

The Tender and Fierce Love of God

by Sandeep Poonen

To become a zero, we need to surrender to God's love and trust in His plan, fueled by the reminder of His creation and love.

Duration: 27:06

Scripture: Romans 8:29

Topics: "Gods Love", "Surrendered Faith"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of running the race of faith to be a 'zero' before God, completely surrendering all aspects of self to Christ. It highlights the need to refuel on the love of God, understanding our unique creation by God, and embracing His vision for our lives. The message encourages silence to hear God's voice, recognizing His fierce protection and tender love for each individual.

Transcript

I can start with that. What does, what makes a person spiritually strong as an athlete? I'm reminded of a couple of things but let me start by going with 1 Corinthians chapter nine verse twenty-four which talks about Olympic athletes. 1 Corinthians chapter nine verse twenty-four, you may be familiar with these verses.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way so as to win. Dear brothers and sisters, let me be crystal clear about what the race we all have to run. And if we're going to be Olympic athletes, if we're going to run this race, he talks about getting a perishable wreath.

They were talking, Paul was talking about the Olympic Games and at that time it was just started in which they used to get this wreath. Now you get a medal. And he was saying run to achieve, to receive the imperishable crown.

To me it's very clear the race I ought to run. And it's good for us to be crystal clear about the race to run. And here's the race I want to run.

And I invite you to run this race too. This is the race that I have in unity with Christ. It's the race to zero.

The race to be a zero before God. That is the race that I want to invite all of you to run. There's not ninety-nine percent of Christ and one percent of me that will work.

Let us all run a race to be a zero in Christ. Then Christ will be all in all to the glory of God. And all of us are in transition.

I don't know what percentage you're holding together with Christ. And Christ wants you to run the race to zero. Where you will be nothing.

Where you will be a crushed olive. All of yourself has been crushed completely so that God can fill you and what comes out of you is God. Zero.

Zero agendas. Zero biases. Zero past issues holding you back.

Zero ambitions driving you forward. Zero personality flaws. Zero sicknesses.

Zero past heritage. Anything that you got through the tree of Adam. Zero.

So that you could be fully planted in Christ. And Christ may be all in all. This is the race that I am eager to run.

And this is the race that we all must be pursuing too. So that when we get up and speak here, we're really desiring to be a zero. That Christ may be completely demonstrated and I might be completely out of the way.

And so I work hard. I work hard in the way I write, in the way I speak, preparing so that I might be a zero. And that Christ might be all in all.

May that grip you. It's not the race to go up. It's the race to go down that grabs a hold of me.

All of us. Did you have less to begin with? Good. You have less to give up.

Woe to those who are rich and intelligent. Because those things are hidden. The things of God are hidden.

Blessed are you who are like infants who have very little to bring to the table. You have less to go to become a zero. Because that's the race I'm on.

And so many ways those of us are in this part of the world have been given so much. We've been given abundance of food and shelter and many other things. We have to strive to be like our brothers and sisters all over the world to become a zero.

If a grain of wheat falls into the ground and becomes a zero, it will bear much fruit. May God help us. And I want to share today what is the motivation to become a zero? What is the motivation to become a zero? We know that the goal of our life, Romans chapter 8 verse 29, is to become like Jesus, to become conformed to the image of Jesus.

That I can say is an analogy. It's like God telling us, you have to come from the West Coast in California and you've got to go to the East Coast in New York. You've got to traverse that whole distance.

You've got to travel that whole distance. And he put us on this earth and said, I'm starting you on the West Coast and you go to the East Coast, the other end of the country. I'm going to give you a car.

I'm going to give you a beautiful machine. It's called your body. And I need you to take this body from the West Coast to the East Coast, from your life under Adam to your life in God, fully like Christ.

What's going to get you there? What's going to take this car from the West to the East? You need fuel. Most Christians have been given this car, which is our body, and are doing whatever they want with it. Even most Christians, the world definitely, but even most Christians have been given this car and they're going wherever.

They're going for day trips and week-long trips, visiting all parts of the world in their car. Some, a few Christians are trying to position that car, their body, East. Most of such people too, however, are trying to push their car.

And obeying the commands of God is getting the car to New York. The commands of God are absolutely strict. Get your car to the East Coast.

There's no wavering about it. You can't change your direction, but get to New York, get to the East Coast. And so some of us reach the commands of God, and it's so easy for many of us to try to push the car.

And we say, Lord, I'm sitting in this car, I need to push it. But God never wanted it to be that way. God never wanted our car to be pushed to our destination.

God wanted to give us fuel. And what is the fuel that we've been given? It's the love of God. And so, dear brothers and sisters, if you are ever stuck, if you are ever find yourself on the side of the highway, and you're getting out of your car and starting to push it, stop.

What you need is fuel. You need to be refueled with the love of God. You need to be, have the love of God be shed abroad, to be poured to overflowing, back in your car.

Then go and obey the commands of God. Then get back in your car, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the love of God fueling you, you move forward. To become a zero, to go and take up your cross and die, and all of the commands of God, to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, all of these are fueled on the fuel of the love of God.

I hope this is a message of liberation to people who find themselves stuck on the side of the highway, seeking to obey the commands of God, saying, God, I'm out. Refuel on the love of God. And His word is the place where the love of God has been shown to us.

Now, I want to show you just a couple of verses, as that helps, if it helps you understand some of the love of God. Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. And this is where man was completely separate from all other of creation, because God breathed in him.

And I had this picture, as I was reminded of this verse, of God stooping down, bending down, and breathing into the nostrils of man. Just this being. Animals had life.

Insects had life. Animals also breathe. But this is different.

They breathe oxygen, and they breathe out carbon dioxide, too. But this is different, what God did to Adam and Eve. He breathed into them, into their nostrils, the breath of life.

He did that to Adam and Eve, thousands of years ago. And what made it really special is to see that God did that to me. He didn't just say, okay, now it's biology taking over, go and reproduce, and that's it.

No. Turn with me to Psalm chapter 139. Man and woman have no ability to create an eternal being.

Only God can do that. Man and woman, without God's help, can create after our own flesh. But God is the one.

We know this passage in 13 through 16. You know, you formed me in my inward parts. You've wove me in my mother's womb, verse 13 of Psalm 139.

I will give thanks to you, verse 14, for I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works, and my soul knows it well. Not just my being, not just my physical being, but my soul.

The thing that was created when you breathed into me, this knows it well. Listen to this in the message paraphrase. Oh, yes, you shaped me first inside out.

You first, you shaped me first inside, then out. You formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, high God, you're breathtaking.

Body and soul, I'm marvelously made. I worship in adoration. What a creation.

Who's what a creation? You. You know me inside and out. You know every bone in my body.

You know exactly how I was made bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. You watched me grow from conception to birth. All the stages of my life were spread out before you.

So, the very tender picture of you. And I know, I knew God did that for Adam, but something changed when I saw God doing this for me. And I want to ask you, dear brothers and sisters, dear family of God, have you made this personal? Have you made God who created you exactly the way he meant to make you with the size of the nose that you have, the shape of your body, the way it is, the bone structure of where you are, bone by bone, he made you with the shape of your eyes, the color of your skin, every little thing.

Have you seen God making you? Have you seen him breathing into you this soul? And as I shared before, take your year of birth and just go one whole year before that. You know that you never existed. That was the news to me.

Adam existed only when he was created in Genesis chapter 2, 6,000 whatever years ago. I wasn't there. I wasn't around.

And to think of how eternal God is, and to think of how limited myself is, but to still see the care in which in 1974 God took to breathe and create me. I don't know what's your year of birth, but can you see that, that that's the attention that God paid to create your soul that will never die? How can we say that we're not special to God? God has been extremely attentive and is specifically the way he's created you and everything about you. That's the start, I think, of how God can start to see from the very beginning God created you.

And then this is also passages that we've been reading in Zachariah chapter 2. Zachariah chapter 2, verse 1. This is a vision that Zachariah saw and there's a vision that we need to see. My eyes, I lifted up my eyes and I looked. Behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand and I asked, where are you going? And he said, I'm going to measure Jerusalem.

The Lord spoke to me this way and there's a voice that can be in your head. There can be a voice that you hear saying, here's the measuring line, here's the commands of God, go measure yourself. Go see how short you fall in the glory of God.

And bless my heart to see what the vision said. This is the beginning, before you build a temple, before you do all of this stuff. Here's what the angel who was speaking, this is what Jesus says to such people.

When you hear the voice and go measure it, you want to see how short you fall in the glory of God? When you come to God and you come saying, Lord, I have a measuring line in my hand. I'll show you how short I fall of your glory. Here's what Jesus says to you in verse 4. Run, outrun this man, go speak to that young man and say, stop, don't put away a measuring line just yet.

Tell him something. Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls. There's going to come a day in your life and God wants to open your eyes.

Before you start on your journey to New York or to the US coast, God wants to open your eyes to your future. Above all that you ask or think, abundantly more than you ask or think, he wants you to have a vision of that from the start. Dear family of God, this is the fuel and what God wants to keep on inspiring you with to get up in the morning.

You'll be without walls. I'll be the wall of fire. I, eternal, infinite God.

How long is the wall of fire of God? If God is the wall of fire, how big is it? What's the dimensions of it? It's limitless. I'll be that. That's the progress God wants to make in your life.

And I will be the glory in the midst. God will be the glory. That's it.

Dear brothers and sisters, take away a measuring, put away a measuring line for a while. Embrace this vision. Embrace this vision of God.

When you, when you see a measuring line in your hand, when you begin your walk with God in the morning, remember his loving kindness. Remember that, let God open you afresh to the vision God has for you. I don't care how 2016 was, how 2015 was, how 1974 all the way to 2016 was, immaterial.

Lord Jesus, give me a fresh vision. When I take out my measuring line, help me first to see you. You're the glory.

Verse 8, thus says the Lord, after the glory, I'm going to go after the nations who've splendedored you. I'm going to do that because he who touches you touches the apple of my eye. The devil's been hitting you.

Your flesh has been hitting you. Anyone who hits you, Jesus, God is saying, hits me. Anyone who hits you, bloodies my nose, blackens my face.

That's what the lesson Bible says. Gives me a black eye. My eyes need to be open to how precious I am to God.

My eyes need to be open that when somebody touches me, when the devil comes against me, when my past comes against me, who got a black eye? Who got a bloody nose? God did. If my eyes can be opened to that, it won't be just a truth that I memorize. It won't be just a reference that I remember.

It'll be the difference between death and life. If I know how tenderly and fiercely God loves me, if I know how tenderly he loves me, he wove me in my mother's womb and breathed on me. He didn't shout at it and say, have an eternal being.

He breathed on me so tenderly and he fiercely protects me because he who touches you touches the apple of my eye. I don't see it this way. I struggle to see me this way.

So precious. That is why I am so insecure. That is why I'm so handcuffed by my own things.

So maybe some of us need to put away our measuring line for a while and just meditate on God and his infinite love for us. Because we've been pushing the car for too long and we really need to get into the habit of refueling. The moment we're slowing down in our pace towards God, we need to see the signal of fuel getting empty.

I need to say, get me to a gas station. Refuel on the love of God. And verses like Zechariah chapter 2 and Psalm 139, we've memorized some of those verses, really need to become our fuel in fresh and fresh ways.

So what do I do in this place? Number one, you see at the end of this verse, verse 13, be silent. And who has to be silent? All flesh, including your flesh, including those self-doubts, including those voices of self-pity, including those voices of how you've done it for the last 40 years. Dear brothers and sisters, the way you've done it for the last any number of decades is what is holding you back.

Listen to me. It's held me back in so many ways. The ways I have done it.

Oh, I'm just this way. Oh, that's just the way I am. That's the way I've always done it.

Don't let the way you've always done it come in the way of God and his promises for you and his purposes for you. Let God open your eyes to see that there's an infinite wall of fire. That is your boundaries.

That is what you can do for God. The glory of God is in you and in your midst. What's the limit to that? What's the limit to that love? Who's handcuffing God? I am.

Who's limiting God? My unrelief. So the voices of self-pity and self-doubt have to be silenced and I have to take a sword to it. I have to be ruthless to it.

1 Corinthians 10:13. God never allows me to be tempted beyond my ability. So what's the reason I fell today? What's the reason I fell yesterday? 100% me.

God's a wall of fire. God's an infinite protection around me. His glory is limitless.

Be silent, flesh. Be silent, voices that have held you upon bondage for decades. Be silent because God is aroused.

God is getting up. What is he going to do when he gets up? Turn with me to Song of Solomon, chapter 2. Song of Solomon's middle of the Bible right before Isaiah. God is aroused.

He's coming for you. What does he have to say to you? Song of Solomon, chapter 2, verse 14. Oh my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret place of the steep pathway, let me see your form.

Let me hear your voice. For your voice is sweet. Your voice is sweet.

And your face is beautiful. Can you get the picture? Here's the bride hiding in the cleft of the rock, hiding behind the rocks, in the secret place of the steep pathway. That's where the bride's hiding.

And God is aroused. And he's coming. He's saying, be silent.

I have something to say to you. It's not a word of condemnation. He is saying, your voice is sweet.

Your face, this face that I breathed into. I don't care what your mother said about your face, what your father says about your face, what culture says about your face, what your husband or your wife thinks about your face, doesn't matter. What does God say about your face? Your face is beautiful.

Your face is lovely. This is fuel. This is the fuel of God that must constantly drive us.

Jesus longs for communion, Hudson Taylor said, in his people more than they long for him. We all say we long for God. But he's the one who's aroused.

And he's coming to the cleft of the rock and to the steep pathway. And he's the one saying, you are beautiful. Your voice is lovely.

The way I made you. I know there are a lot of issues that we need to work on. And we go, we have a lot of things.

And if you look at Zechariah chapter three, you see God goes on to tell you how cleansed you are. And that's the next thing that you have to see after you see how incredibly fierce God is in Islam. God wants to cleanse you, put a brand new robe on you.

And we as brothers and sisters of you, hopefully we'll say let's put a crown on you too. Then we hear the admonition of the Lord. Then we hear the exaltation of the Lord.

Don't despise the day of small beginnings, dear brothers and sisters. Let me repeat what I started with. If your car is slowing down in the race to be a zero, to be silent before the Lord, stop over and refuel on the love of God.

May the Lord open our eyes and our ears to see God with a black eye and a bloody nose every time we've been hurt. Let the pain that God experienced on our behalf help us to stop feeling sorry for ourselves. You feel you got the black eye, you didn't.

When they punched you, when your father and mother said these things about you, they weren't punching you. They were punching God. Let our eyes be open to the bloody face and the black eye that God has.

And may we hear the voice of God saying, your voice is lovely. Your face is beautiful. If that happens, dear brothers and sisters, it'll transform you.

It'll be a journey of love. It'll be a pilgrimage. It'll be from east coast to west coast.

If we have to take up a cross, so be it. We'll always have fuel in our hearts. May God help us.

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