

# A Challenge to Greater Godliness

by Zac Poonen

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a witness for Christ, highlighting the unique gift of evangelism while encouraging all believers to be witnesses in their own capacity. It addresses the need for surrendering to God, seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and being bold in sharing the gospel, even with relatives. The speaker challenges listeners to aim for a higher, more devoted Christian life, detaching from the love of money and seeking to serve God wholeheartedly.*

**Scripture:** Acts 1:8, Matthew 6:24, Leviticus 6:4, Luke 16:13, James 4:4

**Topics:** "Witnessing for Christ", "Surrender and Boldness in Faith"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a witness for Christ, highlighting the unique gift of evangelism while encouraging all believers to be witnesses in their own capacity. It addresses the need for surrendering to God, seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and being bold in sharing the gospel, even with relatives. The speaker challenges listeners to aim for a higher, more devoted Christian life, detaching from the love of money and seeking to serve God wholeheartedly.

---

## Transcript

Jesus said in Acts 1.8 that we shall be his witnesses. He gives us power through the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. So being a witness to what the Lord has done in us is a very important part of our Christian life.

Not all are called to preach and not all have the gift of preaching. Not all are called to teach. Not everybody can even be an evangelist.

An evangelist is one who can witness anywhere. It's a gift that God gives. I think such people are born with a personality from childhood that just makes it easy for them to reach out to people.

I'm not that type of person. I'm very reserved and shy but some people are not. You know I think from I've met a few people like that in my life.

I remember one brother I knew in England. I was traveling with him in a train and in no time at all he was witnessing to the person next to him. I've seen people like that who travel in a cab and they're witnessing to the taxi driver and travel in a bus and they're immediately witnessing to somebody sitting next to them.

That's a unique gift. It's a gift of evangelism. Wherever they go.

Brother Ed here is like that. Wherever he goes he's a witness. It's rare.

You don't try to imitate him. But we can't be evangelists but we can be witnesses. That all of us can be.

Where we tell people as opportunity arises. What I do is when I travel in a flight or anywhere if I'm sitting next to someone or in a train in India I say Lord if you give me an opening I'm ready. I'm just available.

I don't have the ability to reach out and open up a conversation perhaps like an evangelist. I'm not an evangelist but I'll be a witness. That means you there's a slight opening I'll take it and go in and tell what the Lord has done for me.

And I want to ask all of you dear brothers and sisters you may not be evangelists. Very few are called to be evangelists like very few are called to be teachers. God called me to be a teacher and I've told all the even the elders in India I said don't try to have my gift.

You don't have it. If you try to imitate me you'll be a flop because God hasn't given you that gift. But all of us are called to be witnesses.

There's no excuse for not being a witness. So that's what I want to urge you if you're not a witness that means you never ever tell anybody what Jesus has done for you. There's something wrong with your Christianity.

I'll tell you that and I'll tell you what is wrong. You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit because the apostles were sitting inside locked rooms refusing to tell others about what the Lord had done for them until one day God filled them with the Holy Spirit and suddenly nobody had to tell them. Nobody had to prod them.

Come on go and witness. Go and know. They just went out.

It's like a fire. You know one says the fire nobody has to tell a fire to spread. You see how fire spread and burned down whole forests and burned down buildings.

Nobody has to tell the fire come on burn up the next building. It just spreads and that's how Christianity spread in the early days. The Spirit of God came upon them and they went out and witnessed and I believe that many of us sitting here need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I'm not telling you to go out and witness. You're not able to. You're too shy.

You're inside closed doors just like those early apostles. I was like that and I said Lord I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I remember I prayed that when I was 21 years old.

As soon as I was baptized in water I said Lord I want to be your witness. I'm a very shy person naturally but I want to be your witness. I want to take every opportunity to share the gospel.

When I'm sitting in a bus or a train or even out on the streets and I asked you to pray for that and when God filled me with the Holy Spirit it was natural. It's like a fire. You cannot stop a fire from spreading.

I ask you don't be satisfied until that fire comes into your heart. You're missing out on something. You're missing on the most important thing in your Christian life.

Many of you I feel I'm not here to judge you but I sense and God's given me a little discernment that you're like one who bought a house to live in. There's no electric connection and it's dark. When it's cold there's no heating system because there's no electricity.

You sit there and shiver and when it's dark you just go to bed because you don't have any lights. How many of you would take a house like that? You'd rather move into a one-room house which has got electricity and heating and lighting rather than live in a six-room house with no electricity. Now in an earthly thing like that we're so particular.

Would you take a house, would you buy a house which has got no electricity? None of you would do it. Why do you accept a Christianity without the fire of God in it? Dear brothers and sisters I'm telling you you're missing out on something and if you don't listen to me today you will have a great regret when you stand before your Savior one day as we will all stand and you see him face to face and you'll see how much he did for you and like we sing in that song by and by when I look upon his face I'll wish I had given him more more so much more than I ever gave before will that be true of you that by and by one day when you look at his face and you see the nail prints in his hands you'll wish you had given more of your life to him you wish you had sought more of the power of the Holy Spirit so that you could be a witness to your relatives. One of the first things I did when I got filled with the Holy Spirit was to witness to my immediate relatives I don't mean to my 10th cousins and all that but my immediate relatives and my my brother my sister and though my cousins I began to witness to them about Jesus I was not ashamed of it I was ashamed before I was filled with the Holy Spirit and if you're ashamed to witness to your relatives who are going to hell unless you believe that nominal Christians who were born in a Christian family will all go to heaven I tell you many many Christians believe that oh they are born in a Christian family they go to some dead church but they are Christians they'll go to heaven the devil's deceived you outright your relatives are going to hell and one day you will stand before the Lord and you will feel sorry that you did not witness to them but you believe this absolute rubbish that a person born in a Christian family is a Christian he is not Jesus said very clearly except a man be born again he will not enter the kingdom of God he must be born of the Holy Spirit very important it's I see so many parents who are not even concerned about their own children parents are converted when they are older in age and their children have grown up and left and they did not bring their children to the Lord at least now they should be burdened burdened every day to pray for them and get an opportunity to tell them and ask God to give an opening very important give me an opening Lord to tell my children about Christ when Christ comes suddenly and you're separated from your children for all eternity are you going to find any joy in seeing your own children burning in hell and you realize that you could have led them into God's kingdom because you were too shy you didn't want to offend them you didn't want to hurt them you wanted to remain popular with them I don't want to remain popular with anybody in the world because eternity is at stake and what would you think of a doctor who sees clearly that somebody's got cancer and he won't tell him he won't tell him because he oh he won't be my friend if I tell him the truth what do you think of such a doctor he's not fit to be a doctor what do you think of a Christian who knows this person has not accepted Christ he's not born again I know some people who wait till that loved one is on that deathbed and then they rush oh the person's been admitted in the hospital now I've got to go and somehow tell him to accept Christ I don't know what sort of acceptance of Christ that is I know a person can be saved even at the last moment like the thief on the cross but there's a lot of difference between a person accepting Christ because he knows he's gonna die and a person accepting Christ because he knows he's a sinner there's a lot of difference I'm gonna die so I better accept Christ no I'm a wretched sinner on my way to hell and Christ died for my sins that's very different don't wait till your loved one is on a deathbed before you go and try to witness to that person get

rid of your shyness and if you're still shy pray to God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and don't be so afraid of offending your relatives that you'd rather see them go to hell than hurt them here or not I'm willing to hurt anybody if I can save their soul yeah I witnessed to Hindus and they think I'm a fanatic okay let them think I'm a fanatic one day they stand before the Lord they'll know that I was speaking them to the truth and I at least tried to save them it'll be terrible if some person whom I met regularly and I was a very close friend with me and at the judgment seat of God he turns around to me and says Zach you never told me the truth I thought you were my friend you knew me so well and you knew all this and you never told me I never want a single person to tell me that I'm not naturally that type of person I had to pray for to be filled to the Holy Spirit I pray that even now I never stopped praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit my dear brothers and sisters if there's one thing you need even you young people pray to Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit and to set you on fire for God very important very very important and also it's very important that all of you are absolutely sure of your salvation I'll tell you a little few things of my personal testimony it says you must be witnesses for me and I will be a witness for him today I was born in a Christian family my father was born again before I was born and I'm thankful for that because of that he was very eager that I should not go to the dead Orthodox Church in which he was part of that but he would never send me there he sent me to a Brethren Assembly Sunday school where I could hear the true gospel I'm very thankful for that that from childhood I could hear the gospel and my dad himself went there and I he took me to meetings where I heard the gospel and many times when I heard the gospel as you I'm a sinner I say Lord Jesus come into my heart I didn't see any change in my life because we were already a God-fearing family my father never took me to a single movie in his whole life we were every Sunday we take us to church and we'd read the Bible we pray and but I didn't find any change in my life there I mean those grown-up in God-fearing Christian families were already upright in many ways because we brought up by good parents but we don't see much change in our life and we accept Christ and there's like that with me I was never sure I said other I've heard of people who had radical change I remember hearing the testimony of a murderer a man who was on his way someone I came to know very well he was a part of a murderous gang in India and he was on his way one day to murder somebody with a knife stuck in his leg and he saw some pretty girls going and he thought he'd follow them for a little while before going and murdering this guy and those guys went those girls went into a Christian meeting so he went and sat there and he got converted radically converted and he was a flaming witness for Christ I mean I met him years later and his testimony was so spectacular when I heard that I said Lord my testimony so ordinary I wish I had spectacular testimony like this man's everybody would sit with rapt attention whereas I would say I was born in a Christian family and nothing much happened in nobody is excited with that type of testimony but the Lord showed me later on thank God you didn't murder anybody thank God you didn't have anybody's blood on your hands I mean I took time to understand that I was seeking honor and that's easy in the early part of the Christian life that I want to you know polish up my testimony and make it spectacular but what if my testimony is very ordinary then I asked the Lord to come into my heart a hundred times before I was sure I'll tell you that a lot of people born in Christian homes who were more blessed by my testimony than the testimony of that murderer there are very few murderers who sit in a meeting listening to the testimony there most of the people sitting in our meetings are like me born in God-fearing families nothing spectacular happens when they accept Christ and they're more encouraged by my testimony that I kept saying it and I never was sure but a day came in my life when I was reading the Bible and I read John 6 37 if you don't know that verse you must know it by heart John 6 37 the last part the one who comes to me Jesus said I will certainly not cast out everything Jesus says is certain but sometimes he emphasized certainly it would have been enough he said if I said I will not cast him out he said I will definitely not cast him out and I remember that day way back in July 1959 62 years ago as I was in the naval base and I was

sitting in my room reading the Bible and I said Lord I've come to you many times and the Lord said to me as it were in my heart I never cast you out and I said Lord today I believe that I had no experience I never saw any light or angels or anything I never seen lights or angels in my whole life I've lived by faith in the Word of God that's what changed my life it's faith in the Word of God that made me quit my job no light or vision or voice from heaven or any such thing it's amazing power in the Word of God it's through God's Word that he led me to the person I should marry gave me clear directions and so many things God's Word has been my guide and I said Lord I want to believe that today and to news to you to use naval language I dropped an anchor that day in my life and now for 62 years that anchor has held even though I've had ups and downs and ups and downs like a ship you know tossing with the waves the anchor held and the result is in not a single day in these 62 years have I doubted my salvation that Christ accepted me even in the days when I was down I know Christ accepted me I'm not in a good state right now I'm pretty discouraged I went through those periods as well but Christ has accepted me I want every one of you my dear brothers and sisters to have an assurance like that about your salvation from Christ if you don't have it seek it don't be satisfied with the uncertain I'm not too sure I'm not too sure supposing the doctor said I'm not too sure whether your cancer is gone I'm not too sure that we may still be there would you be happy wouldn't you be happy with the doctor who tells you I've done the surgery it is gone I assure you it's gone how happy a person is like that to hear what doctor saying your cancer is gone completely we must have that assurance that our sin is forgiven that Christ dwells in our heart and you don't need visions and dreams visions you know the Bible says the devil appears like an angel of light have you read that in the Bible yes it says in 1 2nd Corinthians 11 the devil appears like an angel of light so if you saw an angel of light one day like some Christians say they have seen that could be the devil himself he could lie to you he's a deceiver he can fool you with a vision but I thank God it's not with visions that I got my assurance from the unchangeable Word of God Jesus that heaven and earth will pass away but this word will not pass away that devil who comes as an angel of light will pass away but this word will not pass away I did not get my assurance by some voice from heaven I would have wondered where did that come from was it the devil telling me something the devil would like to tell a lot of people are not saved oh yeah you're saved I'm sure he's told that to numerous people have you got an assurance from God's Word as the Holy Spirit spoken to you from some scripture you are a child of God nothing can shake that I'll tell you from my experience and don't be satisfied with anything less don't let some preacher tell you oh yes yes you have accepted the Lord you're his child I never tell people that let me show you a verse in Romans in chapter 8 these are life and death things that we're talking about today not like matters Romans in chapter 8 and verse 16 this Holy Spirit himself testifies to your spirit your spirit means your heart deep within that you are a child of God until you get that witness don't rest if it takes 10 years wait 10 years better to be sure that the cancer is gone even if it's if it needs 10 operations if if the doctor tells me you need 10 operations to get rid of your cancer I say give me 10 operations I want to be 100% sure my cancer is gone but people are more concerned about their cancer going than to be sure about eternal life that they are saved out of hell and eternal damnation from God I think many Christians don't believe there's such a thing they think they'll sort of ooze into the kingdom of God we were born in a Christian family our parents were very God-fearing we never killed anybody we never murdered anybody and my parents are good people and they took us to a good dead denomination Church where they talked about Jesus they didn't talk about the devil they didn't talk about Rama or Allah or anything they talked about Jesus yes they talked about the Virgin Mary also good that doesn't take you to heaven a lot of people who pray to the Virgin Mary who are burning in hell right now don't be deceived by all these things believe God's Word I'll tell you this you will thank me in the day of judgment if you take my word seriously and if you've witnessed your relatives they'll thank me too for telling you to witness to them the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit we are the child

of God I thank God a day came in my life and the Holy Spirit bore witness to me through his word that I am his child that's why it never shook for 62 years and I pray to be true of everyone here to be very sad if you came to RLCF Sunday after Sunday and finally it is discovered in the day of judgment that you are lost that can happen I've said this to people in our CFC Church back in Bangalore I said according to my discernment I feel that a number of you sitting here are not really born again you come to hear an eloquent speaker you come to hear a good preacher who holds your attention for 45 minutes you're fed up with the boring speakers and so you listen to a person who will hold your attention for 45 minutes that does not mean that you're born again it just means you lost you like to listen to a good message so what Herod do you know who was Herod's favorite preacher who is it John the Baptist the most fiery preacher in the Bible other than Jesus Christ and Paul that's the man Herod liked to listen to and the Herod is burning in hell today in spite of the fact that he liked to listen to John the Baptist so just because you like to listen to a good preacher like John the Baptist it doesn't mean anything you could join Herod in hell that's what I've told people in CFC Bangalore and I feel many of you are like that you haven't seriously turned around from your sin see that's the other thing I found as I as after I was born again and I listened to Christians more and more and preachers and particularly these famous evangelists who would come to India and preach in big crowds of 10,000 people and 100,000 people you find crowds like that in Indian gospel meetings and what were they preaching I heard what they were preaching believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved I said what about repentance you don't tell them to turn from their sin you don't tell them to confess their sins to the Lord you don't tell them to turn from that dirty lustful thoughts you don't tell them to turn from their anger and bitterness and murmuring and complaining and their love of money you never tell them all that just believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that's exactly what the devil wants you to preach half a gospel Jesus said repent and believe not just believe let me tell you turn you to Matthew's gospel in Matthew's gospel we read Jesus going around preaching and this is the first time it's immediately after he's come out of the wilderness in Romans Matthew 4 he'd just come out of the wilderness in verses 1 to 11 he'd been tempted by the devil and then he went back to Nazareth and it says here what did he preach there verse 17 Matthew 4 17 this is one of the first sermons Jesus preached from that time Jesus began to preach and say repent turn around that's his first message not believe turn around from your sin turn around from your sin there is no salvation by faith alone you know that phrase what God is joined together let no man put asunder they said that at a wedding I say that in the preaching the gospel to God is joined repentance and faith together but man has separated it say believe believe believe multitudes have gone to hell because they believe you know that song where it's a blessed assurance Jesus is mine one line in that song it says the vilest offender who truly believes if you remember that song one line is like this the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives that is that sung sometimes in these big so-called evangelistic crusades blessed assurance Jesus is mine the vilest offender and there are vile offenders sitting in that crowd who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives and they truly believe in Jesus we changed it in CFC we never sing it that way we sing that song but we change that line the vilest offender who repents and believes that's how we sing it we don't want to fool people thinking that if they only believe they'll go to heaven they will not what do the Apostles preach the first you saw how Jesus preached immediately after he came to Nazareth you see what how Peter preached on the day of Pentecost immediately after he was filled with the Spirit what did he preach do you say come on vilest offenders believe no when the people came to him and said after hearing the sermon they said in Acts 2 37 he said oh brothers what shall we do because we have sinned and Jesus he didn't say believe he said repent repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins then you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit repent and express your faith in baptism that's not an optional thing that's another thing a lot of preachers say yeah you can when you feel like it you can take

your baptism those who take baptism whenever they feel like it their entire life they'll be obeying God when they feel like it those who obey immediately they hear about baptism immediately all their life they hear something they'll obey immediately I've seen that those who take their own cool time to get baptized they'll take their own cool time to obey all the other things in Scripture and they'll discover at the end of their Christian life instead of running the marathon race they've probably covered about one yard in 50 years of their Christian life because they don't have this habit of instantaneous obedience Jesus says something you say yeah we'll think about it I got to discuss it with my priest and I got to discuss it with my relatives well that's how you live all your life then get into the habit of instantaneous obedience you know why the God used those twelve apostles to turn the world upside down to start a ministry that has lasted for 2,000 years now Christianity I'll tell you why when Jesus said to them drop your nets and you're fishing and come and follow me they didn't say we'll pray about it we'll think about it let me go and ask dad no Peter and Andrew dropped it then he went further down and saw James and John they were with their father who was also in the fishing business and he said drop your nets and come and follow me they didn't say hey dad what do you think about that he's calling us to follow him dad goodbye I'm not gonna ask your permission I'm leaving such people are the ones whom God used to turn the world upside down and throughout the centuries it has always been people like that who when they hear something they don't have to consult their husband or wife or father or mother or priest or any Tom Dick or Harry they obey and the Lord is using such people even today to draw thousands of people to Christ ordinary people shy people fills them with the Holy Spirit and you can be one like that and then you will stand one day before the Lord without regret about the way you live my dear brothers and sisters don't be satisfied with living an ordinary substandard Christian life you're not satisfied with living an ordinary substandard physical life why don't you all live in studio apartments one-bedroom house you can survive there there are many poor people who survive there why when you have because you have the resources why do you build a better house it's more convenience why don't you have the same attitude towards your Christian life I don't want us one studio type of Christian life I want to live the maximum with my Christian life the most effective most useful way I can live my Christian life just like you know where if you use your money you earn a certain amount of money every month and you want to make maximum use of that Lord I want to make maximum use of my life in the same way you don't waste your money a sensible man will not waste his money we want to make the maximum use of our Christian life make that your goal from today Lord I want to make the maximum use of my Christian life I don't want to waste a single day of my life we are nearly 82 years old but I don't want to waste a single day of my life many years ago I had an accident I was driving my scooter my actually two-wheel moped which is smaller than a scooter and I was crossing a railway line railway crossing in India and the man of the you know in India it's not automatic they lift up the one bar and then you go across and then they lift up the other bar it's a pretty slow process anyway this man was operating the the two bars that block the railway track and it was up and I shot across with my motorcycle the moped rather small scooter and before I reached the second bar he lowered it and I went bang into it my chest hit it I got knocked off my bike and I hit my head on the railway track and I lay there unconscious I don't know for how long later on when they took an x-ray of my skull if there was a crack in it I could have died there and I don't know how long till today I don't know how long I'd lay there till today I the only thing I know is I went and hit this bar I don't know who picked me up the next thing I was aware of which I think must have been a few minutes later I saw somebody had parked my bike on its stand and they had lifted me up and I was standing there I didn't even remember who picked me up it's all gone from my memory till today it happened in 1993 until today I can't remember 92 or 93 and I can't remember what happened then anyway I got on my bike and I rode and that the policeman standing there said hey be careful you could hurt yourself I didn't know why he was saying that when I went home I found a scar across my chest and I

was taken to a hospital Santosh drove me to the hospital and then I discovered I had a crack in my skull and this is what I said to the Lord at that time I said Lord I have not finished saying thank you to you for dying for me on the cross I'm writing the word T H A N K U Y O U Lord I have not finished writing it I'm not even halfway through it you got to be you got to help me finish it Lord you can't take me away now I got to say thank you not with words but with a life and the Lord's given me since that day nearly 30 years I'm thankful well I still haven't finished saying thank you by the way that's what I keep saying even now I say Lord I just got a few more letters to finish to say thank you Lord do you feel that way do you feel that your life your entire life must be an expression of saying thank you Lord for facing hell for me for three hours on the cross so that I might never go there how shall I show my gratitude to you just by going to church every Sunday just by putting a few dollars into the offering box shame on me if that's all I do I'll tell you something God doesn't want your money which rich father will go and ask his poor struggling sons give me money can you think of it I'm billionaire father his sons are very grateful and they want to give him some money they'll say that is a hey son I don't need your money I'm a billionaire man I don't need your money don't think like all these preachers say God wants your money he's demanding your money no he's a billionaire trillionaire if you don't feel like giving don't put a cent into that box only those who are grateful I'll tell you how I when I was really converted and I was sure that the Lord had accepted me all that I had was his there are some people who say you're going to accept Jesus as Savior first and then after a while you decide to make him Lord there is no such thing it's like a girl getting married to somebody and okay you can decide a few few years later whether you can go and live with him or not now just keep visiting him now and then you're married but you're just visiting your husband now and then which husband will accept that would you have accepted that from your wife after the wedding she says I'll come and visit you now and then no you're going to be with me every day what if he says to you can you allow me one month of the year to go and live with somebody else or if she says at least one day in a year I got an old friend I'd like to live with him one day in a year how many of you would permit your wife to do that are you married to Jesus you want to live one day in the world the world is the other friend we all had before we married Christ would you like one day to live for the world or one month perhaps only Sunday for the Lord what type of marriage is that where you visit your husband only on Sunday true marriage is every single moment of every single day you're with your husband in spirit if not physically you're never interested in anybody else other otherwise it's a divorce there's a divorce in spirit in many marriages sitting there wishing they were married to somebody else that's how many Christians are oh I wish I could enjoy that thing in the world but unfortunately I'm married to Christ it's like a woman saying unfortunately I'm married to this man but that man looks so much more handsome and so nice do you look at things in the world like that I wish I could have that but you know they don't allow me to watch such movies anymore what type of marriage is yours you're not happy you know what the Lord will say go and get married to that man I don't want you one day you will discover that the Lord will say I never knew you you know Jesus said that many will come to and say Lord we did miracles in your name and we cast out demons in your name which is much more than many of us have done and to such people you say I never knew you you say Lord I went to RLCM every Sunday I never missed a single Sunday I even stayed for the lunch I even brought some lunch you think the Lord's gonna be impressed with all that true Christianity is a marriage where Christ is your bridegroom and you're married to him and every single day you're as devoted to him as a good wife should be to her husband not just physically there but in spirit this is my husband and devoted to him I'll never be interested in anybody else or sit and dream about I wish I had married that person and wish I'd that person were my husband no there's no that's a false marriage that's a that's a prostitute such a woman is a prostitute even if she doesn't leave her husband if she sits and dreams about another man I'd say no spirit she's a prostitute and if a person's like that with Christ married to Christ apparently accepted

him but always wishing I had I wish I had this in the world I wish I could watch and watch that R-rated movie everybody says it's a great R-rated movie uh-huh I wish I could go and watch that you're a prostitute I'm sorry to say that but those are not my words I'm only quoting scripture James chapter 4 it's the Holy Spirit's word so that you don't think brother Zach speaks rudely James chapter 4 what does he say my brethren that's how he speaks in James chapter 3 verse 1 my brethren don't be many teachers my brethren James chapter 3 verse 12 my brethren my brethren my brethren my brethren chapter 4 verse 4 you adulteresses how do you like that a letter he writes to my brethren in chapter 4 verse 4 he says you adulteresses you prostitutes thank God for people like James who are brave filled with the Holy Spirit to speak the truth they were not diplomats these writers of scripture they were prophets and that's how a prophet speaks because he doesn't want anybody's honor he doesn't want anybody's money I'll tell you my brothers and sisters if you value the Christian life listen to the prophets don't listen to people who tickle your ears don't read books and articles that tickle your ears read books written by prophets read articles written by prophets who will say to you to your face my brothers you adulteresses chapter 4 verse 4 don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility enmity towards God whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God I wish there were more preachers like that today we would have a much purer Christianity some people will get offended and leave I've said that in CFC Bangalore I feel that some of you should get offended and leave if you're not serious about following Jesus Christ go and find there are a hundred other churches in Bangalore you can go and join them we're not interested in building numbers we are interested in making disciples of Jesus Christ and that's what I say in RLCF too and that's what I said I came here first in 2004 and I preached discipleship and you know some people got offended and left three years ago praise the Lord I'm not hurt that they left we're making disciples it doesn't disturb me one bit I've been in churches in India where some people get offended and left this is this is too strong it's too strong a word I've seen people in Bangalore come they didn't become members they came to listen and say oh no brother we can't do this they came and told me brothers that your message is too strong I can't be here I said yeah there are a hundred other churches go there they will pat your back and smooth you and collect your money and send you to hell the difference here is we don't collect your money we don't tickle you and make you happy we are making sure the cancer is out of your system and you'll be healed and you'll have a glorious entrance into God's kingdom not only you your children too that's what we preach for that's what we desire we're not afraid of offending people Jesus is offending people left right and center he turned around to his own closest disciple you know that once he told Peter when Peter tried to tell him don't go to the cross he says get behind me Satan what would you think of the meek and gentle Jesus turning around to his closest co-worker you read that in Matthew 16 I think it was 23 or something get behind me Satan he stood in danger of his closest disciple getting offended and walking out he said I'm willing to take that risk but any person who tells me don't go to the cross that is the voice of Satan because Satan does not want Jesus to go to the cross to save the world and it doesn't matter if those words come out of the mouth of my closest co-worker Peter Jesus said I will tell him what I think of him that's the voice of Satan Peter for a moment you became the mouthpiece of Satan one minute ago you said you are the Christ the Son of the Living God that was God speaking through you but now one minute later it's Satan speaking through you through the same person you read in Matthew 16 he said thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God and one minute later he says don't go to the cross a man Jesus said blessed are you Simon because my father in heaven gave you that revelation and one minute later Satan is speaking through him it's that easy to backslide that's why we had to be watchful all the time make sure you're listening to God all the time and what do we learn from that incident a voice that tells you avoid the cross is always without doubt the voice of Satan when you have a problem in your home with your husband or wife and the Holy Spirit says die to yourself and you say no you know who's telling you to say

no the devil it's telling you don't take up the cross don't die to yourself and the Holy Spirit is prompting you die die it's a solution to many problems in the home die to yourself another voice has no say to that voice get behind me Satan I'm gonna take up the cross here and follow Jesus when people hurt you and the devil says don't forgive them look at the evil they did to your family look at the evil they did to your son or daughter don't ever forgive them you say get away Satan I'm gonna forgive them can you say that can you die to yourself and say God will protect my children I don't care if some people did evil I'll forgive them Jesus said if you don't forgive others God will not forgive you now I'll tell you something I don't forgive others because I want God to forgive me that is the second best way of forgiving people the second best way of forgiving people is I better forgive them otherwise God won't forgive me Jesus said that that is the second best way if you don't forgive others God will not forgive you I'll tell you why I forgive others today maybe once upon a time I lived in that second best because that's all the accommodation I could afford a cheap accommodation second best I forgive others because I don't want to go to hell but today I don't live there God has made me partaker of his nature through the Holy Spirit why did Jesus say on the cross father forgive them because he was afraid the father would punish him oh I better forgive them otherwise the father won't accept me that's not why he forgave them it was his nature coming out forgive them forgive them father that's the nature he's given me through the Holy Spirit that today whenever I hear that somebody spoke against me I immediately say not forgive them I don't know to think about it somebody tried to do some harm to me lots of people have tried that through the years father forgive them they don't know what they're doing if they only could see what they are doing it would shrink from it in fear they are trying to harm a child of God that's the most terrible thing you can ever do speak evil of a child of God no they don't even realize what evil it is forgive them they are ignorant this comes spontaneously now and if you really seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit it will come spontaneously to you don't be satisfied with anything less than that you know when for years I lived in spiritually speaking with his hand pump type of Christian life what I would not come gushing out in the villages of India there's no running water you got to go to a street hand pump and take a bucket and pump pump pump and that's how my Christian life was pump pump pump pump pump pump and little water would come out and then I would struggle dry thirsty and pump pump pump pump pump pump and little water would come out are you like that is your Christian life like that in spurts and then you dry up dry up for many days and then spurts again you can hear some challenging message somewhere and you'd some spurts again are you satisfied with that that's all you'll have all your life but if you're not satisfied with that Jesus said if anyone is thirsty for a better life come to me and drink then rivers will start flowing out nobody pumps a river it just flows out and flows out I thank God that's happened in my life not only messages that come forth from my heart but forgiveness that comes forth from my heart to love the unlovely to seek the good of others even if it means personal sacrifice that's what God can do for you and me don't be satisfied all I'm saying is aim for the highest don't aim for anything less than that we do that in our profession in your profession whatever it is don't you aim for something higher always seeking for something higher let's do that in the Christian life too if you're doing a business you want your business to prosper you want to you want to get more business you want to get earn more money good why not have that same desire in the Christian life and Lord I don't want to live the substandard Christian life I've been living till today I want to live something higher and don't let that happen just when you hear a stirring message let the Holy Spirit stir you all the time a fire that never dies out I thank God the Holy Spirit has put a fire in my heart it was not like that in the early days of my Christian life I needed to be stirred every now and then I hear a message on tape or go to a meeting and get all stirred up and then it'll gradually hope you know how the fire dies out I got fed up with that life and I said Lord I want something else I want something of fire that from within that keeps on burning and the Holy Spirit can do that he can do that he can set you on fire you know like that burning bush that Moses

saw nothing could stop that fire there's a life that God can give you through the Holy Spirit to your brothers where nobody allowed to prod you and urge you and challenge you to do it it'll all come spontaneously from within there's a great verse in the Song of Solomon which says about this fire that God puts in our heart Song of Solomon right in the middle of your Bible just after Psalms and Ecclesiastes Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon it says there about the fire the fire of God in the flame of the Lord the Holy Spirit is the very flame of the Lord's in Song of Solomon chapter 8 and the last part of verse 6 it's the bride speaking to the bridegroom Oh Lord telling the Lord Jesus set me like a seal in your heart Lord Jesus Son of Solomon 8 verse 6 like a seal on your arm and give me the last part of verse 6 the very flame of the Lord give me the flame the fire of God in my heart a fire which many waters cannot quench it's a fire of love love for God and love for others which many waters cannot quench it says a river cannot quench this fire have you ever heard of a fire that even a river cannot quench most fires even in the forest they send helicopters over there and spray water and it quenches it think of a fire which even a river cannot quench that's what the Holy Spirit does rivers of hatred bitterness that your relatives may fling at you that unbelievers may fling at you that in your place of work mocking and laughing it will not quench the fire of a fervent love for God and a fervent love for that relative who's hurting you for that co-worker who's troubling you rivers cannot quench this fire of love I've experienced it and you can experience it too I'm telling you dear brothers seek for it seek for it and one of the things it did for me was it detached me from my attachment to worldly honor and money I was an unconverted person when I joined the Military Academy in India and my aim was to become a great naval officer to go right up to the top to be the Admiral and one day Christ came into my heart and took away that ambition and I wanted to be great in God's kingdom but another thing God took away from my heart was the love of money I thank God that he took away that from my heart when I was a young man has he taken it away from your heart it's not a question of how much you earn I was earning a huge salary as a naval officer you don't have to be a beggar to stop loving money you can get a very good salary and you can have a good bank account but you may not love money loving money does not depend on how much you earn or how much money you have in your savings it depends on your attitude towards it and I believe there are many people their main hindrance to loving God is their love of money again don't misunderstand me not how much you earn not how much you have in your bank account but how much you love I've never met a beggar in India who doesn't love money there's no homeless man who stands on the streets here who doesn't love money they are rock-bottom poor but they love money and then there are these multi-billionaires who love money too so it doesn't depend on how much you earn or how much you have or don't have it's completely apart from the quantity of your savings you can have a million dollars in your account and not love it or you can have ten thousand dollars in your savings and be a lover of money so don't calculate your love of money by how much you own or how much you earn there's another way to find out Luke chapter 16 tells us Luke 16 this is the way I found out it'll help you if you're serious Luke 16 verse 13 no one can serve two masters now all many Christians all their life they think the only two masters are God and the devil there's no crazy man who thinks he can serve God and the devil at the same time there are people who worship Satan there are such people in the world who worship Satan but they don't think they can worship Satan and worship Jesus no and no Christian thinks he can worship Jesus and worship Satan so the two masters are not Satan and Jesus number one then who are the two masters verse 13 God and wealth or mammon or money wealth personified as a as an idol that's why Jesus said mammon here's God and here's an idol called mammon wealth the pursuit of money no servant can serve two masters you've got to hate the one and love the other or devoted to one and despise the other and the way I found out was this I this is the picture I use in my mind very often I read the Bible I try to use picture language to understand it because Jesus spoke in parables and very often we understand a story better when it's parable when Jesus speaks

about the light of the world or the salt of the earth I can understand that easily you know you come into a room and you know whether there's light or not you put a spoon of food into your mouth you know whether the salt or not it's exactly like that people come in touch with me they must know pretty soon whether they I'm a Christian or not like a key come into a room and you know immediately whether there's light or not people come in touch with me they must know pretty soon that I'm not I'm a regular disciple of Jesus they shouldn't take one year to find that out you put a spoon of my food into your mouth you know whether there's salt or not people come in touch with me and hear me talk to them they must know whether I'm a Christian or not shouldn't take long that's what I learned from those illustrations so the illustration I got here was how do I know whose servant I am supposing there are two people sitting here this is the picture the Lord gave me and I've used it many times A and B and they both want to find out whose servant I am very easy tell them both to call me A calls me and says I come here and B calls me and says I come here immediately you know whose servant I am the one I go to I am that person's servant okay now I apply that to God and money in some particular situation God says do this money says do this who do you listen to when you have to file your taxes money says don't show everything because you let it pay more tax God says show everything even if it pay more I'll honor you who do you listen to that's the time you know whose servant you are not when you sit here in RLCF listening to me or in some other situation God prompts you to give some money and money says no no don't give so much and you listen to money this is okay I think that's too much you know who you're listening to that you are that person's servant however holy you look when you come to RLCF it's in these situations that we discover as I said not in how big your bank account is not in how big your salary is but in these different situations where you have a choice of this or that there's an example I've quoted it before I'll mention it again for those who don't remember it when I was returning to the government in India many years ago what I had cheated it of customs duty you know in naval ships when you when you land in a plane and you take your goods out they examine you to for customs duty you can't go through without going through customs if you come out of a ship land in a ship but in when you're in a naval ship you don't come out of the ship you're living on the ship how do they check what you bought abroad they can never find out because you're living there and so all naval officers would cheat the customs including me the customs officer would come and certify that everything is okay the captain of the ship will give them some whiskey and all that and then they'll sign any paper they want and you're free but when I got converted I said hey I cheated never mind whether the customs officer gave me a free certificate but I cheated and I sat down and calculated how much it was and it was four months of my naval salary four months that took me quite an amount of time to earn and when I was calculating I was trying to calculate how much duty on this how much duty on that different things and I got two figures one was about 20% more than the other couldn't be sure and you know how we are we see I think I'll take the lower figure and pay it and that day I read Leviticus chapter 6 I was you read the Bible systematically and I was reading in Leviticus that if you have taken something by robbery verse 4 Leviticus 6 4 you must restore it and if you have sworn falsely and when you restore it verse 5 you must add 20% to it uh-huh I couldn't get a more exact answer I was deciding which of these shall I give and the lesser one in the Lord said add 20% you know it's amazing how the Bible speaks directly to you that's not the only time many times I've got a reverse which speaks directly to me amazing that's why I believe it's the Word of God and I did it I took a number of months to earn that amount emptied my bank account one day and paid it back and my bank account was empty my heart was full I thank God when I heard these two A and B calling me I responded to God and not to money there are other decisions like that I've had to make in my life where God was testing me who will you listen to and when he sees that you're listening to him I tell you the amount of blessing he gives he given he's given me much more money than I spent that day in giving back much more 10 times more a hundred times more than what I gave there because he was testing me to

see whether I'd give it it's amazing he gives you a hundred times back I can testify to that in my life never have we had shortage in our life God is a good God but honor him and he will honor you and he'll test you to see whether you trust him and say Lord you are my God I will never have another God I will not worship money in my life it's the biggest alternative to God in the lives of many Christians that's why I say that to you you're not likely to go and commit adultery you're not likely to go and commit murder you're not likely to violate the laws of the country but you are likely in some situations to choose money above God and that will be that'll cripple you it'll be like getting one leg paralyzed would you like that and then you go on like that and get another leg paralyzed and you're in a wheelchair you wouldn't want that physically but there are many Christians I've met who are spiritually on a wheelchair I see them years later they have not made any progress in their life because they are moving on a wheelchair they are not running why are they on a wheelchair because they cripple themselves by making the wrong choice in different situations if you have done that in the past repent and say Lord I don't want to do that in the future I want to put you first pray Lord take away from my bank account something some way or the other make me give that money back you know in India the phone services are run by the government it's not private like here there's no Verizon and all in India phone services are run by the government at least in those days in my younger days the money you paid to the telephone service went to the government and one of the things I remember something that happened in my life I was praying Lord if there's some money I accidentally I've made cheated someone which I don't even know I mean the government I want you to somehow make that money go back to the government and one day I was telephoning one of my children who was studying in the US and the telephone services in India are not very efficient and they're pretty expensive and when I finished the call and put the phone down you know those are those phones where you pick up and put it down and you put it down you pick it up again just make sure it's disconnected and I picked it up it is not disconnected and put it down a number of times not disconnected hey this means I'm keeping on paying paying for something what shall I do and I had to put it down and go somewhere else and call the telephone operator from that phone say please disconnect this phone man I finished my call by the time a lot of my money had gone I said maybe I have cheated the government somewhere and the Lord made sure that that money is taken out of my account thank you Lord I had no complaint against the telephone department I said Lord Jesus that was your answer to my prayer that's how my reaction was to money that saved me and it opened my ears to hear the voice of God more clearly and that's changed my life money cannot change my life it will not change your life but if you have the voice of God that can change your life forever choose it my brothers and sisters may God bless you all let's pray Heavenly Father I pray that all these random thoughts that I've shared with people will bring some lasting effect on every single brother and sister here we know that these words will come back to us one day at the judgment seat of Christ and we want to respond to them in the right way so that everyone listening to me today that life will be changed for the better because that's the reason why we preach here in Jesus name Amen

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/KnXsfyHo5eE.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/a-challenge-to-greater-godliness/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**