

# A Firm Grip on the Christian Life ■ The Word of God

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the blood of Jesus and the revelation found in the New Testament. It highlights the need for humility to grasp the deeper truths revealed by the Holy Spirit, contrasting the Old Testament focus on meditation with the New Testament emphasis on revelation. The speaker stresses the significance of humility in understanding Scripture, the necessity of walking in the light for the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from sin, and the transformative power of renewing our minds through God's Word to become like Christ.*

**Scripture:** Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:11, Romans 8:29, Deuteronomy 8:3, John 14:17, 1 John 1:7, Isaiah 65:5, Matthew 11:28, James 4:17

**Topics:** "Understanding the Blood of Jesus", "Humility in Revelation"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Understand what the blood of Jesus does for us, that's really foundational. There are things which are revealed in the New Testament, which the Bible says people in the Old Testament long to understand. Even the prophets in the Old Testament couldn't understand some of the wonderful things revealed in the New Covenant.

When Simon Peter said to Jesus, you are the Christ, the son of the living God, Jesus used a word. When he replied to him, he said, you're blessed Simon because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you. The word he used there is revelation.

That's not found much in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, it was more meditation. And studying the law, which is good.

But in the New Testament, there comes this word revelation. Revelation is by the Holy Spirit and he shows us things which we can't understand with our natural mind, no matter how much we study, no matter how much we meditate. In fact, Jesus once said in Matthew 11, 25, I thank you, Father, that you've hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent and you've revealed them.

There again, the same word. You've revealed them to babes. So, you know, when we come to scripture, if we try to understand it with our cleverness, we'll invariably go wrong.

The scribes were people who studied the scriptures, but they were completely wrong concerning Jesus. Have you ever thought of this? On the road to Emmaus, Jesus walked with two disciples and it says he opened up the scriptures all the way from Genesis to Malachi and showed them how all those scriptures spoke about him. It's very interesting study to see in the Old Testament.

In every book of the Old Testament, there's some revelation of Jesus Christ. Yet, the Pharisees and scribes studied those books. They studied them so many years.

When Jesus actually came into their midst, they said he's the Prince of Devils. He was Beelzebul. That teaches us how blind we can be even if we study the scriptures without the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Why does God hide these things from the clever and intelligent? Is it a handicap to be clever and intelligent? It says he revealed them to babes. And Jesus himself said that the one quality that babes have is humility. So, what I learned from that is that the fundamental requirement to understand scripture is humility.

The humbler you are, the more you'll understand scripture. It's got nothing to do with how many hours you read the Bible or how many times you've gone through the Bible or how clever you are or any of these things. It's all got to do with how humble you are.

And a humble man will understand the scriptures and it'll change his life. And you know the things that we can be proud of? The Pharisees were proud of their Bible knowledge. They were proud of their traditions.

There are a lot of things we're very unconsciously proud of. If there is a human being on earth that you look down upon for some reason, that indicates pride. And in the measure in which you have pride, you will not understand the scriptures.

You'll think you understand, but you'll be wrong. And this book, it's so important to understand this book that if you don't understand it, you're going to waste your life. God's given us one book, Holy One, written by him.

And if we don't understand this, we'll never understand how God wants us to live. And so my dear young people, make it up the passion of your life to study the word with humility and with reverence. God's promised to look upon us with favor if we tremble at his word.

If you're not familiar with that verse, it's in Isaiah chapter 66, and verse 1 and 2. The Lord is saying there, are you going to build a temple for me? In the Old Testament, it was the temple. Today, many people want to do work for the Lord. They want to build a church.

They want to do something for the Lord. And the Lord says, are you going to do something for me? What are you going to do for me on the earth? The heaven is my throne, and the whole earth is just a, Isaiah 66,

1, a place where I keep my feet. What are you going to build for me? But he says, but to this person I will look, the person who is humble, contrite of spirit, and who trembles at my word.

Never forget that verse. If you want God to look at you with favor, all the time, just learn to be humble, broken in your spirit, and to tremble at every word of God, especially if you find some word that you have not obeyed. I was mentioning yesterday the tremendous power of tradition to keep us away from Scripture.

When we tremble at God's word, we'll be willing to give up some very precious things that we have held on to for many years. Because we find Scripture teaches differently. So, if we don't understand what Scripture teaches clearly, we can miss out on the Christian life.

For example, take this matter of the blood of Jesus Christ. It says here in 1 John 1, 7, and it's a very well-known and often quoted verse. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

Christians have a habit of quoting half a verse or a promise without the condition. Do you know that it's wrong to say the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin? Because it's half a verse. There's a condition attached to it.

There are many verses like that that Christians quote. I give unto them eternal life. They shall never perish.

No one shall pluck them out of my hand. That's half a verse. It's like jumping into the middle of a sentence and reading the promise without reading the condition before.

And I believe the main reason why a lot of Christians live a very frustrated, unsatisfying Christian life is because they've tried to claim promises in the Bible without seeing the condition to fulfill that promise. Every promise in Scripture is guaranteed by God to be fulfilled. And if it's not fulfilled in your life, it's because you haven't seen the condition.

Jesus didn't promise eternal life to everybody. He said in John 10, 27 onwards, My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall pluck them out of my hand. But most Christians don't read it like that.

They just jump in the middle of that verse. The same thing here. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

Wrong. What it says in 1 John 1, 7 is if we walk in the light as God himself is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. So does that mean that any Tom, Dick, and Harry can have his sins cleansed in the blood of Christ? No.

He's got to walk in the light. And I'll tell you, it doesn't matter which version you use. Every single version teaches the same thing.

That you've got to walk in the light to have the blood of Jesus cleanse you from all sin. Now, if you believe that it's very, very important that the blood of Christ cleanses you from all sin, which it is, I know what I'd do if I believed that. I'd try to find out, Lord, I really want to know what it is to walk in the light.

Because if I don't walk in the light, the blood doesn't cleanse me. It will not cleanse me. And a lot of people imagine that the blood of Jesus has cleansed them.

It hasn't cleansed them at all, because they're not walking in the light. And it says here, if we say, verse 6, that we have fellowship with Him, and we walk in darkness, we lie and don't practice the truth. It's possible for a Christian to walk in the darkness.

So let's try to understand what it means to walk in the light for the blood of Jesus to cleanse us. This is fundamental. The blood of Christ cleansing us, what the blood of Christ has done for us is absolutely fundamental.

It's the foundation to begin our Christian life properly. And especially you, young people, you need to get your foundation right. What has the blood of Jesus Christ done for you? The first thing is, it cleanses you if you walk in the light.

So the most elementary meaning of walking in the light is, you know, not to hide anything. Who is the man who walks in darkness? The one who is going to hide something. The one who comes in the light is the one who is open.

You remember when Adam sinned. It says he hid among the trees. It's amazing how stupid sin makes you.

As if you can go behind a tree and hide from God. It's one of the first examples of the stupidity that sin brings into a clever man's mind. Adam was so clever that he could give a name to every single animal and bird on earth.

I mean, that's pretty tough. But as soon as sin came, he was so stupid. He thought he could hide behind a tree and hide from God.

But this desire to hide and to cover up is the first result of sin. And then when he's caught, to put the blame on his wife. That's not walking in the light.

The moment you begin to blame somebody else for your sin or try to get out of it by putting part of the blame on somebody else, you're not walking in the light. The big difference between Adam who got kicked out of paradise and the thief on the cross who went to paradise. If you think of the crime that Adam committed and the crime that the thief on the cross committed, is there a comparison? Adam ate one fruit. Look what that thief did.

Think of the number of people he murdered and the number of widows he made and the number of fatherless children he made with his wicked life of murder. And he goes to paradise. And Adam is out of paradise.

It looks a bit unjust. Why is it? It depends on who walked in the light. Adam put the blame on his wife and indirectly put the blame on God.

God, this wife gave me the fruit and you gave me this wife. That's how I ate it. I ate it but there are some causes to it and ultimately you and my wife are the cause of it.

See, when you come like that to God, you get thrown out. But the thief, this is the difference between the two thieves. The one thief said, I don't deserve to be crucified.

Maybe a few years in prison but not crucifixion, I'm not that bad. Get me down from the cross. But the other thief, he said, I deserve this.

I'm really bad. I don't deserve just a few years in prison. I deserve to be killed, hanged, crucified.

And it's as if Jesus said, really? Paradise is made for folks like you. Come with me there today. What qualification did he have? He didn't even have time to go and set right things that he did with others.

But he had one quality which all those Pharisees who were standing at the foot of the cross didn't have. Honesty. He was absolutely honest.

He didn't blame his parents for bringing him up badly. He didn't blame bad company for leading him into wrong paths. He didn't blame the judge for being unjust in punishing him.

Nobody. He said, I'm to blame. I deserve this.

I'm a criminal who deserves death. Lord, please remember me. It's one lesson you all need to learn right in the beginning of your Christian life.

This is one of the most important things of walking in the light. Don't put the blame on somebody else. Say, Lord, I see my fault.

I see where I've gone wrong. I'll tell you, it's very difficult for Christians to acknowledge that they're wrong, particularly after they have built up a reputation for being holy. Husbands and wives have problems mainly because it's very difficult for one person to admit that I was wrong.

I'm sorry. That was my mistake. I tell you, a husband and wife will have a glorious relationship if they can learn this lesson.

This is a very important part of what it means to walk in the light. When I come into God's light, see, one mark of coming into God's light is even though there are things wrong with other people around me, I don't see that. I see my own fault.

Let me show you an example from the Old Testament. In Isaiah chapter 5, Isaiah was a prophet and he was probably the holiest man in Israel at that time. And there were a lot of things wrong in Israel at that time.

A lot of things wrong with all the people around. And he was a prophet who exposed their evils. For example, Isaiah chapter 5, verse 8. He says, Woe to those who add house to house and join field to field.

You know, people are buying real estate all the time and raising the value of property so that poor people have no place to live in. He's condemning them. And then he says further down in verse 11, Woe to those who get drunk and spend their life listening to music and getting drunk.

Verse 18, Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood. Verse 21, Woe to those who are wise and clever in their own eyes. He's condemning people for various things and he was absolutely right.

All these things were true of what he said about these different people. But then, in chapter 6, he comes into the light. He comes into the presence of God.

God Almighty gave him a vision. It's one of those few instances, one of the only instances in the Old Testament where a man sees the glory of God and describes what he saw. He says, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne.

Isaiah 6, verse 1. And he saw the angels who have never sinned covering their faces, covering their feet, worshipping and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy. And they never got tired of saying it. They were calling out to one another.

And in that light, Isaiah completely forgot what all the sinners around him, all the woe is so and so and woe is that group and woe is that fellow and woe is the other fellow, he suddenly saw himself. And he said in verse 5, Woe is me, for I am ruined. I am a man of unclean lips.

I've not kept my tongue under control. It's true that I live in the midst of people of unclean lips also, but I am a man of unclean lips. Mine eyes have seen the King.

And that's always the result of anyone who's come into the light of the Lord. You read in Romans chapter 7 that when Paul came into God's light, he said, O wretched man that I am. If your mindset is, O wretched man that that fellow is or the other person is, etc.

We haven't really seen God's light. When we come into God's light, we see our own need. And if we walk in this light, we have fellowship with God.

And the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. It's very easy for such a man to be broken. He trembles at God's word.

He sees that there are things in God's word that he has not obeyed. Never mind if other people have not obeyed it. That's not what he's occupied with when he sees the glory of God.

And it says immediately the fire from the altar. An angel came with a fire from the altar and touched his lips and said, Your sin is forgiven. Immediately.

Verse 7. It's like we read in 1 John 1.7. The blood of Jesus immediately cleanses us. And not only cleansed, he was touched with the fire from heaven upon his mouth. And the Lord said, Okay, now you can go and preach for me.

I believe it's only such a person who is really qualified to preach. If you want the fire of God to touch your lips, ask God to show you what it is to come into his light. To tremble at his word.

And not to say, Woe is me, because you read it in Scripture, but because you've seen. God shows you suddenly. I believe that if you really walk in the light, you'll have moments like that.

I don't think we can endure it all the time. But we'll have moments of revelation where we really feel like Paul. Lord, I am indeed the chief of all the sinners in the world.

If you've never felt like that even once, that you are the greatest sinner in the whole world. If you've never felt like that even once, I would seriously question whether you're even born again. I would seriously question that.

Anyone who has really come into God's presence sees the horribleness of sin. And he really says like Paul, I am the chief of all the sinners. Woe is me.

What a wretched man I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death that I carry around? And I believe it's that type of revelation that keeps us humble and broken at the Lord's feet where we can constantly have fellowship with him. And the blood of Jesus continually cleanses us from all sin.

There's a lot of sin in us we're not aware of. Particularly sins of omission. You see, normally the sins we confess, which we ask the Lord to cleanse us from, are sins of commission.

That means sins that we actually commit. Not the sins we omit. Omit means the things we should have done which we didn't do.

There are two types of sins defined in the New Testament. One is 1 John chapter 3 and verse 4. Sin is transgression of the law. You know, God told Adam, don't eat from that tree.

He transgressed it. He disobeyed it. That's doing something God told you not to do.

That's sin. That's what we mean by sin of commission. And those are the sins we usually confess.

Lord, I got angry. Lord, I lusted with my eyes. I watched internet pornography.

I did something you didn't want me to do. Transgression of the law means the law drew a line around me and I transgressed it. I went beyond it.

But there are other sins which are sins of omission. Omission means things that you should have done but you didn't do. Now those are not sins we normally confess.

I mean, if you were to ask yourself, when was the last time you confessed to the Lord saying, Lord, I'm sorry, I didn't do that, which I should have done. You may have to scratch your head and try and think, when was the last time I confessed a sin like that? But that's mentioned in James chapter 4. James 4 it says, here's another definition of sin. It's the opposite of what we just read in 1 John 3. James 4 17 The one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it.

That's a sin. This is not referring to something you did. It's referring to something you didn't do, which is a sin.

Lord, I didn't do that, forgive me. Think of the story of the good Samaritans. You know that story where there was a man bashed up by robbers who was going from Jerusalem to Jericho.

And you know the story how the priest came by and the Levite came by. What was the sin of that priest? What was the sin of that Levite? Did they go and kick that fellow? No. Did they spit on him? Did they criticize him? Did they accuse him? Nothing.

Their sin was what? They did nothing. Can you commit a sin by doing nothing? That's what Jesus said. This good Samaritan went and picked him up.

And Jesus said, which of those three obeyed the command which says, love your neighbor as yourself? That's a command in the Old Testament. Love your neighbor as yourself. And the Levite and the priest disobeyed that command, sinned by doing nothing.

Now there are very few Christians who confess the sin of not having done something. That's what I mean. But there's a lot of sin in us which only the light of God can reveal.

And you'll never get that revelation if you're proud. If you think better more of yourself than you ought to think. If you look down on other believers, or look down on other human beings, or look down on people thinking that they're not as holy as you are.

You know, Jesus said, Jesus spoke a particular parable to those type of people who think they're holier than others. And it's very easy sometimes when we are brought up in certain church traditions where our external life and appearance appear to be holier than others who appear to be dressed very worldly and look very worldly. It's very easy for those of us who have grown up in those type of church traditions to be proud of what we think is our holiness and we don't realize that we're stinking in God's nostrils.

And Jesus spoke a parable, particularly for such people, and he spoke about a Pharisee who prayed like this, and he said, Oh God, I thank you that I'm not like other people, especially like those worldly fellows over there. And Jesus said, God never accepted it. And that worldly person over there, he didn't even lift up his head.

He said, Oh God, I'm just a rotten sinner. Have mercy on me. And Jesus said, That guy got accepted.

This is why Jesus said, Many who are first will be lost, and many who are lost will be first. I don't want to fool myself. The greatest deception is self deception, where I imagine myself to be holy, holier than others, and I'm fooling myself.

So, it's the light of God that shows us sin. And it's so important to come into the light of God. Let me show you a verse in Isaiah.

In Isaiah, if you want to see what God thinks of such people. Isaiah 65, and verse 5. Isaiah 65, God uses a very expressive way in which He shows what He thinks of such people. Isaiah 65, verse 5, He speaks about certain people who say to others, Think of yourself now.

I mean, if you look down on certain believers or certain other people and say, Keep to yourself. Don't come near me. For I am holier than you.

Now, we don't actually say that with our lips, because that'll look pretty haughty and arrogant and proud. And we'd lose our reputation for humility if we said that. So, we don't say it.

It's something we think, you know. I'm holier than you. And see how God describes it.

Such people are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Imagine if you're in a room where it's full of smoke getting into your nose. You just feel like getting away from there.

The smoke all the time coming into your nose. And the Lord says, That's exactly how I feel about such people who imagine that they're holier than others because of certain external differences. We've got to be very careful.

I know the times in my life where externally I sought to live a life free from all sin. And the Lord showed me, would show me every now and then, areas of selfishness in my life. Where the Lord would show me that thing that you did is utterly selfish.

Or the way you reacted to that or the way you, the reason why you did that was just selfishness. And the reason you didn't care about that person's need was just you were utterly selfish. You just thought about yourself.

Your whole life revolves around I, me and my family. So long as we're okay, we're alright. It's selfish.

When a person, for example, runs away from the midst of sinful people because he wants to live a holy life along with a bunch of holy people or apparently holy people, that's selfishness. You know when Peter said on the Mount of Transfiguration, Lord, it's good for us to be here. I like Moses.

I like Elijah. I like you. James and John I can sort of tolerate.

But we can live together over here. This is great. Let's stay here.

The Lord said no. You've got to go down to the valley. The sinners are there.

The sinners are there. You know, I've found a certain philosophy among certain believers in this country where you say you can't be a Christian in the city. You've got to get away from the city and go and live in some village to be a Christian.

But all the sinners in the city, what do you do about them? I mean, it's like Jesus saying I can't be as holy in the world. I've got to live in heaven all the time. He would have never come down here at all.

And Christians are retreating from the place where sinners are. It's almost you know what you're saying thereby? You're saying thereby that Satan is more powerful than the Christ who lives in me. The Christ who lives in me cannot keep me pure if I'm in the surroundings of people controlled by the devil.

Who is more powerful? Jesus Christ or Satan? I live in a city. A lot of things a lot of reasons why I wouldn't like to live there but the sinners are there. And Jesus came as a friend of sinners.

Now if you live a selfish life you'll retreat from all the sinners and just gather around with a bunch of holy people and say that's it. That's all I want to be with these people. And you don't see that as a sin.

In fact on the contrary you'll think you're becoming more holy. You're not. You're just becoming more selfish.

But do you get light on that? I mean if Jesus is here right now he's trying to give you some light. And if you will be honest like that thief on the cross and say Lord I'm seeing something about myself that I never saw in all my life. I'm just such a downright selfish person.

I'm telling you from the light God gave me at different times. Selfishness and pride are the two things which are very difficult to see unless we come into God's light. I know the times in my life where God showed me that thing you said was just because you were proud or that the way you reacted to that person the way you acted towards that person the way you thought about that person is just your stinking pride.

I said Lord that's right. I'm sorry. I thank God for the times when God's given me light on myself.

I've come to the place where I believe that the mark of God's blessing on my life is that he gives me light on the unchristlike areas in my life day by day. And as a result of it my daily life is a life of repentance. It's not a life of heaviness.

I believe my life is full of the joy of the Lord but it's the joy that comes out of sin confessed and sin cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Walking in the light, fellowship with God in his presence there is fullness of joy. Tremendous joy in God's presence.

But that comes through cleansing in the blood not you know the sins that we got light on 20 years ago but God's continuously showing us new new areas. I find that selfishness is like a massive onion. You peel off skin after skin after skin after skin and the onion gets thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner.

God gives us like pride. Pride is like another massive onion. God gives us light and as he gives us light we peel off peel off peel off.

Love of money. That's another massive onion. You may think you're free from it.

Maybe you're free from one or two layers of that onion. It's a huge onion brother. Pride, selfishness, love of money.

These are not things that most people talk about. But these are the areas where God gives us light on. You knew the right thing to do and you didn't do it.

I know the times when I've had to confess the sin saying Lord I should have encouraged that brother and I didn't do it. Forgive me. Have you ever confessed that sin? Lord I should have encouraged my husband or I should have encouraged my wife I didn't do it.

I mean if you yelled at your wife or husband that you'd confess. Yes. I hope you do.

But what about I didn't do this? I didn't encourage my brother? You knew the right thing to do and you didn't do it. What I'm trying to say is there's a lot of sin in us and we think we're very holy. We're deceiving ourselves.

If we walk in the light we'll find that we need the blood of Christ till the last day of our life on earth. And the only one who doesn't need the blood of Christ is the one who becomes like Christ totally himself. And if you're getting revelation on yourself all the time on selfishness and pride and the love of money and impurity and all that it won't be a problem remaining humble I'll tell you that.

This is what it really means to look unto Jesus. This is what it means to walk in the light. And this is the mark of God's blessing upon your life.

If you want to know whether God's blessing on you or not ask yourself how much light did you get on your unchrist-likeness in the last one week? Did you see anything at all? Did you see anything that brought you down on your face in the dust and said Lord have mercy on me. Cleanse me in the blood. This is how we progress in godliness.

So, the blood of Jesus is a wonderful thing. If we walk in the light it cleanses us and we feel like just as if we had a shower, you know, cleansed. The reason I mention this is because a lot of people are living in a deception that the blood of Jesus has cleansed them.

And they keep falling back into sin. A lot of young people. So let me mention this.

And I want to go on from there from the blood of Christ to something else. The second thing that's very important to get a solid grip on the Christian life. And that is the power of the word of God.

Jesus said, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. You know that verse. It's the first spoken word of Jesus' earthly ministry.

After his baptism and he was anointed with the Holy Spirit, the very first words of his that are recorded in scripture are these words. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth. If God has spoken 10,000 words, I want to listen to all those 10,000 words because Jesus said, the only way I can really live is by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

Not just a few favorite words. The reason for shallowness and defeat in the lives of many Christians is because they have not sought with all their heart to hear every word that proceeds from God's mouth. To understand everything that God has spoken in his word.

One of the things I'm encouraging people everywhere now to do is to read the Bible more slowly. We miss such a lot when we read the Bible too fast. We shouldn't be more interested in going through the Bible so many times in our lifetime as much as in the Bible going through us.

I mean, if the Bible goes through me once in my life, that's enough. If the whole Bible can go through me once, if the word can become flesh, if every word in Scripture can become flesh in me, and if we take every word seriously. I know times when I've read the Scriptures and I've not been able to move away from one verse for a whole day.

I turn to the Scriptures again the next day and the Lord keeps me back at that verse, the same verse for the next day, and the next day, sometimes a whole week. The Lord's trying to get something, get the verse through me. Read the Scriptures like that.

Man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. If you value God's word as precious. In fact, that is the very first message in the first chapter of the Bible.

I remember in India, a Hindu man who was converted saying this in his testimony. I mean, it never struck me because we are Christians, we read the Bible from childhood. There are a lot of things that don't strike us like it would strike a non-Christian who comes to the word of God for the first time.

And he said something which I never saw, even though I had read Genesis 1 a lot more times than he had. He says when he read Genesis 1 and he saw it said so many times there in that chapter, and God said and God said and God said and God said and God said, he said boy, the God of the Christians is a God who speaks. The Gods I have worshipped so far they don't speak to me at all.

And from that moment he had a passion to hear the God of the Christians speak to him. And it changed his life. The God of the Bible is a God who speaks.

And what we see in Genesis chapter 1 is that every day he spoke. There's a message God's trying to tell us from that first chapter. God could have changed the whole world in one day.

He doesn't need six days. He doesn't even need one second. He could have done everything.

He could have repaired everything in a second. Why did he do it day by day by day by day to teach us a lesson in the very first chapter of the Bible. If you want your life changed from, you know in the beginning it says the earth was dark, empty, shapeless, just like our lives are.

Dark, empty, shapeless. And by the time you come to the end of that chapter, the earth has become so beautiful that Almighty God looks at it all and says it's very good. That God says I can make your life very good like that if you will listen to my word every day and respond to it just like the earth responded.

Do you know the reason for the shallowness of Christians today? It's because most of them watch Christian television more than they read the Bible. They listen to preachers more than they read the Bible. They read Christian books more than they read the Bible.

They haven't got a fundamental respect for God's word. The only type of Christian book I would like to read is a book that drives me to the Bible. Such Christian books are good.

The only type of sermons that I want to listen to are sermons that drive me to the Scriptures. Not people airing their views and things like that. Start with one verse, there's an excuse and then go on.

I'm not interested in such preachers. Man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Those are the words of Jesus.

That's how he began his ministry. Genesis chapter 1 begins with God said, God said, God said, and every day the earth is being changed. The message that comes to me from that is if I receive God's word every day like that my life will be changed.

Till one day God himself will certify that everything is very good. So, this privilege we have in the New Testament which they didn't have in the Old Testament. Because the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, you know, they got that manna every day from heaven.

That's another picture. What was God trying to teach them by giving them manna every day? And if you remember the Old Testament story, if somebody gathered a little extra manna saying, hey, if I don't get something tomorrow I can have this. Or I'm too lazy to go out early morning because they had to go out before sunrise if they wanted to get the manna.

Otherwise they wouldn't get anything. And if somebody thought he'd keep a little extra, it says it began to stink. And it bred worms.

I've never seen food that breeds worms in 24 hours. And here's food that came from heaven and then began to breed worms in 24 hours. Was God trying to tell them something? Yes, he was.

Read it in Deuteronomy chapter 8. The book of Deuteronomy chapter 8. What was the Lord trying to teach them by this special type of food that came straight from heaven and that would breed worms in 24 hours? One would think if it came from heaven it would last longer than food produced on the earth. But it was worse. It bred worms in 24 hours.

The Lord was trying to teach them a lesson through that. Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 3. It says in verse 2, in all those 40 years that he led you in the wilderness, he humbled you and let you be hungry and fed you with manna so that, here's the reason, through that manna he wanted you to understand that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. That's what the lesson he was trying to teach them.

The same lesson in Genesis 1. And this is the verse that Jesus quoted. Every day you've got to get the manna from heaven. You can't live on yesterday's manna because it stinks.

You've got to get it fresh from God. Every word that proceeds from God's love. So what I learned from that is whether it's from Genesis 1, where every day the word of God came and changed the earth or from the 40 years' wanderings of the wilderness, where every day they had to get manna from heaven.

The message that comes down to me from both those examples in the Old Testament, for me as a born-again Christian is I've got to receive a word from God every day. And by that I don't mean just read the Bible. You can read the Bible and get nothing from God.

And there may be another time when you didn't read the Bible, maybe you didn't get time, you were in a hurry, you were busy, and you could still get a word from God. Because you have stored up the word of God through many years in your mind. I find many times like that, that God speaks to me through something I've stored up in previous years.

And which may have nothing to do with anything I read in the Scriptures that day or I didn't read. Something God speaks to me. It's a word from God.

And that's why it's so important to keep on storing God's word in our heart and mind. Because through it, God wants to make us really live. Let me show you Romans chapter 12 in this connection.

In Romans chapter 12, well before that, I should show you Romans 8, because then only you'll understand this verse. In Romans 8 verse 29, we find this word predestination. Predestination, which is the one word which has been the source of great controversy among theologically minded Christians between the Armenians and the Calvinists.

Predestination. Does God determine beforehand that certain people are going to be saved? Is God determined beforehand that certain people are lost? Well, He doesn't speak a single word here in Romans 8 verse 29 about being saved or lost or going to heaven or hell. Predestination is a very simple word.

You know destination? That means where you're going to reach finally. Pre means beforehand. Predestination means God has already determined what your destination is to be.

It's like if you got an air ticket to come here, it would be written on that ticket Denver. And that was your destination. And if you got into the right plane, every minute you'd be coming closer to Denver.

So, this is what predestination means. A destination is already written and if God chose me, as it says in the Bible, before the worlds were created in Christ, then He already determined a destination for me and that destination is not heaven. It's not heaven.

It says in Romans 8 verse 29, He predestined that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. The thing written on my ticket is not to go to heaven, but to become like Jesus Christ. We've got to understand this.

This is what most Christians haven't understood. No, they're all singing, my sins are all forgiven, I'm on my way to heaven. That's not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches that what's written on our ticket is to become like Jesus Christ. And like I said, if you got into the right plane, and every hour you'd be coming closer to Denver. In the same way, if you're on the right track in the Christian life, every year you'll be becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

You'll be more patient, you'll be less angry, and you'd be more pure in your mind, more free from the love of money, more unselfish, more humble, more useful, etc. More like Christ every year. If that's not happening, if you find at some time your life is less Christ-like, you're becoming less sensitive to sin than you were.

This often happens with Christians, that they were more sensitive to sin ten years ago when they got converted than they are now. They become a little less sensitive to sin. Certain things they would never have done in the year after they got converted.

They're doing now. Because they were told their destination is heaven. They were fooled.

But if you got a Bible in your language, and you allow some preacher to tell you something which is not in the Bible, and you believe it, you deserve to be deceived. Because you've got the Bible in your own language. Why did you have to listen to that guy? Nowhere in the Bible does it say our destination is heaven.

It says our destination is to become like Christ. So we must keep this in mind. This is God's goal for me.

When He chose you, when He put your name in the Book of Life, and when you received Christ into your life, God's plan for you was, not that you should become a great preacher, or even bring souls to Christ, but you should become like Christ. As a byproduct from that becoming like Christ, you may do a million things for the Lord. But your primary goal is becoming like Christ.

Now we can go to Romans chapter 12. We understand it a little better. Once we understood our destination, now we know how to get to that destination.

It's like if you're from your hometown, you know you want to go to Denver, the next thing you need to decide is how do you get there? Are you going to drive there? Are you going to take a flight? How do I get there? So in Romans 8, it tells us our destination, Romans 8.29, is to become like Christ. And in Romans 12.2, it tells us how we get there. It says here, don't be conformed to this world, Romans 12.2. But be transformed, that means into the likeness of Christ, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

It's in the mind that transformation begins. It manifests itself in our outward actions. For example, if our mind is changed into the likeness of, into Christ's way of thinking, by the Holy Spirit.

This is done by the Holy Spirit. This is why I said it was not possible in the Old Testament. It's only after the Holy Spirit could come and dwell within man from the day of Pentecost onwards.

You need to understand the tremendous blessing of being in the New Covenant. In the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit can come and dwell inside. Jesus told his disciples in John 14, now the Holy Spirit is with you, but in that day, he'll be in you.

That's the difference between New Covenant and Old Covenant and New Covenant. In the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit was with people. In the New Covenant, he could be in.

There's a lot of difference between Christ being with me and Christ being in me. When Christ is with me, he can solve my external problems. He could solve all the external problems of the disciples when he was with them.

If there was a storm in the sea, he could still that. If there was no wine in a marriage feast, he could handle that. If there was not enough food for 5,000, he could take care of that.

If there was somebody blind, he could open his eyes. Every external problem, he could deal with. But the internal problem that these disciples had, that they couldn't get along with each other.

Even in the last day, they were fighting as to who's going to be the greatest. And the way you see Christians who can't get along with each other. You know that they need the Holy Spirit within them, without a doubt.

Christ may be with them doing all types of miracles for them on the outside, but he's not allowed to work inside. It's inside that the transformation can take place in the New Covenant. And this transformation is only possible in the New Covenant after the Holy Spirit came.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Now, how does my mind get renewed? The renewing of my mind is where my mind begins to think like God thinks. This is the greatest privilege in the New Covenant.

That the Holy Spirit can give me the very thoughts of God. Let me show you this. 1 Corinthians, in Chapter 2. You see, our thought life is the one area of our life which is absolutely private.

You could be married 50 years and your wife doesn't know what you're thinking about. Your husband doesn't know what you're thinking about. Two brothers can be very good friends, but they don't know what's going on in the other person's mind.

It's the most private area of our life. Only you know what's going on in your thoughts. And it says about God, now listen to this.

1 Corinthians, Chapter 2, in Verse 11. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? That's what I just said. Your wife doesn't know.

Your brother doesn't know. Nobody knows the thoughts going on in your mind. It's only you.

And you don't want other people to know your thoughts. You like to keep it private. Even so, the thoughts of God no one knows but the Holy Spirit.

See, just like your spirit only knows what goes on in your mind, only God's spirit knows what's going on in God's mind. And He says, this spirit, God gives us. Verse 12.

We receive this spirit so that we can know the thoughts that go on in God's mind. I mean, I don't know whether that strikes you. It's absolutely amazing that I can have within me the Holy Spirit who knows the thoughts of God and He can tell me what the thoughts of God are.

What the thoughts of God are concerning myself. What the thoughts of God are concerning His plan for my life. And if you're called to a ministry like mine to preach the word of God, to know the thoughts of God concerning what I should preach to a particular congregation.

Can you think of anything greater than this? I tell you to be the world's richest man is garbage compared to having the thoughts of God inside our mind. This is the renewing of our mind. And this is possible through God's word.

Here, God has revealed His thoughts. And if I study this book carefully, in humility, trembling at the words I have not obeyed, and especially fighting against traditions which have made me believe certain things which are not true. And break free from them.

I'll give you a little example. These are not important examples, but I always believed that Jesus Christ died on a Friday. I read the scriptures more carefully and discovered He died on a Thursday.

How many of you know that? He spent three days and three nights in the grave. It's impossible if He died on a Friday and rose up on a Sunday. Just calculate and see.

Simple arithmetic. But most people don't even know that. I'm just giving you an example.

There are numerous things like this in scripture. I believe that there would be a great tribulation on earth for seven years and before that Jesus would come and take us out. Till I studied the scriptures and found that the Christians would go through that tribulation and then Christ would come.

So many things in scripture where what we've inherited in our tradition is completely wrong. It's because we have not been careful to study the word of God. So we don't know the thoughts of God.

I'm amazed at people who say God's given only one book for us to read. Only one book is given for man and they don't spend their time studying it. They read a whole lot of useless novels and things like that more than the scriptures.

How in the world are you going to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? How in the world are you going to face the problems of life? I'll tell you my experience. When I was born again fifty years ago I found in myself a tremendous thirst to study this word. Nobody told me to do it.

It just came. I mean it's like when a baby is born nobody's got to instruct, hey, you've got to cry for milk now. Keep crying for milk? Why aren't you crying for milk? No.

It doesn't understand. Even if you said it, it wouldn't understand what you're saying. It just cries.

It's automatic. If a baby doesn't cry for milk, something's seriously wrong. And that's why I believe something's seriously wrong with so-called born again Christians today.

They don't seem to cry out for the milk of God's word. I feel there's not a proper birth. I think a lot of born again Christians today are tremendously premature.

Premature birth, three, four months, they're out of the womb. Some evangelist pulled them out and they're not ready to face life. This is the tragedy with all the premature births that there are in Christendom and all these babies lying in incubators they don't cry for milk or any such thing.

But it wasn't like that for me. I thank God that I had a proper birth that took time. I really repented and really turned around, really accepted Christ.

And one of the things that happened in me was I had a tremendous desire for reading God's word. I had to carry a pocket New Testament with me and if I stood at a bus stand or anywhere I was reading it, reading it, reading it, exactly like a baby crying for milk. And boy, it changed my life completely.

I want to encourage all of you when you're young, I'll tell you this, once you get married you won't have much time to study God's word. And once you have children you'll have even less time. If you don't make use of the years when you're single I can prophesy without being a prophet that you won't be able to study God's word once you get married.

Now is the time. You better use the opportunity while you're young and single. Find time for it.

Find time for it. Skip certain unnecessary things. Get rid of certain things from your life and say, Lord, this one book you've given me, this is the inspired word of God written by the Holy Spirit.

I want to know it. This is the way I'm going to live. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And from here I can know the thoughts of God and what will happen is, I will begin to think like God. Is there anything greater than that? I'll be able to look at people the way God looks at them. The opposite of that is being conformed to this world.

Conformity to the world again, Romans 12.2, is not an external thing. It's not a question of the way you dress. It's not because a person dresses in a particular way that, say, a young girl is worldly.

The worldliness is not in her dress. You can change her dress and you haven't got rid of her worldliness. Worldliness is in the mind.

And you can put the most modest dress upon a girl and she can be thoroughly worldly in her mind. She'll be just a good Pharisee. It's not in the dress.

It's in the mind. It's from the mind. It comes forth in the dress.

That I agree. And in various other things. But it's in the mind.

Romans 12.2 essentially means, don't be conformed to the world in your way of thinking, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind into the likeness of Christ. And so I want to encourage all of you to study God's Word. Take it seriously.

This is the second thing. The blood of Christ first, the Word of God that can give you a solid grip on the Christian life. And ask God for revelation to make you think like God thinks.

Let's bow before God in prayer. Every step forward in the Christian life is made by taking a simple decision before God and asking God for grace to help you to keep it. And if there are even a couple of things that you've heard today that have spoken to your heart will you say, Lord help me to keep those things.

To be more honest about my sins. To stop blaming other people. To stop looking down on others.

To stop despising others. To say more, woe is me, rather than woe is somebody else. Teach me Lord to tremble at your Word.

Teach me to respect your Word and to study it so that I can learn to think the way you think. So that my mind can be renewed. Help me Father.

Give me grace. I want to start on this path and walk this way. Thank you Father for your Word.

Please help us to walk in the light of it. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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