

Ambassadors for Christ - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

To be effective ambassadors for Christ, we must understand the difference between the Old and New Testaments, be examples, and live with sincerity and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 55:26

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 18:1, John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not giving up in various aspects of life. He references Luke 18:1, where Jesus encourages believers to always pray and never lose heart. The speaker also highlights the example of Paul, who walked in constant victory through God's leading. He emphasizes the need to live and labor in the will of God, as Paul did, and warns against doing Christian work without being in God's will. The speaker encourages believers to examine their motives and ensure that their actions align with their public image and private life.

Transcript

I'm thankful for the opportunity, dear brothers and sisters, to share with you what the Lord has laid on my heart. And what I'd like to share with you during all these three sessions is from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Now, we believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and one of the things that God opened my eyes to was that the main difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is this.

In the Old Testament, they had only teachings, commandments, laws. But in the New Testament, God gave us an example in Jesus Christ. And if you can keep this one thing, there are many differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, but if you can keep this one thing in your mind, you've got the main thing.

That in the Old Testament, it was commandments. In the New Testament, it is an example. In the Old Testament, it was thou shalt do this and thou shalt do that and thou shalt not do this and thou shalt not do this, Exodus, Leviticus.

And sometimes, you know, your preaching and my preaching can become like that. It's very easy for Christian preachers to get up in the church and tell people, you shall do this and you shall not do this. You shall do this and you shall do this.

And in a sense, we are leading them back into the Old Covenant. But in the New Covenant, Jesus said, first of all, he said, follow me. And we can say, well, it's only Jesus who said that.

No, Paul said, follow me. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 1, he said, follow me as I follow Christ. Philippians 3, 17, he said, follow people like us who can be an example for you.

So, when a preacher gets up in a church today and says, this is what we must do and this is what we must not do and these are the sins we must give up and these are the commandments we can keep, everything he says may be right, but he may still be an Old Testament preacher unless he can also say to the people, follow my life, follow my example. See how I live with my wife, see how I live with my co-workers, see how I handle money, see how I speak, see how I conduct myself 24 hours a day, every day of the year and see what the gospel has done in my life. The tragic thing in India is we have multitudes of Old Testament preachers in Christianity who are saying correct things, the Old Testament is correct, it is the word of God, but there was no example there.

Moses could not say, follow me. Follow me comes only in the New Testament, you never see it in the Old Testament. And as long as we cannot say, follow me, we are still in the Old Testament.

Many preachers say, don't look at me, look at Jesus. That sounds very spiritual. If you are saying, don't depend on me, but depend on the Lord, that is good.

We don't want people to depend on us, we want them to depend on the Lord. But if you are saying, don't look at me because I am a bad example, but look at Jesus who is a good example, then we are back to the Old Testament. So the most important thing that we need to manifest in India today is examples of people who can say to others, not in a boastful way, but in humility, follow me as I follow Christ.

And I think God knew that when we look at the example of Jesus, we will always think, well he was God, of course I can never be like him. But he was not just God, he became a man when he was on earth. And to remove all doubt from our mind, God has also given us the example of the Apostle Paul.

He was not God. We know that Paul was a man just like us. He started out his unconverted life, it says in Acts chapter 9, he was breathing murder.

He was breathing murder against God's people. Threats and murder. And this is the man whom God picked up and not only made the greatest apostle that Christianity has seen, but also an example.

He called himself the chiefest of sinners, teaching us that it is not only good people that God picks up. Yeah, God picks up some good people. But he picks up a lot of sinners like you and me.

And he could take the greatest sinner and make him an example. So in 2 Corinthians, more than any other letter of the Apostle Paul, Paul reveals his inner life. And I want to just point out a few things to you briefly, and you can meditate on them later on.

I'll just pick out a few phrases from 2 Corinthians. First of all, in chapter 1, verse 1. Chapter 1 and verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. And I want to take that little expression.

By the will of God. Paul knew what God's will for his life was. He lived and labored in the will of God.

That's the first thing I want to say. He lived and labored in the will of God. And that's the thing that gave him strength throughout his life.

He knew that God had a plan for his life and he wanted to fulfill that. A lot of us may not be so sure whether we are in God's will. And that's where all our problems begin.

I have observed Christian work in this land for more than 40 years. And I'm convinced that a lot of people who are doing Christian work today are not in the will of God. And that's their problem.

They may think their problem is somewhere else. It's not somewhere else. It starts with the fact that they are not sure whether this is the place where God wants them to be.

And that's why they have complaints. And that's why they are jealous of somebody else who has got some other ministry. And that's why they are in competition with other ministries.

You can never be in competition with any other brother in the whole world when you are in the will of God. See, the will of God is like God putting a finger as a finger in the body of Christ. The finger is not in competition with the eyes.

Never. It is never jealous of the eyes. Because it is in the will of God.

And when you understand the will of God for you, your place in the body of Christ, which God planned from all eternity, you can never again for the rest of your life be in competition with another person anywhere in the world. I'm saying this from my experience. When I was a young Christian, I tried to imitate others.

You know, young people are like that. They are very foolish. And to show that we are better.

But once I understood what God wanted me to do, I finished. My competition with other people finished. My jealousy of other people disappeared.

I was in the will of God. And I was not in competition with anybody else. And I didn't have to show that I was better than anybody else.

And I didn't have to prove to other people that my labors were more successful or any stupid thing like that. Do you know whether you are in the will of God? In John chapter 21, we read a very interesting story. We read there about the Lord telling Peter, Peter, when you are old, other people will stretch out your hand and take you where you don't like to go.

And he was telling Peter how Peter was going to suffer for the sake of the gospel. Now, nobody likes suffering. I don't like it and you don't like it.

And Peter did not like it. But sometimes we find a comfort if we see that other people are also suffering. But if we are suffering and other Christian workers are not suffering like us, then we have a problem.

And that is why we read in John 21 that Peter looked around and saw John and asked Jesus, what about this man? Is he going to have an easy time? Or is he also going to suffer like me? If he is going to suffer like me, then I am happy. But if he is going to have an easy time, and I am only going to suffer, then it is going to be difficult. And do you know what Jesus told Peter? The Lord said to Peter, that is none of your business.

You follow me. And I want to ask some of you who are sitting here, maybe you are going through suffering. And you look at some other Christian worker who is not suffering like you, who is having an easy

time.

Maybe he is living in a place where there is not so much persecution. And you compare yourself with him, like Peter compared himself with John, and says, what about him? And do you know what the Lord's word to you today is? That is none of your business. Are you following me? Or are you worried about other people? See, this problem arises when we are not sure of God's will.

When we are not sure of the will of God, we have so many problems. Because we are wondering whether other people are going to suffer like us. It is none of my business.

God's will for us, each person, is different. And I want to go to a second point here. In chapter 1 and verse 12, Paul was totally sincere, with a godly sincerity.

Our proud confidence is this, in the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves towards you. It does not matter, my brothers and sisters, if we are not gifted. But if we are not sincere, it is a serious problem.

It does not matter if our labors are not as successful as some other people's. I have seen through these many years that in India, the labors are more difficult in some areas than in others. People who work in Andhra and Tamil Nadu and all, have a lot of success to report.

People who work in Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and all, it is not so easy. It is not equal all over India. It does not matter if our success rate is not the same as somebody else's, but sincerity, that is the thing God looks for.

Paul says, my testimony, our proud confidence in the testimony of our conscience is this, we have conducted ourselves in total sincerity. That means there was no wrong motive in anything that Paul did. Everything he did was with, what people saw in him was what he was in private.

That means when he prayed with a burden in the meeting, he had the same burden when he prayed at home, privately. If I pray for something with a great burden in the meeting, and I don't pray for the same thing in private, I am not sincere. There is something wrong.

I am trying to project an image before people that I have a great burden for whatever I am praying for. But the test of it is whether I also pray for that when I am all by myself, and whether the impression I give to other people in public is exactly what I am when I am alone. You know, if I give the impression that I am seeking the glory of God in everything I do, and if in my private life, in the decisions I take, you see, the decisions we take are based on certain factors.

In 2 Corinthians 5, in verse 15, Paul says, Christ died that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for those, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf. In the Living Bible, the paraphrase of those verses, 13 to 15, it reads like this, Whatever we do, it is certainly not for our own profit. Can you say that? Whatever I do, it is certainly not for my own profit.

It is that Christ might be glorified in my life. See, the way we can test it is in relation to the decisions we take in life. Every day we take decisions.

We take decisions how we are going to spend our time, how we are going to spend our money, where we are going to live, what we are going to do, and many, many other decisions like that every day. And behind

each of those decisions, there is a motive. And it is that motive that determines whether the decision is spiritual or not.

And that motive, only God knows and you. Even your wife may not know your motive. Because for every decision we take, we can give a spiritual whitewash and make it look as though there is a spiritual reason behind what I am doing.

But the motive may not be one that comes out of godly sincerity. Godly sincerity means that what I appear to be is what I really am. I am not seeking my own profit in anything.

I believe that all of us can have the type of life that Paul had when he said, follow me. We may not have his ministry. Ministry is unique.

God doesn't give your ministry to me or my ministry to you. But we can have the type of life that Paul had when Jesus said, follow me. He was not telling us to follow him in his ministry.

He was not telling us to feed the multitude with five loaves or to raise the dead or to die for the sins of the world. That was his ministry. How can you and I follow him in that? There is no area of Jesus' ministry where I can follow him.

I cannot turn water into wine. Or I have never fed 5000 with five loaves. I have never raised the dead.

What did Jesus mean when he said, follow me in his life? And what did Paul mean when he said, follow me as I follow Christ? That's not for us to follow his ministry of sending handkerchiefs to cast out demons or heal the sick. But in his life. Sincerity has got nothing to do with ministry.

It's got to do with life. And all these things that we are going to look at are not primarily with his ministry. But his life.

There was a total transparency about Paul. Now we are not born like that. You know children from childhood itself they learn to deceive their parents.

Deceive their teachers in school. And we were all like that when we were children. And as we grew up we became specialists in deceiving other people.

In making people feel something is true which is not true. And we become Christians and Christian workers. And that deception does not go away from us.

Until we work on it. Unless we allow the Holy Spirit to convict us and we through the help of the Holy Spirit cleanse out all this deception. I want you to turn for a moment to Revelation chapter 14 and see what it says there in verse 4 and 5 about those who follow the Lord wherever he goes.

In Revelation chapter 14 and verses 4 and 5 we read about those who follow the Lamb the last part of verse 4 wherever he goes. And we all want to be in that number. Many people ask this question who are these 144,000 chapter 14 verse 1 who are standing on Mount Zion.

I said well I don't know whether it's an exact number perhaps it's not because the book of Revelation is full of symbols. But one thing is true these are people in verse 5 in whose mouth no lie is found. That is for certain.

I don't know many other things about this 144,000 but I know one thing about them that during their earthly life they cleansed out one thing from their life completely and that was lying hypocrisy pretending giving a false impression maybe these people did not get full victory over their anger they were battling that maybe they did not get full victory over the love of money they were battling that maybe they didn't get full victory over even lusting with their eyes maybe they were battling that but one thing they cleansed out completely and that is giving others a wrong impression and that encourages me because there are so many sins over which we may not get complete victory before we leave this earth as long as you are battling it fighting it you are ok you don't have to be discouraged

if you still fall in with your temper or you suddenly discover somewhere you were selfish or you loved money if you are honest and admit it to the Lord and say Lord it's true I was selfish there I didn't speak so kindly to that person you are ok but if you don't have sincerity there is one thing written about these 144,000 there was no lie in their mouth can we belong to that number never giving another person an impression which is not true dear brothers and sisters work on this this is serious this is one of the most important requirements to serve the Lord that I am that people don't think of me more highly than what I really am that I don't give people the impression that I am more spiritual or have gifts which I don't have don't go stand up in your church and pretend to have the gift

of healing if you don't have the gift of healing no don't boast about anything which you don't have I have publicly said in my church I don't have any gift of healing as an elder if you are sick I will do what scripture says and anoint you with oil and pray for you who are sick and we have seen people healed but I don't have the gift of healing I say my gift is teaching I don't want to fool people don't fool people about possessing a gift claiming to possess a gift which you don't have let's be humble and let's be honest and let's tell people the truth if you tell people about one person who was healed through your prayer don't tell them about the 99 other people who were not healed after you prayed for them that is honesty don't just tell them about that one person who was healed when

you prayed that is dishonesty if you don't tell them about the other 99 people who were not healed when you prayed for them that's just one example be honest about your struggles if you have wandering thoughts when you pray don't have them I battle with them even today but when it happens I start praising God and that's a help but it's very very important in verse 13 of 2nd Corinthians 1 Paul says when we write something it's exactly we write nothing else than what you read and understand and the living bible says you don't have to read between the lines as though I mean something else it's exactly what I have written we all write letters some of us write prayer letters I hope you are sincere in what you write that like Paul that when somebody reads it there is nothing between the lines

between the lines means you are trying to give a hint about something you are trying to say something in a very spiritual way which is not absolutely true that is where we lack sincerity it's very dangerous because an insincere man gets into fellowship with Satan and that's the danger I don't want to hold hands with Satan but if I write my letters in such a way that there is guile that means I am trying to give a different impression by what I say or what I write I have unconsciously got into fellowship with Satan and how can I serve God if I am in fellowship with Satan be careful about the letters you write number 3 chapter 1 verse 21 the apostle Paul says he was anointed by God anointed with the Holy Spirit now that's another important requirement if we are to serve God the anointing of

God's Holy Spirit in the Old Testament we read this was the most important qualification for anyone to serve God they were anointed and to me the greatest example of all is Jesus himself you know a good life

is not enough to serve God that's good we need a good life but that good life must have the anointing of the Holy Spirit if we are to serve God the way he wants us to and the clearest example of that is Jesus himself we know that Jesus Christ our Lord lived for 30 years a perfect life his fellowship with the Father was not broken even for one minute in all those 30 years he lived more perfectly than any of us his knowledge of scripture was so vast when he was 12 years old can you imagine what it was when he was 30 years old he had a good life good knowledge of scripture and he had a

concern a concern about his father's business when he was 12 by the time he was 30 that concern must have been much more but he was still not fit he still needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit so you and I can have a good life good knowledge of the word and a concern for the Father's work and we can think I've got a good life I've got a good knowledge of the word I've got a concern for God's work and I'm qualified to serve God no you're not you need to be anointed with the Holy Spirit in fact Jesus did not dare to go out into the ministry without being anointed with the Holy Spirit when he was 31 years old he was not more holy than when he was 29 he was just as holy when he was 29 as when he was 31 his knowledge of the word did not increase when he was 31 from when he was 29 so the

anointing of the Holy Spirit did not make him more holy or give him a greater knowledge of the word it equipped him with supernatural gifts to serve for example he never preached prophetically till he was anointed I'm sure in the carpenter shop he must have shared God's word like when he was 12 years old he was discussing God's word throughout his life he must have discussed God's word but that prophetic utterance came only after he was anointed with the Holy Spirit some of us are good brothers and sisters we have studied the word but what we lack is the fire and the fire can only come through the Holy Spirit and because the fire can only come through the Holy Spirit the devil has made sure that in today's Christendom the greatest subject of controversy is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit

I'm not surprised at that the devil has made this topic the greatest subject of controversy so you have two groups in Christendom one who have gone off to a fanatic extreme and doing all types of stupid things and saying it is the Holy Spirit and other people who have reacted against that and say we don't want all that and who don't have the Holy Spirit at all and neither of them have the Holy Spirit one has got emotionalism and psychological gimmicks and manipulation of people and call it the Holy Spirit and the others just have their intelligence and their study of the word and their knowledge and so the devil is happy with both groups we must not belong to either of these groups to me the answer is in Jesus Christ he was not on that fanatical extreme rolling on the ground and all that

and saying it is the Holy Spirit neither was he the other extreme where he felt because I have lived a good life and because I know the word I don't need to be anointed it says when he was baptized in Luke chapter 3 he prayed and as he prayed he was filled with the Holy Spirit and it was not just once the apostles were not filled with the Holy Spirit once I want to encourage you my brothers and sisters seek with all of your heart for the gifts of the Holy Spirit you cannot serve God in India without the anointing the supernatural anointing and the gifts of the Holy Spirit the anointing that will put a fire in your heart we can't produce it ourselves ok then I want to go to chapter 4 the fourth point is in chapter 2 in verse 11 here Paul says no advantage should be taken of us by Satan he

was aware of Satan's schemes Paul was aware of Satan's schemes no advantage should be taken of us by Satan because we are not ignorant of his schemes see Satan is a very wily person the first mention of Satan in the bible in Genesis chapter 3 it says he got into the serpent because the serpent was the cleverest among all the animals Satan didn't get into a donkey because a donkey is pretty stupid he got

into a serpent because he had some fellowship with the serpent in terms of cleverness now many of us may think we are very clever but you are not clever enough for Satan I am sorry to disappoint you but I want to tell you that you are not as clever as Satan he is cleverer than all of you he is cleverer than me too we cannot overcome him with cleverness clever people are at a disadvantage

when they try to fight Satan only with humility not with cleverness the one thing that Satan does not have is humility he doesn't have purity he's got many other things he's got knowledge of the bible so you can't overcome him with knowledge of the bible he's got cleverness you can't overcome him with cleverness he's got supernatural gifts you can't overcome him with supernatural gifts you can overcome him if you have what he doesn't have he doesn't have humility and he doesn't have purity and he doesn't have love so if you want to overcome Satan you better seek to have those things he doesn't have those are his weak points you know in a battle we always try to find out what are the enemy's weak points and attack him on his weak points you know how the devil comes to attack us how does

the devil attack you he knows what your weak point is and he attacks you there do you know what the devil's weak point is if you have that you can overcome him his weak points are humility purity and love he has nothing in those three areas and that's why the devil fights Christians in these areas he makes sure that you have everything except purity except humility and except love it doesn't matter what else you have you can't overcome Satan we must not be ignorant of Satan's schemes you know here he is speaking about in the context of it I don't have time to show it to you he is talking about this man who had lived in sin in Corinth about whom Paul writes in the first letter and now in the second letter he says ok you fellows have disciplined him enough you put him out of the church you

disciplined him good you obeyed my letter but now you fellows are going to the other extreme that you are making it so difficult for him that he cannot even come back see the purpose of all discipline is to bring that backslider back to the Lord so he says now you should forgive him in chapter 2 verse 10 he says you must forgive him see sometimes in this over strict position the devil says you must be strict with that person and we think that being very strict is a mark of spirituality and that's one of the schemes of Satan there is a strictness and a hardness which can be human not divine because there are many dictators in the world who are very strict and very hard with people there are many disciplinarians in the army in many countries who are very strict and disciplined they are not

godly and Satan can make us feel that by being strict we are being spiritual there is a strictness that is spiritual there is a strictness which is not spiritual and we need to distinguish between the two so there are many other areas the only way we can be aware is if we listen to God if we wait upon God there is a wonderful example of this in second Kings in chapter 6 and verse 10 where we read of the king of Aram was fighting against Israel and Elisha sitting in Israel would always know where the enemy is going to attack Israel next and he always warned the king of Israel be careful the enemy is going to come here see this is the type of ministry we need in our churches where you know because the Holy Spirit shows you where the danger for your church is going to come next year or six

months from now how can you know that how can you know what Satan is scheming in his mind for you for your church six months from now how can you know you don't know because you don't know Satan's mind but God knows and if you wait on him he can show you you can't get it by study of the bible you can only get it by waiting on God and saying Lord show me the schemes of Satan and protect me and protect my flock and my family from the schemes of Satan that's how Elisha protected Israel one man protected Israel one prophet it's a great blessing when a church has a prophet who understood the wiles and the

schemes of Satan and can warn the church against it be a person like that the fifth point I want to mention here is in chapter 2 this is the fifth point that is Paul walked in victory always

thanks be to God who always leads us in his triumph in Christ his life was one of constant victory that is God's will for us and that is possible under the new covenant read it carefully the number of things we can learn from that one sentence first of all it was not through his own ability it was God who led him in victory the other thing we see here he was not led in victory occasionally but always now when we see the example of a man like this who was a murderer and a sinner that gives us hope even if we were the greatest of sinners that God can do such a work in our life that we can say this one day thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ there was no defeat in Jesus' life there was no defeat in Paul's life he may have fallen now and then we read once he shouted at

the high priest and he lost his temper he made mistakes, he shaved his head so Paul made mistakes and occasionally slipped up and fell but he was not basically a defeated man he was an overcomer and I believe that's God's will for every one of us we must have faith for that I believe Christendom generally in India has got so used to living a defeated life most Christians are so used to the fact that all my life I will have to lust with my eyes all my life I'll have to lose my temper and all my life I'll be defeated by so many sins and the devil has brainwashed Christendom with that that is very rare nowadays to find people who can lead people to have faith in a word like this thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph do you think the Bible says rejoice in the Lord always without a

purpose that is God's will for us I believe that we can never lead other people to faith if we don't have faith for that ourselves and I pray my brothers and sisters that you will have faith in your life I don't care what sin you are defeated by and it doesn't matter how many problems you have do you believe the word of God that what God did for Paul he can do for you and me that God can lead us in triumph in Christ all the time always we may as I said I'm not talking about sinless perfection Paul didn't have that and we may slip and fall now and then but basically our life will be an overcoming life and our slipping and falling will be occasional not the regular type of fall that is characteristic of so many Christians but I also want to mention this that when we walk like that and the

fragrance of Christ is manifested through us in every place verse 14 and 15 the result is not going to be the same in some cases it is going to bring death to other people verse 16 in some cases life do you remember what Simeon said in Luke chapter 2 verse 34 and 35 when he picked up the baby Jesus he took the baby Jesus from Mary's hand and he said in Luke 2, 34 and 35 this child is set for the rise and the fall of many in Israel that the thoughts of many hearts will become manifest that means when Jesus came into a synagogue some people were lifted up closer to God and some people fell closer to the devil that's exactly what happened when Jesus went into a synagogue when other preachers went and preached in the synagogue nothing happened lots of preachers preached in the synagogues but

yeah, they preached in the synagogue a lot of people got information and everybody got a little more knowledge of the Bible perhaps but when Jesus preached in the synagogue it brought a turmoil it lifted up some people and pushed some other people down those who were hungering after a godly life they got drawn closer to the Lord and the other hypocrites got exposed and if Jesus is in our church the same thing will happen when people come to our church some will be lifted up closer to God some will be exposed it's not going to be the same to some people we are a fragrance of life and to other people we are a fragrance of death the message of victory that I preach will draw some people closer to God and will make some other people hate me because that's how it was with Jesus thanks be to

God who always leads us in triumph in Christ and manifests the fragrance of Christ through us in every place but to some it will be an aroma of life and to some an aroma of death we leave the consequences with God the consequences are God's many times in the Old Testament the Lord used to say to the prophets don't worry whether they hear or they don't hear you read that in Ezekiel many times you just say what I told you to say whether they listen or don't listen at least they'll know that a prophet came into their midst one day so that's our calling don't worry about whether some people respond or some people hate you and throw you out and never invite you back again doesn't make a difference your calling is to manifest the fragrance of Christ the proclamation that God can lead us in

victory at all times and in every place then I want to go to the next point we read in chapters 3 and verse 5 number 6 Paul lived and served in dependence on God he lived and he served in dependence on God he says in chapter 3 verse 5 we are not adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves our adequacy is from God our sufficiency is from God that means he believed that God's grace was sufficient like it says my grace is sufficient for thee is sufficient for everything that God calls me to I don't have any adequacy in myself he lived in dependence upon God in his life and his ministry his life was a life of faith that means one where he depended upon God to take him through every situation you see as we look at the future in our country none of us know what it's

going to be like we may have dark days coming in the future in this land and it's very very important that we don't depend on our own resources my sufficiency is from God it's not even from an organization or from a man God may use an organization to help me to support me but I don't depend on that you remember how Elijah was fed by the crows and gradually he began to depend on the crow more than God because every morning at 8 o'clock the crow will come and it's very easy for a Christian worker to depend on the channel rather than the God who uses the crow and that's why God one day stopped the crow from coming and one day the crow was no longer there and Elijah wondered why today at 8 o'clock in the morning the crow has not come it's very easy for you my brothers and sisters to depend on

a postman who comes with a money order on a particular day of every month that can be your crow and you depend on it so much till after some time your faith is in that crow and you look for the crow more than to God you look for some particular person who is going to send you a check for so much money on a particular day of every month it's very easy even Elijah was in that danger and God stops that and says Elijah I'm going to take you somewhere else now go to Zarephath not even in Israel outside Israel and I'll support you through a helpless widow it's the same God but the channel changed and it's very important that all of us keep checking ourselves is my sufficiency my dependence on God or on man do I believe in the sovereign authority of Christ over everything that happens on this

earth you know Jesus said in Matthew 28 and verse 18 and 19 all authority in heaven and earth is given to me therefore go where do you go is it because all authority in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ or do you go because somebody says I will support you every month therefore go you'll be disappointed one day don't go on that basis go because Jesus said all authority in heaven and earth is given to me therefore go that's the way I went on that basis 34 years ago and I've never been disappointed God has used human channels to take care of my needs but I've never depended on one of them dear brothers and sisters let's keep that in mind finally chapter 4 verse 1 he never gave up he says we have this ministry we don't lose heart chapter 4 verse 16 we don't lose heart that means he

was tempted to be discouraged he never gave up no matter how much he was tempted to be discouraged he never gave up and I want to mention three areas where we should not give up first of all in prayer

Jesus said in Luke 18 and verse 1 men ought always to pray and never give up never lose heart it's one of those areas where it's very easy to give up we should not give up Lord I haven't got the answer for so long but I'm not going to give up I've heard of George Muller that once he prayed for three people who were laid on his heart for their salvation and I think he prayed for more than 30 or 50 years and the last one was converted after he died he never gave up because there was a burden on his heart and he never gave up and when you're praying something for the glory of God there is no

need for you to give up secondly it says in Galatians 6 verse 9 we should never give up doing good that's another area where we can easily give up we start doing good to people and we don't find any response and after a while we give up it says keep on sowing let us not be weary in doing good even to people who harm us and the third area Paul says in Ephesians 3 verse 13 I ask that you not lose heart at my tribulation or as the margin says that I don't lose heart at my tribulation sometimes when suffering comes our way we can also tend to give up God has controlled the tribulation I think it's Revelation 2.10 says you'll have tribulation they'll put you in prison but it'll only be for 10 days God has determined the exact period here's the third area John the Baptist was in prison and he

began to doubt is Jesus really the one and Jesus said the one in the new covenant is greater than John the Baptist how? that even when he's in prison he will not doubt one of the words that has encouraged me very much is Isaiah 49.23 which says those who trust in me will never be ashamed many many times in my own life I have been tempted to be discouraged when an answer to prayer has not come when we have done good to people and the response is not what we expect when there's suffering for the sake of the gospel and I've always gone back to that verse Lord you said those who trust in you will never be disappointed will never be ashamed I want my life to be a demonstration to this world that those who trust in the Lord Jesus will never never be put to shame let's make that our goal let's

pray Heavenly Father we pray that the example of this man whom you have set before us is a man who followed you faithfully will challenge us each one to be better disciples of yours and better servants we pray in Jesus name you are invited to visit our website on the internet at www.cfcindia.com that is www.cfcindia.com and at punan.org forward slash zac that is p-o-o-n-e-n dot o-r-g forward slash z-a-c for all audio messages audio messages and books by Zac Punan that can all be downloaded freely our mailing address is Christian Fellowship Centre 40 D'Acosta Sqawe Bangalore 560084 India If you would like message by Zach Poonen by email, please send us your email address to [cfclit at touchtellindia.net](mailto:cfclit@touchtellindia.net).

That is [cfclit at touchtellindia.net](mailto:cfclit@touchtellindia.net). The Lord bless you richly.

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