

# Ambassadors for Christ - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

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*To be effective ambassadors for Christ, we must be willing to suffer, serve others, and have a healthy fear of God, recognizing accountability to Him in all areas of our lives.*

**Duration:** 56:01

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 12:2-5, 2 Corinthians 1:4, 2 Corinthians 5:16, 2 Corinthians 6:4, 2 Corinthians 6:8, 2 Corinthians 11:26

**Topics:** "Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on several key points from the book of 2 Corinthians. Firstly, he highlights how Paul commended himself as a servant of God in all situations, whether in endurance, affliction, or even when honored. The speaker emphasizes the importance of behaving as a servant of God in both suffering and success. Secondly, the speaker discusses how Paul recognized the fear of God and the accountability that comes with it. He emphasizes that believers will one day stand at the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for everything done in their bodies. Lastly, the speaker mentions the example of John Wesley, who had a strong sense of accountability for his time and money, and encourages the audience to cultivate the same sense of accountability in their own lives.

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## Transcript

We'll continue looking at 2 Corinthians and I, where we come across an expression in chapter 5 verse 20 called We are ambassadors for Christ. In chapter 6 verse 1, we are co-workers with God. This is what we are basically thinking of, an ambassador of Christ and a co-worker with God.

That's what we were thinking of in our last session and we want to continue thinking about that in this session. What it means to be an ambassador of Christ and what it means to be a co-worker of God. That means when people look at my life, they must see I'm representing Jesus Christ.

I'm trying to show people what Jesus Christ is like. One of the expressions which I have been sharing many times in the last year or so in this land is this. That India has not rejected Christ.

India has rejected the Christ that they have seen in Christians, which is not the real Christ, very often. So when I say I'm an ambassador of Christ, I see it as a great challenge that by the grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, I must seek to show in my little corner of India what Christ was like. So this is our calling.

Keeping that in mind, let's look at another characteristic that Paul expresses about his own inner life. Chapter 4, verse 5. Paul was a servant of others for Jesus' sake. A servant, we don't preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.

See, we have two options here. We can preach ourselves or we can preach Christ. What does it mean to preach ourselves? Nobody preaches that I died for your sins.

It's not that. We may preach that Christ died for our sins and we may preach everything according to Scripture. We may say that Jesus Christ is Lord and we got to worship him.

But a lot of preachers and servants of God, while preaching the correct words, the way they come across is they are projecting themselves and putting a pressure on other people. And this great man of God in the pulpit comes forth more than Jesus Christ. And the people in the congregation are connected to this man of God in the pulpit rather than to Jesus Christ.

Then this preacher, even if he's preached all the correct doctrine, he has preached himself and he has not preached Christ. If your ministry is to be successful, the way to test it is, are people in this church connected to me or are they connected to Christ? If I die and drop out, will the church continue or will the church also die? See, if my little finger dies, it's cut off. The body doesn't die.

You pull out one eye, the body doesn't die. But you cut out the head, then the body dies. So if your church dies when you die, then what are you? You must be the head.

And you should not be the head. Jesus Christ should be the head. If your organization dies when you die, then you are preaching yourself, not Christ Jesus as Lord.

So most Christian organizations and churches today, people preach themselves, not Christ Jesus as Lord. See, when we preach Jesus Christ as Lord, it says here, we have to preach ourselves as servants. And for Jesus' sake, or as the Living Bible, I think, paraphrases it, because of what Jesus has done, because of what Jesus has done, I'm your servant.

I believe that we need to be gripped by this deep down in our heart, that I'm not here to get other people in the church to serve me. What does it mean to be a master? The opposite of servant is a master. A master is someone who expects servants to do something for them.

And that's the way you can find out whether you're a master or a servant in your organization and in your church. Do you expect people to do something for you? Do you expect them to give you some respect? Then you're a master. We must finish with expecting people to respect us.

How much respect do you give to a servant? How much respect does a master give to a servant? I know that my whole attitude to my church in my hometown changed when the Lord told me, you're not their master, you're their servant. In everything, look at yourself as a servant. A servant must come on time for the meeting.

Masters can come whenever they like. I used to be disturbed because people didn't come on time for the meeting. And the Lord told me that, you're a servant, you come on time, the other people can come whenever they like, they are the masters.

Don't expect them to respect you, don't expect them to do things for you, don't expect them to give you any gift, don't expect anything because you're a servant. The moment you begin to expect things from people, you're a master. Our calling is to be a servant.

Jesus expected nothing from anyone. If people gave, he received, but he didn't expect. And he did not have any demand.

Masters have demands on people. They want people to do certain things. And that is the cause of a lot of problems in Christian work, and not only in Christian work, but in homes.

You know, the Bible says in Ephesians in chapter 2 about a law of commandments which brings a separation. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 15. A law of commandments which separated Jews from Gentiles.

Why did the Jews have a problem with Gentiles? Because the Gentiles didn't keep these commandments. And we can have also certain commandments, unwritten commandments, demands that we have on other people. A husband can have certain unwritten demands on his wife, and when she does not fulfill those commandments which she has got, there's tension between husband and wife.

A wife can have certain expectations and demands from her husband, and when he does not fulfill that, there's tension. This is the cause of all problems in fellowship. We have certain demands on other people, not written demands, unwritten demands.

I expect people to behave in a certain way towards me. You know how we can be irritated with the way somebody talks, or the way somebody behaves, or the way somebody expresses himself. Why are we irritated? Because we expect him to express himself in a certain way, and he doesn't express himself in that way.

Sometimes we expect people to behave like we are, and he doesn't behave like us, and we are disturbed. And in all those situations, if you allow the Holy Spirit to give you light, you'll become a better Christian. The Holy Spirit will show you, as He has shown me, that you expect other people to be like you.

The problem is not with that person, the problem is with you. God can bear with him, but you can't bear with him. Why is that? You're so imperfect yourself, and you can't bear with another imperfect person? Almighty God, who is perfect, can bear with that person? You see, there are so many ways in which we are not servants.

We are masters. We are not ambassadors for Christ. And that hinders our ministry.

Paul said, we are your servants. We expect nothing from you. We are here to serve you.

And we are always available. I've often thought of that time when Nicodemus went to Jesus at night, and Jesus was not disturbed. And the way that has spoken to my heart is, supposing some needy soul comes to speak to me at a time which is not convenient for me, am I disturbed? Or am I like Jesus, ready to serve Him? There's a time we read in Mark's Gospel where Jesus did not even have enough time to eat food, because He was always serving other people.

There was a time when He was hungry, but after He had spoken to the woman of Samaria, His hunger disappeared. From all these things, I learned one thing, that if food is more important to me than people, I'm not a servant of people. I want to say to you, my brother, sister, if your lunch or your dinner is more

important than people, you cannot be a servant of Jesus Christ.

If food means more to you than helping people, there may be times in our life when we have to give up our lunch or dinner because there's a needy person I need to help. Jesus was always available. He never felt anybody was disturbing Him.

You didn't have to go through a secretary to meet Jesus Christ. You could just go to Him anytime. He was always available.

You could disturb Him in the middle of the night. He was available to counsel you. Now, another point I want you to notice is in chapter 4, the second point here, in verse 8 to 12.

The Apostle Paul was willing to suffer. He was afflicted. Perplexed.

Persecuted. Struck down. Carrying the dying of Jesus in his body all the time.

Let me show you another passage in chapter 1 and verse 8. The affliction which came to us in Asia where we were burdened excessively beyond our strength. And in all that affliction, chapter 1, verse 4, God comforted him. And that's how he got a ministry.

We cannot have a ministry if we are not willing to suffer. Jesus' ministry came out of suffering. In the Old Testament, ministry did not come out of suffering.

In the Old Testament, you just got alone with God on the mountaintop and listened to God and came down from the mountain and preached what God said to the people. It was just a message that God gave. Now, today, that type of ministry is Old Testament ministry where I get into a room, sit down with my Bible and a whole lot of books and concordance and tapes and listen to all that on Saturday and get up on Sunday and I preach it.

Okay? But real ministry doesn't come like that in the New Covenant. Paul says his ministry came out of suffering. God took him through all types of difficult experiences, he says in 2 Corinthians 1, verse 4, and from those experiences came out a ministry that could help other people who are also suffering.

You know, he talks in chapter 11 about a whole lot of things that he went through. It says he went through physical difficulty and frequent journeys, chapter 11, 26, and he faced many dangers, many, many dangers, a lot of labor, verse 27, and hardship, many sleepless nights, chapter 11, 27, sometimes hungry, sometimes thirsty. God's greatest servant was one who sometimes did not have enough food to eat and sometimes he was shivering, it says in the cold, verse 27, but he had no complaints.

Do you complain if one day you don't have enough money to buy food or to buy warm clothes in some cold climate? Paul didn't. Sometimes God allows us to go through these things to help us to understand what other people have to go through. I remember once when I asked the Lord in a particular situation to make it a little easy for me and I expected God would answer my prayer but he did not and it was not easy.

It was difficult. And I asked the Lord, I said, Lord, why did you not make it easy for me there? And the answer the Lord gave me more than 30 years ago, I'll never forget. He said, if I make it easy for you, you will not understand what your fellow countrymen are going through and then you won't have any ministry to them.

You know, today a lot of Christian workers like to have a comfortable life where things are very easy and then go out and preach messages to people who are going through great difficulties. They don't have a ministry. And all Christian workers who seek for comfort cannot have a ministry to other people.

You leave it to God whether He gives you comfort or not. Sometimes He gave Paul comfort, sometimes He put him in prison but whether he was comfortable or in prison, he had no complaints. He was willing to suffer, he was determined to suffer, he knew that labor, hardship, sleepless nights, sometimes without food, sometimes plenty of food, sometimes no food, sometimes he had enough, sometimes he had very little.

It was all part of his education because only from that came a ministry. So if I ever complain that I'm going through a little suffering here and I'm only interested in escaping that suffering, I cannot have a ministry to other people. Paul was willing to suffer.

And I believe that as we go into the future days in this country of ours, we must be willing because there could be made greater suffering in the days to come. I want to show you one verse in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 17 and 18. Paul says, Our light affliction, which is only for a moment, is working for us an eternal weight of glory while we don't look at the things which are seen by the things which are not seen.

What does it say here? Our affliction, verse 17, works for us. That means the suffering that I'm going through is working for me. Now, what do you call somebody who works for you? A servant.

Affliction is my servant, Paul says. It's working for me. It's not working against me.

It's not controlling me and running my life and making me miserable. And I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, if you have served the Lord even for one year, I'm sure you've suffered. We can suffer physically.

We can suffer, you know, abuse and ridicule and misunderstanding and people telling false stories about us many, many times of physical suffering, psychological suffering, mental suffering, emotional suffering. But what I want to ask you is, did all that suffering work for you or did that suffering become your master and depress you and discourage you? We cannot avoid suffering, but we can decide whether that suffering is going to sit on top of my head and become my master or whether that suffering is going to be my servant. Paul decided, suffering is going to be my servant.

It is going to work for me. I'm not going to work for him. I'm not the servant of suffering.

Suffering is my servant. That's what he says in 4.17. It works for me an eternal weight of glory while, that word while in verse 18 is very important. When will suffering work for me? According to verse 18, only as long as I keep my vision on the things which are invisible.

Why does suffering not work for me? Because I'm looking at earthly things and as long as I'm looking at earthly things, suffering will be my master. But if I shift my vision to the things which are invisible, as long as, that word while in verse 18 means as long as, as long as I'm looking at the things that are invisible, suffering will be my servant. God is in control of it.

We must be willing. And another point I want you to notice here, in chapter 5, the third point in this section, verse 10 and 11, the apostle Paul was one who knew the fear of God. He says we must all appear at the judgment seat of Christ to receive for the things that we have done in our body, whether good or bad.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. Paul recognized that a day is going to come when I'm going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ and I have to give an account for every single thing that I have received in my life. If God has given me health for 70 years, I have to give an account to Him for health for 70 years.

Jesus had to give an account only for 33 and a half years. We have to give an account for every day that we live on this earth. The longer we live, the more we have to give an account for.

Now this sense of accountability I find is greatly lacking among many Christians, most Christians. And it's lacking because it's lacking among their leaders. And it's lacking in the leaders because the leaders don't fear God.

How many of you believe that you have to give an account to God for every single day of your life on earth? How you lived that day? How you spent that day? How many of you believe that you'll have to give an account to God for all the money you have received? Many people wish they could get more money. You think it's really better to get more? Let me use an example. Supposing you were working for a company here and that company gave you 500,000 rupees to take by train to Delhi and say when you reach there please give this cash to our company office in Delhi.

And you have an option either to take 500,000 rupees you need two people one person to take 500,000 rupees and one person to take 5,000 rupees to Delhi. Which would you choose? I know which I would choose. I'd rather take 5,000.

It's too much of a responsibility to take 500,000 rupees in three days in a train journey to Delhi. Because when I reach there I have to account for more. If I have only 5,000 I have to account only for 5,000.

I'm sure all of you would choose less. Why is it that on earth we always long for more money Shall I tell you why? Because you don't have a sense of accountability. And I believe this is one of the main reasons why God does not anoint the words that you speak when you stand up in the pulpit because he sees that you are not accountable with earthly things.

And Jesus said if you are not accountable with earthly things how will I give you the things of real value? The fear of God motivated Paul in his life. He was afraid. A healthy fear.

You know, just like if you were carrying 500,000 rupees in the train that would be a certain healthy fear. You won't sleep peacefully at night because you've got to take care of this money. And to recognize that everything in our life we are accountable to God I have to give an account to God for the money I receive.

It's not just accountability to an organization. Accountability to an organization is easy. It's thousand times easier to give an account to an organization for all the money I got.

To give an account to God is a thousand times more difficult. Many people don't realize that. It's not just our time, our money, our words.

Do you know what Jesus said in Matthew 12? Every word that we speak, verse 36 to 39, we will have to give an account in the day of judgment. Our life, our money, our speech, the way we behave towards other people. I have to give an account to God.

It says here in verse 10, 5.10, 2 Corinthians 5.10 for everything that I did in my body. I have to give an account. Whether I kept my body pure for Him.

Whether I kept myself available for Him. And the ones who have accomplished the most for God on this earth were the people who had that tremendous sense of accountability that Paul speaks of here. Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men and we are made manifest to God.

I have read the life of John Wesley who was one of the great servants of God in England about more than 200, 250 years ago. And I see one great secret of that man's life was he had a tremendous sense of accountability for his time and his money. He knew that I cannot afford to waste my time.

Whether other people are convinced that I have spent my time profitably or not is not the main thing. Every day was accountable to God. Every bit of money he received was accountable to God.

If we can start in just these two areas in this new year and say, Lord I want to be more, I want to have a greater sense of accountability for the time you have given me. I want to have a greater sense of accountability for all the money you give me. I don't want to waste time.

I don't want to waste money. And I also want to be accountable with my speech. I believe our ministry will become so rich if you are just careful in these areas.

And that sense of accountability that comes upon us will also come upon our people as we share with them. And that comes through the fear of God recognizing that one day I am going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ. And I have to give an account for everything that I have done in this body.

That is what produced in Paul. He says in verse 11 a fear of God. Then I want to go to the next point, number 4. In chapter 5 and verse 16 Paul says from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh.

That means he did not look at people as they were in the flesh. You know, we have a natural tendency to be drawn to people who are of the same community, of the same language, or the same temperament, or the same intellectual level, or the same tribe, or same caste. We feel more comfortable with people who are like us in every way.

And we know them according to the flesh. That's why. Paul says I refuse to know anybody according to the flesh.

I only see a person, he says here, in Christ. In Christ he is a new creature. Verse 17 I am not anymore looking at a person to see is he from my state? Is he from my community? Is he from my language? Makes no difference to me.

Why do we see so many churches where people of the same community come together? Because they know each other according to the flesh. There are numerous churches in North India which all consist of Malayalis. I say that's not a local church.

That's a Malayali club in North India. That's not a church. You cannot call it a church.

A church is a local church of people in that locality. But when people all from one community gather together, that's a club. That's not a church.

We must not know people according to the flesh. And through the years I've deliberately sought to fight against this. I say I don't want to be drawn to a person because he is my language, my community, same intellectual level, nothing.

I want to see is he in Christ? Is he a godly person? Is he a humble person? Is he pure? Does he have a hunger after God? I don't care what color his skin is, what language he speaks. I want to be drawn to such a person. He refused to have special friends.

You know Paul says to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 5, he says in verse 20, those who continue in sin, 1 Timothy 5.20, rebuke publicly. And then he says in verse 21 of 1 Timothy 5, I solemnly charge you in the presence of God maintain these principles without any bias and doing nothing with partiality. Do you know that partiality is a sin? That means when you show favoritism to a person because he belongs to your community or because he is your brother-in-law or relative or son or daughter.

There is so much of this in Christian circles today. Where a man is attracted to people on the basis of a fleshly relationship. And Christendom is full of organizations which are just controlled by one family.

You mean everybody in that family was spiritual? No! It's a fleshly relationship. It's not spiritual. Paul didn't gather his relatives around him to do God's work.

You need to ask yourself whether you're drawn, whether there's partiality on the basis of a human relationship. See, the human relationship I got from Adam. In Christ, there is no Greek, no Barbarian, no Malayali, no Tamil, no Manipuri, no Hindi speaking, nothing.

No American, no African, no Chinese. It's all gone in Christ. All those distinctions are in Adam.

In Adam, we have distinctions like educated, graduate, not graduate. In Christ, there's no difference like that. In Christ, the distinctions are godly or ungodly, humble or proud, loving or unloving.

Not these other distinctions. We know nobody after the flesh. James says, you know, in chapter 2, he says, a rich man comes into your congregation and you give him a special seat.

And that poor brother comes with a torn shirt and you say, ah, you go and sit somewhere over there. Do you know what a lot there is in Christian circles like that? Can you honestly say that in your church you don't care whether a man is rich or poor? That you value only godliness. That you don't care whether a man speaks your language or is your intellectual level or any such thing.

That you only value godliness and humility. Paul was like that. He determined, I will not know anybody according to the flesh.

That was the secret of his life. He was an ambassador of Christ. Okay.

Let's go to another example. Paul in chapter 6 verses 3 to 10 and chapter 7 verse 2. In all these passages, we see fifthly, Paul was commended himself verse 4 as a servant of God. In all situations, he commended.

That's the expression he uses in chapter 6 full. In everything I commend myself as a servant of God. What that means is in all those things that he lists there, in endurance and affliction and hardship, he showed how a servant of God should behave.

And not only in suffering, but also when he was honored. Verse 8. When he got glory. When he got good report.

There also he said, how should a servant of God behave when somebody praises him. Paul said, yeah. That's how you saw me.

The praise and the criticism glory and dishonor. None of these things made any difference to him. He commended himself to other people.

People could see there in Paul that these things did not affect him. Whether he had much or little. Whether he was praised or dishonored.

It was all the same. And notice further. He says in chapter 7 and verse 2. Make room for us in your heart.

We wronged nobody. We corrupted nobody. We took advantage of no one.

A true servant of God never takes advantage of other people. He should be able to say at the end of his life like Samuel said. Let me just show you that wonderful example in the Old Testament.

In 1 Samuel chapter 12 verses 1 to 5. He says in verse 2. 1 Samuel 12 verse 2. He says I am an old man now. My hair is grey. And I have walked with you from the time I was very young till this day.

So here was a man Samuel who started serving the Lord when he was very young. And now he was an old grey headed man. Maybe people had seen him for 50, 60 years.

And look at his testimony. He says here I am. Bear witness against me.

Have I taken your ox? Verse 3. Have I taken anybody's donkey? Have I cheated anybody in all these 60 years? Have I oppressed anybody? Have I put my pressure on any of you for 60 years? Have I taken a bribe from any of you when I made a decision? And they said you have never cheated us. You have never oppressed us. You have never taken anything from any man's hand.

My brothers and sisters when you come to the end of your ministry in a particular place don't count the number of churches you built the number of people who came to your Bible school or training center and all those statistics are worthless. This is the testimony you should have. You should be able to stand before the people whom you serve and say tell me did I take advantage of anybody here in any way? Did I oppress you people in any way? Did I corrupt you in any way by anything? And the people should be able to say no you never took advantage of us.

You served us. That is a man of God who commends himself as a servant of God in every situation. You know I believe that only such a person can say like Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7 to make room for us in your hearts.

Let me go to the next point in chapter 7 and verse 6. It's a very interesting thing we see here about the apostle Paul number 6 point. He sought for fellowship with his co-workers. When it says here that Paul was a bit discouraged at a particular time but God who comforts the discouraged comforted us by the coming of Titus.

How did God encourage Paul? He didn't send an angel from heaven. He sent him a younger brother called Titus to encourage him. That's been a great challenge to me.

That when I am tempted to be discouraged God is not going to send an angel from heaven. He'd probably send a younger brother to give me some fellowship. A younger brother.

I want to ask you whether you value your younger brothers. Paul did. Paul says I was going to be discouraged but this young brother Titus came along and I had some fellowship with him and I got encouraged.

That's exactly what he says. I was encouraged. My discouragement and depression went away.

But that's because he valued that younger brother. And I want to tell you my dear brothers and sisters if you are to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ, learn to value not just your senior leaders but your younger brothers. I value my younger brothers in my church very highly.

They encourage me. They preserve me from falling. They encourage me when I am tempted to be discouraged and depressed.

Their fellowship lifts my spirit. They help me to keep the fire burning in my heart. Perhaps the reason why God is not able to do more through your life may be because you don't value brothers who are younger to you because they don't know so much.

They are not so gifted. You don't value sisters who are younger to you. Titus was so much younger than Paul.

But Paul was honest enough to say he helped me to overcome my depression. You know when Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane was under such tremendous pressure, he turned to Peter, James and John who were so much junior to him and said, will you come and pray with me because I am under tremendous pressure now. I want to ask you my brothers and sisters, when was the last time that you went to some brother who was much younger than you and say brother please pray with me because I am under tremendous pressure now.

Have you ever said that even once in your life? Have you ever felt that you need a prayer support of a much younger brother? Jesus felt like that in Gethsemane. Do you see how proud we are? Do you see how proud we are especially when we come to a position of leadership that we have to act as though we don't need anybody. Act as though we never feel any pressure and that's why we dry up.

Let's humble ourselves and let's remember that we need our younger brothers and there are times when we need to get them to pray with us and the Titus will come and help us to overcome our depression and perhaps we need sometimes to go to someone much junior like Peter, James and John like Jesus went and say brother pray with me. See many leaders are not honest about their struggles with those who are younger to them. We like to give an impression to people that we don't have any struggles.

Oh we're okay and that's why we remain depressed. I believe that we can fulfill a lot more for the Lord if we learn to value our younger brothers. I want to show you a verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 this amazing word which says 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 21 I cannot say to the hand I don't need you. That's understandable but the head that is Jesus listen to this 1 Corinthians 12 21 On the head Jesus does not say to the feet the feet are the lowest and the least among all of God's people like in the body the feet is right down. The head does not say to the feet I don't need you.

Do you ever give people an impression I don't need you. I'm okay. You need me of course because I'm the great man of God but I don't need you.

And I want to say this my brothers and sisters that it's not a question of saying it. I don't think we ever say it with our lips but it's an attitude I don't need you.

And that attitude is not the attitude of the head Jesus Christ it's the attitude of Adam it's the attitude of the world I am self sufficient the apostle Paul sought for fellowship with his coworkers and lastly point number 7 chapter 8 verse 20 and 21 the apostle Paul was very careful in the handling of money he's talking in chapter 8 about taking a collection and in taking that collection and taking it from Corinth to Jerusalem he told them he says we have to take precaution that no one should discredit us in the administration of this generous gift this large amount of money we have to be very careful that nobody thinks that we are taking something out of that for ourselves and so he says therefore we sent two brothers read that passage we sent two brothers so that it's not just one

brother who handles money it's a very dangerous thing when only one person handles money in any place Paul was very very careful in this area if there is one area where the devil has got an advantage with so many Christian workers and destroyed them it is in this area of money they have not been faithful with money they have not had a clear testimony in the area of money the handling of money has not been faithful and if we are not faithful in the handling of money God will not be able to commit to us true riches nobody should be able to say concerning us that we were a bit unfaithful in the use of money there can anybody say that about you? do you have a clear testimony in the area of handling of finances are you very accurate in keeping a record of particularly God's money that you are

very very careful to write down every rupee the way it is spent Paul was in fact he was so careful we read in chapter 11 and verses 7 to 15 he says when I came to you and I preached to you he says I didn't take any money from you people I was not a burden to anyone because the brothers from Macedonia supplied my need verse 9 I am not saying Paul didn't receive gifts he says very clear here that he did receive gifts from but he knew from whom he could receive and from whom he could not receive I want you to notice that point he says from you Corinthians I did not receive anything but from the church in Philippi they sent me and I did receive so what do you learn from this you learn from this the apostle Paul knew where to take money from and where not to take money from I find that many

people in Christian work today do not have that understanding they love money so much that they will take it from anybody and they destroy themselves we need discernment can I take it from that person what about from that person and you may see that the lord may permit you to take it from one person and not from another person I will give you an example there was a very wealthy brother in one of our churches who came one day to my house and gave me an envelope which obviously contained some money he said here you are brother Zach, this is for you I said ok thank you very much and as soon as he left the house the lord said to me don't touch that go and give it in the church office get a receipt and give it to that brother you must not use one rupee of that for your personal needs now he

was a born again baptized brother in one of our churches he was not a stranger I said fine so I did what the lord said I gave it in the church office and got a receipt when I saw him next I gave it to him and he said to me he said that wasn't for the church brother Zach, that was for you I said that's ok you gave it to the lord it's gone to the lord, don't worry three months later that brother fell into some sin and I had to rebuke him and correct him and discipline him and my mouth was open now if I had received his money my mouth

would have been so full of his money that I wouldn't be able to speak have you ever tried to speak with your mouth stuffed with money try it put a lot of currency notes in your mouth and see if you can speak can't speak I would not have been able to speak to

that brother the lord knew what was going to happen few months later and protected me from it earlier so that I could speak straight why is it that some of you are not being able to speak to certain people in your congregation who need to be corrected or certain people who you know are doing something wrong because they have stuffed money into your mouth and you have not sought the lord whether you should receive that or not even from a believer these Corinthians were believers Paul didn't take it and he says that is the thing that makes a difference between me and all the other workers in chapter 11 verse 12 he says I make a distinction between me and all the other workers by the way we handle money we are different is there a distinction between you and other workers on the basis of

money the way you handle money you know we make so many distinctions between our church and other people on the basis of doctrine on the basis of principles of organization on the basis of activity we do this and they do that our doctrine is this and their doctrine is that what about money is there a difference between our attitude to money and theirs I have told people in our churches I said here is a country where in almost every denomination when it comes to marriage they always ask for dowry shall we be different or shall we be just like everybody in the world I say we shall be different you know when I conduct a marriage I get a certificate from the bride groom written signed certificate I have not received any money from the girl or from her parents and my parents have also not

received any money from the girl I said only then I will conduct your wedding I say if you want to take a dowry there are many other people who will give you a marriage certificate they will conduct your marriage please go there but you can't do it here why is it that when it comes to money we are all the same in doctrine we say we are so different but when it comes to money it is all the same as a servant of God we have to show we are different from others in this area in the way you handle money in your carefulness in knowing whom to receive from and whom not to receive from and where money is being used to exploit poor people like in the way of dowry that as a servant of God you take a stand against it even if it makes you unpopular we have had people leave our church because of that I

say you can leave its fine I am not offended by that but we are not going to lower our standards to please any of you dear brothers and sisters when we stand as different from the society around us let it not be just because of our doctrine or because we got a cross on top of our building and they have got some idol on top of their building no, but because our attitude to money is fundamentally different from theirs then there is a manifestation of light in the midst of darkness lets pray Heavenly Father we pray that you will help us to live in the light of the word we have heard we humbly ask in Jesus name you are invited to visit our website on the internet at [www.cfcindia.com](http://www.cfcindia.com) that is [www.cfcindia.com](http://www.cfcindia.com) and at [punan.org](http://punan.org) forward slash zac that is p-o-o-n-e-n for video messages, audio

messages and books by Zak Poonen that can all be downloaded freely.

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