

# (Atlanta 2013) 2. Loving the Truth

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of loving the truth in order to avoid deception and grow spiritually in faith.*

**Duration:** 54:12

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:1

**Topics:** "Loving Truth", "Spiritual Deception"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of loving the truth to avoid deception, particularly in the context of the last days. It highlights the dangers of falling away from the faith due to deceitful spirits and the significance of confronting secret sins, such as the love of money. The speaker urges listeners to seek liberation by aligning their lives with God's Word and being honest with themselves.

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## Transcript

So we were considering the verse in 2 Thessalonians 2, a guarantee that I will never be deceived. With all the deception that's going on in the world today in Christendom, the way to avoid deception is by ensuring that I love the truth so as to be saved. Please remember this verse all your life, 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 10 and 11.

If you read the chapter, you'll find it's particularly referring to the last days, the days we're living in, when it says that Satan is going to deceive. And you know how Jesus said that there'll be so much deception that even the elect will almost be deceived. And we read in 1 Timothy 4 how the Spirit expressly says, that means he's underlying something, that in the latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits.

Now there are many believers who feel nobody can ever fall away from the faith. And you come to the faith, you'll never fall away. Well, it's all a matter of whether you love the truth in God's Word, or whether you'll stick to that doctrinal mold into which somebody poured you into many years ago, and you hold on to it and say, no, I can never fall away from the faith.

I was taught that. Well, if you don't love the truth, you'll be deceived. That's all I can say.

And Scripture says the Spirit explicitly says, 1 Timothy 4.1, that in later times, it's our time, some will fall away from the faith. They were in the faith, they fell away because they paid attention to deceitful spirits. The first sin mentioned in the Bible is lying.

When Satan told Adam, told Eve, you shall not die. That's the first lie in Scripture. And the first sin that you see was not Eve's disobedience.

That came afterwards. First lie mentioned in Scripture is a lie. And Jesus said, Satan has been a, Satan's a liar.

Jesus called him a liar. And if you turn to the last chapter of the Bible, you'll find the last sin mentioned in the Bible is also lying. Those who, in Revelation 22, it speaks about those who love and practice lying.

Verse 15, they are categorized with murderers and idolaters and immoral adulterers and those who practice lying. Revelation 22, 15. So isn't that significant? The first sin mentioned in the Bible is lying.

The last sin mentioned in the Bible is lying. And the first sin that God judged in the early church was lying. Have you seen the seriousness of it? And then Jesus saying, I am the truth.

Sanctify them through the truth. I will never be sanctified if I don't love the truth. The truth about myself and the truth about God's Word.

The truth that I see in God's Word, which may go contrary to everything I have been taught in whatever denomination I was in from childhood or whenever I switched denominations, I went to some other church because I thought that had the truth. And then I discovered something in Scripture, which is beyond what I heard. I mean, this has been my journey.

I started off in what was known as the Syrian Orthodox Church. That's what I was born into that, baptized as a baby. But after I was born again and I started reading the Scriptures, I had to switch and give up that and go to another which church which I felt was more in line with Scripture.

And after a while, I found that they were not teaching some things in certain portions of Scripture. And my life was a journey like that. I remember, so I went to another church and then another one.

So somebody who heard my testimony said, Brother Zach, you've been such an unstable person. Going from one church to another church to another church. I said, I've been unstable all my life.

I started out in first grade and I went to second grade and then from there to the third grade and fourth grade. I wasn't like these rock-steady people who stayed in first grade all their life. I just moved on because I wanted to press on in my education.

And you know that our life on earth is an education and we have to complete it. And if you discover something now in God's Word, which after careful study, I'm not just saying that you should superficially say, will you love the truth so as to be saved from deception? Or do you love your honor so much as to say, I can't say after all these years that I was wrong. Why not? That's what keeps some people in a deception.

25 years, I believe this and I've taught that to others. How can I now get up and say, I was wrong. That's why God will test your honesty to see whether you love the truth of God's Word.

I know I've had to get up and say at different times, I was wrong. I was wrong when I believed that the church would be raptured before the tribulation. When I searched scripture, I couldn't find a single verse anywhere that taught it.

So I said, okay, I'm going to proclaim the truth, even though there's perhaps less than three or four percent of believers in the world who believe it. That's fine. It's always a small number that knows the truth.

On the borders of the promised land, it is a small minority, Joshua and Caleb, that were right. Two people were right. 600,000 were wrong.

Where do you stand? In many, many situations I found in my life, it's a very small minority that's right. Thousands of Pharisees were wrong. Bible scholars were wrong in Jesus' time.

Eleven disciples were right. Now we can understand all that in the past. Yeah, that's right.

Joshua and Caleb were right. 600,000 were wrong. Eleven disciples were right and all the other scribes and scholars were wrong.

But when you apply it to today, is it possible that a lot of people you stand with could be wrong? If you've got the Bible in your language and you don't study it, then you deserve to be deceived. Dear brothers and sisters, we will never be free the way we should be if we don't love the truth. And the second part of that statement, I'm going to come to that in 2nd Thessalonians 2, it says, Love the truth so as to be saved.

So I said that truth is, first of all, the truth about myself and the second, the truth in God's Word. Because the truth is found in Jesus. I am the truth and God's Word is the truth.

So as I compare myself with Jesus, I see things wrong in myself. You know, like Isaiah, when he saw the glory of the Lord, that's the first time he realized how corrupt his speech was. He didn't realize it till then.

And when we see the glory of God in Jesus Christ, then we see selfishness and pride in us like we've never seen before. And that's why the Bible says we must run the race looking at Jesus. And as we look at Jesus and we see the truth, we see what is not truth in us.

And if you are willing to face up to it, God will cleanse us from it. The same way when I see the Word of God and I see the truth, and I compare myself with it and I face up to it, I can be cleansed from it. But the question is, do I want to be saved from what I see? It's wrong.

Those who love the truth, 2 Thessalonians 2, and who want to be saved, not just academically, yes, I know, I realize now God is a trinity. See, that type of Bible knowledge even the devil has and it doesn't save him. There's no doctrine of the Bible, the true doctrines in the Bible, which the devil doesn't believe.

He knows it all and he knows it better than us. Knowledge of the Bible by itself is not a proof of holiness. I've been in different groups where people can quote this verse and that verse and the other verse and a lot of dumb believers sit there and watch that and say, wow, what a spiritual man.

He's not a spiritual man. He just knows the Bible like the devil. That's all.

I mean the devil could get up and quote a lot more scriptures than that guy. So knowledge of the Bible doesn't make a man holy. Being able to quote this verse and that verse and the other verse and the other verse, you know that the devil quoted a verse to Jesus Christ.

He picked out exactly the right verse from the Old Testament, from Psalm 91, when he wanted to tempt Jesus to jump off the temple and commit suicide. Why don't you jump off the temple? Because there's a verse, it is written, he shall give his angels charge over thee, so that lest you dash your foot against a

stone. And Jesus said, ah, but it is also written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God.

So the truth is found not just in it is written, but in it is written and it is also written. Like a bird's got two wings, truth has got two wings. If you have only one, you just keep going around in circles.

And so that's why we must remember that Bible knowledge by itself is not spirituality. The devil's got it and he's got it better than all of us. But if I love the truth so as to be saved, the devil doesn't want to be saved.

He may know the truth, but he doesn't want to be saved. That's the thing that will deliver me from deception. Let me give you one example.

As I told you, this is from my personal testimony I find in my own life. James chapter 1 and verse 26. Here's the voice of scripture and it's a good verse with which I can see whether I love the truth and want to be saved.

James 1 26, if anyone thinks himself to be religious or spiritually minded, then I'd say perhaps most of us fall into that category. Otherwise, you wouldn't have taken all the trouble to come here for this conference. Spending so much money, so much time.

You do consider yourself to be spiritually minded, not like those other guys who are sitting watching television this morning. If you consider yourself to be spiritually minded and you cannot control your tongue in your daily life, at home, in your place of work, on the roads, when people are not obeying the traffic rules or they cut in front of you, whatever it is, you're just deceiving your own heart and your whole christianity is worth zero. Lord, is it true that if I cannot control my tongue, my whole christianity is worth zero? I mean, surely all the other things in my life are worth something.

Well, if you believe that what Jesus said is true, thy word is truth, sanctify them through the truth. Thy word is truth. I hold up that as a truth and say, Lord, I fail.

I've got zero. I can't control my tongue. I say I'm born again.

I speak in other tongues, but I can't control my mother tongue. What's the use of that? My religion is zero, even though I speak in other tongues. I can't control my tongue when I'm speaking to my wife at home.

Can't control my tongue in different situations. I have to face up to it, Lord. My christianity is worth zero.

Do something about it. Please help me. Number two.

God loves honest people. One of the greatest truths I discovered in 50 years of being a christian, more than 50 years, is this, that God loves honest people. If a person is ruthlessly honest with himself, when he sees a verse like that, God will lead him, where that word becomes flesh in his life.

When it says about Jesus that the word became flesh, I see that that God's word must become flesh in our life too. That is how Christ will be manifest in us. That's God's desire.

That the life of Christ must be manifest in his children. And so, here is just one example. I could point out a number of verses like that and say, is it God's will? I'll give you another verse.

I won't give you too many. I'm not here to condemn anybody. But I'm trying to challenge you this is what God's called me to do in my life, to challenge people, not to unrealistic standards, but to the standards of

God's word.

I'll give you an example of an unrealistic standard, which I never preach. There are preachers who say, when somebody's hurt you, you must not only forgive them, but you must forget completely what they did. That's a lie.

That's impossible. That's an unrealistic standard. And if you ever try to attain it, you'll torture yourself and condemn yourself because it is impossible.

You cannot forget what the evil that other people have done to you. You may try to, but you have no control over your memory. God has given us control over our will, but not over our memory.

And so you don't have to torture yourself saying, oh, I've forgiven that person, but I keep remembering it. Well, you'll remember it all your life. But you say, doesn't God say that He'll forget our past? Nowhere does the Bible say that God will forget our sins.

Nowhere. Did you know that? Well, maybe I should show you that before we go further. In Hebrews chapter 8, what exactly does God say? Learn to read the Bible exactly.

Hebrews 8 verse 12, one of the blessings of the new covenant, the Lord says, I will be merciful to their iniquities, Hebrews 8, 12, and I will remember their sins no more. Do you know there's a lot of difference between saying, I choose not to remember your sin, and to saying, I've forgotten about your sin. There's a world of difference.

I mean, I haven't forgotten the stupid things I did 60 years ago in my life. How in the world can Almighty God forget it? I remember very vividly the sins I committed before I was born again and after I was born again. I remember them very vividly.

God's forgiven me. The blood of Christ has cleansed me completely. I stand before God as if I've never sinned, but I still remember what I did.

I have no condemnation over it. And I'm absolutely certain God remembers it too, but he chooses not to remember. That's what he says here.

I will not remember. He hasn't forgotten it. It's very important to remember that, brothers and sisters.

Don't torture yourself by unrealistic standards. So I have to forgive people. If I don't forgive them, God says he won't forgive me.

But the fact that I remember what that person did does not prove I've not forgiven him. Forgiveness is an act of the will. I say, Lord, I choose to forgive that person.

I do not wish him any evil, but I remember what he did. So that's what I mean by an unrealistic standard that some preachers preach, which is never found in Scripture. That's why you must always check everything that anybody preaches with Scripture.

You say, show me, where is it in the Scriptures? It says in Acts chapter 17 about the Bereans. They were more noble than the people in Thessalonica. Now, when God compares two groups of believers, they're both born again.

The believers in Thessalonica were born again. The believers in Berea were born again. But the believers in Berea were more noble-minded.

The Holy Spirit says that there must be a reason for it. The reason is in Acts 17 verse 11, the people in Berea were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica because, first of all, they received the Word with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see whether it was really like that. Now, remember one thing, that those days they never had a Bible like this.

They couldn't go home and say, okay, I'm going to search the Scriptures. We've got the luxury of doing that today. But do you know what it cost them those days to search the Scriptures daily? There was usually only one place where these parchments of the Scriptures were in scrolls, and that is in the synagogue.

They had to go to the synagogue and turn the scrolls and let me check up whether what Paul preached last Saturday at the Sabbath was right or not. And then he said something else, let me check the Scriptures, and they'd roll the scrolls and check every single day. They searched the Scriptures daily.

They finished their work, and during their spare time, they went to the synagogue, which is the only place where there's a Bible. And the Lord says these Berean Christians were really noble-minded. Look at the effort they took to go somewhere and search the Scriptures just to check up whether what the great apostle Paul was preaching was Scripture or not.

That's why they were protected from deception. Have you ever wondered why there's no letter to the Bereans in the New Testament? You know why? There was no need to correct anything there, because whichever preacher came up and preached, they'd say, well, brother, good to hear you, but we'll let you know next week whether we believe you or not. We don't have a Bible right here.

I mean, you folks don't have to say that. You've got a Bible in front of you, but they didn't have a Bible in front of them. How do you know whether this preacher was just fooling them? So they'd go take time next week to go through all the references he gave, find if it's right, and come back next week and say, yeah, we believe you now.

Such people can never be deceived. Those are the Bereans, more noble-minded. Are you noble-minded? I find multitudes of Christians today who know more about a lot of worldly things, more know more about politics and about the clashes between the Democrats and the Republicans and what's happening in the Senate and the Congress than they know about the Bible.

That's the problem. They're not noble-minded, and so there's deception. So if I can urge you this weekend to recognize what Jesus said, God's word is the truth, and his prayer, Father, sanctify them through the truth.

Love the truth so as to be saved. Read it exactly. So I just told you I was going to give you another example.

Philippians in chapter 4, Philippians 4 and verse 6. What a word for the particular time in which we live with financial struggles and many other problems, many sicknesses spreading around the world. Philippians 4, 6. Be anxious for nothing. The previous verse sentences, the Lord is near.

The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing. But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension.

Will God your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Now that is the truth. Father, sanctify my disciples through your truth.

Thy word is truth. And what is God's standard? To be anxious for nothing. Nothing, by the way, means zero.

Be anxious for nothing. I need to love that truth if I want to be saved, and I look at that and say, Lord, that's not true in my life. I said it to the Lord many years ago.

I said it's not true in my life. I'm born again. I have no doubt about it.

I was baptized in water, baptized in the Holy Spirit. But I'm anxious. Not all the time, but every now and then.

I certainly can't say that this word has become flesh in my life. Be anxious for nothing. Now the sad thing is that many believers read that.

I say, yeah, it's just another verse. Read it. Maybe write it on, hang it on their wall or something, but it's never true in their life.

And they're not even bothered that it's not true in their life. That's the worst part of it. Not that it's not true in their life, but they're not even bothered.

Because they think God's word is full of suggestions. If possible, be anxious for nothing. But if it's not possible, don't worry.

Do you know that there's only one verse in the Bible which says you've got to do if it's possible? There is a verse like that. I'll show it to you right now. Romans chapter 12.

As far as I know, I mean, what comes to my mind, there's only one verse in the Bible which says obey it if possible. And it's very interesting. Romans chapter 12, verse 18.

If possible, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Why does it say if possible? Because the peace depends on the other guy as well. It doesn't depend entirely on me.

So what can I do about it? I want to be at peace, but he doesn't want to be at peace. So there is no peace between us. So there it says if possible.

But nowhere else. Be anxious for nothing. If possible, no.

So if I face up to it and say, Lord, this is the way you want me to live. Because this is the way Jesus lived. And this is the way we are called to live.

What shall I say? Shall I love the truth and say, Lord, it is impossible that you would give me a command that is impossible to be fulfilled? How many of you would tell your little 10 year old boy to carry 10,000 pounds on his head and rebuke him if he can't do it? Or give him some impossible task which even you can't do? He wouldn't do it. No father would do it. Is it possible that Almighty God can give us commands which are not possible to be fulfilled? That's the old lie of the devil.

Has God said that you should not eat of every tree? That's how he started with leading Eva's train. Has God really said be anxious for nothing? No, no, no, no. Doesn't really mean that.

Has God said you can't eat of this tree? No, no, no. It doesn't mean that. It's okay.

Take it, Eve. It doesn't matter. That's how the devil takes believers through many, many verses.

Has God really said be anxious for nothing? No, no, no. Don't take God so seriously. It's not really true.

Philippians 4.4. Rejoice in the Lord always. 24.7. And the devil says, has God really said that we should rejoice in the Lord always? And once the devil's convinced us that always does not mean always, and verse 6, nothing does not mean nothing, he's got us. I know he got me for many years of my Christian life after I was born again because I did not love the truth.

That's all. I wasn't free. I was slave to so many things because you still know the truth.

The truth will set you free. I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, the devil's got a lot of us in bondages that we should not be in. And I hope you will confront Satan and seek to be free from it by believing God's word.

It is not God's will, let me tell you straight to your face, that you should have anxiety for anything. It is God's will that you should take that matter to God in prayer, to your loving Father and say, Father, here's a thing that's bothering me. I want to bring it before you and I want you to hear me and I want to thank you and believe that you will hear me.

Now remember that in prayer, Jesus once used this example. You know the story, so I don't need to turn to it. In Luke chapter 18, he said there was a widow who wanted something, justice.

The enemy was oppressing her. It's a picture of the devil troubling us. And Jesus pictures the church and believers as helpless widows.

We're helpless. And here was this mighty enemy oppressing the widow and she goes to the judge, to an unrighteous judge. And he says, no, don't bother me.

She keeps on going, going, going, going, going. Finally, he says, lest she wear me out, okay, I'll do it for her. And then the Lord says in Luke 18, you can take your own time to read it.

Don't you think a father in heaven would be better than that unrighteous judge? And the next verse, but when the Son of Man comes, where will he find such faith among his people? What is the mark of faith? Persistence. Will he find such faith? He says, Lord, I haven't got there yet. Be anxious for nothing.

But I'm going to get there. The devil's oppressing me still. It's better than it was last year, but I haven't got there yet.

A lot of people don't persist like that. They allow the devil to occupy a whole lot of territory that's supposed to belong to God. And I say, okay, so this is God's will for all of us.

And I hope over this weekend, it'll be a weekend of liberation for you, for every one of us. I remember when one of the verses that I took very seriously, as I began to take God's word more seriously, was rejoice in the Lord always. And I said, Lord, that's not true in my life.

So frequently, I'm discouraged. So frequently, I'm depressed. And I call myself a Christian.

For a lot of people, Christianity is mainly their Sunday service. Someone asked me once, Brother Zach, what's the difference between your church and other churches? I said, we don't claim to be better than any church. We don't say that there are no hypocrites in our church.

There are hypocrites in every single church on the earth. We're not perfect. But if you ask me for a difference, I would say one difference is this.

For most churches, their important day is Sunday. In our church, the important day is Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday and Sunday afternoon, after you go home from the church service. In other words, how you live at home, how you behave in your office, how you behave when everybody else is having road rage on the roads, that is what we emphasize.

Not how good was the music on Sunday morning? I couldn't care less. How fine was the sermon? Not so important. How many people came to the service? Doesn't matter.

How did you live at home on Monday? Did you control your tongue? Were you free from anxiety? Did you rejoice always? Dear brothers and sisters, that is the Christianity that will matter when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Not how well you sing and preach and do all the other things. You do activities and Sunday school and this thing and mission work and so many other things.

Praise the Lord for all of that. I'm not against ministry. I'm 73 years old and I'm still running around the world preaching, so nobody can say I'm against ministry.

But that is not the main thing for me. It is not. I say to me much more than ministry is how I speak with my tongue every day.

Whether I'm free from anxiety, whether I'm depressed, whether I'm gloomy. Those are the things that bother me much more than whether I preach well or not. I'm a preacher.

I've been preaching more than 50 years, but that's not the main thing in my life. I'm a worshiper first. Number one, a worshiper.

Dear brothers and sisters, there's a shallowness in our Christian life if we don't love the truth about these areas in our life. The opinion of men is fit for the garbage bin. People think you're a great Christian.

It's throw it in the trash can, that opinion. What does God think about you? What does God think about your life? Can he say that you're a person who loves the truth? That when I speak the truth to this child of mine, he or she faces up to it and says, Lord, that's true. I'm guilty.

Guilty exactly as charged and I want to change. I want your will to be done in my life. Let me show you another verse that God began to speak to me.

You shall know the truth. The truth shall set you free. 1 Timothy chapter 6. Now remember, Paul was writing to Timothy who was the most wholehearted among all his workers.

Now, Timothy was probably around 45 years old when he got this first letter from Paul. He joined Paul when he was a young man of around 20. He'd already been with Paul for 25 years and when Paul looks around at his workers, he says, there's no one like Timothy.

He's absolutely top class. He's the best of the lot, the best of my co-workers. So remember that when you read these letters to Timothy, he's writing to the best of his co-workers.

What's he telling him about? He says in 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 6, let me paraphrase it. Make sure that godliness or religion or Christianity or preaching is never a means of financial profit. What a word that today's preachers need to hear.

Most preachers today that you hear, particularly on television, are in for financial profit. John Wesley used to tell his co-workers in the 18th century, never let it be said that you became rich by preaching the gospel. And if you became rich doing a business or working a secular job or through an inheritance you got from your parents, fine.

But never let it be said that you became rich by serving God. Godliness. Some people think, it says here that verse 5, that godliness is a means of profit.

But the profit it brings us is contentment with what we have. And then he goes on to say, verse 9, those who want to get rich. It's a little phrase.

Those who want to get rich. You can be a poor person and want to get rich. You can be a rich person and want to get rich.

But it's, when I read a phrase like that, I want to love the truth. I say, Lord, do I fall into that category of those who want to get rich? It's pretty searching. If you're honest about yourself and with yourself, they fall into temptation and snare.

Just look at this verse. They fall into temptation and a snare. Many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Wow. Who wants to get into all that? And then he goes on to say, the love of money. Lord, do I fall into that? Not having money, but loving it.

He's a root of all sorts of evil. And some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. They live defeated third-rate Christian lives.

Their usefulness to God is ruined. They should have been prophets, but they're backslidden Christians. Or they started out well as great preachers when they were young men.

But 25 years later, they are backsliders because they love money. Now you say, Paul, surely you must be just warning people about other believers, right? You're telling him what to preach to other people in the church. Paul says, nothing doing.

Verse 11, you man of God, run away from these things. Timothy, I'm speaking to you. Do you get that? Paul, are you talking to your faithful, wholehearted co-worker whom you've already named as the best of your co-workers, walked with you for 25 years with uprightness, never sought his own, but the things of Christ, as you read in Philippians 2, 20 and 21, always seeking the good of others and the glory of Christ.

You're telling him to flee from the love of money. You mean even such a man can be in danger of that. You're telling him that if he wants to get rich, he will pierce himself with many sorrows.

You man of God, verse 11, run away from these things. My brother, sister, let me ask you, do you think you're better than Timothy? I don't think so. But my son, if I got into Paul's team and even if Paul said that I was his best co-worker, he would tell me, Zach, flee from the love of money.

Don't seek to get rich. See, Paul, are you telling me this? Yes, to you. Do you face scripture like that? Those are the people who love the truth and will be saved from the love of money.

I'll tell you my honest opinion. Most believers that I've met and most preachers are not saved from the love of money. It's deep-rooted in them.

They think because they are poor, they don't love money. I've never met a beggar or a tramp who doesn't love money. Have you met one? You got any tramp or homeless man? Show me one who doesn't love money.

You don't have to be a millionaire to love money. Every human being loves it till Jesus saves us from it. I remember once reading about Zacchaeus.

You know it says in Luke chapter 19. What was Zacchaeus's problem? He was a lover of money. He was a tax collector like all other tax collectors.

He loved money to such an extent that he would cheat and swindle others and get them to pay more taxes and pocket most of it himself and swindle so many people in his lifetime till Jesus came into his house and delivered him. What did Jesus deliver Zacchaeus from? His problem was not adultery. His problem was not religious hypocrisy.

He had no reputation in the synagogue. He was considered a sinner. His problem was the love of money and when Jesus confronted him, he said in Luke 19 verse 8, Lord I know I've cheated a lot of people.

I'm going to give back four times whatever I took from people and I'm going to give half my goods to the poor. You know if you look carefully this is one of the blessings I get from reading scripture carefully. Luke 19 verse 8. I don't know whether you see this.

Supposing Zacchaeus had said it like this. Listen carefully. Lord I will first give back four times what I've taken from people.

Then I will give half my possessions to the poor and that's not what he said. He said first I'll give half my possessions to the poor and then give back four times as much. If you do a little mathematics, you will see that the shrewd man will say I first give back what I've taken from others.

Then I will give half my goods to the poor. I'll be left with more. I mean if that's too complicated for you, go and ask a mathematician and he'll explain that to you.

He'll be left with more. Whereas if I first give away half my goods. Let's take an example.

I got \$100,000. I give away \$50,000 to the poor and then from the remaining \$50,000 I give away four times and I'm left with say \$25,000 left. And if I put it the other way around, I first give back the \$25,000.

How much am I left with? \$75,000. Then I give away half my goods to the poor. How much am I left with? \$37,500.

Now Zacchaeus was a shrewd calculator. Don't forget that. But he doesn't say it like that.

You see how free he has become from the love of money by saying I'll first give half my goods to the poor. I'm not this calculating type of person anymore like I was before. If I was, I would put it the other way around and I'll give back what I've taken four times.

And when Jesus heard that, Jesus is as shrewd as Zacchaeus. He did that calculation too. And he said boy, verse 9, salvation has come to this.

This Jew has been saved because he was saved from the love of money. And then, because he's a son of Abraham, because that's how Abraham was when Lot wanted the property. He said you choose what you want, I'll take what's left.

When the king of Sodom said you can take this, he said no I won't even take a shoelace from you. This is the son of Abraham, he says. His attitude to money is like Abraham's.

And then Jesus said the son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost in the love of money. I read that in the context and I said Lord, I'm lost in the love of money. You came to seek me, to save me, not from hell but from the love of money.

That's in the context. I want to be saved. And it didn't happen overnight.

But little by little by little by little, I found the Lord began to save me. Showed me little little things. I found the love of money was like a huge onion.

And when I peeled off something and I was free from it, I discovered later on there's only one layer. And in another situation, I found a deeper layer and I'd peel off that and he'd show me another one. I'm not free from it yet fully but the onion has become pretty thin through the years.

I'll tell you when I'm free from it, when I have exactly the same attitude to money that Jesus had, it'll happen when Christ comes. But I want to work towards that. This is what I mean by loving the truth.

And I tell you it'll bring liberation. Your bank account may be a little less but your life will be richer. You'll live closer to God.

Is it worth getting closer to God if I'm a little more free from the love of money? And that's why when we started our church, we decided right at the beginning 37 years ago to have some fundamental principles in the matter of love of money. Where we try to differ from what we other people were doing. First of all, we decided that we'd never take an offering in the church.

No offering bag. No box in the front. Everybody comes and puts their money in.

Because of two verses. Jesus said, when you give, you must give secretly. Nobody must know what you gave.

And even if they don't know the exact amount, they know that you're putting something in the offering bag or the box and you say that's got to be secret. The second thing Jesus said, you must give cheerfully. Well, when you stick a bag in front of somebody, you don't even know whether he's giving cheerfully or not.

He has to give because people are watching him. It may not be secret. It's not secret.

It may not be cheerful. So we dispensed with it. And not only in the one church we have, God's planted about 50 churches now in different parts of the world through this ministry.

And in every one of those churches, we never take an offering. We just put a box there. See, if you want to give, you give.

Nobody will know whether you put it or not. It's secret. And you don't have to give.

If you don't want to give, give cheerfully. And the other thing we decided was that we'd never make a report about our ministry. And we got that from Jesus and Paul.

Jesus and Paul shared with their close co-workers what they were doing. He told his disciples. Paul would tell his fellow apostles.

But they never published like you see in Christendom today, particularly now that the internet has come up. Websites describing what we're doing here, what we're doing there, what we're doing the other thing. And it's all a subtle way of telling people, support us.

See what we're doing for the Lord? It doesn't in an ugly, blatant way say give us money, but it's meaning the same thing. It's more subtle, that's all. And we decided we'd never speak about our ministry.

If you go to our church website, which you've had for many years, you will not see one single thing there about what we are doing for the Lord in India or anywhere else. You'll never see a list of all our branch churches or any such thing. You go to [cfcindia.com](http://cfcindia.com), you'll think it's just one church.

That's the way we want people to think about it. Jesus said, when you give, don't let anybody know. When you fast, don't let anybody know.

When you pray, don't let anybody know. Whenever you do anything for the Lord, don't let anybody know about it. Let it be hidden before the Lord.

Why do you want to advertise it? And we also decided that we would never make our needs known to anybody. And when people would write to us and say, we want to support your ministry, we finally had to put a page on our website saying, before you give, you have to fulfill five conditions. Number one, you must be born again.

You can't give to God's work if you're not his child. God doesn't want it. He wants your life first.

He wants your heart first. Number two, Jesus said, when you come with your offering, if you know that somebody's got something against you, Matthew 5, go and settle that. Then come and give your offering.

So that's the second condition. Have you got something against somebody? Is there some dispute? You have not settled with some brother, sister? Don't send your money to God. Don't send it to us.

We won't take it. Number three, it says in 1 Timothy 5.8 that if you don't take care of your own family, you're worse than an unbeliever. Take care of your family.

Do your children need that money? Do you need to feed them, clothe them, educate them? Maybe pay rent for a house? Give that and take care of them. Don't let your children suffer because saying you gave

money to CFC. No, keep it.

Number four, are you in debt? I don't mean a mortgage or a car loan because you've got some equivalent for that, for the bank loan. Your house is there or your car is there. That's not a debt.

But I'm talking about money that you borrowed, maybe just to spend on yourself or something. Render to Caesar first. What is Caesar? Then give to God.

What is God? There's one place in the Bible where Jesus told us to put man first before God. Did you know that? In every other place we put God first. But when it comes to money, if you owe money to Caesar, which is the government, IRS, or some individual or X, Y, or Z, give it to him first.

Render to Caesar what is Caesar's. Then give to God what is God's. Because if I owe money to you and I put money in the offering box, God says I don't want that man's money.

Give it back to him. So that's the fourth thing he said. If you're in debt, don't give us.

And number five, if you are giving because you want to get a reward from God. Like you hear so many preachers say, you give your tithe and God will bless you. Don't give.

You can't do business with God. God's not a businessman. He's not running a bank which promises so much interest for the money you give him.

No. So we've almost prevented most people from ever giving to us anything. I say once, and I say if you do succeed in going past all these filters, then you can send your money here.

I've seen people who've gone to that site because there's no other Christian website like that in the world. I challenge you to find one like that. Because people love money so much.

They're so eager to get it. Now we don't take that stand and we offer everything on our website free. Not because we're a bunch of millionaires.

If you come see our churches, you'll find many of them are very, very poor. But we believe that's the way Jesus, who was one of the poorest people in Israel, that's the way he conducted his ministry. Paul was a very poor man.

That's the way he conducted his ministry. But God took care of it. And we say, Lord, if you're the same in a country like India, you can take care of it today.

And he does. And he's done it for so many years. There's a lot more love of money in us than we think.

If you love the truth, you'll be saved from it. And you know what will be the result? You will become a servant of Almighty God. And I'll tell you the verse for that.

And we'll close with that. Luke 16, verse 11. Luke 16 and verse 11 says, I'm sorry, 13.

Luke 16, 13. No servant can serve two masters. Do you want to be a servant of God? That's what the Lord spoke to me many years ago.

If you want to serve me, you have to stop serving money. No one can serve two masters. You've got to hate one and love the other, hold on to one and despise the other.

And the two masters are God and money. Let me paraphrase. Let me read it, putting God and money into that verse.

No one can serve God and money. You either got to hate God and love money. You get that? Or you got to love money.

You got to love God and hate money. Or love money and hate God. Or hold on to God and despise money.

Or hold on to money and despise God. Are you despising God? Are you hating God without knowing it? I don't want to do it. I want to love the truth.

I take Jesus' words exactly. And I'll tell you, it's liberated me. God opens my eyes to see things in the scriptures that I never saw for years.

I sometimes take a verse and say, listen, have you seen that? And people say, boy, I read that so long I never saw it. It's a wonderful thing when God begins to open our eyes. If you love the truth, you'll not only see the truth in scripture, you'll be saved from those sins the Bible describes.

There are many, many other things like this, my brothers. If we say the Lord is coming soon, the important thing is not just knowing more of scripture and going regularly to church service. Seek to be saved from everything un-Christ-like in your life.

I saw as I looked at the life of Jesus that there was zero love of money in him. He used money. He saved money.

Judas Iscariot's bag was like a savings account. That's all okay, but he never loved it. He used it to serve his father.

May God help us. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, we pray that you'll help every one of us to have more light on ourselves, to be free.

Knowing the truth, you know that you said the truth will set us free. Help us to love the truth so that we can be saved.

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