

Balance of Truth - 1

by Zac Poonen

The balance of truth is essential for progress in the Christian life, where faith and works are both important, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by believing.

Duration: 58:17

Scripture: Matthew 22:36, 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Balance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance of truth in Christianity. He compares a Christian with one strong wing of truth to a bird flying in circles, lacking forward progress. The speaker encourages Christians to seek progress rather than mere movement in their spiritual lives. He also highlights the need to seek God's will and honor Him, rather than making money the goal. The ultimate aim is to become perfect and lacking in no area, with God filling up any weaknesses and providing extra coaching in areas where we are lacking.

Transcript

So, our subject is the balance of truth. A lot of wrong doctrines have come in Christianity, not because of error, but because one truth is magnified so much to the exclusion of another truth, or because another truth is neglected completely. Now, the danger of that is that it's like a bird with one wing.

What do you think a bird would happen to a bird if it flew with one wing? It could fly, but it would keep flying in circles. And that's what happens to a Christian who's got one strong wing, one side of truth, and the other side not so strong. You see that Christian after many years, he's in the same spot spiritually, even though he has moved.

He's constantly active and moving, but another person observing can say, this is only movement, there's no forward progress. You can have a lot of movement without progress. We don't need movement in the Christian life, we need progress.

And for progress, it's important to have both wings. And that is why we need to study the scriptures, because God has given us his word to make us complete. Let me show you a verse in 2 Timothy 3. All scripture is inspired by God, and it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, complete, adequate, equipped for every good work.

The word perfect or complete is something that is found frequently in the New Testament. There is no perfection in the old covenant. There's no victory over sin in the old covenant.

There was anointing of the Holy Spirit in the old covenant. David was anointed, Saul was anointed, Elisha was anointed, but there was no victory over sin. There was no perfection.

There was no example of God having become man. There were great men, like Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, the greatest. But there was no example who could turn to people and say, follow me.

Nobody in the Old Testament could say, follow me. And nobody in the Old Testament could press on to perfection. Now this is very interesting, because when you look at all the Christian groups that call us heretics and false teachers, you know why they call us false teachers and heretics? Because we preach victory over sin.

Because we preach perfection. Because we preach that we can follow Jesus, who lived on earth as a man. These three things that were not found in the Old Testament, we preach it, and so all Christians who are living under the Old Covenant will fight it.

You say, this is not Christianity. Why? Because they are living under the Old Covenant. But you say they are anointed.

So were people under the Old Covenant anointed. Elisha was anointed. You say they have healing gifts.

Sure. Elisha, Elijah had healing gifts. But what did they lack in the Old Covenant? But they did not have perfection, they did not have victory over sin, they did not have an example like Jesus who could say, follow me.

So I'm not surprised when people who live in the Old Covenant and experience only Old Covenant stuff oppose anything like this. God has given the Scriptures so that we might be perfect. The Apostle Paul said in Colossians chapter 1, he said, Colossians 1 verse 28, we proclaim Christ, we don't proclaim a doctrine.

We proclaim Jesus Christ. And lifting up Jesus Christ, we admonish every man. That means we correct people.

We teach every man with all wisdom. Wisdom means practical daily Christian life. So that we may present every man complete, perfect in Christ with both sides balanced.

That was the purpose with which Paul preached. He said we preach Christ who was perfectly balanced and we admonish people saying, look at him and look at yourself, fill up what is lacking. And teaching every man in all wisdom, the areas where they are lacking compared to Christ, who was the perfect example of the balanced, complete, perfect man.

Very few people preach Christ like that. The only way a lot of people preach Christ today is He died for your sins. Believe in Him.

But not as an example for us to follow. And for this purpose to present every man, not one or two believers here and there. Paul's desire was every believer in the church should be balanced.

He says, for this purpose I labor. And you know how hard he labored, how many letters he wrote, how much he traveled preaching. Once in Ephesus he told them for three years, I preached to you day and

night, 2000 sermons in three years.

That was Paul. He labored day and night preaching, teaching according to the mighty power of God which worked in him to make people perfect. So that was the purpose of Paul's preaching.

See what James says in James chapter 1. All of us who are Christians face many, many trials in our life. If you don't face any trials in your life, you are probably not wholeheartedly following Jesus. But everyone who wholeheartedly follows Jesus faces trials in his life.

And it says in James chapter 1, verse 2. Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter these various trials. Now how can we consider it joy when we encounter trial and testing? Exactly like when you send your children to school to write an examination. Many of you just finished an SSLC or ICSE examination.

And your parents did not hold you back at home saying, oh the examination is going to be tough, please don't go today to school. In fact, even if you had a fever, they would send you. Even if they didn't send you on other days, on the trial day, the testing day, the examination day, they'd send you.

Why? Exactly the same reason it's written here. Consider it all joy when you face a test. Because you know that at the end of that examination, if you pass, you're going to get a promotion.

You're not going to sit in the same class. And then you get excited. That's why everybody waits for the results.

Hey, I got a first class. I got promoted. I'm in the next class now.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, in the Christian life when God sends an examination into your life. A test, a temptation to test you. It's exactly like school examinations.

Knowing that, the testing of your faith. Remember, in every test in the Christian life, it's one thing that's tested, your faith. In the schools, they test maths, physics, chemistry, geography, history, all that.

In the Christian life, it's only faith. Do you believe? Do you believe that God is more important than all created things? Pretty women, gold, everything created, God is more important. That's the test.

A lot of people say, no, God is not more important. This thing is important. That thing is important.

Okay, you fail the test. Those who say God is more important, they pass the test. Or the test is, do you believe that God's approval is more important than man's approval? That's another test.

It's a test of faith. I believe God's approval is more important than man's approval. Some people say, no, what my father says is important for me.

Okay, go ahead. What God says is not so important. Your choice.

You fail the test. Sure. Or the third test, the third area of faith could be, do you believe God's word is true or what the devil tells you is true? The devil puts fear, fear, fear, discouragement.

You say, yeah, yeah, yeah, it's true. You fail the test. But if you believe God's word, which says, I'll never leave you, nor forsake you, you pass the test.

So it's a trial of your faith. Every test is a test of whether you believe. And if you pass, allow it to bring that perfect result.

You will become, verse 4, perfect. You will get your degree. You will graduate.

And you will be lacking in nothing. And that balance will come level. Lacking in nothing means one side of you may be very imbalanced right now.

And God will send you some test so that it gets level. I mean, for example, if you're very good at mathematics and very poor at Hindi, will your parents send you for mathematics tuition or Hindi tuition? Can you fast and pray and tell me the answer to that one? Hindi tuition, simple, because that's your weak subject. So if one particular area in your Christian life is weak, God is going to allow you to be tempted in that area.

He gives you special tuition. So you find, you say, hey, I'm getting temptation after temptation after temptation in one area. That's like your child saying, hey, I'm being sent for Hindi tuition, Hindi tuition, Hindi tuition every day.

Brother, that's your weak subject. God wants you to get 100%. He doesn't need you to give, He doesn't need to give you tuition in other subjects because you're already okay there.

So we need to know the areas in your life where we are okay. God allows us to be tested just like any sensible father. Sends his children for tuition in the subject where he's weak.

And that's where you need extra coaching classes. What is the aim? So that you become perfect, lacking in nothing. So that you get 100% in every subject.

So that's why James says, rejoice in trial. So whether it's scripture or preaching or trial. I showed you three verses.

The aim of everything is to make us perfect, balanced. That's the meaning. Lacking in no area.

Lacking in no area. And if one area is lacking, God fills it up. If the right hand is weak, He strengthens that.

If the left hand is weak, He strengthens that. So we want to try and study together in these three evening Bible studies, six areas where we need to be balanced. And the first one I'd like to show you is from Ephesians and chapter 2. It's the area of faith and works.

Think of the two sides of a balance. Faith and works. Which is more important? Which is the area where you need some special tuition? Where you need to get a little extra help? Which is the area where you are heavy and which is the area where you are light? Faith and works.

Ephesians chapter 2. We need to see where the Bible says works are useless. Yeah. Do you know the Bible says works are useless in some area? That's like saying it's useless putting a door in the foundation.

Right or wrong? It's useless putting a window in the foundation. Who puts windows and doors in the foundation? But what is useless in the foundation is very useful in the superstructure. Every house has got doors and windows but nothing in the foundation.

No works in the foundation but plenty of works in the superstructure. That's what you see in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8 onwards. But by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God not as a result of works. Isaiah 64 verse 6 says all our righteous works are like filthy rags in God's eyes. That means if I try to stand before God like a lot of religions think that one day God will take a balance and find out how many good works I did, how many bad works I did and if the good works are more I'll go to heaven and if the bad works are more I'll go to hell.

That's like a judge sitting in a court and a man has committed 10 murders on one side and say okay tell me all the good deeds that you did. Oh you did 25 good deeds. Okay you can go.

Does it work like that in any court? A man who committed 10 murders but he did 25 good deeds so the judge says you can go. It doesn't work in a human court. It won't work in the divine court.

People have been hanged for one murder. So sin cannot be atoned for by a whole lot of good works. Even a million good works cannot atone for one murder.

You can be hanged for one murder even if you say well I did a million good works. That's how exactly, that's the falsity of a lot of teaching that goes on where you think that God will see your good works and overlook your bad works. It's not true.

You can't atone for a sin by giving money to God or going for more meetings or any such thing. Not of works lest any man should boast because people can boast I did this I did that for the Lord. But salvation is by faith.

But after that there's plenty of room for works after that like the foundation is laid then there is room for works as you read in the next verse. We are God's workmanship. That means when we are born again God made us a new creation.

Created in Christ Jesus now to do plenty of good works. Good works which God planned long before we were born that we should walk in them that we should do them. Do you know my brother sister if you are born again that long before the worlds were created God knew you by name.

And he wrote down in a book in heaven you read that in Psalm 139 with your name all the things all the good works that you are supposed to do after you are born again. That's a huge list of what you are supposed to do after you are born again. That's the meaning of this verse.

And if you realize that 50 years after you are born again you wasted your life. I thank God I realized it about one and a half years after I was born again when I got baptized. And that so gripped my heart.

And I said Lord oh boy I really want to finish all of that which you have written down. I don't know whether you have that passion. If you have that passion you'll have a tremendous longing to find out God what's your will? What's written in the book concerning me? You won't be disturbed by anything that happens around you because God will control all the circumstances concerning your life.

I know sometimes I plan to travel somewhere by air go somewhere and it doesn't work out that I can go then. Then I plan it for another time. And I've always prayed this prayer.

I said Lord in your book you have planned where I should be each day of every month of every year. I want to be in that place. Even if it's in a jail for preaching the gospel.

That's where I want to be. I don't want to be out of that place if that's where God wants me to be on a particular day of a particular month of a particular year. That will be the best place in the world for me.

Now most human beings don't have that understanding. They think the best place is where I can sit comfortably and relax. No sir.

The best place is the center of God's will for your life. And for Paul that was a few years in jail. You know that if Paul was not in jail he would not have written some of these letters.

Thank God he was in jail for a little while. My point is that sometimes God may want you in a place where it's inconvenient. That's the best place for you.

But he won't send you there if he sees that you don't have a terrific passion to fulfill everything written in that book. Very few people have that passion. Most Christians just drift along.

You know I've been on the high seas when I was in the Navy and I used to see sometimes logs of wood lying floating on the sea. And bottles floating. I mean you don't know where that bottle is going to end up.

When the wave goes this way it goes this way. When the wave goes this way it goes this way. But the ship that I was on was not going like this and that.

The ship had a destination. We have to reach such and such a place by tomorrow evening. And we get there.

And the next day we start from there and say we got to be there in three days time. And we get there. But this bottle and this log of wood they don't have any plan.

They're just moving. Moving. They're here.

They're there. They're in the conference. And then another conference.

But there's no getting to the place where God wants them to be. Don't let your life be like that. You know God can overrule your decisions.

Most of you or all of you perhaps are in jobs. I was also in a job in the Navy and I believe that God controlled naval headquarters decisions concerning where they would post me. On which ship.

My heavenly father determined that because I was a child of God. Because he had a plan for my life and matters over which I had no control. Like naval headquarters posting me.

That was God's decision. He would take care of that. Matters over which I had a control.

Oh I've got to make money. I've got to go here. That God will allow me to go astray.

If I make that my goal. It's good to earn money. Nothing wrong in it.

I've always encouraged people to take the best job available. But don't let making money be your goal. And don't love money.

Seek God's will. Seek to honor him. And you will not miss those works which God has planned itself beforehand.

You know this gripped me so much. That I said Lord when I stand before you and you open that book and say. You know on so and so day I wanted you to be here.

And I wanted you to do this. And this day I wanted you to be here and I wanted you to do this. You were lazy and lying around doing nothing and you missed all that.

The next day you did something okay. But you missed four or five days in between. And the next day I wanted you to do this.

And you didn't do it. You wasted another five six days. And then one day you did something.

I don't want the Lord to tell me that. I want to take every day of my life seriously because life is so short. We don't have a thousand years on this earth.

How many more years do all of us have. If Jesus comes soon. Twenty thirty years at the most.

I don't know. Perhaps less. And even if you live a full lifetime.

Seventy eighty years. Don't you want to do the works that God planned beforehand for you. Don't waste your time comparing yourself with somebody else's gifts.

Say Lord I have faith. I want works. Now we need both.

Let me just say a word about faith. By faith we are saved. It's very important to know that our salvation is by believing.

We receive the Holy Spirit by believing. Not by works. Don't think that you can be baptized in the Holy Spirit by fasting and praying and doing a lot of sacrifices.

That's false teaching. That's like if somebody comes to you and asks you how can my sins be forgiven. And you say you've got to fast.

You've got to pray. And you've got to take up your cross every day. And maybe after two or three years God will forgive your sins.

Now if you heard me preaching that message. What would you call me. Correctly a false teacher.

But if I tell you in order to receive the Holy Spirit you must fast. You must pray. You must take up the cross.

And maybe after two or three years of praying God will give it to you. You will not call me a false teacher. That is how ignorant we are about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We've got our ideas from Pentecostal preachers or some other preachers and not from the Bible. Salvation includes two things that God offers. Let me show it to you in Acts of the Apostles in the first gospel message.

The first gospel message was the right one. And the Apostle Peter said when people came to Peter and said verse 37 what shall we do. Peter said repent.

Verse 38. Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this promise is for you and your children and for all those who are far off in India and Bangalore in 2006.

As many as the Lord our God will call to himself. This promise applies to everybody. What is that? Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

God's gift. Let me ask you again what is it? Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. What do you got to do? Repent.

Be baptized as a symbol of your faith. Did he say that if you repent and believe and get baptized you'll get forgiveness of sins and then you got to fast and pray and do so many other things and then you'll get the gift of the Holy Spirit. That is what you hear today.

It's not what Peter preached. There are a lot of false gospels today and this is just one of them. It doesn't look false.

I'll tell you why it doesn't look false. Because in our human nature there is a tendency to love a religion of works. Because we get some satisfaction.

You know supposing you worked hard for 10 years and you got something you can be proud of it. But if somebody gave you a gift how can you be proud of that? That's the difference. And that's why you see some people are proud of the fact I'm baptized in the Holy Spirit.

You never see them proud of the fact my sins are forgiven. Why is that? Because they got the forgiveness of sins by faith and whatever else they got they thought they got it because of works. Don't ever forget many of you who are confused about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I'll tell you when will you receive it? Show me that non-christian man who is struggling to get forgiveness of sins, who goes on pilgrimages, gives money to the beggars and does so many things and works hard and prays and fasts in order to get forgiveness of sins. When will he get forgiveness of sins? Can you tell me? When? Never. When will you get the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Never.

Same thing. It's a false gospel. It is by faith.

No works. You're trying to put windows and doors in the foundation. No place for that.

Let me show you Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. Paul says you foolish Galatians. You foolish people. Who has bewitched you? Who has anesthetized you? Who has fooled you into this wrong doctrine? I want to ask you something.

Did you guys receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing with faith? How did you receive the Holy Spirit? Is it because you deserved it? I know the times when God has filled me with the Holy Spirit, crisis times, and I'll tell you, if I draw a graph of my life from the time I was born again, at the times when I really thought I deserved to be filled with the Spirit, He didn't fill me with the Holy Spirit. But when the graph of my life went down to the bottom and I thought, boy, that's the last place that God can ever fill me with the Holy Spirit, that's when He filled me with the Holy Spirit. To teach me one thing, that I don't give you the Holy Spirit because you deserve.

You will never deserve. I don't give you the Holy Spirit because of works. You've done no works.

You've messed up your whole life. I learned something. Does God give you forgiveness of sins after you've attained some height or when you're in a mess, upstate? When did the thief on the cross get forgiveness of sins? Not after he said everything right.

Just as he was, he came. And I want to tell you that you can come just as you are by faith and receive this salvation which is forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It's by faith.

There's no works there. We need to be balanced in our understanding. And so, here is something which is very clear.

And that's why in the early, in the Acts of the Apostles, you know, people, the day they were converted, the apostles would say, come on, now you've got to receive the Holy Spirit now. But then people say, how do I know I'm not fooling myself? Right. How do you know you're not fooling yourself that your sins are forgiven? Do you see some vision? How do you know you're not fooling yourself that you're born again? I ask people that question.

How do you know your sins are forgiven? Oh, he says the Holy Spirit is born witness to me. From the word and from the inner witness. Exactly.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the same witness again concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From the word and from the inner witness of the Spirit. Why don't you ask him to do that? We need assurance.

I know that I got assurance that my sins were forgiven long time after I actually got my sins forgiven. Some people get it the same day. I didn't get it the same day.

My sins were forgiven one day. I don't know when. Sometime back, sometime later, I was sure.

Now, that doesn't mean that I got forgiveness of sins when I was sure. I was sure here, but I was forgiven over there earlier. You know, it's something like some money is deposited in your bank.

You don't know about it. And you go and get your passbook entered one month later and say, hey, some money here. When did it come? One month ago.

Oh, it was there all along, but I knew it only one month later. Assurance is like that. So when we come to God with a sincere heart, I want to encourage all of you who are in doubt about the Holy Spirit's baptism and fullness and receiving the Holy Spirit.

You can settle it today. If you come to Jesus and say, Lord, I've come with a clean heart to the best of my knowledge. You know, you can't get forgiveness of sins if you don't repent.

It's not only faith. It's repentance plus faith. That's what Peter said.

Repent. That means turn around. You're not saying that you're perfect, but you turn around and say, Lord, I want to live for you.

I want to confess my sin. And to the best of my knowledge, every sin is confessed to God. To the best of my knowledge, I don't have any bitterness against any man.

I've forgiven everybody. And I've asked forgiveness from those whom I've hurt. My conscience is clear.

Now, Lord, the cup is clean. Is your cup clean? Your conscience clear towards God and towards man? Your cup is clean. You can ask God to fill you with the Spirit immediately.

Lord, my cup is clean. Fill me with the Holy Spirit right now. And say, Lord, I receive by faith what you give me because Jesus died for me.

Not only that my sins may be forgiven, but that I might receive the Holy Spirit. And once you pray that prayer and you have faith in your heart, you say, Lord, now give me an assurance that you fill me with the Holy Spirit. Don't compare yourself with me or some other older mature brother.

Because the fullness of the Spirit has got different levels. If a cup is full, it's full. If a bucket is full, it's full.

If a tub is full, it's full. If a pond is full, it's full. And if a river is full, it's full.

But there's a lot of difference between a river being full and a cup being full. And you're only a cup. So you don't expect to have as much water in a cup as some godly older brother who's got a river flowing through him.

That's the mistake some people make. They say, oh, if I get filled with the Spirit, I'll be able to do all those things that brother does. Yeah, maybe after 40 years.

Not today. You know, our capacity has to increase. But you don't have to wait 40 years to be filled with the Spirit for the cup to become a river.

It'll take 40 years, but you can be filled now. And when a newborn believer is filled with the Spirit, he can be like a cup filled and the Apostle Paul was filled with the Spirit at the end of his life. Rivers were flowing through him.

Both were filled, but the capacity was fantastically different. You know, it's like the capacity of a hall. You say a hall was filled with people.

What is the next question you ask? What is the capacity? Only ten. Ten people. OK.

Hall was filled. Another fellow says, our hall was also filled. What is the capacity? Ten thousand.

Oh ho. So you see the difference between being filled, but you can't say that hall with ten people was not filled. It was filled.

Nobody else could sit there. So, many people make this mistake. Some people say, oh, I must speak in tongues.

Well, if God wants to give it to you, He'll give it to you. You can ask Him for it. You can ask God for anything.

But don't get into a panic if God doesn't give it to you immediately. One day when your heart is full of thanks and you find yourself wanting to express yourself to God and you don't have words in the English language, speak out to God. He understands whatever is coming from your heart.

But don't wait for that. You cannot receive the Holy Spirit by works. It's by faith.

So when it says by grace are you saved through faith, you've got to get that foundation right. From there you can move on to works. But if you don't get that foundation right of our sins being forgiven and God giving me the Holy Spirit, you're going to have a lot of problem when you move on to works.

It'll be a mixture. It'll be like that balance. One side this way and one side heavy.

And you're going to have problems all your life. So I want to encourage all of you to settle that once and for all today. Lord, my conscience is clear and I want to open my heart to receive the Holy Spirit by faith.

And I want you to give me an assurance. And if there's something I have to set right, would somebody tell me? I'll do it. But I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit today.

God is very exact. I remember years ago a young brother was getting baptized in CFC. And you know before baptism we asked him to give a testimony.

And he said in his testimony, Jesus has called me to follow him. And therefore I believe that if when Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit came on him immediately after that, I'm going to be baptized today, the Holy Spirit will come upon me immediately too. What does God do to that? According to your faith, be it unto you.

The other fellow says, oh well, I'm not so sure. Okay, according to your faith, be it unto you. It won't be true in your case.

See, God appreciates those who are daring and bold and say, Lord, I trust you. You promised it in scripture, it's for me. So, once that faith is there, then we move on to see works is like the superstructure.

Now this is the mistake some people make. Some people, as I told you, they are trying to get their salvation by works. That's wrong.

There are other people who say, well, we've got it all by faith. There's no need for works now. You know, I'm going to heaven, praise the Lord, my sins are all forgiven.

And no matter what I do, I can be a drunkard, I can divorce my wife. I can do what I like, I'm going to heaven. Sorry, you're wrong.

If you don't have works, it proves that your faith was not real. Or maybe it was real once, but you lost it. Maybe your name was in the book of life, but it got rubbed out.

You say, wait a minute, Brother Zach, you mean to say my name can be rubbed out of the book of life? Well, don't quote me. Argue with Jesus. Let's see what he said in Revelation chapter 3. In Revelation chapter 3, he says in verse 5, this is to Christians, to the elder of a church and to a church in Sardis.

He says, he who overcomes, Revelation 3, 5, will thus be clothed in white garments. And I, Jesus, will not erase his name from the book of life. What is the meaning of that? I will not erase his name from the book of life.

Now I want to ask you a simple question. Will Jesus erase anybody's name from the book of life? What do you think? Yes or no? Or was he like your mother when you were a little baby and you didn't eat your food? She said, I'll call the police. You ate up your food because you didn't want your mother to call the police.

Supposing you didn't eat your food, what would your mother do? Would she call the police and send you to the police station? You know she wouldn't do that. It was only a threat. We grow up with these empty lies that our mothers tell us.

And one day we see Jesus saying, I'll erase your name from the book of life. That's like my mother. She used to say all types of things.

Jesus said, I'll erase your name from the book of life as if he's going to do it. My mother didn't call the police. And Jesus will not erase my name from the book of life.

You're going to get a big surprise. Because Jesus is not like your lying mother. He is the truth.

He doesn't make empty threats. If he says he'll do something, he'll do something. When he says, if you do this, I won't do this, I won't do it.

But what about if you don't listen to that? So I have no doubt in my mind because let God be true and every man a liar. Let your mother and father all be liars, but God is true. So what I say is, maybe you were once saved.

But you probably lost it. You prove that by your life. By their fruit, Jesus said, you shall know them.

Not by their gifts. Do you know a man can lose his salvation and still have all the gifts to preach powerfully? To do miracles. Because Jesus said, one day some people will come to him and say, Lord, we did miracles in your name.

And Jesus said, yeah, that's right. But you can go to hell. Because I didn't see any fruit in your life.

That means they were once saved, sought God, were anointed by the Holy Spirit, received certain gifts. And then they lost their salvation, but God didn't take away their gifts. You say, why didn't God take away their gifts? Have you ever given birthday gifts to somebody who has become your enemy today? I have.

But I don't go to them and say, you remember that birthday gift I gave you 20 years ago? Please return it. Even I don't do it. I'm sure you don't do it.

God doesn't do it either. When he gives a gift to a man, he says, okay, keep it. You become my enemy? Okay, keep that birthday gift I gave you.

Greatest proof of it is the devil. The Lord gave Satan certain gifts when he was a pure holy angel in heaven. One day he rebelled against God and went away.

God says, keep your gifts. But you won't get grace. You won't get the anointing.

That's why when you look at a man, don't look at his gifts. See whether he's got grace in his life. See whether he's got anointing in his life.

See whether he's got the fruit of the spirit of Christlikeness in his life. Then you won't be deceived. Otherwise, you'll follow the wrong leaders and go astray.

So works. Follow faith. And if we don't have works, James says.

In James chapter 2. He says, faith without works is dead. James chapter 2 verse, the last verse it says, Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. What he's saying is, You can have all the correct doctrines like you can have all the members of your body.

10 fingers, 10 toes, 2 eyes, 2 ears. And you can have all the doctrines in the New Testament. But if you don't have works, it's like a dead man who's got all the members of his body.

What's the use of that? So what do we learn from that verse? You know when you read a verse like that, you must meditate on it. Many people don't meditate on it. Sometimes people ask me, where do you get all these thoughts from? I just meditate on the verse.

That's all. I don't rush to the next verse. I sometimes read a verse for a long time.

A body, I think of it like this. A body without breath is like faith without works. So then I meditate on that.

I say, what is the most important thing in my body? Is it my toes, my hands, my ears? No, it's breath. I can go without all this, but I can't live without breath. So in other words, works is as important as breath in my life, in my Christian life.

That's from that verse. And that is the proof that my faith is alive. The proof that I'm alive is not that I've got ten fingers.

The proof that I'm alive is not that I've got two ears. Dead people have got that too. The proof that I'm alive is that I've got breath.

So the proof that you're alive is not that you believe Jesus Christ is God. He died for your sins. He's the son of God.

He came to earth. He became a man. And you know the Apostle's Creed.

I believe in him. He stood before Pontius Pilate and I don't... I never said it, so I don't remember all of it. But anyway, he rose again and he went to heaven.

He's coming back and all that. You can believe all that and be dead. As dead as the devil.

Because it's not producing fruit in your life. It's not become a living thing. So faith must lead to works.

Always. And those works are which we saw in Ephesians 2. Those which God has planned from before the foundation of the world for you to fulfill. So let's ask God to show us when you think of the balance.

Lord, which is the area where I need to be more balanced? Is it faith that I'm lacking? Or works that I'm lacking? I want both in my life. Well, there's a lot more on that, but I don't have time to stop there. I want to go on to the next point.

Because I want to try and cover two points every day these three days. The next is the answer that Jesus gave in Matthew chapter 22. We need to be balanced in love for God and love for man.

It's like this balance. Which is more important? Love for God or love for man? You need both. Somebody once came to Jesus in Matthew chapter 22 and asked him, Teacher, verse 36, What is the one great commandment in the law? You know, he expected Jesus to say the Sabbath or something like that.

You know, that's what the Seventh-day Adventist would say. The Sabbath. But Jesus didn't say the Sabbath.

In fact, he wrote the Sabbath most of the time according to the Jewish understanding of the Sabbath. And he said, I can't give you one commandment because it's like a coin that's got two sides. And I've got to tell you two sides if you want to get it.

It's not one, but it's two, but yet it's one. It's like a coin. It's one coin, but it's got two sides.

And you know, one of your coins doesn't have anything printed on the other side. It's a false coin, counterfeit. So he says, it's like one coin.

You ask me, which is the one great commandment? Yeah, it's one great commandment, but it's got two sides to it. One, you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, with all your mind. One side of the human body.

The balance, the other side. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Now, if you look at your life, you may find one of these areas is stronger than the other.

It's like this balance, which is a little tilted to one side, because one side is heavier. I think with most of us, we love God more than we love our fellow men. Our imbalance is more towards, we love God, we go for meetings, we read the Bible, and more and more and more and more we are leaning to one side.

Good. I think we need a little weight on the other side also, to love that other person in the church. Whose face you don't like.

Or that other sister who rubs you the wrong way. Ah, we say, I want to love God more, I want to love God more. We get all like this.

It's crazy. It's crazy. You know, to use another illustration, if you got a steering wheel, whether it's a scooter or a car or anything, and you sort of drift aimlessly onto one side, and you've gone way off the main road, onto the fields and everything else, and somebody says, hey, what are you doing in the fields, man? Turn left.

You say, no, I like this, and I keep going this way. This is the craziness of some people. You're going to turn, man, and come back to the main track.

You're already loving God enough, why not start loving people a little more? Jesus said it's the two sides of the coin. And I believe this is the area where we are tremendously imbalanced. And you say, Brother Zach, are there any people who are imbalanced the other way, who love man and don't love God? Lots of people.

You know the social gospel? A lot of Christians who say when we go to a place, we must teach them to dig wells, grow better crops, give them a better education, build hospitals for them, and serve them in their hospitals, and do so many things for them, treat the lepers and treat this. Is that bad? Not at all bad. Excellent.

What about leading some of these people to Christ? Oh, that'll come. When? After they die? It never comes. This is social work.

Let's do this, and let's do that, and let's do the other thing. And some people go beyond that and say, let's restore justice in all these nations where people are being oppressed. And the communist party say Jesus was the first Marxist communist.

He really cared for the poor. And that's the social gospel. They don't have place for God and all that.

God, Bible, none of all that. Care for the poor. Service to man is service to God.

Which verse is that? Hezekiah 23, 5. Look it up. Hezekiah 23, 3rd chapter, verse 5. Hezekiah 23, verse 5. Found it? Service to man is service to God. You'll also find it repeated in Revelation 23.

Turn to Revelation 23. What's happening? Service to man is service to God. Do you know the number of lies that Christians believe? I'll tell you another verse.

God helps those who help themselves. Revelation 23 is a huge chapter. I don't have time to read all the verses from there.

Just give you a little sample. So there are people imbalanced the other way. But I don't think we are imbalanced the other way.

So we need not worry about them. I mean if I were speaking to a liberal community of people who didn't believe being born again like a lot of social gospel churches, I'd probably preach that there. But not here.

Here our problem is, we think we can love God without loving our fellow human beings. It's just not possible. See, 1 John chapter 4. 1 John chapter 4. 1 John chapter 4. If someone says, verse 20, I love God.

And he hates his brother. He's not a believer. He's not a disciple.

John says, there is another name for him. What is it? Liar. Like we call somebody brother so and so.

What should we call this person? Liar so and so. Do you want the name liar in front of you instead of brother? I'll tell you how to get that title. Just say you love God and hate your brother.

Or sister. You'll get that title very easily. Probably you already got it.

Get rid of it. Get rid of that title in front of your name. Say, Lord, I'm not a liar.

I don't want to be one. I have been a liar. You know, if you want to be free from lying, you've got to first acknowledge that you are a liar.

How many of you will honestly acknowledge? I'm not going to ask you to raise your hands. How many of you will honestly acknowledge in your heart that you're a liar? That you say you love God and there's somebody you hate. There's somebody you've got a bitterness against.

That's the liar. There's somebody you don't want to talk to. There's somebody you meet, you've got this weak smile.

You know that. Why this weak smile? Because you can't, you've got something in your heart against that person. You are the liar.

Miss liar. Master liar. Mrs. Liar.

Mr. Liar. Doctor liar. Professor liar.

Whatever it is. Liar. Because you say you love God and you don't love your brother.

Do you know that atheists can never become liars? In this way. Why? Why? Because they don't say they love God. Here the condition is, you say you love God.

Atheist says, God, I don't even believe He exists. So he can hate everybody. But you are different.

You're not an atheist. You say, I love God. Oh Jesus.

Look at some of the songs we sing. Oh. Whenever you sing those songs about love for Jesus, think about that other person.

That difficult person. And see whether you can love that person. Otherwise, tell yourself, you're looking into the mirror.

Judge yourself. God says, not good. All the other areas good, but this area, not good.

Imbalanced. Take it seriously. Imbalanced.

But keep that picture of a balance in your mind. Which side are you heavy? Which side do you need to work on? Say, Lord, help me by your Holy Spirit to work in this area so that I don't become like this half muscular man, the other side weak. In fact, John says, you're fooling yourself.

You're not half muscular. You are a skeleton all through. Because when you don't love your brother, you don't actually love God.

That's what he's saying. You imagine that you love God, because you sing all those songs. He doesn't say, if a man loves God and hates his brother.

Just read carefully. This is where we got to meditate. He doesn't say, if a man loves God and hates his brother.

That is impossible. What it says is, if a man says or sings, I love God. Or testifies.

He says, he sings, he testifies. He doesn't actually love God. He says, he sings, he testifies.

He doesn't actually love God. He's not really muscular this side. He's pretending.

He's a skeleton all through. Because you can't love God and not love your brother. The two go together.

If you love God, you love your brother. Both those weights will increase at the same height. But if you say you love God, that can increase your weight on one side tremendously.

Praise you Jesus. I love you, I love you, I love you. It's all words.

It's not real love. Real love is tested on the other side. There's nothing there.

There's somebody you hate. You got a bitterness against somebody. You haven't forgiven someone.

So these are areas where we need to think about. Love your neighbor as yourself. God does not permit us to have a bitterness against one human being in the whole world.

If you got a bitterness against one human being in the whole world, I want to tell you in Jesus name, you don't love God. You can sing as much as you like, but you don't love God. You'll hear the truth here.

If there is someone anywhere whom you cannot look straight in the face, you say, well, I can't look at that person. That person said so much evil against me. Okay, fine.

You don't love God. Just remember that. If there's one human being whom you can't look at, whom you can't smile at, you don't love God.

And if it is a brother or sister in Christ, I don't care which denomination, some brother or sister in Christ and sometimes in your own church, whom you can't look straight in the face and give a strong smile and look happy when you meet that person, I don't care how much you sing, I want to tell you in Jesus name, you just don't love God. We're fooling ourselves. We've been fooling ourselves for years.

God's opening our eyes and says, restore the balance. You don't really love me at all. You just say and you sing that you love me.

The test of your love for me is how much you love that difficult person. Let's pray.

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