

Be Ready For Christ's Return

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of growing in love for Jesus Christ and one another, highlighting the need to avoid the love of self, money, and pleasure that can lead to a decrease in love for God. It urges believers to seek the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome these hindrances and to focus on abounding in love to establish their hearts in holiness before God's coming.

Scripture: 2 Peter 3:3, 2 Peter 3:9, Genesis 6:3, Matthew 24:12, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 2 Timothy 3:1, Romans 12:16, 1 Corinthians 11:31

Topics: "Growing in Love", "Overcoming Hindrances to Love"

Description

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Transcript

So as every year goes by, for us it is one year closer to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and we are living in a generation that is seeing many of the signs that Jesus spoke about. We read in 2nd Peter chapter 3, 2nd Peter 3 and verse 3, know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying where is the promise of his coming, that is of Christ's coming. For ever since the fathers fell asleep, everything continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.

But when they say this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God, the heavens existed long ago, was formed out of water, through water and the world was then destroyed, being flooded with water. But by his word, the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But don't let this one fact escape your notice beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day.

So it was only two days ago, that Jesus died and rose again in God's eyes, just two days ago. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you. He doesn't say patient towards the world, he's writing in verse one, beloved, he's writing to believers.

And the Lord is patient towards you believers, not wishing that any of you believers should perish, but all should come to repentance. See that, you know when you read the because they read too fast, they think that verse refers to all the unbelievers, that the Lord is waiting for the whole world to come to repentance. I mean, that all to come to repentance, that will never happen.

The way to life is narrow, very few find it. I'm not waiting for the whole world to come to repentance, it will never happen. But the Lord is hoping that all his children, who are born again, who have things wrong in their lives, habits they have not given up, matters not set right with other believers, that they will come to repentance.

Read carefully, the Lord is patient towards you, that's why he is waiting, that's why he hasn't come yet, thank God, because some of you have not set matters right with others whom you have wronged, or who wronged you and you haven't forgiven them, something, some strained relationship. If the other person is the cause of it, you're not guilty. But if you are the cause of it, the Lord is patient, waiting for you to come to repentance, so that you don't perish.

Can a believer perish if he doesn't come to repentance? There are numerous verses in the Bible that speak that, and here is one of them. So why is the Lord delaying his coming? According to 2nd Peter 3.9, because some of his children have not yet set matters right. Another year has gone by and they have still not set certain matters right.

They made new year resolutions, but there are still grudges in their heart, there are things they haven't forgiven others for, and the Lord is waiting, but he will not wait forever. You know, Jesus said, the last days will be like the days of Noah. You remember that in Matthew 24, but I want to show you something in the days of Noah, in Genesis chapter 6, what the Lord said in the days of Noah.

In the days of Noah, people used to live for nearly 1,000 years. Most people lived up to, I mean, Methuselah was the longest, nobody crossed 1,000, but Methuselah lived up to 969, and a lot of people lived beyond 900 years. And then, after the flood, suddenly, the length of man's life dropped to about 200 or 230 years.

It was a sudden drop by 75 percent, and then once Abraham's generation started, there was nobody who crossed 200 years, and now it is rare for people to go beyond 120 or so. It's decreasing. But it says here, the Lord said in the days of Noah, Genesis 6 verse 3, my spirit will not strive with man forever.

So we've got to remember that in the connection of the Lord is waiting, waiting, waiting for people to come to repentance, but he says, as in the days of Noah, my spirit will not keep on striving to ask people to come to repentance. There's a time limit to God's patience. God's patience is not endless.

There's a time limit to God's patience, but I will give him 120 years. So 120 years in relation to 1,000 years is about 12 percent. So in terms of our time, which is about seven or eight years, the Lord says, I'm not going to wait forever.

Have those seven or eight years that the Lord has been patient with you, is it running out? Has the Lord found that there are things in your life that you have known for seven or eight years, and you've just kept it unsettled, unsettled, unsettled? A habit that you've indulged in, taking advantage of God's grace and forgiveness year after year after year. I'm not talking about where it's the other person's fault. If it's the other person's fault, you still have to forgive him.

But I'm talking about where you need to do something, and you haven't done it for, say, from 2011 onwards or 2010 onwards. It just carried on and on, and we're in 2018. Maybe the Lord is speaking to somebody here.

120 years in relation to 1,000 years is about eight years in relation to our time, or less. And then the Lord judged at the end of that time, and he didn't give any further warning. He just told people.

He never told them it is 120 years. That was something he determined in his own mind. He didn't even tell Noah it's going to be 120 years.

That was something that happened. Nothing happened one year, two years, 100 years. Nothing happened, and people said, oh, nothing will happen.

Just like many believers have not set one matter right over 2016, 2017, and nothing serious has happened. They say, oh, it's okay, it's okay. And all of a sudden, the door was closed.

Then it was too late. So you remember Jesus said about the virgins who were waiting for the Lord's coming. Matthew 25.

They were not people who were not waiting for the Lord's coming. Secondly, they were virgins. They were not harlots like Babylon.

They were virgins, and they were waiting for the Lord's coming, but they didn't take care of the oil that was decreasing in their lamps. The oil doesn't stay there forever, just like God's patience doesn't stay forever. It decreased, decreased, decreased.

They thought, oh, it's burning, it's burning, it's burning. One year has gone by, nothing has happened. The sudden it went down to zero, and the Lord came.

And just like in Noah's day, it says, Jesus said, the door was shut. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. I believe the Lord is saying something to us prophetically.

And if you take it seriously, I want to say to you, like I've often said, those who hear the word of God here in this church, and take it seriously, and obey it immediately, they will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment. Nothing to fear. Your record will be clean, because I'll give you a promise for that.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, 1 Corinthians in chapter 11, we have looked at this verse many times, but if you don't know it, let me repeat it. Verse 31, if we judged ourselves rightly, 1 Corinthians 11 31, we would not be judged. Isn't that a good word for me to remember? I will not be judged when I stand before the Lord.

I believe that. God's word will never fail. I will stand before the Lord Jesus in the day of judgment, and I will not be judged for anything.

It can apply to you. It's God's promise. If I judge myself rightly, that means I don't try to put the blame on others like Adam.

I don't accuse anybody like Satan. I judge myself. I don't refuse to acknowledge my error like the other thief on the cross who went to hell.

Think of those two thieves. The only difference, the only difference between the two of them was, one said, I'm guilty. He did exactly the opposite of what Adam did.

He didn't blame his parents. He didn't blame the police. He didn't blame bad company.

He said, I am guilty. In other words, I deserve to go to hell. I'm not going to blame anybody else.

And the Lord said, really? Oh, heaven is for such people. Come with me today itself. The man asked, at least when you come in your kingdom, he didn't know that would take 2,000 years.

Remember me. The Lord said, no, I don't have to wait 2,000 years today. You can come to me in paradise today.

And here was the other thief who was exactly as bad as him. Not worse. And he went to hell.

Just that one single thing, he judged himself. And so he's not judged. Imagine a man who's lived for 30 years murdering people and stealing and making so many widows, killing their husbands and making so many children fatherless by killing their fathers.

Finally, he's in heaven. This is the wonder of the gospel. This is what true repentance brings.

There's no religion in the world that preaches such a gospel. But the other side of it is, if you take advantage of it, the more you know, the more God will expect from you. And if we do not repent because we think, oh, I accepted Christ 20 years ago.

The Lord is waiting patiently, hoping that you will come to repentance. See, the last word that, what is the last word that Jesus spoke to his disciples? Not as many Christians say, go into all the world and preach the gospel. No.

The last word that Jesus spoke to his disciples is in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3. Repent. Repent to five of those churches. That's the last word.

To the churches. The last word that Jesus spoke was to the churches. To repent, not to the disciples to go to all the world and preach the gospel.

That is there. But the last word is repent because in 70 years or 60 years after Jesus going to heaven, the churches had become so corrupt. The churches planted by the apostles, not by some third-rate preachers.

The original apostles of Jesus planted churches with supernatural signs and wonders. And in 60 years, they had become so bad, some of them, that Jesus said, I will blot out your name from the book of life. Revelation 3 verse 5. That means their name was in the book of life.

And Lord said in human language, I'm going to rub it out. Lord, was it there once? Yes, it was there once. What happened to it? Well, they never repented.

But did you warn them? Yes, I warned them, but they wouldn't listen. They took it easy. They thought, oh, I've accepted the Lord some years ago and they played the fool with sin.

They took sin lightly and their name was blotted out from the book of life. So, but if we judged ourselves rightly, we will not be judged. I hope all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, as we begin this year, have a determination to get 100% in the final examination.

Just like you want your children to get 100%. I don't want to get 40% and just pass and scrape into heaven by the skin of my teeth. I want to get 100%, just like you want for your children.

Do you want that for your life? I hope that one of the qualities of those who claim to be members of CFC will be, not that we've got the right doctrines, but that I want 100% in the final day. When I stand before the Lord, I hope that will be the passion of your life this year, every day. A year has got 365 days.

We've got to live one day at a time. Lord, I want to get 100%. I want to live each day in such a way that I judge myself rightly.

God is my witness that I judged myself every day of 2017. I did not miss one single day in the last year or for many years of judging myself, hopefully rightly, as far as the light I have. So I want to encourage you to do that.

Your life will be far more glorious by the end of this year. If you do that, you will have far more revelation on God's word by the end of this year. You'll have far more discernment about spiritual things by the end of this year.

You won't be deceived by false preachers anymore. If God gives you discernment, judge yourself. Your vision becomes clearer and clearer and clearer as you judge yourself.

It's those who don't judge themselves, whose vision does not become clearer, will always find fault with something or the other. So what shall we judge ourselves in primarily? Let's look at what Jesus spoke about the last days in Matthew 24. You know, the disciples were like us in many ways.

There was a day when we, when CFC started, when we met in an old cramped room 42 years ago. And then it became a little better six years later when we had a building, which we never expected. That was like a palace.

for us in Dacosta Square. And then that became overcrowded. And now God has given us this place and people can look at a building and say, I've had people who come here and say, wow, what a wonderful building you have.

Listen to this. Matthew 24. The disciples came to Jesus.

Jesus was coming from the temple and the disciples said, look at this wonderful building. And Jesus said, do you see this? I say to you, not one stone will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. That temple was a very glorious structure, much better than this building.

And Jesus was saying, don't glory in these buildings. That is old covenant. The Lord made the old covenant temple a very glorious building.

But he says in the new covenant, the temple is your body. That must be glorious, not this building. So when you look at a good building, ask yourself if the real house of God, which is your body, is like that, something that people, that the Lord can appreciate.

And then Jesus was asked by the disciples, the Lord, he said, Lord, tell us when are these things going to happen? What is the sign of your coming or the end of the age? And there are many things Jesus said, and some of these things we already see. There are many who will come in Jesus' name and mislead many. Now that is a, verse 5 is a word that is misunderstood by many people.

It says here, many, verse 5, Matthew 24, 5, will come in Jesus' name and saying, I am the Christ. Tell me honestly, in your lifetime, how many people have you heard come in Jesus' name and saying, I am the Christ? I haven't even heard one. I've heard people in some other religions say that, but in Jesus' name, somebody saying, I am the Christ? I haven't heard any.

What is the meaning of that? If you remove those inverted commas, there are no inverted commas in the original Greek. What he's saying is, many will come in Jesus' name saying that he is the Christ, that Jesus is the Christ. The I there refers to Jesus.

Jesus is speaking about himself. Jesus is saying, many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, that he is the Christ. Not all Christians say that, but they will mislead many.

Oh, there are thousands like that. Like that, I've met many people who come in Jesus' name saying, yes, Jesus is the Messiah. The word Christ means Messiah.

The Jews don't accept it. Yes, Jesus is the Messiah, and then they mislead you. That's what he's saying.

I don't think there were so many deceivers at any time in history as much as today. And one reason for the spread of this deception is the internet. I myself know a number of people who were part of CFC, who were led astray by false doctrines they got from the internet, who fell into pornography because of the internet.

So, many will be led astray, and many will come in, and then you will hear where six of wars and rumors of wars. I mean, that's every day in the newspaper. I don't think there's ever been a time in history where there's so many wars and rumors of wars.

Don't be frightened. Very important word. This will happen, but the end is not yet.

Because nation will rise against nation, kingdom countries against each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes, and there have been plenty of those also nowadays. That's not the end. These are the beginnings of birth pangs.

You know, birth pangs means when a woman is about to deliver a baby, she goes through a very intense pain which only a mother can understand. I don't think any of us men understand anything about it. It's very intense pain.

It's called birth pangs. It's what the Lord told Eve, in pain you will bring forth children. It's just being fulfilled, that's all.

And Jesus says, there's a birth of a new kingdom coming, the kingdom of heaven on earth, and before that birth takes place, there's going to be a period of intense pain. That's what's called, that's what he's referring to, a time of persecution of Christians. Verse 9, they'll deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you'll be hated by how many nations? All nations.

Right now Christians are hated in some nations. You know that many Christians are hated even in a country like the United States, which is supposed to be a Christian country. Yeah, there are people persecuted for standing up for the word of God and its principles over there.

All nations, whether they call themselves Christian or non-Christian, because of Jesus' name. In other words, when you stand up for the truth, you will be hated. And if at this time, in your office, you're unwilling

to bear the shame of being known as a Christian, or unwilling to stand for the truth and uprightness as a Christian, because you're afraid you won't get the promotion you want or something like that, then how will you stand when the things get worse? The Lord told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 12, if you can't run with men, how will you run with horses? Meaning that if a small little thing you can't handle, how will you handle a bigger persecution? So God doesn't give us a big thing all of a sudden.

It's just like we go from kindergarten to first standard, second standard, third standard. God gives us little areas in our place of work, in our neighborhood, where for standing up for being a Christian, we suffer a little bit. You can't even call it as suffering.

I used to call it mosquito bites, but mosquitoes are very dangerous nowadays, so I call it ant bites. Mosquitoes can kill people, sometimes even lions can't kill. So I call them ant bites now.

They're all ant bites, which are nothing compared to the early Christians who were killed by lions. So look at all the little things that you face in different situations in your neighborhood or with relatives perhaps. They trouble you in some way or take advantage of you, and you have to love them as a Christian.

Or in your office, where you don't get a promotion or don't get an increment, or maybe you get fired from your job, because you refuse to do what's wrong. You refuse to sign a false statement, or things like that. There can be very tricky situations you face in an office, where you're asked to tell a lie, particularly those who are in sales, the sales department, to tell lies about your product, which you know is not true.

That can be a very difficult thing. For those who are in the advertising business, we've got to advertise things that destroy people's lives, like alcohol and cigarettes. There are different types of things.

It's very difficult to be a Christian, to speak a lie or to sign something false. Little, little things, and there God is testing you with these little ant bites to see whether you're willing to stand up. You may lose your job, okay, but tell me one thing.

It says in 1 Samuel chapter 2 verse 30, those who honor me, I will honor. Is that true today? See, there are two verses I wanted to prove as true all through my life, right from the beginning. One is, if I seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, God will always add everything to me.

I will never have to tell any human being my needs. I proved that for 58 years. The second was, those who honor me, I will honor, 1 Samuel 2 verse 30.

That also I proved for 58 years. There is not a single situation in my life where I honored God and He did not honor me, not even one. I faced many tricky situations in the Navy and even in Christian work, where there was a temptation to compromise or do what's wrong, and I said, I won't do that.

So, some loss comes, some suffering, some trials, some court case, something, but God honors me finally, always. So, you'll be hated by all nations, and that may begin in your office, it may begin with your relatives, who exclude you because you stand up for the Lord. There was a family who used to be with us in the early years, who used to tell us that every time they went home for a holiday to their relatives, they became backsliders, and they came back and again they had to recover.

What a terrible situation, that you go and visit your relatives, unconverted relatives, and you become a backslider. What type of testimony is that for Christ? That the darkness overpowered the light. The darkness overpowered the light.

That must be the kingdom of Satan. In the kingdom of God, the light overpowers the darkness. Not that they'll all be converted, but they could not put out the light.

If your unconverted relatives can shut your mouth to what you believe in Jesus Christ, and make you compromise when you visit them, even if you're surrounded by unconverted relatives, you have to ask yourself whether you really have the light of God, or a human light according to a knowledge of doctrine, which is not really the light of God. The light of God is so powerful, even if the whole world is against you, it will not quench your light. I'm not saying the world will be converted, but it will not be able to quench your light.

They could not put out the light of Jesus Christ. They could not put out the light of the apostles, even when they killed them. Is this the Christianity we have? The Lord is waiting for all the compromisers to stop compromising at least from 2018 onwards.

Determine that this year onwards there will be zero compromise in your life in any area. You will not sign one false statement. You will not tell a lie to get any benefit or financial gain.

You will prove in your life that God honors those who honor Him. Maybe you won't become a millionaire or as rich as somebody else becomes, but God will not allow you to be a beggar and a homeless person on the street. That I can assure you.

And even the Bible says, the righteous will never be forsaken and his children will never beg for bread, Psalm 37.25. So don't be afraid of being hated and rejected. This is the beginnings of birth pangs. It's the beginning of the pain.

And don't abort the baby, saying, this is too painful. Doctor, kill the child. I don't want any more pain.

That's what you're saying. I don't want to be part of that kingdom that's coming. If it means a little, I have to suffer.

I will not get my promotion. I will not get a hike in my salary. You want to abort the child just for that? You want to miss God's kingdom? Say, Lord, I'm going to stand true through the birth pangs.

And at that time, Jesus said in verse 10, many will fall away. It's going to happen. And I tell you, we are seeing it.

We've seen preachers falling away. And one way they fall away is they don't preach the gospel of victory over sin anymore. How much do you hear nowadays about overcoming sin? How much do you hear about the new covenant of building the church? No.

They will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Not one or two, many false.

You know, a person who comes not in the name of Jesus, but in some other name of some other God cannot be a false prophet. A false prophet is one who comes in the name of Jesus, who says in verse 5, he is the Christ, who says Jesus is the Messiah. Then he misleads.

So don't think the false prophets are people of other religions. No. As far as the Bible is concerned, those are not the false prophets the New Testament speaks about.

The false prophets the New Testament speaks about are the people who come saying like in verse 5, Jesus is the Messiah and then mislead many. Those are the ones he's repeating again. Verse 11, they will mislead many.

And here's what I want to emphasize. What is the thing we should endure in? Because sin is increased or lawlessness, that means a disregard for God's law is increased, most Christians love will become cold. But the one who endures in love till the end will be saved.

So that's the thing we have to endure in. The whole world will not be saved, but verse 14, the gospel of the kingdom. What is the gospel of the kingdom? We got to just compare scripture with scripture.

Romans 14, 17 says the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Not righteousness, peace and joy, but righteousness through the Holy Spirit, peace through the Holy Spirit, joy through the Holy Spirit. That is the kingdom of God.

And that gospel of righteousness, overcoming sin through the power of the Holy Spirit, that gospel of peace, peace in your heart, that means a perfectly clear conscience, peace with all men, no conflict with anybody, and joy, that means rejoicing always, never discouraged or anxious or murmuring or grumbling or complaining. That gospel, which is almost not preached in 99% of churches, will be preached in the whole world. How? Those days if Jesus had said through the internet, the disciples wouldn't have understood what that meant.

But it is being preached in the whole world today. Even a small church like ours is preaching that gospel through the whole world. There's not a single spot in the whole globe today where you cannot tune into a CFC website and hear the gospel of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Not a single spot in the whole world. You go to the North Pole or you go to the middle of the Pacific Ocean or you go to the Antarctic or you go to any remote country, Afghanistan, Mongolia, you can hear. Those who want to hear can hear.

It doesn't say people will be converted, it says it'll be preached in the whole world. It never has taken place until our time. The internet came a long time ago, but how much was the gospel of righteousness, peace and joy preached over the whole world? I'd like to know.

I mean that Jesus died for the sins of the world and your sins can be forgiven. Maybe that was preached, but the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world. I believe it's a tremendous privilege and an honor God has given us.

Do you know the number of emails that we get which say we're so thankful to the CFC web team, to CFC for giving all of this material free? Many, many Christian websites, you have to pay five dollars to listen to a message. What will the poor people do? Five dollars is 320 rupees. Imagine paying 320 rupees to listen to a single message and five minutes through that message if the man is boring, you've lost your 320 rupees.

And they're so thankful that everything is free. The literature is free and Bible study is free and the message of righteousness, peace and joy is always being free. And we have made it free to every person in the world, to the poorest person and the rich person has no advantage over him.

This is how the gospel has gone. We're not boasting, not at all. We rejoice that the gospel is going everywhere, that needy people are being helped, that broken marriages are being restored, that divorces

are being prevented, that people are even being healed through living in righteousness.

We don't lift up our head in pride. We put our face in the dust and say, Lord, this is not our work. I mean, if you see mangoes on a branch, the branch does not say, wow, look at all these 25 mangoes hanging on me and there's nothing on that branch.

You think that branch produced those mangoes? You think it's CFC who's done this? Not at all. Shame on us if we lift up our head, keep your head in the dust. I do that all the time.

I keep my head in the dust before God. It's the tree that produces the mangoes, not the branch. So we will never glory over another branch.

It's none of my business to find out why are they not producing mangoes. No, I want to make sure that through my life and through our church, the Lord can produce the maximum number of fruit that He can, that He wants to. That's all.

And never, never to compare ourselves with others. Just in passing, 2 Corinthians 10, it's a good verse for us to remember. 2 Corinthians 10, verse 13, Paul did boast about many things.

He boasts about certain things in 2 Corinthians 11, that he did not take any money from anybody and supported himself. But before that he says, in verse 13 of 2 Corinthians 10, 2 Corinthians 10, verse 13, we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure. There we rejoice that God has given us a certain circle, a small circle.

CFC is doing God's work in a small little circle. And we thank God that in that small circle, God has given us grace to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, of righteousness, peace and joy to the whole world, to fulfill His promise. Not because of our ability, not because we raise funds to collect money or urge you people to put money in the box, we want to preach the gospel.

No, no, no, no, no. God says the silver and the gold are mine. The cattle on a thousand hills are mine.

If I have a need, God says in the Psalms, I will not tell you. That's what God says and He's our Father. And so we say, if we have a need, we will not tell you or tell anybody else in the world.

We will tell our Heavenly Father. Lord, we want to preach the gospel to the whole world. Provide us the need.

Do you know that the internet ministry is a very expensive ministry? The equipment costs a lot. The servers who are sending out that, we have to pay them regularly every year. But we have a wonderful web team who's not paid anything, who works freely, not only here, but in a number of other continents who help us.

CFC people who are in other continents, we thank God for them. And a number of them here who come back from work and late at night work so that they can spread the gospel of the kingdom all over the world. We thank God for that.

We don't boast about it, but we say God has given us the grace to be able to do that. We humbly thank God for that privilege that God has given us to show our gratitude to Jesus for what he did for us on the cross and for what he did for us in our lives, that we don't keep it to ourselves, but we give it to others. And as we water others, God waters us all the time.

This has been our experience. But it says in verse 12, the last part, those who measure themselves and compare themselves with others are, in my translation, spiritual idiots. That's my paraphrase.

How to be a spiritual idiot? You want to know? Compare your spiritual life with somebody else's. That's all you got to do. Compare your church, CFC, with some other church.

That's the way to be a spiritual idiot. Compare your own life with the life of somebody else here. How much fruit in my branch and how much in his branch? That's the way to be a definite way to be a spiritual idiot, without understanding.

Those who measure themselves with themselves, compare themselves with themselves, but we will not do that. We think of the small circle God has given us and we want to be faithful there. And for some of you mothers, you're not doing any web team work, but do you know that you're doing a great work for God, if you bring up your children in a godly way.

When I see children grown up and going astray when they're grown up and employed, I have to say, I don't want to judge them, I don't want to judge their parents, but I have to quote scripture. Train up a child in the way he should go, good or bad, and when he's old he will not depart from it. If it's a bad way, bad way.

If it's a good way, a good way. That word of God in Proverbs 22 works two ways. You decide when a child is small, whether you're going to be rigid with him to teach him God's word and the principles of God's word, to honor God and seek God's kingdom first, and teach him to honor his father and mother and discipline him when he's wrong, and show him the importance of reading the Bible and following the Bible.

When he grows up, he'll be like that. On the other hand, you say, well the important thing is to go to church. The important thing is to say, Jesus come into my heart and get baptized and that's enough.

And then brother, you've got to earn money and make plenty of money for yourself. But keep a good testimony. Don't do anything that will ruin you.

Live before the face of men and be a good example. And don't mingle with the poor brothers from Tamil Nadu and all. They don't speak English, forget them.

Mingle with the elite and the upper class people, especially the foreigners. Meet them, the Christians who come to CFC conferences. And you ask yourself, who do your children mingle with? Have you asked yourself? Do they ever mingle with the poor and the lowly? Train up a child, the way should go.

When they're old, they will not depart from it. That's why you have some of these posh children who have grown up in CFC, who have no interest in the poor brothers in our village churches. Ask yourself, how much interest your children have in the poor villages churches in India? Some of you are pretty close to zero.

I'm not here to judge them. I'm just telling you, that's the way you brought them up. That's it.

Okay, you can repent of it now. Try to set it right. But for those whose children are still small, train up that child now.

It says in Romans chapter 12, verse 16. Romans chapter 12, verse 16. The middle of that verse says, don't be proud in your mind, but associate with the lowly people.

How much have you obeyed that verse? Associating with the poor and the lowly, not so educated, not so cultured. You posh sisters, educated posh sisters. How much do you fellowship with the really poor sisters in CFC? Do you ever talk to them? Sundays I see a lot of people talking to each other.

Do you ever talk to the poor sisters? Or do you always mingle with the elite, the upper class? Oh, we are new covenant. All I say is, don't deceive yourself. The new covenant is not a doctrine.

It's a life. He who has ears to hear can hear. So let's turn back to Matthew 24.

We read here what Jesus said about what are we to endure in verse 12 and 13 of Matthew 24. People's love will grow cold, but the one who endures till the end in love will be saved. So what's going to happen in the last days is fervent love for Jesus is going to go down.

And why will love for Jesus go down? I believe basically one or two things. It says in 2nd Timothy in chapter 3. I mean, when the Lord has warned us that love will become cold in the last days, we better be careful about it because he's warned us. You know, like if there's a rumor now that there's going to be a great shortage of rice.

Rice is what all of us eat. It's going to be a great shortage of rice in Bangalore. Just like in the days of Joseph, there's going to be a famine.

So they stored up so that they would have enough food in the days of famine in Egypt. So there's going to be a great shortage of something and there's available now, you'd store it up. So the Bible says there's going to be a great shortage of love for Jesus and love for one another in the last days.

I want to work on it. The reason is in 2nd Timothy 3, it's going to happen because of two things. Or let's say three things.

There are four lovers mentioned in 2nd Timothy 3 verse 1 to 4. Read carefully. There are four lovers mentioned in 2nd Timothy 3, 1 to 4. One is lovers of self and lovers of money, verse 2. The third is lovers of pleasure. The fourth is lovers of God.

So in contrast to lovers of God, which we all should be, there are three forces that are going to take us away from loving God. What did Jesus say? The love of many will wax cold because lawlessness is going to increase. What is it that's going to increase this lawlessness? Because it says here in verse 5, people will still hold to a form of godliness.

That means they'll still come to church. They'll believe fundamental evangelical doctrine. They will say they are born again.

But they don't have the power. They don't have the power, verse 2, to overcome self, love of self. They don't have the power to overcome the love of money.

They don't have the power to overcome love of pleasure. You need power. Do you know that you need the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the love of yourself? You can't put yourself to death without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do you know you need the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the love of money? Some of you have been trying to overcome it, but you need the power of the Holy Spirit to do it. Love of pleasure, ease and comfort. You cannot overcome it without the power of the Holy Spirit.

So here it's speaking about people who will still keep a form of godliness But they don't have the power. How do we know they don't have the power? Because they love self, they get offended, they seek their own, they accuse others, they put down others. And they love money.

Behind many of their actions and decisions is the love of money that guides their decisions and actions, which they put a spiritual whitewash over. And thirdly, they love pleasure. They are more interested in spending time watching television than reading the Bible.

Entertainment, entertainment, the great God entertainment. They say, but it's clean entertainment, it's just the news and all that, fine, okay. And then there are lovers of God.

Those lovers of God become lovers of God because they fight against the love of self and fight against the love of money and fight against the love of pleasure through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, in the last days the love of many will become cold. You can ask yourself, my dear brothers, you remember the days when you were first born again? Think back to those days.

You said, I'm not going to watch movies anymore. I'm not going to do this and I'm not going to do that. I'm going to read the Bible every day.

My day will begin with the Bible. Do you remember those days when you were first saved? How is it now? Is the love of self, comfort, pleasure, money, taken you away from the love for God? We can sing so many wonderful songs to the Lord. It's like a story I heard, and it's not a true story, but a young man was telling a girl, I love you so much, I'll cross oceans and climb mountains and come through barbed wire and all to see you next week.

I'll try and see you if it doesn't rain. It's like that. So many wonderful things we say, but when it comes to the crunch, it's a little difficult.

Dear brothers and sisters, ask for the power of the Holy Spirit. The most important thing we need in 2018 is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not just one experience years ago. I pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit every single day.

When I get up to speak, I pray for the gift of prophecy, otherwise I know I'm wasting time. Lord, without the power of the Holy Spirit, I, no matter how much I have progressed, will degenerate in this year to loving myself. And though I think I'm free from the love of money, I'll begin to love money.

And I'll begin to love pleasure. And I'll go back into habits that I gave up. I hope that doesn't happen to any of you.

Seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. Determine to be a lover of God, where love for Jesus becomes supreme. From that will flow love for others.

Love for others is not the first message in the gospel. No, the first commandment is not love your neighbor. Sometimes people try to show their love for others, but they don't love the Lord.

The reason why I seek to be very strict in the church is because, I'll tell you, it's not because I don't love you folks, it's because I love God more than you. The one I love most in this room is my wife. But I love Jesus more than her.

And I will always do that. She will never be first, she'll always be second. And I will never love any of you more than I love Jesus Christ and His body, the church.

And I'm willing to offend every one of you, hurt every one of you, rebuke every one of you, correct every one of you, even if you get offended with me, even if you leave CFC because you love Jesus more. I'm going to be a lover of God. From that love for God, I love others.

So remember that. Don't let your love for people become more important than your love for Jesus Christ. The love of many will wax cold.

The most important thing for us is to grow in love for Christ. I pray that at the end of this year, or every day of this year, your love for Jesus will grow in more and more and more. True holiness is growing in love.

I'll show you that in closing. 1 Thessalonians 3. 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 12 and 13. 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 12 and 13.

May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, which comes through the love for God first, and then for all people, first for the church and then for others, just as we do for you, why? So that, so that, he can establish your heart without blame in holiness before God at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's talking about the second coming. That when Jesus comes at his second coming, our hearts must be established without blame in holiness.

So what is holiness? It is to abound in love for one another. It says here, so that, if you want your heart to be unblameable in holiness, abound in love. So, essentially, when God says he wants us to be holy, it is to love Jesus with all our heart and to love others.

True holiness is to love Jesus fervently and love others. It's not just avoiding dirty things. A lot of people avoid dirty things for other reasons.

But when you love Jesus, you'll avoid dirty things because you love Jesus. So don't concentrate on overcoming pornography first. Concentrate on loving Jesus first.

That will go. Then you will see sin. It's good to use word pictures.

Jesus used word pictures like salt, light, seed. Here is a word picture of pornography. Pornography is, watching pornography is like putting your mouth in a toilet bowl and licking it.

Not a flushed toilet bowl, but a toilet that has not been flushed. And you're licking it with your tongue. That is watching pornography.

And if you want to do it, you can do it. But you've got to be crazy. If you see a man putting his head into an unflushed toilet and licking it, he's got to be crazy.

That is what watching pornography is. There are people who call themselves Christians who do it. You know, sometimes these word pictures help us to hate what we're doing.

And I'm just trying to help you to see it's madness. You're off your head if you're licking the toilet bowl which has not been flushed, even if it has been flushed. May God help us to see.

Holiness comes out of love for Jesus. If I love Jesus with all my heart, I cannot possibly want to see a naked woman. You'll be happy with your wife.

You won't want to see some poor girl to make money stripping her clothes on. And you watch that on the computer screen or your phone. Don't call yourself a Christian.

Don't take a Christian name. Change your name to some other heathen name so that the name of Jesus is not dishonored. Take it seriously this year.

You've struggled with it. Now struggle to love Jesus. And to love Jesus, you need only two things.

I've often said about it. Meditate on how much he loved you. How much he suffered of being separated from the Father and suffering eternal hell for three hours on the cross.

Meditate on that. And meditate on he was forgiven much, loves much. How much you have been forgiven.

That's all. Meditate on how much Jesus loved you. And how much you've been forgiven.

Think back to your past life. And how much he forgave you and he covered up all the wicked things you did. People sitting here don't even know 1% of the evil you did in your unconverted days.

Or even after you were converted. Thank God for that. Be good to others also like that.

Don't uncover all their nakedness before people. You who have a lust to gossip and speak evil of people to others. Think if God exposed all the things you did in your past days to everybody here, how would you feel? Think of that.

God's been merciful to you. Be merciful to others. Love Jesus supremely.

And love one another. Because in the last days that's going to decrease a lot. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Just tell the Lord, Lord I want to get 100% in the final day. I don't want 40%, I don't even want 99%.

I want 100% and I'm going to judge myself rightly from this day by the grace of God. I'm going to concentrate on the power and not the form of godliness. I've had the form of godliness for many years.

I want the power Lord. I don't want to go around advising other people. I want to judge myself.

That's more important. Heavenly Father, help each one of us. Give us grace.

To live before your face. To honor you. Everyone here Lord.

And help us to help one another. In that pursuit of godliness. Where fervent love for you.

And forgiving and loving one another becomes a priority in our life. Help us to be true to you in these last days. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

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