

Being a Witness by Obedience

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes that true witnessing for Christ requires a life of obedience empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 58:24

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:22, Matthew 5:14, John 14:15, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 1 John 2:17

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Radical Discipleship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being true witnesses for Christ by doing God's will in every aspect of our lives. It highlights the significance of giving thanks in all situations, obeying God's commands, and living a life that reflects Christ's character. The speaker challenges listeners to be radical disciples who prioritize obedience to God over personal desires and worldly influences.

Transcript

Jesus said before he went up to heaven, you know, one of his last words found in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8. These are the very last words he spoke before he went up to heaven and so we mustn't forget it. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses. And that applies to our country, that we are to be Christ's witnesses wherever we live.

And that's a good question to ask ourselves. In what way are we Christ's witnesses? He didn't speak about bearing witness. Now there's a difference between bearing a witness and being a witness.

Bearing witness is like in a court, you get up and say what you heard, what you saw. And most Christians understand being a witness as just giving your testimony or giving out a tract or telling somebody about Christ. That's easy.

Being a witness is a little more difficult. To bear witness, I'll tell you this, to bear witness for Christ, to give out a tract, to give your testimony, you do not need the power of the Holy Spirit at all. And that's why a lot of Christians are quite happy without the power of the Holy Spirit because they are bearing witness.

They are not being a witness. If you want to be a witness, you really need the power of the Holy Spirit. You can't do it without it because being a witness means that my way of life is showing other people that I belong to Christ.

I'm different from you. You're in darkness and I'm in the light. You know the difference between light and darkness? Like a bulb manifests, gives forth light.

That's the way when Jesus said you're the light of the world. That's what it means to be a witness. Our life in him was life and the life was the light of men.

And the great tragedy in Christendom is that life has been replaced with words. Most of the pulpits, it's words. There's hardly any emphasis on life and yet being a witness means a life.

Jesus did not come here when Jesus said, I'm who came as a witness for the Father. It wasn't just words he told us. He demonstrated by his life what the Father was like so that at the end of his life he could say, if you have seen me, you've seen the Father.

And we should be able to say at the end of our life, if you have seen me, you've seen Jesus. You've seen what Jesus behaves like. At least there must be some approximation to that.

But I wonder whether that is the challenge that you brothers and sisters see as the challenge that comes to your life. That people should, I should be able to say to people, if you've seen me, you've seen Jesus. I seek to compare myself, I mean examine myself by that standard all the time.

I know I come short, but because I keep that standard before me, it gets better every year. Even if we, even if I haven't reached perfection, Paul had that standard before him and said at the end of his life, I haven't attained, but one thing I do. So I want to ask you brothers and sisters to examine yourself and see whether you're able to say to others, if you've seen my life, you've seen Jesus.

If you've seen the way I talk, you've seen Jesus. If you've seen the way I talk to my husband or wife, you've seen Jesus. If you've seen the way I deal with circumstances or trials, if you see the way I handle money, you've seen Jesus.

If we cannot say that, okay, let's say I'm not like Christ, but are we really longing to be a little more so that another year we can say it a little more. You've seen a little more of what Jesus is like. That means my whole attitude in all these areas is changing.

Now that cannot happen unless you study the life of Jesus. You know, I've been in a number of homes where I see young people who have heroes, who have huge big posters of their hero or some rock musician or cricketer or film actor or actress or something. Why do they put these big, huge pictures in their bedrooms? Because they admire them so much.

They see videos of them and try to play cricket like them, bat like them, bowl like them, and there are film stars and models comb their hair like them. It's such a tremendous admiration and desire to become like that hero. I tell you honestly, I wish Jesus Christ was a hero of more Christians.

Then they would really study his life so much and really want to be like him. But I tell you, the world puts us to shame. The worldly people pursue likeness to their heroes far more than I see Christians pursuing likeness to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we're not witnesses. We can say we failed the Lord and that should bring a great sorrow and repentance in our life because we all testify that the Lord did a tremendous thing for us in dying for us on the cross. I personally never want to take that lightly.

One of the things I see in the life of Jesus was he was always eager to do the Father's will. His only ambition in life was to please the Father and be quick to obey whatever his Father wanted him to do. Whatever people said didn't make a difference.

It didn't matter if people misunderstood him. He wanted to do what the Father's will was. He waited sometimes to know the Father's will, but once he knew the Father's will, he'd do it.

And that's where Christians are not following him. I mean, how much do you wait to know God's will for your life and say, Lord, once I know it, I'm going to do it, whether it's convenient or not convenient. From the beginning of time, from the beginning of man's history anyway, Satan has always said that keeping God's commandments is a burden.

You'll enjoy life much more if you disobey God. That's what he told Eve in the Garden of Eden. God's telling you not to eat of this tree.

See how miserable you are. Disobey God. You'll be a happier person.

She said, well, I suppose you're right, Satan. Did she become a happier person? No. But throughout history, in human history, the whole history of Israel, God wanted a witness on earth.

He called a nation of Israel to be a witness on earth to demonstrate that obeying God is the best life you can live. And they failed him again and again. But the one who started that nation, Abraham, was different.

I want you to see something in Genesis 22. God has wanted a witness on earth not only after Christ came, right from the beginning of time. Abel, Enoch, they were witnesses to God.

And Abraham was another. I want you to see something here. It says in Genesis 22 verse 1, God tested Abraham.

This is 50 years after he tested him first. He tested him first. We read in Genesis 11 and 12.

He told him, leave your country. Leave your parents. Go into another country, I'll tell you.

I remember he was 75 years old, probably retired, probably built a house and settled down. And God says, leave it and go. You know what he did? He got up and went.

And unfortunately, in the beginning, you read in Genesis 11, his dad held him back a little bit. And he didn't go where God told him to go. God told him to go to Canaan.

And he only went up to Haran. You read that in Genesis 11, because his dad went along with him. His dad said, I think Haran's a good place, good enough.

And he stayed there. Yeah, that was a mistake he made, just like a lot of believers make when they listen to their parents and disobey God. There's a place to obey your parents.

But if they tell you to do something, and God's told you to do something else, you better obey God. A lot of people have never fulfilled the first condition of discipleship, which is to put Jesus above father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters. That means, it doesn't matter if my wife is unhappy, I'm going to obey God.

How many of your husbands will say that? It doesn't matter if my dad's unhappy, I'm going to obey God. That's what it means to be a disciple. I tell you, a lot of people I've seen, even in CFC churches, when it comes to the crunch, they would obey their unconverted parents more than God.

And that's why it goes so sluggishly and slowly in their lives. God tested them, and they failed. God tested Abraham.

But you know what God did with Abraham there in Genesis 11? It says he killed his father. God killed his father. Then Abraham obeyed.

He realized, God had told me not to obey my dad, obey him, and he went to Canaan. And here in Genesis 22, 50 years after that, God is still testing him. There never comes a time when God stops testing us, because it's like your children.

When your children go to school, they have a test in Standard 1, they have a test in Standard 2. When they go to university, they're still having tests. Fifteen years after they started their education, they're still having tests. It's like in the Christian life.

But you know that every test, if they pass, leads to a promotion. That's why you send your children to school in an examination time, even if they are sick, because you're so eager that they should do their tests. I wish we would realize that when God tests us, it's in order to give us a promotion.

And he tests us to see, will you obey me there? A little thing, sometimes God says something to us in a meeting, or when we read the word of God, and nobody else has heard it, but he's testing you there. And that's what we see with Abraham. It says here, God tested Abraham and said, Abraham, and if you remember, it was the middle of the night, he was probably fast asleep.

And he said, here I am. We know it's the middle of the night, because later on he says he got up early morning. And he said, he asked him for one of the most difficult things that God has ever asked any human being to do in the whole Bible.

God asked different people to do different things in scripture, but as I've looked through scripture, I find this is probably the hardest thing God ever asked anybody to do. And he had such confidence. You know, God doesn't give a PhD test to someone in the kindergarten.

That doesn't happen even on earth, and God doesn't do it either. God had led Abraham through little, little things, starting from a kindergarten. Kindergarten lesson was, put me above your dad and mom.

Some believers haven't even passed that kindergarten lesson, but Abraham passed it finally, and went finally to the place where God tested him with the highest test almost that God could ask any human being. Take your son, whom you love, your only son, take him to the land of Moriah, where I tell you an offer is a burnt offering to me. And God didn't want him to kill him, but he was testing.

Will Abraham put me even above his own son? And the thing I want you to see here is this word, verse three, Abraham rose early in the morning. That's the point I want you to see. He didn't dilly-dally about it for two, three days and say, yeah, let me think about it.

Let me pray about it. I've noticed something through the years that when God says something, those who obey immediately, it goes exceptionally well with them in their Christian life. There are others who think

about it, say, what will my wife think about it? Or what will my husband think about it? What will my dad think about it? What do the other brothers think about it? What will somebody else say if I do this? What will my friends say? Well, those are the people who all through life, you'll find that is their attitude to God.

Whenever it comes to something God tells them to do, they have to consider various factors before obeying almighty God, if at all they do. And if you look back over your life and you find that that's the way you have been obeying, maybe you did obey after four or five years. You don't realize that there's something in that type of delayed obedience, which shows your nature that God is not so important.

I mean, I'll obey him and I've done 10, 15 other things, but not so with Abraham. It didn't matter what he had to do that morning. Early morning, he rose up.

Now remember, nobody knew, not even his wife knew what God had told him. It would have been very easy for Abraham to continue living as he lived, pretending that he's a godly man and nobody would know that he had been disobeying God. God had told him something that night and he hadn't obeyed it.

God speaks to us in secret. For example, right now, God may be saying something to you and the person sitting next to you doesn't know what he's saying to you. It's exactly how God speaks.

You read the Bible and one morning and God says something to you and nobody in your house knows what God said to you that day, but you know. And at that moment, God is testing you. What are you going to do with what I told you? And sometimes we don't obey and God is merciful.

He tells us a week later, maybe another time, maybe three months later, and you may obey, but it will never go as well in your life. Listen, it will never go as well in your life as if you had obeyed as soon as you heard. That was the difference with Abraham.

And when God saw that type of obedience where he was going to obey no matter what it cost him, it was very, very difficult, very painful, but he would obey immediately. You know what God said to him? You know, I want to tell you something. Verse 15, 16, sorry.

By myself, I have sworn that I will bless you. And I want to ask you a question. Because you have done this thing, you did not withhold your son, your only son.

And also I would say he did it immediately. I'm going to greatly bless you. I mean, I promised you 50 years ago that I would bless you, but I'm going to greatly bless you.

It's going to be far greater than you can ever imagine. And your children will be blessed. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, do you want your children to be blessed by God? I'm not asking whether your children are baptized and people in the church think they're okay.

You shouldn't care less what people in the church think about your children. Do you want God Almighty to bless your children? A lot of it depends on you. This is what we see here.

When Abraham had that instant obedience, God saw that, that costly obedience. He said, Abraham, you don't even realize the way I'm going to bless you. I'm going to bless your children.

And not only your children, I'll bless your grandchildren. Do you want your grandchildren to be blessed? I do. I don't know about you, but it depends on obedience to God.

You say, doesn't it depend on my children? Well, it begins with you. When God, you know, just like a drunken father can mess up his children's lives, a godly, righteous father can have a tremendous influence on his children. That's what we see in Abraham.

How else can you explain this old 125-year-old man telling his strong, muscular 25-year-old son, Isaac, lie down on that altar. I'm going to tie you up and kill you right now. And the 25-year-old son obeys.

Will your 25-year-old son obey you like that? If you tell him, lie down there. God's told me to kill you. I see something about Abraham there.

That because he was so obedient to God, God gave him a son who was obedient to him. Obedient to such an extent. It's amazing.

I mean, look at the ordinary things that your children will not obey you in, particularly when they go past 20. There you see something about Abraham. He said, I'm going to bless you so much.

I'm not only going to bless your children, your grandchildren. Nations in the earth, verse 18, will be blessed because you obeyed me. You see how much delight God got in a man who obeyed because that man was a witness to the truth that God's commands are the very best.

If he tells me to kill my son, I'll even do that. I will never say these commands are difficult, burdensome. God was only testing him.

Once he laid and was about to kill him, God said, no, no, no, I don't want you to kill your son. I was only testing him. God always desires the best for us.

And you will not realize it. You will not experience that blessing till you obey him quickly. Quickly.

I remember right in the beginning of my Christian life, I delayed in obeying in water baptism after I was born again for one and a half years because I belonged to a church that sprinkled me as a baby. And I thought, well, that's the place where I had a good motive in not obeying in baptism. Really good motive.

People told me, listen, if you get baptized, you'll join one of these believers churches where everybody's born again. What are you going to do there? They're already all born again. This church will throw you out.

But if you don't take baptism, this church will not throw you out and you'll be in this orthodox church where multitudes are not converted. That's where you need to be a witness. So, you know, I did not get baptized in order to stay in a church to be a witness for Christ.

Can you think of a better motive than that? And for one and a half years, I disobeyed God in order to be a witness in a church that was dead. But every time I knelt down to pray, God would say, you're not listening to me. Why should I listen to you? And I'll tell you my testimony.

For one and a half years, I stagnated in my Christian life. I was born again. But it's like sitting in the same class for years, failing, failing, failing in the same class till one day I got fed up when I said, Lord, I don't care which church throws me out.

I'm going to obey you. Then I realized the folly of thinking that I could bring people to Christ if I stayed in some church as if I'm some mighty man without the blessing of God. God would not bless me if I didn't obey him.

And that was the one time in my life where I took one and a half years to obey something God showed me so clearly that once you're born again, you must be baptized. And I decided, Lord, it'll never happen again. I'm bungled up.

I'm sorry because I listened to the advice of other people. And it sounded reasonable to me. If you sit in the church of believers, you won't be a witness there.

Sit in the church of unbelievers so that you can be a witness to them. It sounded so reasonable to me. And that's the time I learned in my life, don't listen to your reason.

Listen to God. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, Proverbs 3, 5, and don't lean upon your reason. I didn't know it then.

But I'm thankful I learned a lesson then. And I decided then I said, Lord, from now on, if ever I see anything in your word or you tell me something in my heart, I'm going to obey immediately. I don't care what the consequences are.

I don't care what people think about me. I don't have to consult my dad or my friends or any elders or anybody. You've told me something, I'm going to do it.

And that's helped me immensely. And the day I took baptism, I remember that day so clearly. In January 1961, it was a turning point of my life.

For many people, baptism is not a very significant thing. Yeah, they go to the water, come out. For me, it was a radical change in my life.

Some old man had been buried. I was risen with Christ. You know, there's a wonderful thing when you really do something in obedience to God, and not just as a ritual, not because everybody else is doing it.

Oh, well, I've become 15, 16, I better get baptized. You know, people like that, their baptism doesn't mean much to them. Many of you got baptized.

Let me ask you, did it mean much to you? To me, it was a turning point in my life. Honestly, because I sought God and I saw it in his word, and I said, I've got to do it. It was like that.

Then the Lord began to show me something else I had to do to return money that I had taken wrongfully in my unconverted days from the government and others. And that took me some time to save up that money. And I said, I'm going to do it immediately.

After that, I said, Lord, whatever you tell me, I'm going to do it immediately. And one day I emptied out my bank account and returned to the government all the money that was due to it. My heart was full of joy.

And it's been such a tremendous thing. I said, Lord, I want to be. I didn't know much.

I was only 21 years old. But I said, Lord, I don't know much of the Bible, but I want to obey you. I want to be a witness to the fact that the best life you can live on earth is a life of simple obedience.

Nobody heard what God told me in my heart. Nobody knew. Nobody in the world knew that I had cheated the government.

Even the government itself did not know in taxes and things like that. But I said, I'm going to do it. It's one thing to do something right when you're caught or when you're told to do it.

It's quite another thing when nobody's told you to do it. You can never get caught, but you do it because you fear God. Because you know that God wants you to do it.

So I want to encourage you, my dear brothers and sisters, especially you young people, if you really want it to go well in your life, learn to listen to the little voice of God in your conscience and obey it as soon as you hear it. I remember when my dad, when I was 14 years old, he wanted me to join the National Defense Academy. And I did the exam and I was not converted.

I thought it was a good profession to go to. And I joined and he said, my dad told me, I want you to retire as the Admiral of the Navy. And I said, okay, we'll try.

And I worked hard. And then I was born again. I said, Lord, those ambitions are gone now and I want to live for you.

And three years, just three years after my baptism, one day I was reading the Bible and God spoke to me. He said, you must leave your job. Quit.

Go and preach the word. I decided on the spot, I'm going to leave. I didn't ask my father.

I didn't tell anybody else. I put in my resignation paper. Then I wrote to my dad saying, sorry, dad, no Admiral now.

I'm going to serve the Lord. I never made a better decision in my life. What I want to say is, of course, I went through a lot of difficulty, financial difficulty, many other types of difficulty, but it was the best decision I made in my life.

I want to say to you just, you ask Abraham today, did you take the right decision when you quickly obeyed God? Oh yes. Think what my life would have been if it was not like that. Why am I saying all this brothers and sisters? Don't think the Lord is delighted in your sacrifices you make to come to the meetings, to pray, perhaps give a little money to God.

This is not what he looks for. If you want to be a witness for Christ, let me show you this verse in 1 Samuel chapter 15. It's a very interesting story.

And if you don't know it, you must know it. God had selected Saul personally to be king of Israel. Saul never wanted to be king.

In fact, when God selected him, he went and hid somewhere. He said, I don't want to be king. He was such a humble man.

But Samuel said, God has called you. He accepted it. And one day he made a big mistake because God had blessed him.

He thought God's given me so many victories and I'm doing so many wonderful things. Samuel had told him one day, that comes in 1 Samuel 13 verse 8. Saul waited seven days according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come. And Saul said, bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

And he offered the burnt offering. He had no right to offer the burnt offering because he was not a priest. That is a very strict law in the Old Testament.

A king cannot be a priest. A priest cannot be a king because that union of king priest was reserved for Jesus Christ who was to come later. That was the reason.

No king could be a priest. No priest could be a king. It was reserved for Christ and reserved for us now.

We are kings and priests. Revelation 1 says that. But in those days, nobody could be a king and a priest or a priest and a king.

But you know, when you're blessed so much in your ministry, you begin to think, yeah, I can do some other things also and God will bless me there. No, he won't. That's one of the biggest mistakes I've seen in a lot of Christians.

Just because God's blessed them in one area where God called them to be there and do something, they begin to think, have high thoughts about themselves. Yeah, therefore God will bless me everywhere. I can do this.

And they go and mess up something and bungle up something. If you look back over your life and see where you bungled up something and messed up something in your life, it's like that. You thought because God blessed you, God's with you everywhere you go.

He isn't. You should have humbled yourself. Then it would have gone well.

And so he offered the burnt offering. He had no right to offer the burnt offering. Samuel said, wait seven days.

But Samuel didn't come. So what to do if he doesn't come for seven days? Wait for another seven days. You have no right to do what God's not told you to do.

There are many instances like this in Scripture. You read in 2 Chronicles about another king called Uzziah. God blessed him so much.

But it says when he was blessed, his heart was lifted up in pride. Exactly like I have seen in even CFC believers who came who are nobodies and God blessed them and their heart begins to be lifted up in pride and they begin to think that they are somebody. They even begin to think that they can correct the elders.

It's amazing. And Uzziah, we read there in 2 Chronicles, he went and did the same thing Saul did. Offered an offering and went up to the priest as a priest in the temple.

And the priests resisted him, we read. They said, you can't do that. And the king got angry.

So how dare you tell me not to do that? And immediately God smote him with leprosy. And he was a leper until the day of his death. What was his crime? Did he commit adultery? No.

What did he do? All he did was he went into a ministry God never called him to. He didn't obey. It's really a passage that's worth studying, you know.

And I believe that here also I want to show you in 1 Samuel chapter 15, the same thing. 1 Samuel in chapter 15. That's exactly what Saul also did.

And God told him that time, the earlier time, because you did that, you're not going to be the king, but God gave him a second chance. And that's 1 Samuel 15. This time God told him, I want you to go and kill all the Amalekites because they are harassing you all.

But what did he do? And kill all the sheep. But Samuel didn't kill all the sheep. He kept some of the good sheep and said, maybe I can offer these as a sacrifice to the Lord.

Why kill them? These are good sheep. But God had told him, kill everything. It was a test.

Many things, you know, God's testing us. You say, and you use your reason and say, why should I kill the good sheep? The bad ones, the diseased ones, kill them. But the good ones, hey, I can offer them to the Lord.

But the Lord's told you to kill them. Then he used his reason. And he came and said to Samuel, yeah, I have obeyed the Lord.

Verse 13. Saul said to him, 1 Samuel 15.13. Blessed are you of the Lord. I've carried out the command of the Lord.

But Samuel said, then how is it I hear all this bleeding of sheep and oxen here? Oh, he said, the people spared it to sacrifice to the Lord. Now listen to Samuel's answer. 1 Samuel 15.22. Do you think the Lord delights in sacrifice as much as in obeying his voice? I want you to remember 1 Samuel 15.22 all your life.

To obey, in the middle of that verse, to obey is better than sacrifice. Any sacrifice you make for the Lord, whether you can come regularly for a meeting, give money for God's work, it's all good. But to obey is better than sacrifice.

You can't cover up your disobedience by saying, I'll make some sacrifice for you. You can't do that. God doesn't delight in sacrifice as much as in obedience.

Why is that? Because in obedience to God's commands, even when I can't understand it, God's told me to do it. I'm going to do it. I'm a witness against the devil because the devil has told everybody on earth it's useless obeying God's commandments.

Look at the world today. They disobey every commandment in scripture. Every movie that's produced is to show that disobedience to God is okay.

Almost every movie that I've heard of, I thank God I don't see them, that I've heard of, I presume it's the same, is some married man loving somebody else or man loving two girls or two men loving one girl and fighting about it and where sex and adultery and all is not taken seriously. And you know who watches these movies? Some CFC believers, because it's an interesting story in it. You think such people will be witnesses for Christ? And forget about whether other people saw you watching the movie or not.

The devil saw you. And the devil says to God, God, is this your witness on earth? He's glorifying me. He's watching the things I produce secretly.

He doesn't let other people know about it. But God, you and I know about it. You and I just have a look, God, see what that guy's doing.

You said he's your witness on earth. What does God say? I never want Satan to say anything like that to God about me anytime. If I get angry with my wife once, Satan will say, God, this guy is not only a witness, he's supposed to be a preacher.

Look at how he's talking to his wife. I never want Satan to say that to God once. In my godless days 40 years ago, I was like that, but not now.

It's gone. Because I'm concerned about my witness before Satan, who sees me all the time. Are you concerned about that? Or are you really concerned about your witness before other believers in the church? When they see you, you must behave properly.

No. Do you know that the Bible says in Ephesians chapter 3, that the church is to be a witness to angelic beings. Now, we all know we are supposed to be witnesses here on earth, but Ephesians 3 says, God wants to, he could never do this in the Old Testament, because they didn't have the Holy Spirit.

The manifold wisdom of God, Ephesians 3.10, the manifold means the many colored, many sided wisdom of God. It's like the rainbow has got many colors. The color white has got seven colors in it.

It's white, but there are seven colors in it, the seven colors of the rainbow. And the wisdom of God is like that, many colored, many sided. And God wants to manifest his wonderful wisdom through the church, not just to all the unbelievers.

I mean, that's, we already saw witnesses on earth, but to these rulers and authorities in the heavenly places, there are, those are not human beings. Those are angelic beings. And there are rulers, authorities in the third heaven where God dwells, Michael and Gabriel and all the authorities there.

And then there are authorities where in the second heaven, where the devil dwells with his, you know, Ephesians 6.12 says we wrestle with these principalities in heavenly places. That's not in the third heaven where God dwells. Satan got thrown out of there, but he's in the second heaven between what we see as the sky and the third heaven.

And there also, there are these angelic principalities and powers who are watching. And God says to me, I want to manifest my wisdom to them through the way you live. I want them to see in you a demonstration that whatever it costs, it's worth obeying God.

Whatever it costs, it's worth obeying God. It's worth facing the wrath of men in order to obey God. To demonstrate to Gabriel, for example, that God calls Gabriel and says, look at that son of mine there.

Nobody's watching him, but see how upright he is. See how careful he is with his speech at home where nobody's watching him. See how careful he is.

See how gracious he is. See how forgiving he is. See how he doesn't live for money.

He can make a lot of money as a preacher, but he doesn't. Gabriel, do you see something there? You see the wisdom of God? And Gabriel says, that's amazing. Because he doesn't see that much in a lot of other people who call themselves Christians.

Do you see that as a challenge that God wants to point to you? It's not just me. He wants to point to you, your brother, your sister. And God wants to show you, not only to the angels in the third heaven, but in the second heaven.

So Satan, have you seen that one? Like in the book of Job, you read when there were so many hypocrites on earth and Satan could travel around the earth and point them out to God. God says, yeah, it's true. But what about Job? Have you seen him? One who obeys me, little things.

A man who turns away his eyes so that he doesn't lust after women. A grandfather who turns away his eyes. Job said that in Job 31 verse 1. He said, I made a covenant with my eyes that I will not gaze.

Forget about going and touching or committing adultery. I will not even look at a pretty young girl. Remember, his children were grown up and living in their own houses, 10 children.

He was a grandfather. But he says, I won't look at a pretty woman. And God says to Satan, have you seen Job? Yeah, you can show me 10,000 hypocrites, Satan, but have you seen this man? From those days till now, God has been showing his wisdom, especially now in the church.

God is showing the principalities and authorities in heavenly places, his wisdom. Human wisdom is different. Human wisdom is, you know how all the Israelites live by 10 commandments, but most unbelievers live by one commandment, thou shalt not get caught.

And most believers also live by one commandment, thou shall not get caught. And the Lord says to Satan, I know that a lot of people live by one commandment, thou shall not get caught, but look at this person. Look at this young sister, look at this young brother.

It's different. And Satan says, look at all those young sisters who dress like all the models and film stars, and they're trying to attract men with the way they dress and that provocative way. God says, yes, I know.

They call themselves my children. They're all hypocrites. But look at this other young sister.

See how she's not influenced by all these other worldly dresses around her in her own church. She's different. She's different.

She dresses modestly. There, Satan, I have an example. I pray there'll be many more examples like that.

Those are upright. Satan says, look at all these believers. God, you've given a word in scripture, which is so clear that nobody can misunderstand it.

Even a child can understand it. It says in Romans 13, verse 8, don't owe anybody anything. But look at all these believers of yours who are in credit card debt day after day after day.

They can't afford it. They go and buy with a credit card. They don't care for your word, Romans 13, 8, owe no man anything.

They want to buy something. They buy it. And God says, yes.

But have you seen this? I know there are not many, but have you seen this one, that one who just refused to go into debt, even if they have to tighten their belt and live a little more uncomfortably without that luxurious gadget, just because they want to obey my word? Satan, I have a few witnesses on earth who

will not get into debt. How many of you have a passion for that? I remember I had that desire when I was married and we were so poor. We had hardly any money at all.

But I decided my wife and I, we'll never get into debt. And we never have. I'm 71 years old.

I've never been in debt for a single day. No credit card debt, no other debt. When we could afford something, we bought it.

When we couldn't afford it, we didn't buy it. Simple. Have we suffered? No.

We sleep well at night because we don't owe anybody anything. Do you see all these things as Satan telling God? There is no believer who will prove that keeping your commandments is the best thing possible. And God says, yes, there are.

I know there are not thousands, but there's one here, one there, one the other. There's a remnant. My question to you, my brother, sister is, do you want to be in that remnant whom God can point out to Satan? Or you just want to make a few sacrifices and say, yeah, I'm a Christian.

I've accepted the Lord and Jesus keeps forgiving my sin. I keep doing a lot of wrong things, but I have the blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus. What type of gospel is this? I often used to think like this.

Supposing I'm witnessing to an outright non-Christian and I tell him, hey, listen, you know, there's salvation in Christ. He says, what can your Jesus do for me? I have many problems. Can you tell me? He can remove the guilt of all your past sin because he died on the cross.

He says, really? That's wonderful. He says, that non-Christian says, because that's certainly one of my big problems. I always live with guilt, but I have another problem.

I get so angry every day with somebody or the other in the office, in the home. Can your Jesus deliver me from that? And you scratch your head because he hasn't delivered you. He said, no, Jesus can't do that.

He's not so strong. Anger is pretty powerful. My Jesus is not so strong, but he can forgive you.

You can keep on getting angry every day and Jesus will keep on forgiving you. He will say, I don't want your Jesus. Thank you.

Go and tell somebody else. Do you blame him? Do you blame him for rejecting this Jesus you're witnessing about? Who can only make you keep on making a mess of your life every day and keep on cleaning it up? Keep on making a mess and keep on cleaning it up? Is this the Jesus of the scriptures? Are we witnesses to the real Jesus? I'll tell you why we don't get victory. Because we don't fear God, you know.

We love our selfish desires. We love our reputation. Nobody dare insult me.

If he does insult me, he's going to get it from me. At least in words. We haven't died.

Dead men don't get angry. You know that? It's true. Dead men don't get angry.

When you are crucified with Christ, when you accept the cross, you die to yourself, you don't get angry. Dead men don't boast. Have you ever heard a dead man boasting about anything? About himself or his

family or anybody? We have to die, brother.

There is no other way. Jesus is different from other people. Preachers invite you say, come and give your money to my ministry.

We never say that here. We say what Jesus said, come and die to yourself. That's what Jesus said.

Come and die, not come and give your money to my ministry. And the millions go after all these deceivers who say, come and give your money to my ministry. And the devil is happy with them.

You think the devil is not happy with multitudes giving money to crooked preachers who buy airplanes and expensive cars with that money and fool these poor people. You think the devil is not happy with them? He's absolutely happy with these multitudes of people deceived by these television evangelists. When he says, God, you think you're winning? Look at all these millions of your believers who I fooled them through my agents who preach on television, who collect their money.

Where are the people who tell them to die to themselves and overcome their anger and overcome their love of money and learn to always speak with grace or always give thanks? Let me show you one Thessalonians chapter five. What does it mean to be a witness for Christ? Be a witness before the devil to be witnessed before people by showing that doing the will of God is the best possible life I can live on this earth. One Thessalonians five verse 18.

There are many areas where we don't know God's will, but here is one area where God's will is written down plainly, so plainly that you can't mistake it. One Thessalonians five 18 in everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. You want to know God's will for you? Let's start with something already written plainly.

People say, brother, I don't know whether it's God's will for me to marry this person or that person, take this job or that job, move my residence to this place or that place, take that house or this house. I say, yeah, that those things are difficult. But shall we start with the easy things before going to physics and chemistry and all? Let's start learning ABC, right? It's not a good idea to start with the kindergarten instead of jumping to eighth standard first.

Start with the kindergarten. Let's start with things which are clearly, simply revealed in everything. Give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Okay, now I want to define the meaning of a very difficult word. Everything. I have to explain what everything means.

Everything means every thing or all things. How else shall I define it? Everything. What shall I do in every situation? Now I got to explain.

Give thanks. Thank you, Lord. In every situation.

But that doesn't look right to me. It doesn't matter. God is in control.

If you love God, you're called according to his purpose. The things that other people do even to harm you will work for your good. I tell you that.

I've had doctors treat me wrongly and make mistakes. It's worked for my good. Do you believe that? Because I learned to give thanks.

Imagine a doctor doing a surgery on you and making a mistake and you give thanks to it and God says, sets it right and does something good for you through it. It's amazing the power of giving thanks. God can defeat the enemy.

All things work together for good. There are numerous people because I'm a servant of the Lord. There are numerous people who try to harm me in many ways.

Never succeeded till today because God makes it work for my good. Romans 8 28. God makes all things work for my good.

Therefore I give thanks for all things. Now if Romans 8 28 had said God makes 50% of things work for our good, then this verse would have said in 50% of things things give thanks. This is another area where the devil says, God show me a people on earth who will give thanks for everything.

It's written so plainly in your word. This is God's will. You boast that you've got such a lot of wholehearted disciples.

Show me one of them who will give thanks in every single situation. Never grumble, never complain. God show me one.

Show me one in CFC which claims to be such a spiritual church. Show me one who will give thanks in everything. Never complain, never grumble in any situation, home, office, any situation.

I want to ask you, will you be one of those? Not for the name of CFC. I couldn't care less for CFC. My loyalty is not to CFC.

My loyalty is to Jesus Christ. Sure, it certainly is. That's why I always tell people if you find a better church than CFC in Bangalore, you must go and join it.

Leave this church immediately and go and join it and come and tell me about it. Maybe I'll join it too. Because I want you to be in the best possible church.

I want you to be in a church where you'll be a radical disciple of Jesus Christ. That's what I don't want to fill these chairs. I'm not interested.

I want you to be a radical disciple of Jesus Christ so that when you stand before the Lord, you can stand there and God can say, well done, good and faithful servants. That's what I want. And that's what I want for all of you.

And I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the way. One last verse. 1 John chapter 5, sorry, chapter 2. 1 John and chapter 2. This is more true as today as we approach the end of time.

1 John 2, 17. The world is passing away and all its fashions and lusts, but the one who does the will of God will live forever. If you decide in everything in your life, start with in everything, give thanks.

For this is the will of God. I decided many years ago, God is my witness. I decided many years ago in my life that I will give thanks.

It's not a question of what I feel like. I may feel, I don't live in my emotions, how I feel. I couldn't care less how I feel.

I live in my will. I choose to say, Lord, I give thanks for that, whether I feel like it or not. I don't care whether I feel like it or not.

I say in Jesus name, I give thanks for that, even though I can't understand right now how in the world that's going to be a good for me. And I've always found out in all these 52 years of being a believer, it's worked out for good. Take that testimony.

It is true. God's word is true. The world is passing away and all its fashions and lusts, but if you do the will of God, you will abide, live forever.

Do you want to live forever? According to this verse, how do you live forever? Do the will of God. I want to do it. Jesus came here to make us do his will, not to just live for ourselves and go to heaven.

No, he didn't come here to make people live for themselves and go to heaven. He came here to turn us around from doing our own will and to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. In fact, he taught us to pray that.

Father, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth in my life as it is done in heaven. Every little thing, every little thing, the angels do God's will. Lord, I want to do it like that in my life.

That's what he taught us to pray. He said, pray like this. How many of us pray like that? Oh God, I want your will to be done in my life.

Those are the happiest people on the face of the earth. I'll tell you, it's made my life extremely happy. As you've often heard me say, if you can find a happier man than me in India, show him to me.

I'd like to meet him. I'd like to check it out if he's really happy 24 hours a day, seven days a week, like God's made me. It doesn't matter.

If something's going wrong, it doesn't matter. God is on the throne. He controls.

He controls all things. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the way to live. In Noah's time, God said something similar to him.

The world is passing away. Only this ark will remain. Noah said, oh, I believe that.

Then I'm going to live for building the ark. And if you believe God like Noah did, you'll live for doing God's will in your life and building his church. That's the only thing that'll remain when everything else perishes.

Believe it or not, he was yours to hear. Let him hear. Let's pray.

Like God spoke to Abraham all alone when nobody else heard him, God has spoken to you today, I believe, when nobody else has heard except you. The person sitting to your right and to your left did not hear what God said to you today. Now the question is, whether you're going to obey.

God is testing you and he wants you to be his witness. And if you find it difficult, seek for the power of his Holy Spirit. That's the way to do it.

Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit and give me power. You don't have to go to any meeting or get emotional. Get alone in your room and kneel down alone before God and ask Jesus, the baptizer in the Holy Spirit, to baptize you in Holy Spirit and fire and enable you to keep his commandments and do his will so that you can meet him with joy when he comes again.

And the little thing that he's told you to do today, do it. Don't delay, don't dilly-dally, lest that become a habit in your life. If you have to set right something with somebody, go and apologize today.

If you have to return something, return it as soon as possible. Say, Lord, I'm going to obey you from now on, whatever you say. Heavenly Father, apply the word to our hearts, we pray, we humbly ask.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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