

Being Full of Faith

by Zac Poonen

To be full of the Holy Spirit, we must earnestly desire Him, value Him, thirst for righteousness, and have faith in God's ability to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 59:49

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, Habakkuk 2:4, Acts 23:1, Romans 3:28, Hebrews 4:15

Topics: "Faith And Humility", "Justification By Faith"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life full of faith in God, highlighting the contrast between trusting in our own reason and pride versus trusting in God and living by faith. It explains the concept of being justified by faith, declared righteous by God, and the need to continually grow from faith to faith. The message stresses the significance of humility, dependence on God, and the dangers of pride and self-reliance in hindering our faith.

Transcript

We all know of the importance of being full of the Holy Spirit. We read of people in the Acts of the Apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit, which is an action that took place in a moment, and then we read of people who were full of the Holy Spirit. It's like saying you filled the petrol tank of your scooter or car, that's in a moment, and then to be full all the time is a different thing altogether, because that means as it goes down you keep getting it filled up.

So when the Bible speaks about certain people who are full of the Holy Spirit, they were people who were consistently living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and that is very rare to find. I've met lots of people who testify about a particular date when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. It's like someone saying, I filled the tank of my scooter five years ago.

Great. It doesn't mean anything. And that's the tragedy in a lot of so-called spirit-filled churches.

They are not full of spirit-filled people. They're all talking about an experience that happened in the past. And basically, to remain filled with the Holy Spirit, if you have, first of all, you know, you've got to earnestly desire it.

No one can be filled with the Holy Spirit if he doesn't value it. God doesn't give his most precious gifts to those who don't value it, and that's the reason why we have to sometimes hunger and thirst. You've got to

hunger and thirst for righteousness to be filled.

And Jesus said, if you want rivers of living water to flow out from you, you've got to thirst for it, not ask for it, but thirst for it. And there's a lot of difference. Those who ask can get the bare minimum things like forgiveness.

But if you thirst, you can live a spirit-filled life. Thirst means you value it more than anything else on earth. And you also, the other condition is, of course, faith.

You believe that God will do it for you. That's all. Anybody here, it doesn't matter how great a sinner you've been, if you've repented, turned around, trusted Jesus for your salvation, and you thirst for an overcoming life, you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that your life can be a victorious one and you can be a blessing to others.

Thirst and faith, and that thirst and faith must continue all the time. And it's very important that we keep our conscience clear. If I have a thirst to live this life, I'll always keep my conscience clear.

As I said, two things to continue in the spirit-filled life. One is keep your conscience clear always. That means as soon as a thorn gets into your foot, pull it out.

As soon as you're aware of a sin, confess it. And the second is humble yourself. Whenever you get a chance to go down, go down.

In the world, people are always seeking to go up. That's the way Lucifer went and became the devil. I'm encouraging you to go the way Jesus went, who went down, came from heaven to earth and became a servant down at the feet of his disciples on the last day of his life on earth.

That's the way of overcoming. Go down. So keep your conscience clear.

And whenever you get an opportunity to go down, somebody humiliates you, great. Go down. Humble yourself.

Keep your mouth shut. Don't try to defend yourself. You live the happiest life you can ever live.

But instead of that, you try to fight and defend yourself and be like Lucifer. And you'll begin to manifest some of his nature as well. And it's sad when Christians haven't seen the way Jesus went.

But there's another part of it which I want to see here in Acts of the Apostles. In Acts chapter 6, there's an expression spoken about Stephen, the first martyr. The first martyr Stephen, before he became a martyr, was selected to do a very lowly service.

And that lowly service was to serve food to the widows. And it's amazing the standard of life in those days was such in the church that to even find it to give a man the job to serve widows, Acts chapter 6, the Apostles said, select, verse 3, seven men full of the Holy Spirit. Boy, you need people full of the Holy Spirit to serve food to the widows? Yeah, so that you don't show any partiality.

Because there was a conflict. You know, the guys were giving more food to the Jewish widows and less to the non-Jewish widows. And so they said, you can't give this to ordinary people.

You've got to give it to spiritfull people. And not just spiritfull people, but people full of the Spirit. That means not just, I mean, if they had said, select somebody who was filled with the Spirit.

Almost everybody in those days was filled with the Spirit at some time. They said, no, no, no, no. You've got to select people who are full of the Holy Spirit.

And that's the type of person God selects even today to do even a lowly service. And then it says here, this is the passage that really challenged me. They chose, verse 5, in the middle of verse 5, Stephen, a man who was not only full of the Holy Spirit, but full of faith.

That's a beautiful expression, full of faith and the Holy Spirit. I like it. It's a challenge to me.

I want to be that type of person. And remember, Stephen was a very young believer. Those are all young believers those days.

Recently converted, just three, four chapters earlier that the Holy Spirit was poured out. Very new. How old a believer was Stephen? I don't know, maybe two, three years in the Lord.

Two, three years in the Lord. Can he be full of faith in the Holy Spirit? Young man, maybe 27 years old. Can we find some 25, 27-year-old people here, young, full of faith in the Holy Spirit? It's a challenge to us.

It can be. In those days, they didn't have a Bible. Their knowledge was much less than all of ours.

They couldn't explain doctrines like we can. They could not compare this verse with that verse and the other verse and teach so many things like we can, but they were full of faith in the Holy Spirit. And that's what made the early church so powerful.

That's what you and I need, brothers and sisters. So I thought I'd share a little bit about what the New Testament speaks about faith. In Romans chapter one, we want to be full of faith in the Holy Spirit.

You know, in Romans 1, 17, it says, we know that verse 16, the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. The word faith and believe, by the way, are hardly ever found in the Old Testament. In the Old Covenant, faith and belief was not so important.

There's only obedience, obedience to the law. In the New Testament, if there is obedience, it's the obedience of faith. That's what it says earlier here in Romans 1, 5. We've been made apostles to bring Gentiles to the obedience of faith.

Even obedience is the obedience of faith. But in the Old Testament, it was just plain obedience. They were obeying because they'd be punished if they don't obey.

They'd be blessed if they do obey. But in the New Testament, I don't obey because I'll be punished if I don't obey. Or I'll be blessed if I obey.

That's to be a little child. Little children, we punish them if they don't obey. Give them a chocolate if they do obey.

There in little children, we see a picture of Old Covenant life, where you obey God because you feel you'll get some blessing if you obey God. You know, all these preachers who say, give money to God and he'll bless you. That's 100% Old Covenant.

It's doing business with God. And yet so many Christians can't see it. And they should be ashamed of themselves to stand up in a meeting and say, I gave tithe to God and God gave me a promotion in my job.

I said, go and hang your head in shame, man. You testifying about doing business with God? Have you come here to talk about God as a father? Or a businessman or a bank that gives you better interest than other banks? Crazy. What most surprises me is all the dumb Christians who sit and watch this and say, wow, that's what surprises me more.

Not that stupid fellow standing up there and saying that. But all these fellows who, and even some CFC people who are supposed to know the Bible. They say, wow, I want to get that.

You want to do business with God? The New Testament is about the obedience of faith. You know what the obedience of faith is? Where you don't do it for reward. You don't do it even when you don't know the reason.

Um, the obedience of faith is I do it because God told me to do it. I don't know why. I don't know if any benefit will come from it.

But if God said it, I'm going to do it. You know, that's the only reason we get baptized. Why do you go and dip yourself in the water or get somebody to dip you in the water? Is that such a great thing? Jesus stood in the queue of repentant sinners.

He was not a sinner, but he stood in that queue to get baptized by John the Baptist. And John the Baptist said, hey, why are you coming for baptism? You'll never sin. He said, it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.

He didn't go by his reason. His reason would have said people will misunderstand you. If you're standing in that line of repentant sinners, they'll think there's some secret sin in your life.

You lose your testimony, man. Don't stand there. Or go privately when nobody's around.

No. The first thing I see in Jesus' public ministry is he did not listen to his reason. God told him to get baptized, go and stand in line with all those sinners.

He did it. I learned something there. That the new covenant way is the way of not listening to my reason, but listening to God.

The obedience of faith. And because I believe that whatever God has said is for my very best. That's faith.

Why is it so many people are reluctant to obey God? Totally because they don't believe what God says is for their very best. Why are so many people, I think could be people sitting here, who have not surrendered every single area of their life to God? Because they feel that God will mess up their lives and make their life unhappy. He's a spoiled sport and doesn't want us to have any joy in our life.

It's absolutely wrong. You'll have more joy in your life if you give every area to God. Supposing you say from today onwards, I only want to read what you want me to read, Lord.

I never want to read anything which you don't want me to read. You think your life will be unhappy? Your life will be the happiest. If you've got television and you say, Lord, I'm only going to watch on television, only, only what you can sit with me and watch.

You think you'll be unhappy? Maybe you'll miss some of those filthy serials, movies, etc. But you'll be one of the happiest people in the world. Those movies don't make you happy.

They give you a temporary excitement and pollute your mind for the next 50 years. Is it worth it? No, I, the obedience of faith is, I believe whatever God says is for my best. If you believed it, I tell you, you'd never once watch internet pornography in your life.

If you believed it, the obedience of faith, I believe what God says is the very best for me. And even though my nature pulls the other way, no, I'm going to listen to what God says. That's the obedience of faith.

Everything in the New Testament is based on faith. Not just blind obedience or doing business with God. Not if I do this, I'll get some benefit.

There are preachers who preach like that. I don't. See, when God sent Adam into the Garden of Eden, he didn't give him 10 reasons why you should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

How many reasons did he give? Not even one. He said, Adam, I'm telling you, don't eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If you eat, you'll die.

No reasons. That is obedience of faith. That's how we teach our children.

Supposing your child is playing around with a live electric wire. You say, don't touch it. He says that two-year-old said, give me 10 reasons why I shouldn't touch it.

And you sit down and try to explain 10 reasons why you should not touch an electric wire. You'll be giving hundreds of reasons for the rest of his life. And he'll die before he grows up.

What did you say? I have said it. That's enough. I hope you bring up your children that way when they're small.

When they grow up, they understand the reason. When they're 25 years old, they'll understand why daddy told them not to play around with blades and electric wires when they were small. But they don't understand it when they're two.

It's faith. So in the beginning, I understand today a lot of things which I did not understand 50 years ago as to why God says this and why God says that. If I had waited till I understood, I'd have been disobedient all these years.

So faith is so important. Not just that we trust Jesus having taken our sins, but a life of obedience of faith. And what stands in the way is our reason.

That's why the cleverer you are, the greater problem you'll have with faith. I've seen that. Why does it say in James chapter 2? Now, this is scripture inspired by the Holy Spirit.

James 2, 5. Listen, my beloved brethren. Didn't God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith? Is that partiality? There's no partiality with God. Why has he chosen the poor people to be rich in faith? It's a truth which I have seen because I have worked among rich people and among very poor people.

In this country. And I've seen who's got more faith. It's absolutely true what it says in this verse.

And I'll tell you why. Let me give you an example. Supposing you have a massive financial need all of a sudden.

Say a hospital bill. And you got, you're so rich that you got 20 times that amount in your bank account. You need to pray.

You need to see God. Not at all. Let's say some poor villager faced with this massive hospital bill.

And he doesn't even have 10% of that in his bank account. What's he gonna do? Well, he can borrow, go and beg. Or he can trust God.

That's just one example. I'm not saying therefore we should be poor in order to have it. That's not my point.

What I'm saying is that person is helplessly dependent upon God in that situation. And you are not. Because you can do without God in that situation.

Even a God is non-existent to be able to pay your bills. So that's why the poorer person has an advantage. The rich person's got a handicap.

It's like he's being asked to run the race with chains on his legs. That person is running without any chains. It's a handicap.

So what's the solution? The solution is not to give away all our riches and to be poor. The solution is to say, Lord, I will not trust in my intellectual resources or my earthly resources. I will trust in you.

And that the poor and the rich can both have. See, a lot of poor people, when they're in need, they don't trust God. No.

I've seen even in CFC. Some brothers, when they are poor, what do they do? They go around hinting to everybody else so that they get their needs met. They're not trusting God.

So don't think that every poor person trusts in God. A lot of poor person just trust in other generous believers. They don't have, they have zero faith just as much as the rich.

So it's not poverty alone that brings faith. It's a question of whether in our heart attitude is, I depend on God. Whether I have money or no money, I depend on God.

Take this matter of understanding scripture. Why did Jesus say in Matthew 11 and 25, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent and reveal them to babies. Is that partiality? That God reveals truth to babies and he sees some clever, intelligent person there and says, no, no, no, I won't reveal anything to him.

Is God against the rich? Is he against the clever and the intelligent? We need to understand that. What can you do if you were born clever and intelligent? It's not a choice. It's like the color of our skin.

You can't do anything about it. What can you do if you're born into an inheritance which you never even thought you'd get? Does it mean God's against you? We need to understand. It is dependence.

What are you dependent on? That's the point. Are you dependent on God or dependent on your cleverness to understand scripture? You know, when I hear different brothers around the world and CFC

or anywhere speaking God's word, it's very easy for me now after 50 years of being a believer to see whether this guy is displaying his cleverness or his humble dependence upon God. It's a great temptation when you speak to display your cleverness.

And I've seen a lot of preachers, people who go to Bible schools and all that. They have taught to excel in clever presentation of the word. Paul said, Paul was one of the cleverest people in the first century.

Brilliant man. If he were on earth, he'd have been today like an Albert Einstein or something. Absolutely brilliant.

But he said, when I preached, I did not come to you with clever words because I didn't want your faith to rest on my cleverness, but in the power of God. So how did God use a clever man like Paul? How did God give Paul, a clever man, more revelation than all the others in his time, including Peter, who was not 10% as clever as Paul. So then we see it's not cleverness.

Paul also was a rich man, by the way. His father was a very wealthy businessman who gave him enough money as an inheritance, by the way, that you read in Acts 28, Paul could rent a house for two years in the capital city of the world, Rome. Imagine going to London or New York and renting a house for yourself in the middle of the city.

Can he do that? He came from a rich family and he got an inheritance. That's how he could manage it. And he was very clever.

So there's an example God has given us of a person who was rich and clever, but whom God used more than anybody else, which shows us that it's not a question of whether you're rich or clever. It's a question of you're being proud. You see, most rich people are proud of their wealth.

And one proof of that is they don't mingle easily with extremely poor people. I've noticed that in our conferences here in Bangalore. We have people who come from the villages and some of them do know English, by the way.

In fact, we say to people from even the village churches, only send people to our conference who can speak English, but they are very poor. Their English is not all that perfect. But I've noticed a lot of CFC people immediately go and speak to the foreigners.

The other ones they wanna contact. They can have the whole conference go by for 10, 15 years, and they never once go and speak to these poor brothers and sisters who come from Tamil Nadu villages. Why? Pride, pride, pride.

And I see the development of these believers who are like this. They remain stagnant throughout. I felt as my children were growing up, I said, Lord, I'm thankful.

That you have allowed my children to grow up in a church where there are highly educated people and very uneducated. So that they don't grow up as some elite type of people. That they can learn from childhood to learn to mingle with all equally.

It was my great longing for them because I knew that then God's grace would be upon their life. I wanna ask you parents, do you teach your children to mingle with the poor and not so smart, but who may be spiritual? If you do that, you'll be doing them great good in the days to come. I'll tell you that.

Observe your children. Your parents observe your grown up children during conference time and see who they go and talk to. Don't be blind.

Wake up, see who you go and talk to. So God's not against the rich. He's not against the clever, but he's against that pride which makes a person feel, I can only mingle with so-and-so.

It says in Romans chapter 12. Have you read this verse? It's a command of the Holy Spirit. Romans 12, 16, middle of that verse.

Don't be proud in your mind, but associate with lowly people. Associate with lowly people. How much have you done that? How much have you taught your children to do that? Message translation says, make friends with nobodies.

How many nobodies have you made friends with in your life as a Christian? Have you made an effort? Let me ask you straight. Some of you who've been in CFC for many years. How many nobodies have you met and talked to during the conferences? And how many somebodies do you go and talk to in the conferences? Evaluate yourself honestly before God and you'll discover why you get so little supernatural revelation from God.

I thank you, Father. You have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent. I thank you, Father, that you have chosen the poor of the world, rich in faith, not because of their poverty, not because of their lack of education, but because of humility.

When he said, be like babes, he means humility. It says here, don't be the great somebody, but make friends with nobodies. So that's such an important thing, faith.

Let me show you Proverbs chapter 3. Proverbs 3 says, verse 5, trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your mind. See, mind and heart are contrasted here. Most Christians live in their mind.

It says, don't lean on your mind. That's faith in your mind, faith in your cleverness. So if you put these two things together, have faith in the Lord and don't have faith in your mind, you know there what is the greatest enemy of faith.

It is your cleverness and your reason and your dependence on it. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Don't lean on your own clever understanding.

If you lean upon him, if you lean upon him with all your heart, he will make all your paths straight. Verse 6, KJV says, he will direct your paths. Oh, I praise God for times when I have, you know, taken a quick decision and the same day said, Lord, I'm sorry.

The effect of that decision has not yet taken place. So thank you for alerting me. I want to know your will.

And the Lord says, cancel it. Same day, I canceled it. Even in advice that I give to church elders, sometimes the same day I would cancel it.

I had to do that yesterday. I took a decision earlier in the day and later in the afternoon, I was thinking, Lord, I'm sorry. I didn't really consult you enough about that.

Please, I want to do your will. And before the evening was over, I was able to cancel it. And I believe that would turn out for the good of that church.

So in all your ways, my brothers and sisters, acknowledge that your cleverness is not good enough to do God's will. It's good for the things of the world. It's good for doing your computer work, your school work, your college work, your factory work.

But when it comes to doing the things of God, you don't lean on your own reason. Yield completely to him. Say, Lord, I'll choose your way, the obedience of faith.

How many of you young men will have the boldness to say, Lord, for unmarried, I'll choose whomever you give me. I don't care whether she's pretty, intelligent, clever. She's God-fearing.

I know that you will. It's not that God ignores intellectual compatibility. I think intellectual, emotional, spiritual compatibility are all necessary.

Even physical attractiveness. It's not the devil who made women pretty. God made them.

I'm not saying God will ignore all that. But I say, if those are important values for you, you may miss God's will. Supposing you, why are you afraid, young men, to say, Lord, I'll marry anybody you choose.

I'll tell you why. You think God will pick up the ugliest girl in the world and say, come on, marry her. Who told you that? The devil.

Lord, I'll choose any job you want me to take. Why are you hesitant to say that? He'll ask you to pick the lowest, most lowest-paying job in the world and say, go and take that and live in some hut. You don't know the Father.

That's the problem. That's why faith is based on, first of all, knowing God is a loving Father. I believe with all my heart that my earthly Father desired so much good for me, sacrificed so much for me.

I can think of instances, and you know your fathers did that for you. But I have a Father in heaven who's far more interested in the very best for me. I told the Lord this when I got converted.

I said, Lord, I'll go. I'll do what you want me to do. If you want me to remain in the Navy, I'll remain in the Navy.

You want me to quit, I'll quit. And when the time came for marriage, I said, Lord, I don't ask for a Malayali. I'll marry anyone you give me.

I want someone who really wants to live for you. That's it. I'll choose whoever it is.

It must be God's choice. I had no hesitation because I knew that I could not choose better than God. You can go and choose a pretty girl with a character like a witch and ruin your whole life.

Or you can marry a man who's wealthy, make you live in a palace and make your whole life miserable. But if you give yourself to God, you think he'll make you live in a hut or make you live on the streets? I have personally seen in the last more than 30 years of work among poor people in the villages and even some poor people who have come to CFC in past years. I know better than others because I've seen it in the villages and here what rock bottom poverty some people were when they came to the church.

And we do not preach the prosperity gospel. We have never said if you give money to God, God will bless you. We've said seek holiness of life because Jesus died for your sins.

No other reason. Because God wants you to be holy. And I have seen every single one of them prosper materially without preaching the prosperity gospel.

I've seen it in the poorest villages. I've seen it in poor people who've come here to CFC. How it has gone with them and with their children.

The sad thing is in some cases when it goes well with their children, the parents get puffed up and backslide. Backslide doesn't mean they leave CFC, but you can see in their faces a haughtiness, a pride. You know what my children are like? You know where we were when we first came to CFC? I wish their children were poor.

That these parents would not be lost. We don't give the credit to God. We take the credit to ourselves.

I've seen it happen. I'm only warning you brothers and sisters, don't lean on your reason. Walk in lowliness before God all your days.

Recognize that you're a nobody. It's easy for such people to have faith. That's what it means to live by faith.

Don't lean upon your own reason. You know what? The Lord, the option that God gave Adam in the Garden of Eden was really two ways of life. One, live by your reason.

Acknowledge your good and evil. You eat the fruit comes into your mind. I know exactly what is good and what is evil.

I can choose or reject that and choose life. That's the Holy Spirit. It's the life of God.

And then when you have to take a decision, you say, I can't lean on my reason now. I have to depend on the life of God within me rising up when I think of a decision or subsiding down when I think of a decision, thereby indicating to me whether that is God's will or not. You know, that's how we're supposed to live.

That's the life of faith, by the way. See Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8 and verse 6. The mind set on the flesh that is on the Adamic way of life. You can call the flesh, Adam's nature, Adam's way of life.

And if my mind is set on the way Adam and Adam's children think, it will lead to death. It may make you a very wealthy man because you can be crooked and you can cheat and tell lies and become extremely wealthy and you become a great politician or great businessman and even a great preacher. But the mind set on the spirit is life.

That means it's like a upsurge of life and peace. Perfect peace. Whereas the mind which is set on the flesh is full of unrest.

How many of you are disturbed when you find yourself lying down in bed with your mind tossing about about a lot of things which have got nothing to do with God but have only got to do with earthly anxieties and problems that other people have caused for you which the devil keeps reminding you. He's got a time to remind people. It's usually when they put their head on the pillow at night.

Ah, now these people are relaxed. I can remind them of all the evil that people have done to them and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Just disturb their sleep a little bit.

You find that? Or do you find you can sleep peacefully? A good conscience is the best pillow, I tell you that. Where you have nothing against anybody in the world. A mind which is at peace because you're forgiven everybody.

You don't have a grudge against anyone. You're not jealous of somebody who's doing better than you. You're happy.

What a life, the life in the Holy Spirit. This is our inheritance, brothers and sisters. Don't be happy that you made money or your children are doing well.

These things are trash. There's an inheritance God's purchased for us, a mind which is at peace and a mind which is full of the life of God thinking, you know, there's a chorus which I think Amy Carmichael or somebody wrote which I sometimes sing to myself. Shine on me, Lord, through the hours of night.

Let my very dreams be found about thy business on some holy ground. Shine on me that my very dreams may be about thy business and found on some holy ground. Yeah, God answers prayer.

If you really long for that, he'll do that for you. But if that's not your longing, then you'll get all types of dreams which don't really bless you. The mind at peace, it's our birthright.

If our heart is right with God, our mind will be at peace. And I'll tell you something. You don't have to be afraid.

He'll always give you enough for your needs. He'll always take care of your children. I'll never, I never hesitate to remind you of Psalm 37, verse 25, which says, David says, I'm 70 years old now.

He wrote a lot of Psalms when he was young, but this one was when he was old. Psalm 37, 25, I'm young and now I'm old. I'll tell you one thing, fellas.

I have never seen a righteous man forsaken. I've seen a lot of wealthy people struggling, but I've never seen a righteous man forsaken by God. And I've never seen his descendants begging for bread.

I've never seen his children without a job. I've never seen his grandchildren without a job. I've not seen his great-grandchildren without a job.

Do you want that? Be righteous. Wealthy people, some of their children become beggars for their grandchildren. Be righteous, live by faith.

God wants us to live by faith and not to live at a static level of faith. In Romans 1, we saw that the gospel is the power of God and to salvation to everyone who believes. Romans 1, 15, 16.

The next verse he says, the righteousness of God, Romans 1, 17, is revealed from faith to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith. It's like it says in the last verse of 2 Corinthians 3 that the Holy Spirit changes us from glory to glory, to glory, to glory, to glory, to glory. It's like telling your child, you're gonna go from first standard to second standard, third standard, fourth standard, fourth.

All the way to PhD and to postdoctoral studies. There's no end to it. It's like that faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith.

And you tell your child, don't be satisfied with what you learned in third standard. You got to go on, man. I want you to get a PhD.

And that's how we, the Lord tells us to, don't be satisfied that you've got just enough faith to take you to heaven. Your sins are forgiven. It's from faith.

That's the first level that you just joined school. That's kindergarten. You've got to go from faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith.

So the question is, are you progressing in your education of faith and the school of faith, the school of knowledge? Oh, all of us have made a lot of progress. But knowledge, it says only puffs up. It's like a balloon.

You blow into it, bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. The Bible says knowledge is like that. You think that's a very useful thing.

It's like a little child who thinks a balloon, wow, how big it is. Knowledge puffs up. It's just hot air.

But faith, from faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, that'll build you up like you're strong. So do you know the difference between knowledge and faith? Do you find, I don't need to ask you whether you're growing in knowledge. If you're coming here every Sunday, your knowledge is increasing in leaps and bounds.

The question is, are you growing from faith to faith? It's like your child comes back from school and you ask him, well, you play marbles in school, right? How many marbles did you get this year compared to last year? I'm not really interested. I say, did you get a promotion from first standard to second standard? That's what I'm more interested in than finding out whether you play marbles better this year. To get knowledge is like that.

You can play marbles better, but you're still sitting in the kindergarten as far as faith is concerned. Knowledge is increasing, but faith is not growing. We really need to take heat to that.

In this matter of faith, the Bible says in Romans chapter three, first about being justified by faith. Romans 3, 28, we are justified by faith. Now I've often spoken about this, but there are a lot of new people here.

Newly come to the church and sometimes we can, I don't want to ignore them. I want to explain to you what justification is. Even when all our sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ, you have repented.

You've come to Christ. He's forgiven you your sins because you believe that his blood was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins. And every single sin of yours is forgiven.

Your record as far as sin is concerned is clean. You still can't stand before God. Did you know that? How can you stand before God? You think that if your sins are forgiven, you can stand before God.

That's what a lot of people think. That's why forgiveness is not enough. Because even when all my sins are forgiven, I still have within me what the Bible calls the flesh, a corrupt nature.

How in the world can I stand before God with this corrupt nature and say, my sins are all forgiven? That's filthy. There's nothing good in it. We cannot stand before God.

That's what many have not understood. I'm sorry to say many preachers don't even explain it. So what does God do? To cover up this filthy nature, He clothes us with the pure righteousness of Christ.

We haven't partaken of it yet. That we will slowly partake of it over a lifetime. But meanwhile, we are covered with it.

And I stand before God, accepted just like Jesus Christ. Because I'm justified, declared righteous, clothed with the righteousness of Christ. By faith, I accept it.

Do you know that you are justified by faith? Do you know that you're justified? Or you only know you're forgiven? These are inheritance. There's a story that Jesus spoke about this in Matthew chapter 22. A certain king gave a wedding feast.

And this is a picture of our salvation. And he sent out his slaves. Matthew 22 to invite those who are invited.

Those are the Jewish people first. The whole nation of Israel come. I've come to save you.

And they said no. The Jewish people rejected that message. They didn't come.

He sent other slaves. Please come. You've been invited.

Everything's ready. They said no. They paid no attention.

Where's fire? And they went their way. That's what the Jewish nation did. And the king was angry, verse 7. And he said the wedding is ready, verse 8. Those who are invited, the entire nation of Israel, were not ready.

They're not worthy. Now go to the highways and get all the beggars, the evil and the good, the people in rags. You know who they are? You and me.

The beggars from the streets. The filthy. Whether they are evil or think they are evil or good, whatever it is, bring them in.

That's how we came in. And then, you see, all these beggars in rags and torn clothes and filth and dirty. You can't come and sit in a king's wedding feast with those clothes.

The king knew that. So at the gate, he gave a beautiful white robe to every person who came. Put this on and your dirty rags will be covered.

And the beggars were excited and they would all put it on. Except one guy who came in a suit and a tie. He said, I don't need this wedding robe.

I think my robe, my dress looks pretty neat as it is. I'm not like these beggars with their rags. I think, OK.

He went in without the wedding robe. And the king comes to see these thousands of people. And it's very easy to spot when everybody's in white, one fellow in a nice pinstriped suit, which he thought was excellent.

And the king asked him one question. How in the world did you get in here without a wedding robe? It says here he was speechless. Now, if you had to pay for the robe, he could have said, I didn't have enough

money.

It wasn't, he didn't have to pay, it was free. If it was not offered, he could say, nobody offered it to me. It was offered to everyone.

He did not take it because of his pride. It's a picture of people who say, who compare themselves with others and say, I'm not as bad as them. Are you like that, my brother? You're the one who will never be justified.

Because you compare yourself with other sinners and say, well, I'm not as bad as them. I mean, I'm saved and he's saved. But I wasn't as bad as them.

You know why Paul had such a wonderful experience of salvation? Because even though, as he says, he lived with a perfectly good conscience from childhood and kept the law all his life. He saw himself as the chief of all the sinners in the world. How can a person, have you ever thought of this? I don't have time to show you that Acts 23 verse one.

He says, I've lived with a good conscience all my life. Philippians three in the first few verses, six, seven or eight or something. He says, according to the righteousness in the law, blameless.

And here's a man from his childhood, who's lived with a good conscience till the age of 60 when he testifies in Acts 23 one. According to the law, external standard of the law, blameless. Still says in 1 Timothy 1 15, I'm the chief of all the sinners in the world.

How is that possible? Because all the other things were in the eyes of men. I have a good conscience before men. And I have kept the law before men.

My external life is clean. When we looked at his inner life, he says in Romans seven, I found all types of desires there which are corrupt. I'm the chief of all the sinners in the world.

He said, Paul, if you were living today, Paul, are you worse than Osama Bin Laden? He said, yeah. Do you believe that about yourself? You wouldn't say that, would you? There are two revelations that God had to give me in my life about 35 years ago. One was, it changed my life.

That Jesus came in my flesh, not with my sinful tendencies. No, that was not there. But of the same flesh by which he could be tempted.

And he was tempted in every point. Not only that, but exactly as I am. Hebrews 4, 15.

That was impossible if he did not have my flesh. That was a revelation that really revolutionized my life. And that was one of the results that came out of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And I started reading the Bible. I remember after I was filled with the Holy Spirit, well, it was really the second time I had an experience before when I backslid. And then God filled me with the Holy Spirit again.

And I said, Lord, if this is real, then the New Testament will become a new book for me because the Holy Spirit wrote it. And it did become a new book from that. And that was the first revelation.

The second revelation, which is equally important, was for me to discover that everybody in the world had the same flesh as me. A lot of people haven't seen that. Even those who have seen that Jesus had the

same flesh, they haven't seen that that other guy has got the same flesh as me.

He's a child of Adam, just like me. Once I understood that, I'll tell you the result. I could never look down on anybody after that.

You know how some communities look down on certain other communities and say, ah, I know, they're like this. I feel sorry for you. The part of the country I come from is Kerala.

And in Kerala, people are very proud of the families they come from. You know, their family names, which they're very proud of, they're displayed on the gate. I like to put Adam or something like that.

I don't know. Family name. They like to display it, you know.

Especially if you're related to some archbishop or bishop or something like that means... I mean, the archbishop may be in hell, but the name is very famous in those circles. And they say, I belong to that family. So sometimes I meet such people and say, what's your family? I say, I came from a family that was kicked out of Eden many years ago.

But Jesus came and saved me. Are you proud of something that you have inherited? Family name. Family wealth.

Educational intelligence. No wonder your experience of Jesus is so shallow. He came for the humble because he himself is humble.

He came for those who have no high thoughts about themselves because of their wealth or their intelligence. I'm glad he picked up somebody like Paul who was rich and clever so that rich people and clever people don't think they're excluded. That even such a man could really live by faith and depend on God, live by his heart, not live by his reason.

So here, this man came in the suit and he was thrown out, it says. He was thrown out because he felt his own righteousness was good enough. And the king said, bind him hand and foot, verse 13, and throw him out into the outer darkness.

Why? He's better dressed than all the others. If you remove the garment, the outer garment, definitely his dress was better. He was the best of the lot.

That's why the Pharisees couldn't find. I like to see that picture on the cross where this wicked criminal who lived murdering people, stealing from people goes into paradise and the holy Pharisees standing on the foot of the cross go to hell. Never forget that picture of the cross.

The one whom the world considers a criminal walks that very same day with Jesus in paradise. And all those people in the world considered very scholars, Bible scholars and religious leaders go to hell. Not because of their Bible knowledge but because of pride.

Pride is the enemy of faith. If you don't have more faith, my brother, sister, the answer is because of pride. I'll show you that from scripture.

In the Old Testament, I showed you one enemy of faith is our reason. Proverbs 3, verse 5. I'll show you the other enemy of faith in the book of Habakkuk. You know where Habakkuk is? It's after the book of Hezekiah.

Just turn, you find it? Habakkuk. It's towards the end of the Bible. Just work your way backwards from Malachi.

Zechariah, Haggai, Zechariah, Habakkuk. Habakkuk chapter 2. Here's a contrast between two types of people. In verse 4, the last part, the righteous will live by faith.

The opposite of that should be the unrighteous. No, the opposite of that is the proud. First part of that verse.

His soul is not right. He's not righteous. So what is it saying? The proud person is not righteous but the one who's got faith is righteous.

See the contrast? In Proverbs 3, 5, it is the one who has faith and the one who trusts in his reason. Here it is the one who's got faith and the one who's proud. So from these two verses, I get two, I get conclusions as to what are the enemies of my faith.

One is my reason. When I trust in my reason, for example, a lot of anxiety is because we use our reason so much. And if we trusted in God and did not depend on our reason, we wouldn't have so much anxiety.

We'd be free from it. You know, like these people who study diseases, diseases, they're not doctors, but they study disease. They go to the internet and look this, look up this, look up that, look up this.

And they imagine they have all types of diseases which they don't have. They use their reason so much. They get all worried about something.

It's like I heard this man who went to a doctor and said, I think I have this very complicated disease. But he said that disease doesn't have any symptoms. He said, that's right.

I don't have any symptoms. So I feel I've got this very complicated disease. That's the result of too much of studying medicine on the internet.

Imagining I've got this and I've got that. I've got the other thing. Be anxious for nothing.

You have a father in heaven who cares for you. A person who trusts God like that, is free from anxiety, lives by faith. And pride.

The reason the Pharisees could not believe was because of their pride. They were too proud. So I've learned something from that.

That if I lack faith in a situation, I say, Lord, I must be proud somewhere. That's why I got all anxious. That's why I'm so anxious about my health.

Anxious about how will it turn out. Will I die before my children grow up? All these things, you know, which the devil puts into our mind. It's because of reason and pride.

Let's learn to trust in a heavenly father and live by faith and walk by faith. First of all, justified by faith, declared righteous, accepted by God. And then every day living, trusting a heavenly father who cares for every need of ours.

Dear brothers and sisters, let's go that way. Let's bow before God. Let's pray.

This is not a complicated way. The complicated way is the way of unbelief and reason and pride. The way of faith is simple.

It's for the humble. It's for the ones who do not boast about their intelligence or their wealth or their children or their family or anything, but who humbly trust in God and say, Lord, I lean upon you. I want to live by faith all the days of my life.

Heavenly father, this is the way we want to live. You know that Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. Who wants not only to bring a beginning to it, but also an end to make us perfect in faith.

We want to go that way, Lord. Every single one of us. Help us, we pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

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