

Brokenness and Compassion

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting a true and accurate picture of Jesus and building a holy church, rather than focusing on social work and quantity.

Scripture: Colossians 1:28

Topics: "Church Growth", "Christian Humility"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting a true and accurate picture of Jesus through our lives, preaching, and actions in the body of Christ. It highlights the need to focus on building the church as the primary mission, rather than getting distracted by other good works. The goal is to make Christ our example and present every individual as perfect in Christ, focusing on quality over quantity. The message also addresses the need for honesty, humility, and seeking God's mercy in our lives.

Transcript

...the Father because the world had a wrong understanding, the Jewish world had a wrong understanding of what God was like. And our ministry in the body of Christ is to present a true and accurate picture of Jesus by the way we live and the way we preach, the way we run our homes, the way we build our church. In all these things, people must get a clear picture of what Jesus was like.

That is our goal and that's what it means to stand true to God in day of compromise. But people are taken up with so many other things like social work. I'm not against social work, but Jesus did not spend his life collecting all the blind Bartimaeuses and all the lepers and open a colony for them.

That's not what he did. And that's not what Paul did, you know. He didn't go around opening homes for the lepers and the blind.

There are many non-christian organizations doing a great job in that. I live in India where there's such a lot of poor people, such a lot of sickness, and I'll tell you honestly the truth. What I've seen in 50 years of moving around in India, the people who do social work best are not the Protestants, they're the Roman Catholics.

I can trust a Roman Catholic orphanage any day more than the crooked directors of Protestant orphanages in India. This is true. A lot of people who send money to India, they think they're supporting an orphan.

They don't realize that that director is sending the same letter to ten other countries, and you think you're the only one supporting. Where did the other people's, nine people's money go? Into the director's pocket. And I can see the amount of corruption.

Even the government has come to light, and it comes in these papers, the scandals of Christian orphanages, but never of a Roman Catholic one. So I see that, you know, think of a thing like slavery. Slavery is utterly contrary to God's will, and yet in Paul's time, the great apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, never tells one single master to set his slave free.

Have you ever thought of that? He just says treat them kindly and take care of them. Even to Philemon, whose slave was a believer, Onesimus, he doesn't tell him share your property with him and let him go free. No, he says take him back to the slave.

Paul recognized that there are certain social things which society and the world was not ready to rectify. He didn't approve of slavery. If you had asked for Paul's opinion, he'd have told you straight.

But he was sensitive to God. Sometimes, you know, we are moved by human compassion, and it's not the compassion of Christ. It's not according to the wisdom of God.

And we do things, and they don't necessarily build the church. I see very clearly that, just like Noah spent all his energy and all his money and all his time to build the ark, because he knew that is the only thing that would remain when all of the world collapsed around him and was destroyed. I see in exactly the same way today.

There is only one thing that will remain when the world is destroyed, and that is the true Church of Jesus Christ. And that's not something big. It's something holy.

The Bible ends with the story of, not the story, but it speaks about the last chapters of the Bible are dealing with the false church and the true church, Babylon and Jerusalem. And if you read carefully, Babylon is called great, the great city, eleven times. Babylon is the megachurch, the great Babylon, Babylon the great.

Jerusalem is called the holy city. You see the difference? One is quantity. The other is quality.

That's the difference between the false church and the true church. So if you're impressed by quantity, you'll definitely be a part of Babylon. If you try to build a church and you want to increase in numbers and you don't want to make it holy, you'll end up as Babylon without a shadow of doubt.

So we need to see, reorient our thinking according to Scripture. I don't want to start a crusade against, in India we have a form of slavery still. In many of the villages in India, they don't call it slavery.

They call it bonded labor, where poor people are made to work for very minimal pay, and in the farm and the fields, and they have to keep borrowing from their masters until the debt becomes so huge that the masters say, okay, we'll release you from all that debt, but you give yourself and your family that you'll serve us freely and we'll provide you a place to live and food. It's slavery. They don't get any more salary then, they can't go away.

It's called bonded labor. The government is 100% against it, has passed laws against it, but you think those laws are implemented in these villages? No. So what should we do when we go to these villages?

I'm not going to take a crusade against delivering free food from slavery.

The need in a country like India is so massive that, I mean, folks from a country like this, where you don't see that type of need, can be moved by compassion. When you see children eating out of garbage bins, that happens all over India, and there are preachers who capitalize on that and show all these pictures and get money out of gullible Christians to fill their pockets. There's only one thing that's going to remain when Christ comes back, and that's the church.

You see in Revelation 21, the church, holy city, Jerusalem. And this church is something, if you want to build on the basis of quality and not quantity, you have to make Christ our example and our goal. Like Paul says in Colossians, and that's a great word for me in my own ministry, Colossians in chapter 1, he says in verse 28, we proclaim Christ, admonishing every man, teaching every man with all wisdom, so that one day we may present every man in my church perfect in Christ.

This is my goal, that if God gives me a responsibility in a church, I want to present every one of them perfect in Christ. If God gives me children, I want to present every one of them as a disciple of Jesus. I'm not happy with what other people think.

You know, so often parents, I tell you, a lot of Christian parents want to give a good impression before others. Others must think that my children are godly. I'll tell you honestly, I couldn't care less.

When my children were small, I never told them, what will others think if you do this, or what will others think if you dress like this? You ask your children questions like that, you've trained them to be hypocrites. I never asked it. I would only say, what does God think about it? Even if nobody sees you, what does God think about this type of attitude, or this type of conduct, or this type of speech? It's very, very important that we hold our children and our church to the highest.

And the main thing is that Jesus emphasized was the hidden life. Everything inward, you know, in the Old Covenant, the emphasis was on the outward. There were 613 commandments in the Old.

Ten of them, everybody knows the Ten Commandments. There were 613 altogether, and every one of them had to do with something external. Sacrifices were external.

So many laws concerning external things. That's why you had an whole army of scribes who were there to explain chapter and verse, how to do this, and how to do that. But that which was external in the New Testament, in the Old Testament, Jesus emphasized the inward.

You remember in the Sermon on the Mount, he said, murder. You were told in the Old Testament, don't commit murder. I don't have time to show you all that, but you read it in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. You know those chapters.

In the Old Covenant, you were told, don't kill. I'm telling you, deal with the root of it, anger. And if you don't get the root of it, anger, out of your heart, you can go to hell.

In the Old Testament, it was, if you murder, you'll be punished. But in the New Testament, it is, whoever is angry against his brethren, lets that anger come out of his heart, in his mouth, and again, out of his mouth, he will be guilty enough to go to hell. And then he said, in the Old Testament, the commandment, Matthew 5, that's what I read, was Matthew 5, 22.

He said, the Old Testament commandment, Matthew 5, 27, was don't commit adultery. But I say, go to the root of it. The inward, the thing which nobody can see, just like the anger, that lustful look at a woman.

And if you find it like that, pull your eye out of your body. Again, he says, otherwise, your whole body will be thrown into hell. Many people have asked me through the years, Brother Zak, for 40 years, I've heard you speak against anger and sexually impure thinking, more than any other sin.

Why do you speak so much against these two? I said, listen to me, I'll tell you. You read Matthew 5, 6, and 7 carefully, and there are many, many sins mentioned there. You know, if you pray to get honor, that's a sin.

If you give to get honor, that's a sin. If you judge others, that's a sin. He says, don't be anxious.

If you get anxious, that's a sin. If you love money, that's a sin. But out of all the sins, I mean, if you hate your enemies, that's a sin, because you've got to love your enemies.

Many, many things listened in those three chapters, but out of all the sins that Jesus spoke about, there were only two sins that he said will take you to hell. Read it yourself. Anger and sexually lustful thinking.

I say, because it's serious, I speak about it. And because hardly anybody else speaks about it, you try and go to any Christian TV program and see if they ever speak about these two sins. Never.

Because the preachers themselves haven't got any victory over it. They haven't pursued it. And so you have a generation of people sitting in churches who have got totally impure thoughts, who get angry at home all the time and with each other, and they don't even think it is serious.

The two most serious sins that Jesus spoke about, not even mentioned. Do you think today's churches are presenting the real Jesus before people? They say, we must help the poor. They'll take pictures of some skinny child in Somalia or somewhere and say, we should help him.

By all means, help him. But that's not what Jesus spoke about. And there's so much of misquoting of Scripture.

You know, there are people who quote Matthew 25. I've heard it myself. Matthew 25.

It's all because people don't read Scripture carefully. Matthew 25, the King will say to those, verse 34, come inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, Matthew 25, 35, and you gave me something to eat.

This looks like the social gospel, right? I was hungry, you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.

And I was naked and you clothed me, Matthew 25, 36. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.

And people take those verses and show you those pictures of someone eating out of a garbage bin in India or some sick skinny child in Central Africa or widows who become prostitutes and all that. Yeah, yeah, it's good. I'm not against anybody helping all these people.

But read carefully. Then the righteous will answer, verse 37, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger? When did we see you sick? And now listen to the answer of Jesus. Very important, all those careless readers of Scripture, please pay attention to this one verse.

The King will say to them, and I want to misread it first. To the extent that you did it to one of these human beings, you did it to me. That's how most Christians misread it.

He said to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine. Do you really believe all human beings are brothers of Jesus Christ? Are you such a heretic? Are you a Christian? Who are the brothers of Jesus? Jesus said, those who hear my word and do it. It's the way you treat not human beings.

I'm not against your caring for human beings. All I'm saying is that's not what Jesus speaks of here. Be exact in quoting Scripture.

Don't pass on misquoting of Scripture to other people like a lot of preachers do and collect money from them. In as much as you did it to the one of these brothers of mine, the least of them you did it to me. This is the real Jesus.

So shall we do good to all men? Yes. Turn with me to Galatians in chapter 6. You see, I live in a country which has got a thousand times or a million times more poverty than you have ever seen in your life. I move in them.

Some of our villages are extremely poor villages. We have planted churches there. So I'm not speaking from theory.

I'm speaking from experience. I live in a country where I'm surrounded by beggars and tramps every day, all around, in the streets, on the roads, everywhere. So I don't see anything like that here.

Not at all. All the people you call homeless and tramps here are a hundred times better than the ones we have in India. So I'm speaking from experience.

Galatians chapter 6 and verse 10. While we have opportunity, that means while we are alive, let us do good to all men. I believe that with all my heart.

Let's do good to all men, but especially, in other words, concentrate on the household of faith. That's all I'm saying. And we do that.

We, from our church in India, have given millions of rupees. When I say millions, I mean millions of rupees to poor people in the villages in India. Believers to the household of faith, who are sick, who are hungry, who have their houses washed away by a cyclone.

We go and build those houses. And then we build the houses of the Hindus next door as well, so that we have a good testimony before them, not just the houses of the believers. And those who, so many of them, to educate their children in school.

Basic education, not college education and all that. Basic things. We've done it.

The household of faith. And I'll tell you what we have discovered. By the time we have met the need of the household of faith, there's hardly anything left with us to give to the rest of the millions and millions of

people in our country.

And I don't have a bad conscience about it. I turn to other passages also, which people misread. Let me show you two other passages like this.

James chapter 2. True faith. What is the mark of true faith? James chapter 2. He's speaking about a wrong attitude to poor people. My brethren, don't hold your faith in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

Is he talking about poor people in the world? No. He's talking about poor people in the church. If a rich man comes into your assembly with a gold ring, dressed in fine clothes, and you pay special attention to this rich man.

And I tell you, there's such an evil I have seen in India. When I was a young Christian, I would see that the board members of almost all the churches, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, the board members are always the big, big company executives and senior police officers. And I said, what's this? Is this how every church, you mean all the spiritual people are the people with big jobs and big salaries? I was young, 23 years old, and I said, Lord, if I, I never thought I would ever build a church.

But I said, Lord, if you ever give me grace to build a church, I will never follow this. I look for godly people among the poor fishermen and poor people. And those are the type of people we have as elders in many of our churches.

Extremely poor people. Some people can't speak a word of English and who are poor, but who are godly. You show favoritism to the rich man.

Many Christians have not understood that partiality is one of the biggest sins I have found among elders and pastors in churches. They don't even recognize it as a sin. It's as bad as adultery and murder in my eyes to show partiality, to show favoritism because a person is rich.

And he says, this poor man, you, just to the verse three, you say, go and stand over there or sit down at my footstool. He's talking about a poor brother in the church compared to rich brother in the church. He's not talking about all the poor people in the world.

And that, thus you have dishonored the poor man. Verse six, isn't it the rich who drag you to court, etc. And then he goes on and he speaks about faith.

What does he use verse 14 when you say, brethren, you have faith, but no works. Can that, such a faith save him? Now listen to this. If a human being, verse 15, is without clothing or need of daily food, no.

Don't misread it. If a brother or a sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and filled, and you don't give him, then what's the use of that type of faith? That type of faith is without works, it's dead. Turn to another passage.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word is established. 1 John. Here it speaks about faith with works.

And 1 John brings another aspect of love. What is the mark of love? 1 John chapter 3. 1 John in chapter 3, verse 17. Whoever has this world's goods and beholds other human beings in need and closes his heart again.

Is that out in your Bible? No. Beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him. How does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with deed, word, or tongue, but in deed, or tongue, but in word and truth.

What am I saying? I'm saying you don't find the emphasis on social work in the New Testament that you find in Christendom today. If people want to do it, go ahead and do it. But don't try and find a support for it in the New Testament.

I'd like somebody to show me that. These are the verses which I quoted that people show to me because they misread it. They don't read it carefully.

It's to ease their own conscience that they do these things. I want to ease my conscience by supporting some poor widow or orphan somewhere in the other country. It doesn't cost me anything to toss a few dollars there and send it there.

And I ease my conscience. Well, you want to do it, you do it. Keep doing it all your life.

I'm not telling you to stop it. All I'm saying is, please read the New Testament carefully and obey it exactly. If you believe this is the Word of God, if you believe the Holy Spirit knew what he was talking about, if you believe that the Holy Spirit could have used the word human being instead of brother, and then I ask myself, why didn't he use it? Didn't he know what the condition of the world would be in the 20th, 21st century? I have a tremendous respect for the Word of God.

I'll tell you that. I think, I don't think there's anyone here who can challenge me in respect for God's Word. And the proof of it is I have studied it for 55 years, and I keep studying it today, and I read it exactly.

We've, in our churches, we have followed it exactly. We followed the pattern exactly. Jesus said, don't be called father or rabbi.

You're all brothers. In all of our churches, no, we don't call anybody by any title except brother, even the little small things. The Bible says a woman should wail her head when they pray or prophesy.

In all of our churches, we teach that. You know, a sister, if she wants to pray publicly or prophesy, share a word in the meeting, she must wail her head. We don't insist that she should wail her head if she's sitting in the meeting.

That's up to her. Most of our sisters do, but if someone doesn't have light on it, we don't judge them. We don't treat them like second-class citizens.

We treat them like people who don't have light on this command. That's all. But I say, if you ever get up to share a word, or if you stand in your way, you're standing in your seat, and you share your word, we will not allow you to share your word if you don't wail your head.

We are willing to offend you, and you can leave the church and find another church where you're comfortable, but we obey God's Word. We're not interested in numbers. I've had people come up to me and say, Brother Zach, your standards are too high.

I say, show me the one place in Scripture where my standard is higher than what God's Word says. We believe in sisters dressing modestly, and I don't care who it is, even if it's an elder brother's daughter. You see, you've got to dress modestly, and I'll speak to them.

I'll speak to the father, usually, if it's his wife or daughter not dressed modestly, because the Word of God says that. The Bible says that we have to obey His Word. Man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

So, to me, it's a matter of life, and if a church is to have the life of Jesus, then it must obey God's Word in these things. So, I don't go around with tapes measuring the length of people's dresses. That's not my business.

I remember once one sister came up to me and said, How shall I dress? I said, I'll tell you. I don't have any lengths to tell you or any such thing. I said, Imagine if Jesus was living in the next street, and he called you up one day and said, I want you to come with me for a walk in the marketplace.

How would you dress to go and meet Jesus, to go with him in the marketplace, where he would be proud to walk with you and say, This is my sister? Dress like that. Not only when you come to church, but when you go to work, and all the time. Don't you want Jesus to be with you all the time, or you just want to impress people in the church that you dress very modestly? There's such a lot of hypocrisy, I tell you, among Christians, and there are Christian leaders who are afraid to offend them.

Oh, that's a relative of mine. I couldn't care less if it's a relative of mine. We stand against them.

My wife's brothers were part of a church. They all got offended and left. We don't care.

We know 2nd Corinthians 5.16 is a major verse for me. I know no man according to the flesh. 2nd Corinthians 5.16. I don't know anybody according to the flesh.

Nobody's my special friend. If an elder is wrong, he's wrong. The Bible says rebuke an elder, and I've done that.

Some elders have got offended and left us. God bless you, brother. I don't wish you any evil, but I'll speak the truth to you, because I don't want your blood to be on my hands in the final day.

I want to present Christ exactly. I want to obey God's Word exactly. That's the only way I can build the church.

Let me turn you to Isaiah chapter 66. Isaiah 66. We read here, and the Lord says, he's talking about building the church in relation to our time, and listen to these words.

Let me paraphrase it in relation to building the church today. Thus says the Lord, heaven is my throne. Think of this.

Heaven is God's throne, and the earth, this huge planet earth, he says it's my footstool. You know what a footstool is? It's a small little thing on the ground where people put their feet on. He says this whole earth that you think is so big is just a place where I might put my feet, and you're trying to build a church for me over here? Where then is the church that you will build for me? All those who are seeking to build a church in your localities, listen to this.

The earth is a footstool. That city or town of yours which you think has got so many million people, it's a small dot as far as God is concerned, and you're going to build my church, is it? You think you can build my church over there? You're so spirit-filled, and you know so much of the word, and you went to conferences, and you understood how to build the church, and now you've understood the technique, and

you're going to build the church? And he says, I'll tell you who's going to build my church. The one I will look at, last part of verse two, is the one who is humble, and who contrite of spirit, and who trembles at my word, who reads something in scripture and trembles.

Lord, I haven't obeyed that. I've been careless with my eyes. I've been trying to please people there.

I was afraid that some sister would get offended and leave our church, or her husband will get offended. I remember when my other son, Sandeep, started a church, a new church in California, and he began to preach about a simple thing like women must veil the heads. Half the church left, because those women didn't veil their heads.

They took their husbands with them, proving that they were the head of the house. It was right that they didn't veil their heads, because they were proving that we are the head of the house, and we drag our husbands with us. They were honest in not veiling their heads, I agree.

But I said, we don't want such people in sisters in the church, and I told Sandeep, I'm proud of you. This is the way. Let them all go.

Let's have a church of five people, ten people, two or three, Jesus said, where Jesus will be in the midst, because we tremble at his word. Like, you know, I told you, some people came to me and said, your standards are too high. Brother Zack, I can't be a part of your church.

I said, fine. That's why God has allowed so many other churches to exist, so that you go and sit there and don't waste our time here. I say, you're like a person who says, this hospital is too hygienic.

I want to go to one which is a little bit of dirty, so that we can... You never think of like that when you go to a hospital. Oh, this school's got a very high standard. I don't want to put my children here.

Let me go to some other place which is a little more indisciplined. You never think like that when it comes to a school or a hospital, but you think like that when you come to a church, and I'll tell you why. Because you value education.

You value hygiene, but you couldn't care less for spirituality. You couldn't care less for God's word. I'll tell you the truth.

You can get offended with me if you like, but a lot of people have got offended. But in the day of judgment, those who have heard and obeyed will be thankful, because I tell people this also. If you see a single thing that I'm preaching in my church, which is not found in Scripture, point it out to me.

I'll stop it. And if you find a single thing taught in the New Testament that we are not trying our best to practice in our church, show it to us. We'll practice it.

I challenge people like that. Can you challenge people like that in your church, with our church you're trying to build, to tell people, brother, tell me something I'm not preaching, which is in the New Testament. We'll start preaching it from today.

And tell me something which we are doing or preaching in this church, which is not found in the New Testament, and we'll stop it immediately. But we're not going to be influenced by people who say, oh, this is too high a standard, or somebody will get offended. Let the whole church get offended and go.

I'm not bothered. We have to stand before God. I don't believe that a God for whom the earth is a footstool, that I am such a big person to build a church for him.

No, I'm not. I'm a nobody. I'll always be a nobody, but I want to tremble at his word.

And I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, all the nice things you may hear is all very good, but if you don't tremble at God's word, and you're not humble and broken and contrite in spirit, if you don't take the lowest place, you cannot build a church. I'll tell you that, no matter how much of Scripture you may know. And I'll tell you another thing.

There's a lot more pride and conceit in us than we can think. You know, the Bible speaks about haughty eyes. If you read that, and if you don't know where that verse is, it's in Proverbs chapter 6. Proverbs chapter 6. And it says here, Proverbs 6 and verse 16.

There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him. Number one, haughty eyes. See, I thought pride was in the heart.

It is, but it comes out through the eyes. 2nd Peter chapter 2, he talks about preachers whose eyes are full of adultery. A pure woman, a pure woman will easily detect eyes of adultery in a lustful man.

Very easily. If you're the type of person who is secretly lusting, lusting after women, you can cover yourself as much as you like, but you can't hide your eyes. A pure woman will stay away from you, because she will see adultery in your eyes.

And a discerning servant of God will also see it in you. Impurity in your eyes. You cannot hide it.

You can hide all that you do in secret, but it's in your eyes. You don't realize it yourself. It's like body odor.

Some people have body odor and they don't even know it's there, but other people can smell it. Haughty eyes. I've seen it in people.

I've seen it in people whose lives are so upright. There's a haughtiness about them which they don't seem to understand. It never seems to go well with them.

No matter what they try, they're never able to build a powerful local church. God doesn't bear witness to them. God doesn't give them grace.

They've understood all the truth. They're great preachers and they know this and they know that and they can preach powerfully, but nothing happens. There's no pure local church built anywhere, because God is opposed to the proud.

Imagine a very gifted preacher who's a very upright life and God is all the time opposing him just because he's proud. Where will he build a church? He says, I look at the person who's humble and got a contrite spirit, who has seen the humility of Jesus and been gripped by it. That's the first thing we need to see.

Tremble at his word and the trembling comes because I'm humble. I say, I'm nobody. If God has said something, who in the world am I to change that? Even if it's a small little thing in the word.

Who in the world do I think I am to change? When Jesus himself said that he will not change one jot or tittle from the law and he was under the law, Almighty God came in the form of a man and said he will not

change one jot or tittle from the law and here I am thinking that I can modify something and say, oh that was only for the Corinthians and that's not for us today. Who in the world do I think I am? I'm amazed at people who have such opinions and air them and write books about them. I'm not interested in listening to anything else they have to say.

If they don't tremble at God's word, they've got nothing to teach me. I want to meet people who are humble and broke and contrite in spirit and who tremble at God's word because those are the only ones who can teach me and I can see it in their eyes. It's very easy for me now because I've been a believer for 55 years.

I worked with so many types of people for 40 years in planning churches and it's pretty easy for me to see even in a person's eyes, adultery and pride. It's pretty easy. I don't always tell them because they got to get light on it themselves from God but if we don't set this matter, you can come to all the conferences you want, understand all the techniques and all the principles and be very gifted preacher.

I'll tell you right now, nothing will happen. You'll just be frustrated year after year after year and you won't know the reason. Let me turn you to Philippians in chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2, it speaks about the two sins that are the greatest sins in us.

Selfishness and pride from which all come the other things. It says in Philippians 2 verse 3, do nothing, do nothing. Philippians is a great letter.

We already saw, don't murmur, don't complain, don't be anxious, rejoice always, always be content. Here's another verse like that, do nothing. Philippians 2 3, from selfishness or pride.

Selfishness and pride are the two deeply rooted attitudes in us from which come all these other sins. Selfishness, lust comes out of selfishness. People watch pornography out of selfishness.

I mean, you would not want to see your own daughter stripping herself on that computer screen for money. No, no, not my daughter. Then why do you watch that one? Oh, that's somebody else's daughter.

I couldn't care less for her. Really? You're not bothered watching another person's daughter stripping herself and you want to watch that and enjoy that on a screen and you call yourself a Christian? Go and hang your head in shame before God and say, Lord, I really need to be born again. I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Then I don't care for somebody else's daughter stripping herself for money and I donate money for that. You put your credit card in there to watch some pornography or even if you watch it freely. Don't you see the horribleness of it from selfishness? I want to satisfy my lust.

I don't care if other people suffer because of that. Pride. From that comes all these other things and then he repeats it again.

Don't look out for your own interests, but the interests of others. Esteem each other, not as more spiritual than yourself. Very often misunderstood.

I've seen umpteen preachers misquote verse 3 because they don't read scripture carefully. Esteem others as more spiritual than yourself. There is no such verse in scripture.

Do you think Jesus esteemed Judas Iscariot as more spiritual than himself? You think Jesus esteemed Peter as more spiritual than himself? You think Paul esteemed the Corinthian Christians as more spiritual than himself? No, he told them straight, you're carnal. We are spiritual, but you're carnal. Was that pride? No, it was just speaking the truth.

If somebody is sick, he's sick. So it's not esteem others as more spiritual. That would be a lie.

That's a false humility to say, oh brother, you're more spiritual than me. You're not. You're carnal.

That's what Paul told the Corinthians. You foolish Galatians. Who has bewitched you? Did he think that the Galatians are more spiritual and more discerning than him? No.

If God has given you discernment and you recognize that some people are carnal, they are carnal. I've told people that straight to their face. I don't care whether they think I'm proud or not.

It's the truth. It's what Paul told the Corinthians, and if they take heed to it, it'll be their salvation. Esteem others as more important than yourself, and that we see in the beautiful example of Jesus washing the feet.

Washing the feet in the Jewish culture was the job of slaves. Rich people had slaves in their home. They all wore sandals, and I wear sandals most of the time in India, and I know my feet are dirty because it's so hot.

That's why we wear sandals, and it's so refreshing to have your feet washed with water. Of course, I just put it under the tap and wash it, but they didn't have running water those days, so they keep a basin there, and a slave would wash the feet of all the people as they came in. They leave the sandals there and wash the feet, and then only they'd come into the house and, you know, recline for dinner or a meal.

Now, when Jesus hired this upper room from whoever offered it to him, he said, I don't want anybody there. This is a private meeting only for my disciples. Otherwise, that rich man would have kept a slave there to wash all the people's feet, so he kept the bucket of water and the dipper or whatever it was, and he, according to Jesus' instructions, he had nobody else there, and all these disciples know that when they come into a house, the bucket of water is there.

They're supposed to wash their feet, and they come and sit down, and there's no slave, and Jesus looks down and says, everybody's important. Matthew is the chartered accountant, and John is the relative of the chief priest, and Peter is the leader of the apostles, so there's no slave here. Jesus looks down and says, I'm the only one who's a slave here, so I better do it, and he takes the bucket and washes.

Consider others as more important than yourself. He didn't think they were all more spiritual than him, but he considered every one of them as more important than him. That's why he took the place of a slave.

He even washed the feet of Judas Iscariot. Follow his example. It's one of the things I prayed.

I said, Lord, on the last day of your life on earth, you were at the feet of your disciples washing it. Bring me there. Bring me to the feet of your children on the last day of my earthly life.

So many Christian leaders, they want to be directors and chairmen by the time they come to the end of their lives, CEO of some Christian organization. Not Jesus. He was at the feet as a slave.

Go in that direction. Say, Lord, I want to be the slave of others. I want to be the feet of your children, even the betrayers like Judas Iscariot.

I just want to be underneath all of them and consider them as more important than me, to do dirty jobs for them any day. I've said to people who come to our church, I say, well, what's needed to be done in this church is to clean the toilets, and if you're humble enough to clean the toilet, you're fit to be a member of our church, and then it says in verse 5, have this attitude in yourself which is in Christ Jesus. With that one sentence, you can live your whole life, even if you don't have a Bible.

If you read the Gospels and you know what Jesus was like, and you have this one verse to live with, have this attitude in yourself which is in Christ Jesus, and apply that in area after area after area. Have this attitude in yourself that Jesus had towards women, towards money, towards those who make, this is the difficult part, money and women, we can understand, towards those in Christian churches who are making money in the name of religion from poor people, have the same attitude that Jesus had, take a whip and chase them out of God's house. That's more difficult because it'll make you unpopular, but if you want to be like Jesus, have the same attitude that Jesus had, stand against it.

Proclaim the corruption of today's preachers and pastors of swindling poor believers of their money. That's the only way these poor believers will be liberated from the bondage their leaders have put upon them. You know the number of emails I get from people who have been liberated from watching, listening to our messages, liberated from people who have dominated them, who put them into debt, teaching them to give money.

Have the same attitude that Jesus had towards Pharisees and hypocrites. Don't just be nice to them and say, oh it's okay. Jesus was told them straight to their face, you're a hypocrite.

That's not right. Have the same attitude. I tell you, you can live with that verse for the rest of your life.

If you want to be a spiritual person, just take Philippians 2.5 and apply it to all the areas of your life. Have this attitude of Christ towards your wife, towards your husband. Just one verse.

That's all you need for every area of life. It's an amazing verse. Have the attitude that Jesus had and if you've read the Gospels, you know the attitude Jesus had.

Somebody who calls you Prince of Devils, Matthew chapter 12. Jesus says you're forgiven. It's an amazing word there.

Whoever, I'm going to show it to you. Sometimes we don't read the Scripture carefully. Let me show it to you.

In Matthew chapter 12, we read about Jesus healing a deaf and dumb person. Not only deaf and dumb, he was also blind. It's one of those unique people.

I've never seen a person like this in my life who's blind and dumb. So he couldn't see and couldn't speak. Matthew 12.22. And demon-possessed.

Imagine that. And Jesus cast out the demon and that person could speak and see. And the multitudes are excited.

They said, this is the Son of David. But the Pharisees were jealous of this ministry and they said, this is through the power of the ruler of demons that Jesus is doing it. And what did Jesus say? See these words.

Verse 32. Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man shall be forgiven. That was not just saying you Pharisees are forgiven.

In the next 2,000 years, whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, I've already forgiven them. That's the meaning of that verse. That's the way I read it.

Whoever shall in the future, not whoever has spoken, whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man. All those people today who go around saying that Jesus was a homosexual and Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and all the Jesus Christ superstars and all the wretched things that people say about Jesus. It's okay.

Don't be like other religions who go fighting for their leader. I say, my leader is Almighty God. He can take care of himself.

I don't have to go defending a lion. Jesus Christ is Lord and he has forgiven them. So there's nothing to fight about.

He's already forgiven them for all the things they spoke against him. And there we see his attitude towards those who spoke evil against him. His attitude to money.

He didn't get into a fight with Judas Iscariot because he stole his money. He hoped Judas would repent. Turn back to Philippians 2 and I want to read further in that.

Have this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus. And he goes on to say and he says, I want to show you primarily everything else came out of this attitude. Now listen carefully.

Philippians 2 verse 6. First step, he was equal with God from all eternity. Philippians 2 6. And he did not require that equality or something. He was humbled himself and became a man.

That's a massive humility to come from God to man. It's like man to an ant crawling on the ground. Even that's not, contrast is not good enough.

It's much lower than that. God becoming a man. Never never forget that my brothers and sisters.

Have this attitude in you that he was Almighty God and he took the lowest place as a man. Those whom he created. And that wasn't enough.

One would think that itself is humility. No. When he came among men he took another step further down.

He went down and became a bondservant. He didn't have to become a bondservant. If he had come as a king, that itself would have been a massive step of humility.

God becoming an earthly king. What a huge humility that is. But no, it was more than that.

First step was humility. Then there was another step of humility. Coming as a man he went down to the level of a slave because those are the lowest people in society.

And he had come to save the lowest so he went down because he knew that he could save people only if he went underneath them. That's why he was born in a stable. I've never in my life heard of anybody born in a cow shed.

Have you? Even the poorest people in the tramps and beggars that I know in India. None of them, none of them, those women give birth in a cow shed. At least some little room or a corner somewhere.

But in a cow shed with all that dung and donkeys and cows and all floating around. Why did, why was he born there? Because he had come underneath everybody to lift up everyone. So different from the understanding of a Christian preacher today.

Today's Christian leaders are like film stars. Jesus didn't come like a film star. And we need to stand against the wrong picture of Christ being presented today.

Christian preachers like film stars, swindling people of money, using their money to buy houses and cars and planes and whatnot. He became a bond slave. One who had no rights.

Humbled himself. You think that well, that's about it. You can't go lower than that.

No. One more step. So humility, God to man.

And the second step of humility, man to bond slave. And there is one person even worse than a bond slave. And that's a criminal.

The Romans did not crucify slaves. They let them live. But criminals, they said, they can't live.

They're worse than slaves. Don't just kill them. Crucify them.

And so he went below a third step of humility. He humbled himself, verse six, verse eight, to the death of the cross. The crucifixion was the worst form of killing people that has ever been discovered or invented by man in the history of humanity.

They would, otherwise they would behead or the guillotine or chop people's head off or fire arrows at them. And there were so many other ways of killing people in the old days. But the Romans invented the worst form of death for criminals.

And I think that Jesus waited in heaven until the worst form of execution was discovered. He said, now I'm ready to come to earth. In the history of humanity, before that and after that, there's never been a worse form of execution than crucifixion.

It was public humiliation. A man hung up in an underwear over there, mocked, laughed at, spat upon, and crucified on a cross. Imagine, Jesus waited till man had discovered the most humiliating, worst form of killing.

He said, now I'm ready to come to earth. Have you seen it? Have you seen this Jesus? Have you seen the real Jesus? And he went down. So there was, that's why I always say there are three secrets in the Christian life.

You know what they are? Humility, humility, humility. Those are the three secrets of the Christian life, and I got it from here. God to man, man to bond slave, bond slave to criminal.

Have this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus. And that is why God has exalted him, verse 9, and given him a name which is above every name that every name. Jesus is not exalted because he's a son of God.

No. When he finished his ministry on earth, he was not exalted to the right hand of the Father because the Father said, oh well, you're my son, of course you've got to come back here. No, read what it says, therefore, therefore, read scripture exactly.

God exalted him, therefore. Why? Because he had gone down, down, down, down, down to the bottom, and that is the person whom God exalts even today. Humble yourself that he may exalt you in due time.

And if God were to give you a ministry, I believe, as I said, the only thing that's going to last finally when this world is over is the church. And the greatest honor that God can give you is to build the church. I don't know whether you believe it.

I believe it with all my heart because that's to be a co-worker with Jesus Christ who said, I will build my church. A church against which the gates of hell will never prevail. I don't mean just a Bible study gathering.

There are lots of people who say, let's have a Bible study gathering in our house, and it's a nice decent sort of thing for Christians to do. We get a little reputation, the guy's a holy guy, he has Bible study meetings in his house. I don't mean that type of stuff.

Okay, that's okay, you can do that. But to build a church, to have a regular weekly Bible study, that's easy. All the Pharisees have that.

But to build a church of Jesus Christ, where Christ is the head, where people work together, you can't do that. God will enable you to do it if you tremble at his word, and if you're humble and broken and contrite in spirit. That's what Isaiah 66 says, and there's no partiality with him.

You can know the scripture from cover to cover, and you will not be able to build a church. You can know every theory and study every book there is on church planting, you will not be able to build it. You can go to every conference and understand how somebody else did it, and you won't be able to do it, because God's looking for those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at his word, who read his word, and say, Lord, I haven't obeyed that, I must obey it.

As I said the other day, who tremble because they're not loving their wife like Christ loved the church, and who are constantly repenting, Lord, I still need to go further to love my wife as Christ loved the church. I want to go further. They're trembling at that word, and trembling at other words.

Lord, there was a slight impurity in that look there. I repent of it. I want to be absolutely pure.

Lord, I see a little bit of love of money in my heart there. I was a little excited when I got that extra unexpected money. I don't see Jesus as ever excited about it.

I say, Lord, I want to tremble at your word. I'll tell you why, because it says in Luke chapter 16 that there are only two masters in the world. These are the words of Jesus.

You don't find this in the Old Covenant. In the Old Covenant, to love money was perfectly okay. You could love money and be an excellent Jew.

Job, who was the most godly man of his time, was a man with fantastic wealth. Abraham was a man of fantastic wealth. David, the man after God's own heart, was a man of fantastic wealth, and that was okay.

But in the New Testament, it's slightly different. Now our example is not Abraham or Job or David, not those kings of Israel. Now our example is Jesus and Paul.

It's not a question of how much you have. I'm not talking about your income or your inheritance or the wealth you've inherited from your parents or what you have in your bank account. I'm not talking about all that type of stuff.

I'm not talking about monks and nuns and monasteries and all that type of stuff or hermits who go out into the jungle. I'm not a follower of John the Baptist, dressing in camel skin and eating wild locusts and honey. No, I'm a follower of Jesus.

And here it says here in Luke 16, 13, no one can serve two masters. So you have to make clear in your mind who is your master. He will hate the one and love the other, hold on to one and despise the other.

And the two masters are God and wealth, or we could say God and money. The two masters are not God and Satan, but God and money. And here we cannot judge one another, and I'm not here to judge anybody here, because I don't know your private life.

I don't know how you handle money. I don't know how you deal with finances in your private life. But God knows, and he knows those who tremble at his word and who are upright.

But I see clearly for myself, the only person I can judge here is myself. I've been married 47 years, but I don't think my wife can still know whether I love money or not. I can fool her by my external attitude.

Only God and I know, perhaps the devil, whether I love money or not. And I want to tell you that nobody knows whether you love money or not. Your wife doesn't know.

But you know. God knows, that's for sure. And quite likely the devil knows as well, because he knows your secret dealings and everything.

But you cannot serve both. That's clear. And how do I know? I've looked at it like this.

Supposing there are two people here, A and B, and both say that Zach is my servant. It's very easy for you to find out which of these people I'm really the servant of. You'll tell both of them, A, you call Zach, B, you call Zach at the same time.

Let's see where he goes, towards you or towards him. You'll know immediately whose servant I am. That's the way to find out.

Here's God, and here's money. And God says, come here, I want you to do this. And money says, I can give you something.

Come this way. You know immediately whose servant you are, in your heart. I know.

And God calls me to something, and if money calls me somewhere else, and I respond, I know whose servant I am. Nobody else may know. I can justify myself.

Yeah, there was a great opportunity actually to serve God in that place, and that's why I went over there. Really? You know what the reason was? You can fool the whole world. You can't fool the devil.

The devil's opinion of me is much more important, I tell you, than your opinion about me, because he knows a lot more about my private life than you do. And of course, the most important is God's opinion about me. But what I'm trying to say is, even the devil knows more about you than all your fellow believers, because he knows the decisions you're making, and he knows what prompted those decisions.

He knows the factors which made you take a certain decision. I remember once, see, I do a certain investment business from which I've supported myself for 40 years, and God's just blessed it. And I remember some years ago, when I went somewhere for some ministry, and by the time I'd come back, I lost a huge amount of money, because I was not available right there to do what I needed to do in certain investments.

I said, fine. I went for this ministry, and the Lord asked me, are you unhappy? I said, no. Money is not important for me.

If that were to happen again when you went somewhere, I'd say I'd go again. Definitely. Your work is definitely more important to me than any money on this earth.

I only need just to live, and I've never starved. If you provide me enough of my needs, I don't need a great accumulation of anything. And then, that settled that matter.

Two years later, I met two brothers at a conference, and they asked me, Brother Zak, do you remember when you came for that particular conference over there? I said, yeah, I remember that very well, because that was the time when I lost this huge amount of money. I didn't tell them the reason why I remembered it, but it was very, it was etched in my mind. And he said, Brother Zak, we were saved in that conference.

I said, wow. Two people saved. How much did they cost? Jesus said one soul was worth the whole world.

And the interesting thing was, God did not allow me to know that for two years. If I had known it immediately, I'd have been excited straight away. Oh, well, this is nothing.

But God kept me ignorant of that to say, supposing nothing happened there, would you still go to serve me and forget about this loss? I said, sure. But then, two years later, God encouraged me saying, it was worth it. I'll tell you something, my brothers, you will never regret having chosen God over money in any situation.

I remember when I left my job in the Navy, I said, Lord, I will never serve money. If, even when I have nothing, and there were times when I had very, very little. Annie and I, when we got married, we were so poor, I could not even afford a house rent.

For two years, I had to live in one room of my dad's house. We couldn't afford, I was so poor because I was working among students, I was working among villagers who were extremely poor. I said, I will not use my gift, and I had a gift, I will not use my gift to make money for myself, never.

That way, I'll ruin myself. So, okay, if we are poor, we are poor. We live in a little room and manage, we'll buy what we, if we can't afford something, we won't buy it.

I was determined, I'm gonna serve God. And one of the things the Lord showed me then was, even when you have nothing, give people the impression that you have plenty. I said, I'll do that.

So, I never wore a shirt with frayed collars in public. I'd use that only in private, because otherwise people would, the Lord said, if you give, ever give people the impression of any poverty in you, they'll, what they'll give you is charity. And I don't want any of my servants to be objects of charity.

No. My father in heaven is a billionaire. If he allows me to go through a little time of struggle, it's for my good.

And what an education my wife and I got during those years of poverty. I tell you, I wouldn't exchange it for the whole world. And you know, I didn't know at that time why God took us through that, but years later, when we, most of our ministry in the villages, is in villages, most of the churches we have planted is in the villages of India.

And they're extremely poor. And many of them, when they get married, they cannot afford to rent a house. They have to live with their parents.

And I can tell them, brother, I know that. I can be a forerunner for you there. God took me through that years ago.

I didn't know what for, but now I know it was so that I could be a forerunner for you now in this village, in this situation. Everything that God takes you through, if you humble yourself and accept it instead of complaining, years later you will see he was preparing you for a ministry. I've seen that again and again in so many situations.

When religious people took me to court because I exposed their wrong doctrines. And I was ten years, all the way to the Federal Supreme Court. Well, I said, Lord, that's part of my education.

I can help other people. I got a 101 course in law through that process. And I could tell people from my experience what, when they're in difficulties, you know, God takes us through something so that we can help other people in the same, same thing.

So I want to read this Luke 16 13 and see, tell me if I'm reading it correctly or not. I am trying to read my, read it accurately. I'm not misreading it.

The two masters are God and money. Okay. That's clear.

So I want to go step by step. The two masters, Luke 16 13, are God and money. So if you love God, you will hate money.

Am I right? And if you love money, whether you know it or not, you hate God. Absolutely accurate. If you hold on to God, you will despise money.

If you hold on to money, you despise God. Have you ever heard anybody tell you that? That if you love God, you hate money? It's what Jesus said. Tell me if there's any other interpretation of that verse.

That means you despise it. It doesn't mean anything to you. I tell you, this is such an important thing.

This is the reason why many people don't have an anointing in their ministry or their life. Because it says in verse 11, if you are not faithful in the use of money, who will entrust to you the true riches? Who will give you the true riches, which is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, likeness to Christ, revelation on God's Word. Those are the true riches for me.

To me, the true riches are revelation on the Word of God, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, conformity to the likeness of Christ. I cannot think of anything else which are true riches. And what do I have to do to get it? Be faithful with money, verse 11.

Be faithful in little things, verse 10. Be faithful, verse 12, with that which is another's. Money is another's.

It belongs to God. Don't let me act as if it's my own. God's loaned it to me.

Let me be faithful with that which belongs to another. I must always recognize that it belongs to another. I think that verse 10, 11, and 12 all refer to money.

Money is verse 10, a very little thing. That's the first thing I need to recognize. If you think money is a very big thing, you got it all wrong.

Luke chapter 16, verse 10. Faithful in a very little thing means faithful in money. Money is a very little thing.

Unrighteous mammon. There's a lot of unrighteousness in money. Be careful with it.

And it belongs to another, verse 12. It belongs to God. I'm a steward.

Let me never think of it as mine. And if I'm faithful with it, God says he'll give me true riches. When I hear the boring sermons that a lot of people preach, I say I don't want to judge them, but I'm pretty sure that the guy's not faithful with money.

Otherwise he wouldn't be speaking like that. There'd be an anointing and a power upon his ministry. God would be backing him up with true riches.

I'm not talking about people who are not called to the ministry. No. People are not called to the ministry, they can share.

I'm talking about people who think they're called to the ministry, and God never seems to be backing them up. Even after many, many years. But they think they are pretty important.

They think they know so much of the scriptures, etc. This was such a thing to me that, you know what I prayed for my four sons when they started earning? I said Lord, I want each of my four sons, at least once in their life, to make a choice where they will lose a lot of money because they chose God and obedience to his word above money. At least once in their life.

That will prove to them and prove to me that God is real for them. Otherwise so many people say yeah, yeah, we love the Lord and we put a little money in the offering box and all that. But to make a choice in our life, at least once in your life, where you took a decision which made you lose a lot of money because you wanted to obey the Word of God, or you want to obey God's call as opposed to money's call that side.

I'm gonna choose God. I lose something, they're fine. And I was very delighted when I saw that it actually happened as well in all four of them.

I don't want to go into those details. This is what it means to be like Jesus. Humility, faithfulness in money, and then God will commit to us the true riches.

I want to say one more thing. And that is a verse that the Lord spoke to me. When the Lord called me, he called me with Isaiah chapter 49.

I remember the 6th of May 1964, I was sitting in a railway station in India near Bangalore, interestingly. I was still in the Navy and God spoke to me through Isaiah 49 and called me to his service. And one of the verses there was this, Isaiah 49 in verse 10, the middle of that verse, he who has compassion on them will lead them.

And the Lord showed me one of the most important requirements for a spiritual leader is compassion. You have to have compassion on suffering humanity. And I said, Lord, I never want to lose that.

Compassion. Jesus told the Pharisees, you know so much of the Bible. I don't want sacrifice, I want compassion.

I did not, why, they asked him, why you're such a friend of sinners? He said, well, it's the sick who need a physician, not the right, not the healthy. I came to call sinners to repentance. I did not come to call the righteous.

To identify with the weak and those who have fallen and failed. I think of Jesus speaking to Peter, Luke chapter 22, verse 31, Luke 22, 31, Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. And you know what that was? To make him deny Christ three times before that night was over.

And I have prayed for you. Now one would think, you know, God's ways are not our ways. If I were there, what I would say to Simon is, Simon, I'm praying that you will not fall.

I don't want you to fall, Simon. Do you know how serious a sin it is to deny Jesus Christ? How does that compare with sins like adultery and murder, denying Christ? Well, let me quote another verse to you. Jesus said, if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father.

He never said if you commit adultery, I will deny you before my father. If you murder someone, I'll deny you before my father. No, if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father.

So I see it as the worst possible sin, because he never related that to murder and adultery. Sometimes we don't see how serious a sin it was for Peter to deny Jesus Christ. It would mean that Jesus would deny Peter.

It was a terrible sin. But Jesus never prayed that Peter wouldn't fall into it. It's like you see somebody going in to commit adultery, and you don't pray that he doesn't fall into it.

Can you imagine Jesus, who loves people so much, wants to save people from sin, allows somebody to fall and doesn't even pray that he will not fall into that sin? But he says, I'm praying for something else, Peter. I'm praying for you. Not that you won't fall.

I'm praying that after you have fallen, and you hit rock bottom, and you've committed the worst possible sin three times, I'm praying that when you hit rock bottom, you will know that God still loves you. That's the meaning of faith. Faith is when you hit rock bottom in your life to know God still loves you.

It's a wonderful thing. That's faith. Don't lose your faith then.

I remember one young man who used to come to our church, and he was very honest. He was not converted. He was young, maybe around 20 years old.

He would come to me sometimes and say, Brother Zag, I'm sorry. I fell again. I got drunk, and I went around with bad friends.

I said, okay, repent. Come back to the Lord. Then he'd be up again, and then another time he'd fall.

He'd always be very honest with me. I loved him for his honesty. Never tried to pretend that he was spiritual or any such thing.

I never knew what he was doing, so he could have fooled me. Then one day he was transferred away from Bangalore to another place. He was going away.

He still hadn't been converted. I said, I want to tell you something, my brother. One day you will hit rock bottom.

You keep sinning like this. One day you'll hit rock bottom, and that day, remember that God loves you, and remember that I love you too. My doors of my house are open to you anytime.

Come back to him. It was such a joy for me to see him years later, back in the Lord's, converted, back to the Lord, happily married. Jesus has compassion on people who have fallen.

I know in my own life, before I had this experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit in 1975, before that I went through a period of inward backsliding, where I was preaching things, and it's not true in my life. It's true of many, many preachers. The only thing is they don't acknowledge it.

It's very lonely when you're at the top of a pyramid, and everybody admires you so much, and you're not in a part of a church, and I was just a wandering preacher. It's very easy for such people to live a double life. Externally, I was okay.

I wasn't committing adultery or stealing or doing anything externally wrong. My external testimony is okay, but inwardly, I wasn't living the life that I preached, and I got so fed up of it, and I said, Lord, I don't want to continue in the ministry if I'm going to be just preaching things that are not true. You've got to do one thing for me, that make my inner life correspond with what I preach.

That's all. I'm not asking for anything else. I don't want a car or a house or any such thing.

I want my inner life to correspond with what I preach, and I know that can only happen if you give me a genuine infilling with the Holy Spirit. I went to Pentecostal churches, and I was disappointed with what I saw. I said, Lord, all that noise and emotion, I'm not interested in that.

I want reality in my life. That's what I'm seeking for, genuine inward holiness, and God answered my prayer after many years of discouragement and drifting here and there. When I was at rock bottom, when he should have sent me to hell, he filled me with the Holy Spirit.

It's amazing what God does. It's like, you know, you're working in a company, and you're doing everything wrong, but you're still getting your monthly salary, and one day you ruin one of their very expensive

machines, and the manager says, I want to see you, and you go up to him, and he says, I've decided to promote you to be the manager of the factory, and I'm going to triple your salary. He said, are you joking? No, I'm serious.

That's what God did to me. Only Jesus would do things like that. He picks up Peter and makes him the chief apostle.

Who'd do that? Only Jesus. Then why did the Lord allow him to fail? Because he had tried every other way to humble Peter, he didn't succeed. Three and a half years of preaching on humility, there's no humility in Peter.

He says, everybody will deny you, but I won't. You know who I am, Lord? You don't know me. I'm strong.

What to do with such a man? The only way to humble him is to make him fall into sin. Do you know that that is God's last resort to humble you? When he tries every other method, and he does not succeed, then he will even allow you to fall into sin. He doesn't like it.

He came to save you from sin, but he even allowed that to save you from it, to break you rather, and to make you humble, so that you never, never boast again for the rest of your life. Do you think Peter ever boasted? And thus he'll prepare you for the most fantastic ministry that anybody can have. You see, for example, imagine Peter getting up on the day of Pentecost and preaching for 15 minutes, and 3,000 Jews are converted and baptized in water and baptized in the Holy Spirit.

What would happen to you if you preached 15 minutes somewhere and 3,000 Jews, remember this is like converting Muslims or people who are fanatics, who believe Jesus was a false prophet, converting 3,000 Jews and they are baptized in water, baptized in the Holy Spirit. Boy, your head won't be the same size. And Peter went up and saved the people.

The other disciples came to meet Peter and said, Wow, Peter, what a job, man. What a man of God you are. He said, Hang on.

I know what I did six weeks ago. I know what I did in the courtyard of the high priest six weeks ago. It's not me.

It's God. Once God has humbled you like that, you can never be proud again. I know God did that to me 40 years ago.

He broke me so thoroughly that I'll tell you honestly, it's almost impossible for me to be puffed up no matter what ministry the Lord gives me. I don't want to say impossible. I say almost impossible.

And it is definitely impossible for me to look down on any sinner or any backslidden believer no matter how deep they have fallen and I've come across people like that. It's impossible for me because God brought me down to the bottom to break me. That was the only way he found he could break me.

That was the only way he found he could break Peter. And if he does that with you, take it. Humble yourself.

That's how he prepares you for the ministry he has. And sometimes, you know, I have seen people who live very upright, righteous lives. Praise the Lord.

That's good if your father, parents were God-fearing, they brought you up in a very upright way. And I find in them, they're not able to have compassion for people who messed up their lives. There's a little bit of arrogance that you see in them for these poor people who messed up their lives.

And when I look at them, I almost feel it's like saying, I wish you had sinned much more in your life. I wish you had sinned very deeply in your life before you got converted. Then you would never have this attitude.

That's not necessary. Jesus never sinned, and he had more compassion than Peter and everybody else. But with some people, it requires a deep falling and failing.

In my case, it was like that. In Peter's case, it was like that. And if you managed to have compassion for the worst of sinners and the worst of backsliders, and remain in brokenness and humility, even though you were upright all from day one of your life, you're an amazing man.

God bless you, brother. Preserve yourself like that. There are very few people I've seen like that who can remain.

Most of them, they're not aware of it themselves. But there's a little secret satisfaction in the fact that I never felt so deeply like these people. It's God's mercy that protects you.

I always believe that all flesh is the same. If the circumstances of my life were different, I could be a terrorist, just like any terrorist you read in the newspapers, the worst ones. I don't believe that the flesh of the worst terrorist in the world is any different from mine.

I'm convinced of it. God's convinced me about it. I mean, you may disagree with me.

You're welcome to disagree. But I know this, what Paul said, I know that in my flesh there dwells no good thing. And God had to convince me about it because, I'll tell you, because I was brought up in a very God-fearing family.

My father never took me to the movies. He sent us to Sunday school right from a young age. We never had any worldly things in our house.

I grew up like that. And it was very easy for me to be conceited and not have compassion. I would never be able to build a church because we're dealing with sinners around us.

We're dealing with people who have messed up their lives. We're dealing with backsliders who come to Christ and then go right back. How in the world? He who has compassion on them will lead them.

Ask God to give you compassion if you want to be a leader, if you want to build a church. His mercies are new every morning, it says. That came home to me with great force, you know, Lamentations 3. His mercies are new every morning.

I meditated on that. I saw that means that when the Lord looks at me in the morning, He says, hey, you've never sinned in your whole life so far. I've never had to forgive one sin in your life till today.

Really, Lord, is that how you look at me? That's the meaning of new mercies. That means He looks at me as if I've never sinned in my life. And the Lord says, look at other people like that yourself.

Treat other people the way I treat you. No matter what you know about their messed up past, let your mercies be new every morning. Look at them like that.

You will be a leader then. He who has compassion on people will lead them. That's God's rule.

Sometimes we think what you need is just the anointing of the Holy Spirit, or gifts of prophecy, and a little bit of knowledge of the Bible, and I can go and build a church. Try it. He's looking for those who are broken, humble, contrite in spirit.

And I want to say this, my brothers and sisters, there are people who are very gifted, very capable, and who can also preach wonderful messages and know so much of the scriptures. But when I listen to them, I say, there's something missing there. I can sense it.

There's something missing. Sometimes I work with many elders, and if there happens to be another elder in that church who's got it all right, who's broken and contrite, because we try to have at least two or three elders in each of our churches in India, so if there's another elder in that church who's really a broken, humble man, the church gets built. But this other, second elder, who's not so broken, not so compassionate, thinks, God's using me too.

He's not. God's working there in spite of you, brother. He's using that other brother who's broken, and you're getting the credit for it just because you happen to be a fellow elder.

It's so easy to deceive ourselves. It's so important to live before God's face and say, Lord, give me light on myself. Give me light on myself.

I live in a judgment of myself, I'll tell you, before God, every single day of my life. It's the honest truth. Because I believe, according to 1 Peter 4, that the mark of those who belong to God's house is that they judge themselves every day.

1 Peter 4.17, The time has come for judgment to begin in the household of God, and it begins with us first. My passion in life is not to build the church. My passion in life is to be like Jesus Christ.

And as a by-product of that is to do what Jesus did, to build the church. But my passion, my personal passion is to become like Christ, and because he's building the church, I'm building the church. But my primary passion is not building the church.

It's not my ministry. It's becoming like Jesus. And I see, as I walk with the Lord, the closer I walk with the Lord, the more I see areas in my life that nobody knows, that even my wife does not know, my attitudes, that that was not perfect like Christ.

That was not perfect humility. That was not perfect unselfishness. That was not perfect love.

And I cleanse myself and become a little better. And I find I have to do it all the time. I have to do it until the day Christ comes.

This is the meaning of I purify myself. That's why I have a hope. It says everyone who has this hope, 1 John 3, 3, will purify himself until he reaches Christ's level of purity.

That's the way we build the church. As we cleanse ourselves, we will lead others to cleansing, and we speak to others about the things we have cleansed ourselves in. That's why we won't be hard in our

preaching, because whatever we preach is whatever I've seen in myself first of all.

I've cleansed myself from that. I remember when I read this verse about Zacchaeus. I don't know whether you've seen it.

It's very interesting. Sometimes you read Scripture carefully. I tell people, read Scripture slowly and carefully.

You'll discover things you've never seen before. Let me show you something. Luke chapter 19.

Maybe you haven't seen it before. Luke chapter 19, you read about Zacchaeus. And Zacchaeus, as soon as Jesus came to his house, he stopped.

It's an interesting word, Luke 19, 8. Zacchaeus stopped. What do you mean stopped? Zacchaeus stopped when Jesus came to his house. In other words, I understand it that Zacchaeus stood outside the gate and said, Lord, stop.

You're a holy man. You can't come into this house. I've used a lot of cheating money to build this house.

You can't come in here. He stopped. And he said, I want to set something right before you come into my house.

I will give half of my possessions to the poor, because I've cheated a lot of people and I don't have their mailing address. I can't keep that money, so I give it to the poor. And the others whom I've cheated, whom I know their mailing address, I'll give them back with interest four times as much.

And Jesus said, Salvation has come to this house today. And now listen to this. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Let me expand it. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are lost in the love of money. That's the context.

And I said, Lord, I remember the day when I said to the Lord, I'm lost in the love of money. I'll tell you, people don't know it, Lord, but I'm lost in the love of money. You came to seek and to save people like me.

Please save me from it. Seek me and save me from the love of money. You be honest with God, He'll do it for you.

But you keep pretending that you're free from the love of money, you'll be lost in it all your life. I remember a businessman who was in our church, well-off, rich man. He came to me once and I was counseling him.

And I said, Brother, your problem is that you love money. That's your problem. He said, No, Brother, I am freed from that.

I said, Really? I said, I'm still working out my salvation from it. You're already free from it? That's wonderful. And sure enough, a few weeks later, he fell away from the church through the love of money.

It was a last warning, as it were, that God gave him. Let's not think that we are purer than we really are. Say, Lord, seek me and save me from moral impurity.

Seek me and save me from impure thoughts. I'm lost in it. I'm lost in the love of money.

I don't tremble at your word, Lord. Seek and save me from it. He came to seek and to save the lost.

But if you don't admit that you're lost, He won't seek you and He won't save you. What's wrong in admitting, at least to Him? Don't admit to each other, at least admit to Him that you're lost in a particular area. The Lord will do things for you.

He's done miracles for me. I can honestly testify before God today that I rejoice always, 24-7. I cannot think of the last time in my life I was discouraged.

And yet, I remember the early days of my life. I was frequently discouraged as a born-again Christian. It's gone.

It's gone from my life because I said, Lord, I'm lost in discouragement. I'm one of those really bad believers, children of yours. I'm not one of those good ones.

I'm the bad one. I'm so discouraged frequently. So many things in my life.

Please seek me and save me. And He did it. But you've got to be honest.

God loves honest people. Let's humble ourselves. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, have mercy upon us. Help us to be what you want us to be on this earth. Our life is so short.

So easy for us to live in a world of self-delusion. To imagine that we are somebody when we are nobody. To imagine that we have a victory when we have nothing.

Not to see the depth of corruption in our flesh. Seek us. First seek us.

And then save us. Lord Jesus, we pray in your name. Amen.

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