

# Building the Body of Christ - 1 Doing the Works That Jesus Did

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith, obedience, and living in subjection to God's authority in order to experience the fullness of God's promises.*

**Duration:** 58:41

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 8:9-10, John 14:12, Romans 1:16-17, James 3:7-8

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Faith Works"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of believers understanding and applying the promise in John 14:12, where Jesus states that those who believe in Him will do the works He did. It challenges Christians to move beyond just receiving forgiveness of sins to experiencing the fullness of God's promises, including having rivers of living water flow from within and doing the works of Jesus. The sermon highlights the need for believers to seek God with all their hearts, be under the authority of the Holy Spirit, and continually progress in faith to claim all that God has for them.

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## Transcript

I want to read a verse in John 14 which most Christians have not understood. I have spoken about this verse many times. But even then, I don't know whether people who have heard it have understood it.

It's in John chapter 14 and verse 12. I am sure you have heard these words before. These are the words of Jesus.

How have you understood it? Now, there are certain verses and gifts which are only for certain people in the body of Christ. We know that all are not apostles. All are not prophets.

All do not have the gift of healing. All do not speak in tongues. But there are some things for everybody.

And wherever you find in the Bible words like he who believes, that is for everybody. We know, for example, it says he who believes can have eternal life. And most of us have believed that and received Christ as our saviour.

But there are some places in the Bible, in the New Testament where it says he who believes, which we don't claim. For example, Jesus said, he who believes in me, out of his innermost being rivers of living

water will flow. Now, a lot of people who have believed Jesus for eternal life don't believe that rivers of living water will come out of them.

But the promise is for the same group of people, those who believe. The same Jesus said here, he who believes in me, the works I do, he will also do. That's the first thing.

We can do the works that Jesus did. If you believe. See, there are different levels of faith in the Christian life.

Let me show you a verse in Romans chapter 1. Here the gospel in verse 16 is described, not as a message, but as the power of God. Romans 1.16. The gospel is the power of God. Not a message.

Now many people have known it as a message. But here it says the gospel is the power of God. If we only receive it as a message, we haven't understood the true gospel.

Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation. So it's a power. But it says here, it's to only those who believe.

So if you don't believe in the gospel as a power, you won't experience it as a power. And then it goes on to say, in verse 17, that in this gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. See what it says, from faith to faith.

That means from faith to faith to faith to faith, it keeps on going. Like when you send your child to school, he goes from first standard to second standard to third, fourth, fifth, all the way to the top. Now if you only want your child to read and write, then he just needs to go to first standard.

He doesn't have to go beyond that. If you're happy with that, then he doesn't have to go beyond first standard. No, if he only wants to read and write, then he need not go beyond first standard.

If you only want forgiveness of sins, then just one level of faith is enough for us. And most Christians are like that. They have faith for the lowest level, and they stop there.

And if your child goes to school and comes back and says, Mom, Dad, I know how to read and write. I don't need to go to school anymore. Because I already know how to read and write.

You're going to be very disappointed. God is also disappointed with children who don't go beyond the first level. So there is no end to this school of faith.

It goes on endlessly, depending on how much you can claim the promises of God. Let me just show you this verse, first of all, in John's Gospel. Chapter 6. Verse 47.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. The words of Jesus. You can have eternal life if you believe in Jesus Christ as your savior.

He said, truly, truly, I say to you. So that's almost the lowest level of faith. I'm a sinner, and I come to Jesus believing that he died for my sins.

I believe he died for my sins. And that he rose from the dead. And I receive him as my savior.

And I have eternal life. But I shouldn't stop there. See, John chapter 7. Now see what Jesus says.

Verse 38. It's for the same group of people. This is not for some special people.

He who believes in me, out of his innermost being, rivers of living water will flow, as the scripture has said. Verse 38. Now you can stop at John 6.47 and never go to John 7.38 in all your life.

You know, like a child who doesn't want to go to second standard because first standard is enough. As parents, we force our children to go to school. We say, even if he doesn't want to go, we still say, you've got to go.

God doesn't do that. If a person does not want to go beyond first standard, God says, okay, you stay there. If a person doesn't want to go from one level to another, God says, okay, it's up to you.

If you want to stop at John 6.47, you can stay there for 50 years. God won't force you. He will say, okay, you stay there.

And this is a tragedy with so many messiahs. And that is found in Jeremiah 29. Jeremiah 29 and verse 13.

This is what the law says. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. What about if you don't search with all your heart? Then you will remain in standard one.

And that's the reason for the shallowness of the lives of so many believers. So there is no partiality with God. All are the same to him.

We are all the same. Why is it some believers progress to great heights, some believers seem to live at a low level? Why is it some believers, no matter how many messages they hear on victory over sin, never come to victory over sin? Message about victory over sin. But they never come to that life.

Why is that? Even after 15-20 years. I know people in our churches who have sat for 30 years listening to that message, they never have come to that life. But there are others who in 2-3 years they come into that life.

What's the difference? They have obeyed this law. You will find me when you search for me with all your heart. When you read something in the scriptures, and you seek God with all your heart saying, I want that for myself.

Now as I said, there are certain things which are not for everybody. For example, if you seek with all your heart and say, God I want to be an apostle, you may not become an apostle. He won't make you an apostle just because you seek him with all your heart.

Because that's not for everybody. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to different people. Like the human body.

One is like the eye. One is like the ear. One is like the hand.

So gifts are given differently. But, wherever you read in the gospels, Jesus is saying, if you believe in me, that's for you. That's for me.

That's not just for some people. Eternal life, that's not only for some people. He who believes in me will have eternal life.

Anyone who believes. What about John 7, 38? That's also for him who believes. Why is it, you can believe and get forgiveness of sins, but not believe for rivers of living water to come out? It's because you don't thirst for it.

You don't seek God with all your heart for that. Many years ago, you earnestly sought for the forgiveness of sins and you got it. See, many of us, most of us were born in homes where we never heard the gospel from childhood.

Even Christian homes, very often we haven't heard the true gospel from childhood. But sometime in your life, you heard it. And you had to break with the culture and belief of your parents and for some of you, it must have been very difficult to believe something that your parents didn't believe.

But you decided, you're going to take that stand for the Lord. And you were born again. Your parents didn't even know what it is to be born again.

Many of us were probably the first in our family to be born again. But you took a stand. You sought God with all your heart and your sins were forgiven and you got eternal life.

Have you stopped there? And if you have stopped there, it's a tragedy with so many Christians. I want to encourage you not to stop there. Even if you have stopped in first standard for many years, let's move on now.

Say, Lord, you also said that if I believe in you, rivers of living water will flow out from me. That's a picture of a life filled with the Holy Spirit. It's more than forgiveness of sins and it is more than just speaking in tongues once in a while.

No, no, no, it's much more than all that. It's rivers gushing out of us, blessing people wherever we go. For whom is that? Is it only for men? No.

The Bible says in Acts 2.17 that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters also. That was not possible in the Old Testament. It's for women and men.

It's for young children and older people. You don't have to wait till even you're 20 years old. You're going to be 15 years old and filled with the Holy Spirit.

You don't have to wait till even you're 20 years old. You're going to be 15 years old and filled with the Holy Spirit. And we have to look inside to see if the promises of God are for us.

And whenever you read in the Bible that whoever believes, it is for you. Just like you believed for the forgiveness of sins. Let me repeat this.

That you have to seek God with all your heart for it. You know, Jesus once said the kingdom of heaven, you can get the kingdom of heaven only if you're a person of violence. So, externally, we're not violent people.

We're not fighting with people. But inwardly, we fight against everything that hinders me from getting God's promises. I must be a man of war inside my heart.

Outwardly, I'm a man of peace with everybody. And I never fight with another human being. But inwardly, everything that will hinder me from getting God's best, I'm going to fight against.

So here is one promise that you can claim. That you can be filled with the Holy Spirit and rivers can flow out of your life. That you can be filled with the Holy Spirit and rivers can flow out of your life.

And then we read in John 14, the verse we saw in the beginning. This is also for those who believe. It's not just, it's not for one or two people.

What does it say, John 14, 12? He who believes in me. Is that you? Then it's for you. What is that? The works that I do, you can do also.

And we need to understand what are the works that Jesus did. Now if I were to ask you, how many of you believe in Jesus? Almost all of you will raise your hand. Then I ask you this next question.

How many of you believe that you can do the works Jesus did? Then you may not raise your hand. Why is that? Because even though you say this is the word of God, you don't believe it. Is that in your Bible? Truly, truly I say to you, if you believe in me, you will do the works that I do.

So if you can't do it, it's because you don't believe in him. You're like the child who stopped at first standard. Another brother who was saved after you, another sister who was saved after you.

He's gone ahead of you. You're stuck in first standard, he's gone to tenth standard. Even though he was converted ten years after you.

Why? Because he was not content. He wanted all that God had for him. Just like in our country, if you go to the villages, some children drop out of school in the fourth standard.

Maybe some of the girls after first standard. You come to the cities, you find they're not even content with twelfth standard. They want to go to college.

I wish we had the same passion for spiritual progress like we want our children to get higher education. Don't you have a passion that your children should get a very good education? You'd be very disappointed if your child dropped out in 4th standard. Do you see how God is disappointed with you? With the low level of Christianity that you're satisfied with.

Now if your child is not very intelligent and he's struggling, struggling, struggling, you're at least happy he's trying. Okay, maybe he's not so clever to get a PhD. Okay, as far as he can go, encourage him.

But what do you think of a lazy child who's not bothered? That's the problem with a lot of God's children. They are lazy to claim God's promises. What does it mean to do the works that Jesus did? Now, if you go to most Christians and ask them, can you tell me some of the works Jesus did? They'll say, well, he healed the sick.

He opened blind eyes. He cast out demons. He fed 5,000 with 5 loaves.

And he raised the dead. I say, you're telling me only the things that he did in the last 3 1/2 years of his life. He didn't live on earth only for 3 1/2 years.

But those are the only things that come to our mind when we think of the works Jesus did. Supposing somebody wrote a biography of your life and wrote only about 10% of your life and left out the 90%, that would not be a true record of your life. So when we think of the works Jesus did, it started from when he was a child.

Let me show you some of the works he did when he was a child. In Luke chapter 2, when he stayed behind in the temple, and it says in Luke 2, 46, they found him after 3 days. He was in the temple for 3 days.

A 12-year-old boy. I don't know what he ate and drank for those 3 days. But when Joseph and Mary found him there, look at his reply to them, a 12-year-old boy.

Verse 49. In the middle of that verse. Did you not know that I had to be in my father's business or father's house? Did you not know that I had to be in my father's business or father's house? See, at the age of 12, he wanted to talk about God's word with older people.

He didn't feed 5,000 here. He didn't feed the 5,000 when he was 12. He didn't heal the sick or raise the dead.

He didn't heal the sick or raise the dead. But there are some of the works he did. For 3 days, he was talking and discussing the word of God.

What a desire he had to talk about God's word. These are some of the works Jesus did. These are some of the works Jesus did.

I want to believe that if I believe, I can have the same desire. I want to believe that if I believe, I can have the same desire. That I can talk with people about God's word for 3 days and never get tired of it.

That I can talk with people about God's word for 3 days and never get tired of it. Do you believe that can be true in your life? Do you believe that can be true in your life? Or do you get bored after talking about God's word just for a few minutes? Or do you get bored after talking about God's word just for a few minutes? If you believe, you can do the works Jesus did. If you believe, you can do the works Jesus did.

Let me tell you something else that he did. Let me tell you something else that he did. When he was a child, When he was a child, verse 51 verse 51 We all know who have children.

We all know who have children. You know there are laws. God has made the earth subject to certain laws to go around the sun.

And it must rotate on its own axis within about 24 hours. And it never changes. Always subject to that authority of God.

That's why the planets and stars never collide with each other. The way believers collide with each other. You know why? Because they are all subject to an authority.

They don't clash like husband and wife clash. Because they are subject to authority. And Jesus also when he was on earth He lived in total subjection to his father.

And he knew that his father wanted him to be in subjection to Joseph and Mary. That's why he was subject to Joseph and Mary. It was not because Joseph and Mary were perfect.

See, to be subject to a perfect person who never makes a mistake, that's very easy. But there's nobody like that in the world. There's no one like that in the world.

There's no one who's perfect. And so Jesus had to learn for 30 years to be subject to parents who were imperfect. That is what prepared him for his ministry.

And I believe the reason why many people don't enter into the ministry God has for them. Because they don't subject to the authority God tells them to be subject. Because they don't live in subjection to the authority God has for them.

The trouble with the Christian church today is we have a whole lot of independent people who are subject to nobody. It's like if my fingers started running off from the body all by themselves. And my ear just took off one day and went off somewhere.

And my eyes went off and decided when it's going to come back later. This is today's church. It calls itself the body of Christ.

It's a joke. It's not at all true. In this body everything is subject to authority.

It's one of the fundamental principles of building the body of Christ. And Jesus is the captain of our salvation. He showed us by his life how to do it.

And I've been a believer now 50 years and I've had the opportunity to observe many types of believers. And I've seen one thing. That those who have never learned to be subject to authority, God does not give them authority.

Jesus was subject to authority for 30 years. That's why God gave him such fantastic authority. See this little verse in Matthew chapter 8. This is a time when a Roman military man came to see Jesus.

He was like a captain in the Roman army. And he knew how it is in the military. He's got a general on top of him.

And beneath him he's got soldiers. He has to submit to the general, then the soldiers will be submitted to him. So he says to Jesus in Matthew 8 verse 9. I am a man, first of all, under authority.

That means I've got somebody above me. It may be a general. He says, come here.

He's got to stop all his work and go to the general's office immediately. And he goes there and the general says, go and do that. Whatever important work he's got to do, he's got to drop that and do what the general tells him.

And because he's subject like that to the general. He says, I've got soldiers under me. And so when I tell a soldier, go.

He goes. I tell to another, come. He comes.

Why? Because he himself is under authority. He's saying this to Jesus. See, I've noticed that military people can very often recognize another military person.

So this Roman military man looked at Jesus and said, This person looks like a military man. He's under somebody's authority. I don't know how he recognized it.

But that's what he told Jesus. He says in verse 9, I also am a man under authority. I also means like you, I also.

You're like that and I'm also like that. He probably told Jesus, I don't know whose authority you're under, but I can see that you're a man under somebody's authority. Jesus says, I don't know whose authority you're under, but I can see that you're a man under somebody's authority.

And that's why I know that you have authority. When you tell a sick person to go, he goes. And Jesus saw that when he heard it.

In verse 10, he was so surprised. He said, all the people in Israel have not recognized this. They read the Bible every day and they still don't recognize this.

This Roman military man who has never read the Bible, he's recognized it. And he said, I've never seen, verse 10, such great faith in anybody in the whole nation of Israel. This military man recognized the secret of Jesus' authority.

See, there is a difference in the way a dictator exercises his authority. And the way a spiritual man exercises his authority. And Jesus was not a dictator.

He was a spiritual person. And this military man, Roman military man, somehow recognized it. It's a wonderful promise that we read.

The works that I do, you can do also. But the first lesson we need to learn is how to be under authority. For example, under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Let me give you one example. In James chapter 3, the whole chapter is mostly about the use of the tongue. See verse 7 and 8. It says, every species of beasts and birds and reptiles and creatures of the sea have been tamed by man.

You see that in the zoo. Or in a circus. Tamed lions and tigers and elephants.

But it says in verse 8, but the tongue nobody can tame. It's a restless evil full of deadly poison. And that's right inside our mouth.

We thought only snakes had poison in their tongue. No, here it says we got it too. The snakes kill and we kill.

With the tongue. And it says nobody can control it. Imagine, you can tame a lion and wild elephant, but you can't tame the tongue.

It says in verse 3, even these horses you can put a bit in their mouth and control them. But you can't control the tongue. And it goes on to say that the tongue, verse 6, is a world of sin.

Verse 6. Verse 6. Yeah, it's a world of sin. Right inside our mouth. A world of sin inside our mouth.

And I can't control it. It's only the Holy Spirit who can control it. That's why when the first disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, Two things happened.

First of all, the Holy Spirit began to speak through them in another language. And more than that, there was a tongue of fire on top of their heads. And the Lord was saying, I want to control your tongue by the fire of my Holy Spirit from now on.

Which could never be done in the Old Testament. Now a lot of people have emphasized the speaking in tongues part. But what about this tongue of fire? What about that control of our tongue by the Holy Spirit? That's what God wants to do.

If you speak in tongues and the Holy Spirit does not control your tongue, it's a waste of time. I'll tell you what you should seek for. A tongue of fire.

A tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit. Because no man can tame it, it says. So what does it mean to be subject to authority? Somebody speaks rudely to me.

And I want to tell him something in return. But the Holy Spirit says, don't do it, don't say anything. That's the time when I must come under authority.

And say, all right Lord, I listen to you. I will listen to what you say, Lord. And if the Lord sees that I am willing to be under authority like that.

Over a period of time, I will discover my tongue becomes a tongue of fire. A tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit. So this coming under authority is a very important thing.

There are many people in the world today who say we want to build a church. Building the church is not just following a pattern that we see somewhere. And we see that the church is not just following a pattern that we see in the world.

And in the old testament, we saw that Moses built a temple. And there was a pillar. And the most important thing was that there was fire on top of the pillar.

And if the fire was not on top of the pillar, then whatever was being lit was of no importance. And even the Philistines could have made a temple just like Moses made. But they could not reproduce the fire.

And this is the most important thing. So that's the first lesson I would ask you to learn today. Lord, I want to be under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

I want to be subject to whatever authority you put over me. Those are the first works of Jesus that we need to learn to do. And then the Lord will lead us on to greater things.

We can think about that in the next sessions. Let's pray. Now while our heads are bowed in prayer, don't think about anybody else, but think about the Lord.

The Lord has spoken to you. And the Bible says, Today, if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart. Will you pray a little prayer? Lord, there's one thing I've understood.

That I must be under authority. Like Jesus was. I must listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Help me in the little things to listen. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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