

Building the Body of Christ - 7 Knowing Jesus

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of a personal relationship with Jesus as the foundation for a meaningful Christian life and warns against false teachings that misinterpret eternal life and repentance.

Duration: 55:26

Scripture: Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 25:1-13, John 10:27-29, John 17:3, Acts 20:21, 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, James 4:4

Topics: "Knowing Jesus", "Repentance Faith"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building our lives, families, and churches on a strong foundation, likening it to constructing a building. It highlights the need for a solid foundation in Jesus Christ, distinguishing between knowing about Jesus and truly knowing Him personally. The speaker warns against false teachings and stresses the significance of repentance, faith, and turning away from worldly desires to receive eternal life through knowing Jesus intimately.

Transcript

Jesus often spoke about our life like a building. He once said about some people who laid a foundation and didn't complete the building. Then he told another story about some people who built a foundation on sand and the whole building collapsed.

And Paul also speaks about the importance of building properly. Many times in the New Testament we read about the Christian life is like a building. Our personal life is like a building that we are building.

Our family, our house is like another house that we are building. And our church is also like a house that we are building. And the important thing is that all these buildings, our life, our home and our church must all remain for eternity.

So if you are young, you only need to think about your personal life. If you are married, you need to think about your personal life and your family. And if you are a part of this church, then you also need to think about the church.

So all of us certainly need to think about our personal life. And just like if you were going to build a building, we first of all make sure there is a very good foundation. Because if the foundation is strong, you can build to a great height.

If the foundation is not strong, then maybe you can build one floor and you can't put a very heavy roof. If the foundation is not strong, then maybe you can build one floor and you can't put a very heavy roof. Now those of you who are young, maybe you are in school or college, you are very lucky because you are hearing all these things when you are a child.

It's like many of you have advantages that your parents didn't have when they were, even earthly advantages. That today's generation of young people have many advantages that their parents never had. even earthly ways.

I remember when I was in school, I never had a watch, even all the years I was in school. Even for my final examination, I had to borrow my father's watch. But today, first standard students are going with a watch to school.

I never owned a bicycle. All the years of my life, I had to take a bus every day to go to school, catch a bus, change buses and go to school. Not even a cycle.

But today, you find children going to school on mopeds and all that. And there's so many, even clothing and all that. We used to wear very simple clothes and shoes.

But now, it's all very fanciful now. It's good. The world is advancing.

In all the years I lived at home in Delhi, we never had a refrigerator in our house. But today, even poor people have a fridge. What I'm saying is, in the worldly ways, many things are advancing.

Life has become so much easier for this generation. But that doesn't mean that they have become more spiritual. They have advanced materially, but not spiritually.

That's a sad thing. Because today's young people learn bad habits much sooner than people learned it when I was in school 60 years ago. Even when my children were in school 25-30 years ago, it was easier for me to bring them up than today's parents have to bring up their children.

But at the same time, all of you children in this church have the opportunity to hear truths that I never understood till I was 35 years old. Imagine, what I learned when I was 35, you can learn when you're 12. That's like saying, I joined first standard when I was 35, and you joined first standard when you were 12, spiritually.

See, how much you can progress. You all can progress way beyond me. Provided, you take your spiritual education seriously.

You don't take your education seriously, you keep failing, failing, failing. We had a couple of cases of young men who came to Bangalore. They were a couple of brothers who came from Kerala.

Their parents were very rich, and they wanted their children to be doctors and engineers. They didn't have the intelligence or ability to become doctors or engineers. But the parents had a lot of money, so they would put them in these colleges where you give money and get a seat.

And these boys would fail and fail in the very first year. By the time their classmates got a degree, these people were still in the first year of their study. I see a lot of Christians like that.

Every year they fail, fail, fail spiritually. And finally these boys dropped out of that college. And some Christians also drop out.

Now, I want to say to all of you young people, just as you take your academic studies seriously, you must take your spiritual studies also seriously. Because that is more important than your academic studies. How bad do you feel if you failed one year in your school or college? You must feel exactly the same way spiritually.

Lord, I have made no progress in my life in the last one year. I am still sitting in the same class. Or I am sitting in the same class for 2-3 years.

You know, I noticed in the school where my children studied, that some students would do badly because they got the wrong type of friends they were fooling around with in school. The type of friends you have can affect your life. When we build a house, the most important thing is the foundation.

So, I want to tell you all something about the foundation of the Christian life. Because sometimes we don't know that clearly. Let me read a verse to you in 1 Corinthians 3. See, Paul says, as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation and other people are building on it.

Paul says, as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation and other people are building on it. But be careful how you build upon it. And then it says, there is no other foundation anybody can lay, verse 11, than Jesus Christ.

So, the foundation of your life must be Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Because from childhood we have all believed in Jesus Christ. I never doubted that Jesus Christ was God anytime in my life.

But there is a lot of difference between knowing about Jesus Christ and knowing Jesus Christ. Knowing about him and knowing him personally. It's like all of you may know that Dr. Manmohan Singh is the Prime Minister of India.

But do you know him personally? I don't know him. You also don't know him and I also don't know him. But you can know everything about him.

If you have read about him, you can know where he was born, how old he is, what degree he has got, you can know everything about him. But you don't know him personally. In the same way, you can read the Bible and know everything about Jesus Christ.

Where he was born, how he died, why he died, he rose up, he ascended, he is coming back, what all miracles he did. That is just like knowing about Dr. Manmohan Singh. But you don't know him.

You don't know Jesus personally. And like Dr. Manmohan Singh does not know me, Jesus may not know you also. The Christian life is where you know Jesus Christ personally and he knows you.

That is the foundation. Very important to know this. Now let me show you an example of some people who did not have this foundation.

But who thought they had it. You know a lot of people who are born in Christian homes think, I have got this foundation. And because they have a lot of knowledge about Jesus Christ, they think, yeah, I am alright.

You know, it is like I can study a whole book about Dr. Manmohan Singh and I think I know him very well. And all my information is 100% correct. I can write a full essay about him.

But I don't know him. So in the same way you can answer every question from the Bible about Jesus Christ and still you may not know him. And in the same way you can answer every question from the Bible about Jesus Christ and still you may not know him.

We will read Matthew 7. It says in the final judgment day, many people will come to him and say, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, we preached in your name. We cast out demons in your name. Matthew 7.22 We did miracles in your name.

How many of us can say that? How many of you can say, Lord, in your name we did many miracles. How many of us can say, Lord, in your name we did many miracles. We cast out demons.

Probably none of us. So you think these people are way ahead of us, what all they have done in Jesus name. And you know what the truth is? They are not even Christians.

Can you believe that somebody who does miracles in Jesus name is not even a Christian? Can you believe that somebody who does miracles in Jesus name is not even a Christian? Today there are so many people on platforms and all that doing big, big things. In the name of Jesus Christ. Have you ever thought that the Lord will reject them one day? And it says here, I will tell them.

I never knew you. It's like if I ring up Manmohan Singh and he says, I don't know who you are. I phone him up.

And I say, you were born on so and so date. And I give full detail of his life. He says, all that's true, but I don't know you.

That's what Jesus is saying. What is the important question in the final day? Not did you do miracles? Not did you preach? Not did you go to the meetings? Not did you read the Bible? The Lord says, did I know you? I did not know you. Go away.

Depart from me. Let me show you another example. Matthew 25.

We read about ten virgins. It's a parable. They were waiting for the coming of the bridegroom.

Verse 1. Now remember, they were not five virgins and five prostitutes. No, no, no. All ten were virgins.

That means they lived a good life. And all ten, their lamps were burning. Because when the bridegroom came, it says in verse 7, all the ten trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said, verse 8, our lamps are dying out. That means it was there, but it was dying out. They didn't have oil in their dress.

That was the only lack. Outwardly you looked at them, they all looked so, white dress and lamp burning. But something was missing inside.

And while they went to get that, the bridegroom came. And the door was closed. And then afterwards they came and said, verse 11, open, Lord, for us.

What is the answer he gives? I don't know you. I don't know you. Again you see the same word.

Do you know the Lord? Does the Lord know you? That is the important thing in the day of judgment. Not, I was a virgin. I was witnessing for you, my lamp was burning.

I did miracles. The Lord says, forget it. Did you know me? Did I know you? It's very serious.

Now you know, we all know this very well known verse, John 3, 16. God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son. That whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

What is eternal life? Most people say eternal life means a life that never ends. No, that's not the meaning. Because if that is the meaning, then the people who go to hell also have got eternal life.

Because they live there forever. Can you have eternal life in hell? So you know that that cannot be the meaning because people who go to hell also have eternal life. So eternal does not mean that which never ends.

Listen. Eternal means that which never had a beginning and doesn't have an end. When we were born, our life may not end but it did have a beginning when we were born.

It's not eternal life. Because our life had a beginning in the day we were born. Or when we were conceived in our mother's womb.

It began. And it may never end. In heaven or hell.

That's not eternal life. Even the angels don't have eternal life. Eternal life belongs only to God.

It's a life which had no beginning and no end. That is the meaning of eternity. No beginning, no end.

Actually the Bible is very simple if you read it carefully. So eternal life is the life of God. You know some people ask can I get eternal life and lose it? They say if God gives me a life that lasts forever how can it go away? If God gives me a life that lasts forever how can I lose it? That's because they think eternal life means living forever.

So many wrong understandings Christians have. They don't realize that eternity means no beginning first of all. To ask whether I can get God's life and lose it is like asking can this light come on and then go off? Yeah, that can go off.

You unplug it, it goes off. You plug it in, it comes on. If I'm connected to God, I have his life.

If one day I decide I don't want to be connected to him, I lose his life. So it's a great deception to think that once I'm plugged in, automatically I've got life with God forever. There's so much of deception in Christianity and there's one reason for it.

They don't read the Bible carefully. Let me give you one example. This is a very famous verse with people.

John 10, 28 and 29. Listen to it. I give eternal life to them and they shall never perish and no one will pluck them out of my hand.

28 John 10 verse 28 No one can take them out of my hand. 29 My father is greater than me and no one can take them out of my father's hand. So people say, see, there it says, no one can take me out of Jesus' hand.

I say, in English it is very clear. Do you know that sentence begins with A-N-D and? Verse 28 and Don't read a sentence in the middle. There's a condition.

So start with verse 27. Verse 27 My sheep hear my voice and then what? I know them. See that word again.

I know them. and they follow me and then I give them eternal life. Do you know what most Christians do? They wipe out verse 27.

They jump into the middle, verse 28. Say, I got eternal life and God allows them to believe a lie even though they don't fulfil any of these three conditions Verse 27 They don't hear his voice. He does not know them and they don't follow him.

It doesn't matter if you don't follow him. Whether you follow or not, he has given you eternal life. Yeah, brother, then be honest and say that Jesus Christ is a liar.

I don't believe Jesus Christ is a liar. I believe there is eternal life for everybody who follows him. Otherwise Jesus should have said, whether you follow me or not, I give eternal life to you.

Are you going to believe the words of men or the words of Jesus Christ? If I follow Jesus, nobody can pluck me out of Jesus' hand. Nobody can pluck me out of the Father's hand. But if I decide one day I don't want to follow him, then this condition is not true.

See, if the electricity board says, as long as you pay your bill, we'll give you electricity. And one day you decide, no, I don't have to pay the bill. And you wonder why they disconnected your electricity the next night.

You go and complain there. They say, listen, the condition was, we'll give you electricity as long as you pay the bill. You pay the bill, we give you electricity.

But you don't want to pay the bill and you get the electricity, it doesn't work. But in these earthly things we understand. Jesus said, if you follow me, I give you eternal life.

Isn't that in your Bible like that? Do you hear my voice? Do you follow me? And I give you eternal life. Who made you change that? Christian preachers who deceived you. That's why I say to you, be careful about what you read.

I find so many Christians are more careful about reading a court document than about reading the Bible. Supposing you go to court and they ask to sign a document. How many of you will say, ah, it's okay, I'll sign it.

Say, please give me two, three days, let me read it, let me consult a lawyer, then I'll sign it. Because we love money. We love earthly things.

We are very careful about earthly things. And the devil knows we are not so careful about spiritual things. So he fools us left, right and center in the most important things.

That whether you follow or not, you'll have eternal life. Don't be deceived. I'm not asking you to believe me, I'm asking you to believe what Jesus wrote here.

My words are as worthless as any other preacher's words. Just because one preacher preaches to a hundred thousand people doesn't mean he's right. Noah preached only to eight people and he was the only one who was right in his time.

Noah preached only to eight people. All the others were wrong. So don't think the majority is right.

Christians make a big mistake when they think, ah, large numbers are going after them. That must be right. You know, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, God was always with a small minority.

In Enoch's time, one man, Enoch, walked with God. All the rest were going astray. The majority was wrong.

In Noah's time, eight people got into the ark. The majority were wrong. When the Israelites came to the borders of the promised land of Canaan, only Joshua and Caleb, two people were right.

And the other ten spies were wrong. And the six hundred thousand people decided to join with the majority because they thought majority must always be right. And they all perished.

Teaching us, if you follow the majority, you'll also perish. Out of six hundred thousand people, only two were right. What are these warnings written in the Bible for? When Jesus came to earth, there were thousands and thousands of people studying the Bible, the Old Testament.

They were all wrong. Only a hundred and twenty who waited for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were right. They were the only ones who were right.

But Jesus preached to the whole, thousands. And people who went by the majority missed the truth. The same thing when the apostles preached.

Very few people followed the truth. Now I'll show you the words of Jesus Christ. Matthew chapter 7 and verse 14.

The gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and very few find it. How many find the way to life? Very few. I believe that.

I don't believe the whole of India is going to get converted. I would like everybody to repent and be converted. God also wants that.

God wants all people to repent and be converted. God wants all the one thousand million people in India to be converted. But how many will actually find life? Jesus said very few.

Did he know the future? He knew the future better than you and me. I'll tell you one thing. If you want to know the truth, all you have to do is humble yourself and say Jesus knows more than me.

Just say that. That's enough. If you say that, you'll be saved.

But if you think you know better than Jesus Christ and today's preachers know better than Jesus Christ, I can give it to you in writing. You'll go astray and probably end up in hell. I don't have the slightest doubt about it because today's preachers are leading everybody astray.

Because they don't show these verses in the Bible. They make people think they've got eternal life who are not following Jesus. They say many people will find life when Jesus said very few will find it.

Who is right? These lying preachers or Jesus Christ? Now I'll show you what these preachers are. Jesus said very few find the way to life. And what's the next word? Now beware of false preachers who don't tell you that.

Who are these false preachers? Oh, plenty will find the way to eternal life. I believe Jesus Christ. Let God be true and every preacher a liar.

You know, that's why people didn't like the preaching of the apostle Paul. Paul preached repentance. Turn from sin.

Many people don't preach that today. And that is the main reason why many people today are not really born again. They've been told to believe without repentance.

Acts chapter 20 I'm trying to show you this foundation of the Christian life. Paul says Everywhere I go, I preach to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20 verse 21 You know, two things.

Everywhere he went, he preached these two things. Repentance toward God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all that's required to be saved.

And what God has joined together, the Bible says, let nobody put asunder. God has joined repentance and faith together but man has separated it. You listen to most of the preaching today.

Whether it's in the public platforms or on television. You'll never hear the word repentance. It's faith, faith, faith, faith, faith, faith.

Believe, believe, believe, believe, believe. Where are the people who preach repent, repent, repent, repent? Turn from sin. Turn from your anger.

Turn from internet pornography. Turn from your jealousy and your bitterness. Turn from angry words.

And turn from your love of money. Turn from your love of this world. Seek the kingdom of God first.

Turn from everything evil. Forgive others and ask forgiveness from those you hurt. You hardly hear these things.

It's all believe, believe, believe. And so there's no fruit of holiness. See, repentance and faith are like husband and wife.

You can't have a child just with a wife. A wife tries all her life. She cannot have a child.

Husband all by himself cannot have a child. It's husband and wife together that have a child. It's like that, repentance and faith.

If you have both, you get salvation. If you only repent, repent, repent, repent, repent, there's no salvation. If you only have faith, faith, faith, faith, faith, you'll have no salvation.

If you combine the two, the child is born. Okay, I'll use another illustration. See, we are all born facing the world and the devil.

Facing the world and the devil. The world. And God is behind us.

And now, supposing God wants to give me eternal life. Say, here's eternal life. God wants to give it to me. I've got my back to him. You know what repentance is? Turn around. I can't get it till I turn around. I can't face like this and say, okay, I want eternal life. The Lord says it's free, but turn around. It is free, but turn around.

And second thing, faith, I have to take it. That is faith. It is that simple.

I have to turn around and take it. It's all free. You don't have to do any works.

We cannot be saved by good works. I don't have to do so many things in order to get forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But I have to turn around.

I have to turn my back to the devil and the world. See, a lot of people are willing to turn their backs to the devil because nobody likes the devil. But they don't turn their backs to the world.

God and the world are in opposite directions. Let me show you a verse. James chapter 4. Now to whom is James writing? Chapter 2, he says, my brethren.

Verse 5, my beloved brethren. Chapter 2, verse 5, my beloved brethren. Chapter 3, verse 1, my brethren.

What is he telling my beloved brethren? Chapter 4, verse 4. You adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God and whoever is going to be a friend of the world is the enemy of God? So many of you have heard hundreds of sermons. Have you ever heard a sermon on this verse? That if you are a friend of this world you are an enemy of God? False prophets will not preach that sermon. False prophets will only tell you how you can be healed and how you can get money from God.

And they will never tell you that if you are a friend of the world you are an enemy of God. See, friend of the world is not a small weakness. It says you become an enemy of God and it makes you an adulteress.

You say he is speaking to worldly people. No, my beloved brethren, you adulteresses. See, these apostles spoke the truth.

They were like a doctor who gave you a good scan of your heart and said, listen, my friend, your condition is pretty serious and he doesn't even charge you for it. But these false preachers they won't give you a proper scan of your heart they say, oh you are alright, you are going to heaven, God loves you and they charge you for it. They take your money.

The true servants of God are not interested in your money they are interested in giving you a true scan of your condition. Jesus and the apostles they were not interested in money from anybody. Not for themselves, not for their ministry.

They trusted God for that. But they gave people a true scan of their condition. Even if it was Peter.

Peter, you are interested in your own things. You are the devil speaking now. What does that mean? What a scan that was.

Because Jesus loved Peter so much. The more Jesus loves us the more strongly he rebukes us. Judas Iscariot was the real devil.

But Jesus never called him the devil. He never turned around to Judas Iscariot and said, you devil. His rebukes to Judas were very gentle because he knew that Judas Iscariot gets offended very quickly.

But Peter, he said, get behind me Satan. And what did Peter say? Jesus said, do you want to go away? And Peter said in John 6 Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. You called me Satan.

Those are the words of eternal life. Because you showed me my true condition. You showed me that when I am seeking my own I am Satanic.

I have known the Lord for 50 years. I have known the Lord for 50 years. And I am so thankful for the strong rebukes he has given me in my life.

He has also encouraged me but a God who only encourages you and never rebukes you is a false God. I want to ask you when was the last time you got a strong rebuke from the Lord for something wrong in your life? Yesterday? Or never? You are worshipping a false God. The real Jesus encouraged people and rebuked them.

When we know him how do I know that I know Jesus? He encourages me and rebukes me. See John chapter 17 we talked about eternal life. What is eternal life? John 17 verse 3 Eternal life is to know Jesus Christ.

To know God and Jesus Christ. I want to say to all of you you can begin to know Jesus Christ right now. And you can have eternal life.

The beginning of eternal life. What do you have to do? Here is eternal life being offered. I love the world.

I am unwilling to humble myself and ask forgiveness from people. Because I am proud. I love money.

I love so many sinful things. I love my worldly friends more than godly people. But I make one simple decision today.

I say Lord I don't have the strength. I don't have the strength. But help me.

I am going to turn around today. I am going to turn my back to all those things I lived for. I am going to receive from you right now eternal life.

I believe you died for my sins. You died to save me from all those wretched things I am facing. Which will destroy my life.

You died to save me from it. And you rose up from the dead. You are living.

I want you to come and control my life. Fill my whole life with your Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters.

Turn like that to the Lord. You know we have so many people who have come to our church in Bangalore. Who have told me after some years of being there.

They said you know brothers I thought I was saved before I came to CFC. But only after I came here I discovered I was not really saved at all. Because I never heard about repentance till I came here.

Nobody explained to me what sin was. One 70 year old man once said I never knew that anger was a sin till I heard you preach on it. He was born in a Christian family.

Imagine going to church for 70 years and not knowing that anger is a sin. How many of you believe every time you get angry you are sinning? How many of you believe that every time you lust after a woman you are actually committing adultery with her? How many of you believe that when you click on a site to see some filthy thing on the internet you are actually committing adultery with somebody? I don't blame you. Your preachers never told you the truth.

See if in a school everybody gets zero in mathematics it's because the mathematics teacher is bad. Dear brothers and sisters today you can say Lord thank you for opening my eyes. I want to give my life to you.

I want to know you Jesus. Say Lord don't spare me till I know you and you know me. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

While our heads are bowed in prayer I want you to pray this prayer. You pray this prayer silently in your heart. Lord Jesus I want to know you.

I want you to know me. I want to give my whole life to you. And today I want to turn from all the wrong things in my life.

I don't have the strength. Help me. I want you to come into my heart.

I want you to become Lord of my life. I want you to become Lord of my life. Right now.

I believe that you have accepted me. Thank you for hearing my prayer. My life is going to be changed from today.

I believe that. For all those who have made that decision today I pray they will see a change in their life from today. I pray they will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And they will know you better and better every day. I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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