

# Casting Away All Confidence in Self

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Old Testament and living by faith in Christ, rather than relying on human effort and ability.*

**Duration:** 1:17:26

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 4:4, Romans 12:1, Philippians 3:3

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Humility Before God"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of true worship and dependence on God, highlighting the need to cut off all confidence in oneself and to worship in the spirit. It delves into the significance of circumcision as a symbol of cutting off self-reliance and glorifying Christ alone. The message stresses the need for constant prayer, repentance, and a humble, prayerful attitude in all aspects of life.

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## Transcript

As you all know, three quarters of the Bible that we hold is Old Testament. And because we preach in this church more than perhaps any other church in the world, that the Old Covenant has been abolished, it's very clearly taught in Hebrews 8, and that we should be under the New Covenant. The danger is that a lot of us may stop reading the Old Testament.

But if you neglect the Old Testament, you have neglected three quarters of God's Word. The Old Covenant is different from the first 39 books of the Bible. The first 39 books of the Bible are called Old Testament by man.

It's not written like that anywhere in the Bible. Just for reference sake, we call it the Old Testament. Testament and Covenant are the same thing.

But the Old Covenant is what God made with Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses. The Ten Commandments and the 603 other commandments that God gave in Leviticus and all that, that has been abolished because that has been fulfilled in Christ. The Sabbath has been fulfilled and the tithing, every law has been fulfilled in Christ.

So we don't go back to the Old Covenant for doing those things commanded there. But you can understand the New Testament better if you have read the Old Testament, because there you see the symbols. First of all, you see the origin of sin.

You have to begin with Genesis 1, 2 and 3 in any case. And then many other things you see which are even quoted in the New Testament, which helps us to understand the New Testament better. I'll show you a few examples.

If you turn to Hebrews in chapter 9, it says here in Hebrews 9, verse 1, even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and an earthly sanctuary. And there was a tabernacle and it speaks there. This is New Testament, Hebrews 9, 4. There was a golden altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant and all these things.

And then it says here, into the second most holy place, verse 7, the high priest alone could enter once a year, not without blood. That's teaching us about the tent of the tabernacle. So you won't know what that means unless you have read the Old Testament.

There was a tent which had two compartments and into the second compartment you could not enter. And the Holy Spirit was signifying through this, verse 8, that the way into the most holy place was not yet opened. So you won't understand what that means unless you have read the Old Testament.

So I'm just showing you how there are parts of the New Testament which you won't understand unless you have read the Old Testament. While that altar tabernacle was still standing, and that is as long as God is accepting that tabernacle and temple, you could not go into the most holy place. But now, Hebrews 10, 19, Brethren, we have confidence to enter this most holy place that's referred to there by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He inaugurated for us through the veil that is His flesh.

Again, you won't understand that unless you realize in the Old Testament there was a veil, and that that veil symbolized the flesh or the self-will of Jesus Christ. The word flesh is used in the New Testament sometimes to refer to just meat and sometimes to refer to our self-will, our fights against the Holy Spirit. And Jesus had a will of His own, which He denied, as you know in Gethsemane, not My will but Thine be done.

He denied that not only there, but for 33 and a half years He spent all His life saying no to His own will as a little child. He said no to His own will and obeyed His parents. All His life, He was tempted in every point that you and I are.

And the way He overcame was He said no to His own will. No, no, no, no for 33 and a half years. And finally, when every single temptation that any human being can ever face, that includes all the temptations you have faced and will face, He had overcome all of them.

You know what He said on the cross? It is finished. How have you understood that word, it is finished? What was finished? For many years, I thought it was just the punishment for my sins was finished. That's how most people have understood it.

And that is also correct. But that's only, like many other parts of Scripture, only part of the truth. There's a depth to the statements of God.

It is finished meant all the punishment for our sin was finished and every temptation has been overcome. That you can ever face. He has denied His will.

It is finished. And that self-will was symbolized in that veil that hung, that's what we read here, the flesh of Jesus, that veil that hung in front of the most holy place. And there we learn that it is our self-will that

prevented man from going into God's presence.

You won't understand that unless you read the Old Testament. So, until the self-will of man had been completely conquered and rent, the way into the holy place would not be open. You couldn't go into God's presence.

That's why nobody could know God as Father. That's why that place was blocked. And now, it says here, when Jesus completed all that temptation, saying no to His self-will at every point, the veil was torn.

The meaning of the rent veil, when Jesus died on the cross, that veil was rent. And I'll tell you, 99% of Christians have never understood that. And this is the biggest problem with our life.

And if you don't understand it, you don't get victory over sin. It's not just a question of overcoming anger or overcoming dirty thoughts. It's a question of crucifying your self-will, your stubborn self-will, which manifests itself in your married life, which manifests itself when you're driving on the roads.

And if you don't put that self-will to death, you're not going to get victory over anger or victory over dirty thoughts because those are small segments. Self-will is a big circle. One segment of it is anger.

Another segment is murmuring. Another segment is dirty thoughts. And if you just try to conquer those things and your self-will remains the same, you're going to have problems all your life.

And that's why there are people here who have heard about overcoming anger and dirty thoughts for, I don't know, 20, 30 years and you're still defeated. Have you ever wondered why? There's a new and living way, it says in verse 20, through the veil. And that veil is not anger.

It's not dirty thoughts. It's self-will. The veil that is his flesh.

And to go through that veil means I choose every day, like Jesus said, to deny myself, my self-will. To take up the cross means to put that will to death and go through. And this also applies to man's spirit, which is also symbolized by that most holy place where God cannot enter.

Just like we could not enter into God's presence symbolized by the veil, God cannot enter into my spirit through the veil, in my heart. That is my self-will. If that's rent, God can come in.

Otherwise he's on the outside. And our greatest passion must be to experience God deep within our hearts. To experience his leading, to hear his voice.

And if you want to know that, my brother, if you really want to know that deeper walk with God, learn to deny your self-will, to rent, the veil has already been rent, to walk the way of the rent veil, that means the way that Jesus went, then you experience that in your life. So I'm just telling you how that symbolism helps us understand something very practical. I mean if it's just theory, some people study this as just theory of types and all that, and I'm not interested in that.

Everything I read in the Bible must be practical. If it doesn't apply in my practical life, well I'm not interested in studying that. Another example, I'll show you another example of how Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament.

If you turn to Galatians, and we read there, here it speaks about, you know, we are now sons of God and not servants, in the Old Covenant. It says here, in Galatians chapter 3, in verse 24, the law has become a

schoolmaster or tutor or governess or what we would call a private tutor in our house to lead us to Christ. That means, if I were to use an illustration, like an ayah, someone who takes care of us when we are little children, holding us hands when we cross the road, to finally come to the place where we can go on our own.

So the law was not meant to be our ayah forever. I mean, you may have had an ayah at home, someone who was like a governess to look after you, take you to school or something like that, but he doesn't hold your hand forever. A time comes when that ayah leaves your hand.

You can go on your own. That's how it should be. That's why I say, I don't live by the Ten Commandments.

I needed the Ten Commandments in the days when I was not born again. That's why our children, they have not been born again, so they are under law. Your children are not under grace, they are under law.

That's why we have to discipline them, punish them, and that's why we have to compel them to do things. We have learned to walk on our own. Now if a child is mentally retarded, then the ayah may have to hold his hand even when he is 20 years old because he doesn't know how to cross the road.

And unfortunately, a lot of God's children are like that. Even though they have been born again 20 years ago, they still need the law because they are irresponsible. But it's not God's will because you obey the law at a deeper level.

You obey the law in your heart. You don't need a law which says don't kill because you don't get angry. So there's a picture there of the law was like a tutor or an ayah to lead us to Christ.

And once you come to Christ, you are free. Free to obey God just like Jesus did. And in the Old Testament, we have examples.

For example, further down in chapter 4, he speaks about Abraham's two two people he had children through. That's also in the Old Testament. If you don't read the Old Testament, you won't understand it.

Galatians 4.22 Abraham had two sons. Now you won't know what that means in the New Testament if you haven't read the Old Testament. And that one was by a bond woman and one was by a free woman.

Sarah was a free woman. His servant woman, Hagar, was a bond woman. The son of the bond woman was born according to the flesh, meaning, verse 23, that Hagar's son was born in the normal way that all children are born.

Abraham had the power. He was not impotent. He had the ability to have children.

His wife Sarah could not have children. She was barren. But Abraham at the age of 85 had the ability to have children and so he had at the age of 86 had a son called Ishmael through Hagar.

And you read about that in Genesis chapter 16. But then Sarah was still barren. Later on, when Abraham was 100 years old, 14 years later, by the time Abraham also became impotent, and that you don't read in the Old Testament, that you read in Romans chapter 4, that Abraham looked at his own body which was dead.

Till then, Sarah's body was dead as far as giving birth was concerned. But in Romans 4, we read that Abraham's body was also dead and then he had a child. That was a miracle.

This person had gone beyond the possibility of having children and then God gave him a child. So that was not the result of normal birth. It was through the supernatural empowering of God that he got Isaac.

Otherwise he could not have had Isaac. And that's why God waited until Abraham became impotent because till then he felt I'm capable. Okay, if Sarah can't have a child, that's fine.

I'm still capable and I can produce one. And you read in the Old Testament how Abraham lifted up Ishmael to God and said, Lord please let this be this promised seed you have given promise for me. It's an example of the mistake that a lot of people think that when God gives them a promise they have to help God if God is in a difficult position.

They have to help God to fulfill that promise. That's what Abraham felt. Because God told him in Genesis 12 you're going to have seed like the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.

What he meant was you're going to have a heavenly seed that is the church and an earthly seed that is Israel like the sand on the seashore. But he didn't understand that. He just knew he was going to have a lot of children and he was not having any children.

God said that to him when he was 75. Okay, we better help God now. See, God is in a tight spot.

What do you do when God is in a difficult position? You have to help him, right? That's the stupidity of man. All these people for example today what is the application of it for today? The application is when you don't have money enough for God's work but God's work has to be done we have to help God. We have to write letters to America or Europe to help God, you know, because God is in a tight spot now and we have to tell them, tell man see, God is in a difficult position now here in India and we need your help.

If you guys don't help, God's work here will suffer. So you guys better help us with sending us money so that we can do God's work here. Ishmael, Ishmael, Ishmael.

How many of you have understood that? How many of you have seen that going begging foreign people to anywhere, even India or abroad for money is producing Ishmael? It may look very nice. Do you think Ishmael was a handicapped, retarded child? He was much stronger than Isaac. He was very strong, big and a lot of this so-called Christian work is pretty big.

But when you lift up that work and say Lord accept it, God says no. I won't accept it. Because this is produced by your cleverness and your ability and your contacts in different places and that's how you did it, and very few people see that.

You'll see it at the judgment seat of Christ. When all of that comes crumbling down and is destroyed as wood, hay and straw, that day you'll discover it but it'll be too late. Blessed are those who see it now so they don't waste their time producing Ishmael's and building with wood, hay and straw.

The principle is you can't trust God alone. You have to help him out and you have to do something without God's leading. If you want to know the way God did it, look at Jesus.

He never sent out any prayer letters. He never asked anybody in the world ever for money. Paul, look at the way the apostles did it.

They never asked for anybody. So where did all these bright ideas come from? From man's clever brain. That's what you can learn by reading the Old Testament.

Man's clever brain produced Ishmael. And when God saw that, you know what God did? I'll show you in a moment. But it says here that Sarah was the free woman and the son by the bond woman, verse 23, was born according to the flesh.

The son by the free woman was born according to the promise. That means that was 100% dependent on God alone. The other was God plus man.

That means Abraham also cooperated and he thought God was helping him but it was almost 100% man. He had a child exactly like any other person has. He thought it was God plus man.

It was not. It was 100% man. But done in the name of God.

I want to produce a child to fulfill God's promise. I'm doing all this so that I can promote God's work. It looks very spiritual and if you are fooled by that, that shows how carnal you are.

Then he says, this is also a symbol of the two covenants, verse 24. These are two ways of serving God. One is the old covenant.

When Israel was serving God, that was okay. You know, for example, if people didn't pay that tithe, there's a curse pronounced in Malachi 3:10. Cursed are you because you have not given your 10% to the temple. You know that's a very favorite verse of pastors today.

You never find it in the New Testament. No. Because they haven't understood the difference between Ishmael and Isaac.

And so they say, okay, for God's work we must do this, we must raise money, give money. And they were forced to do it. But in the New Testament it says, God loves a cheerful giver.

So these are symbols of two covenants. One came from Mount Sinai and everyone who comes from there are children, verse 24, who will be slaves. Listen to that.

That is the reason for your slavery to sin. Everyone who is a slave to anger, to dirty thoughts, to murmuring, complaining, grumbling, whether you know it or not, my dear brother, sister, face up to it, you are under the old covenant. Even though you sit in a church that preaches the new covenant, you are under law.

Romans 6:14 says that sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under law. In other words, sin will have dominion over you as long as you are under law. That is the meaning of Romans 6:14. Till you come under grace, the children who are born under the old covenant are bound to be slaves.

Hagar was a slave. Ishmael, her son, was a slave. And he says that is different.

And even that earthly Jerusalem, he says in verse 26, which is the Jewish headquarters those days, it is in slavery. But our Jerusalem is a heavenly one, verse 26. When we talk about Babylon to Jerusalem, we are talking about a heavenly Jerusalem, the true church of God described in Revelation 21.

And concerning this, it is written, Rejoice, O barren woman, in verse 27. That is a quotation from Isaiah 54, verse 1. And do you know that Isaiah 54 comes immediately after Isaiah 53? Isaiah 53 is the chapter about the cross, the death of Jesus, Jesus dying for our sins. And do you know what is the very next verse after Isaiah 53? Isaiah 54, verse 1. That is quoted here.

Rejoice, O barren woman, Sarah, who did not bear. You can break forth and shout because the children of this barren woman are more than the one who thought she had a husband. So in other words, the whole purpose of the cross, Isaiah 53, is to lead us to Isaiah 54, verse 1, where we can have children.

Jesus will have spiritual children and we ourselves, no longer being under law, will come into a life of victory. This is what we learn from the Old Testament. Therefore, he says in verse 28, Therefore you, brethren, like Isaac, are children of the promise.

You are not produced by human effort. It is by the supernatural power of God. We are supposed to live by that supernatural power of God, not by our own cleverness and abilities.

That is why we are not to lean on our own wisdom. Christ has made unto us wisdom. So what does the scripture say? Further, verse 29, and at that time, I don't know whether you read this in the Old Testament, again it's the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis, it says that Ishmael, who was 14 years older than Isaac, began to trouble his little brother.

He kept on persecuting him, bullying, bullying that poor little Isaac. And he says exactly, you read that in the Old Testament, and like that, at that time, Ishmael, verse 29, born according to flesh, persecuted or bullied the one who was born according to promise. It's happening now also.

That is why you find, I don't know whether you know, but when we started preaching the new covenant in the early days, boy, we were persecuted tremendously by the people of the old covenant, Christians, who did not believe in victory over sin, who did not believe that we could live an overcoming life, who did not believe that we don't have to send reports anywhere to get money from God. We have proved in 41 years through not only in wealthy places like Bangalore, but in the poorest villages in India, where most of our churches are, we have proved that we never have to take an offering, we never have to compel anybody to give money, we never have to produce Ishmaels in order to fulfill God's promise. It's one thing to talk about this theory, it's quite another thing to prove it in practice.

In my own life, my wife and I proved it long before CFC started. We decided that that's the way we'd go. After God proved it in my life, I proved it in our local church in Bangalore, and I said, until I prove it in the poorest villages in India, which is one of the poorest countries in the world, that God is the same, that those who seek God's kingdom first will find all other things added to them.

We have to prove to this world that God is the same. Dear brothers and sisters, that is what CFC has stood for. It's not just a question of a few messages, you can get up here and preach some messages, and hear some messages, but it's a lot more than that.

It's a question of living a life of leaning 100% upon God, just like a branch in a tree, absolutely helpless, and however many years we have been there, still helpless. See, that branch that produces fruit after 50 years, is as helpless as it was when it started producing 50 years ago. That's what happens to some people, they get puffed up after a little while, when God produces fruit in their life, they begin to think they are somebody, and then God sets them aside.

It's very important to remain till the end with that spirit in which God produced Isaac. Helpless dependence upon God. It's so very, very important to understand that.

We have to hold it till Jesus comes. Because that is the new covenant. And that is what he is explaining here.

So brethren, verse 31, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free. And so stand fast. When you read Galatians 5.1, many people read it all by itself.

It was for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand in that liberty. What does it mean? You won't understand that unless you understand chapter 4, verse 21 to 31.

Sometimes these chapter breaks that come in the Bible which are not in the original letter. Paul just wrote one letter. Whenever you read a chapter break in the New Testament, try and see the connection there is to the next verse.

Otherwise you miss something. For freedom Christ set us free. Stand fast in that liberty and don't be subject to a yoke of slavery.

That means don't go back and say Ishmael was a slave. Stand fast and let all your ministry be the way Isaac was produced. It is not by depending on our own ability.

It is so important in everything we do. When I seek to preach God's word, I have to be very careful that I am not depending on my own cleverness and my own ability to move people emotionally or to convince people, but to helplessly depend on God. Most of the sermons I hear on the internet are Ishmael's.

So many sermons. You need to distinguish. Is this human cleverness or is it something that stirs faith in your heart to trust God that you can also live this way.

The reason why I mention money so much is because Jesus said there are only two masters, God and money. You either depend on God or you depend on money. So dependence on money There is where we find a clarity in our thinking that just like the parables of Jesus made certain truths clear.

For example, Jesus could have said God loves you so much that even if you are a terrible sinner he will welcome you. It is a true statement. But the story of the prodigal son who went away is a far more living and realistic and powerful explanation of that truth than just the statement that if you come back to God he will accept you.

See a parable, an illustration is so powerful. No prophet in the Old Testament did it like that. Jesus was the master at that.

He was always, he was the first prophet or servant of God that spoke in parables eyes and the body and so many things and so many stories all the time to illustrate truth and it is the same principle when we understand these Old Testament stories how they illustrate truth. That is what we see here about Ishmael and Isaac. You will understand freedom in Christ a lot better if you try and see what is the meaning here.

That is the value I mean if it is only a clever idea to you and you pass on that clever idea to other people that is worth nothing. It must produce a practical reality in my life and that is the important thing. So in that connection you read about the deliverance from Egypt is also a picture of salvation.

The blood of the lamb put outside going into the Red Sea and coming out is a picture of water baptism. I mean nobody would ever baptize children if you see that going into the river and coming out is a picture of baptism today. If you understand that in the Old Testament it is impossible to sprinkle children because Moses didn't sprinkle the Red Sea water on those people's heads they went in and out.

That is baptism and coming out and then another cloud coming out of the Red Sea and that is called in 1 Corinthians 10 the baptism of the cloud. It is called a baptism. And you see that that is the baptism in the Holy Spirit that came from above.

So you see the symbolism and its meaning and I will tell you how it has meaning because if you ask people what is the purpose with which God baptized people in the Holy Spirit even the average Pentecostal will not be able to tell you. He will tell you it is to give you the gifts of the Spirit or to speak in tongues and all that. I believe in all the gifts of the Spirit.

I would not be able to preach if God did not give me the gift of prophecy. Impossible. He gave it to me years ago and that is what I use.

I thank God for the gift of tongues that liberated me from discouragement. If there is one thing that delivered me from discouragement it was speaking in tongues. So I am not against these gifts.

But you know baptism when they came out of the Red Sea is a picture of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and then I ask myself what was the purpose of that cloud? Then I know the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The purpose of that cloud was to lead them step by step into the land of Canaan. Ah! Now I know the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to lead me day by day into the life of victory.

But baptism in the Holy Spirit the cloud coming down is just the beginning. And if they didn't follow the cloud day by day by day by day by day they won't enter the promised land. And one day the cloud led them right to the borders of the promised land after two years and God said go in now.

And they consulted with men and they went by the majority opinion. Twelve spies went and ten other spies said right to the border and said go in. They took a vote and ten versus two.

They said ten people say we can't go in. Only Joshua and Caleb say we can. So the majority wins.

That is an example from the Old Testament that the majority amongst God's people is always wrong. They were God's people they were not Egyptians. But the majority vote in all your life.

One man with God is a majority. Not the majority of people. If you remember these simple principles in life your life will be useful.

You won't waste your Christian life. I've seen so many Christians I believe they're wasting their life. And one day when they stand at the judgment seat of Christ they'll wake up and say boy I wasted my life because I didn't understand but instead of spending my time reading the Bible I wasted my time in so many other good things.

There are good things I tell you in the world which can prevent you from reading the Bible. Too much occupation with music, entertainment, up to a certain extent relaxation and entertainment even watching an occasional clean, 100% clean movie he can waste time in these things. He can waste a lot of time on the internet.

A lot of young people nowadays are wasting a lot of time on Facebook. They spend more time with Facebook than with God's book. No wonder they don't grow.

You won't grow. Because God sees you're honoring earthly things more than him. I never wanted to be on the internet or Facebook or any of those things.

And I want to live my life like that studying the scriptures till the end of my life. I know that's the way I can preserve myself in an evil and adulterous generation. I can only recommend it to you.

I cannot force you to do it. If you love Jesus you'll say Lord I want my life to count for you in these last days. I don't want to waste it.

So I want you to think and I want to reach out to you which is very significant. Turn with me to Genesis chapter 16. I told you I would show you this verse when Ishmael was born.

Genesis 16 and verse 16 we read Abraham was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him. This is the last verse of Genesis 16 and that is 11 years after God spoke to Abraham when he was 75 to leave Ur of the Chaldees saying I'll give you children I'll bless you. So he waited a long time.

Nothing came through Sarah. So he decided to take law into his own hands and decided to help God and produced Ishmael. And Ishmael persecuted Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael have persecuted the descendants of Isaac through the years, through the centuries also.

And then notice this. What is the next verse? After the last verse of Genesis 16 last verse Abraham was 86 years old Ishmael was born. What happened when Abraham was 87? I don't know.

88, 89, 90, 91? Nothing. It's unimportant what he did. Next verse says he was 99 years old.

What happened in those 13 years? I'll tell you. God was waiting for Abraham to become impotent. Like we read in Romans 4 for his body to become dead.

As if God was saying Ah, Abraham, you think you can produce a child, right? To fulfill my promise? Ok, I'll wait. I cannot do anything for you till you become impotent and you cannot have a child. Then let's see what child you'll produce.

He could produce a child when he was 87, 88, 89, so God has to wait. There's a lesson there for you and me in that. You think you can serve God with your cleverness and your ability and your study and that.

God says, ok, I'll wait. I'll wait till you come to zero. I'll wait till you become impotent.

I'll wait till you become helpless. Till you become like that branch in that tree which says I cannot produce any fruit without the tree. Have you come to that place? You haven't? Then God has to wait.

This is a principle throughout scripture. He waits till you become spiritually impotent and say, Lord, I can do nothing without you. Nothing means nothing.

That is the message of the gap between chapter 16, verse 16 and chapter 17, verse 1. There's an invisible gap there of 13 years with a powerful message in that gap. And the message is God waits for you to be impotent and helpless. That's all.

And when he was 99, then we read we read later on in Sarah became pregnant supernaturally because Abraham was impotent now. And when Abraham was 100 years old the very next year Sarah gave birth. But before that, as a preparation for that, the Lord wanted to teach Abraham something in a very special way.

What? Abraham didn't understand the significance of why 13 years nothing is happening. You know, we read very often God would speak to Abraham. Abraham, Abraham, God would say here I am.

Abraham would say here I am. Again, he would say Abraham, Abraham, and he would say here I am. But for 13 years God never said anything.

When God stops speaking, there's a message in that also. The message is you're too full of yourself. You're too self-important.

That's why you can't hear God's voice. Okay, God has to wait till you come to the place of helplessness, impotence, spiritually. Say Lord, I can't do it.

That's how it was with Moses. We read in Acts chapter 7 that when Moses was 40 years old he thought all Israel would think God has called me to deliver you. What was God's message to Moses? Moses, you're too strong.

You can kill one man, Egyptian, with a blow of your hand. That's not the way I'm going to deliver Israel. And God took him to the wilderness and why was God waiting 40 years? What did Moses do in the 40 years? There's hardly anything mentioned.

Hardly anything mentioned. You read that Moses ran away to the desert when he was 40 years old. Next thing you read in Genesis 3 he's 80 years old.

What happened between 40 and 80? Nothing mentioned in Exodus. Just like what happened here with Abraham it was 13 years, with Moses it was 40 years. God was waiting for Moses to become spiritually impotent.

And you know he became spiritually impotent if you compare two verses of scripture which I want to show you. In Acts of the Apostles, please turn with me and see this because there's a lesson here. Acts chapter 7 and verse 22.

Acts 7, 22. Here is the powerful educated Moses. He was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians.

Egypt was like the United States of America today. The one superpower in the world was the highest level of education and so many things like Harvard University and all was there in Egypt. They built pyramids which even today people are wondering how people made it.

They were brilliant. Mathematics and science and all that. And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians.

And he was a man of power. A man of power in what? In speech. He was a powerful speaker and in deeds, in action.

He was a powerful speaker and a man of action. And when he was about 40 years old, you know, he saw one of his brothers being unjustly treated and he struck down the Egyptian, verse 24, with one blow of his

hand. He was so strong, he gave one blow to that Egyptian and the Egyptian died.

He was a muscular, strong, wonderful speaker, capable man. And when the Israelites saw that, he thought, verse 22, he thought his brethren will understand. I am the man whom God has chosen to deliver you.

But they did not understand. God says, Moses, you are too strong. Like God told Abraham, you are too strong.

And so we read that he went into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness for 40 years and then after 40 years, see what he says in Exodus chapter 4. Exodus chapter 4, God calls Moses and tells him to go into Egypt to be the deliverer of his people. And Moses says in Exodus chapter 4, listen to this. Can you believe this? Exodus 4.10 Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor now.

I was never able to speak properly. Hey Moses, have you forgotten what you were 40 years ago? God had done such a work of humbling Moses that he completely forgot all his human eloquence and ability. And he says, I am slow of speech, slow of tongue.

How did that happen? God took him away from all those clever Egyptians and put him in the midst of sheep. After 40 years he could not speak, he was not eloquent. You spend 40 years with sheep, you will also become like that, even if you are an eloquent man.

What you want to learn here is that God never uses a man until he first humbles him, makes him a zero. The reason why God cannot use many people is because they depend too much on their human strength. The Bible says in heaven, no man will be able to glory.

Here on earth, a lot of Christian people glory that I did this and I did that. I preached this powerful sermon and I healed the sick and I did that and I planted a church and all this rubbish. In heaven, nobody will be able to say it.

But the man who has learned not to say it on earth as well, who has learned without Jesus Christ, I can do nothing. He will be most effective for God on the earth and you can be like that. You young people, that's the most important lesson you need to learn.

You are all powerful, eloquent, capable, educated people. You are very smart. That's your handicap, unfortunately.

That's why very often God uses people who are not so educated and not so capable and who probably don't even know English properly. And God uses them to teach the PhDs God's ways. Because no flesh can glory in his presence.

And Lord said, listen I made man's mouth, Exodus 4.11 Go, I'll be with your mouth. And he still says, no Lord, please don't send me. I'm not fit.

That was the man whom God used. A man whose human strength had been completely shattered. God wanted to use Moses.

God wanted to use Abraham. But he could not use them until they had come to that place. These are the lessons we read from the Old Testament.

Now turn with me to Genesis in chapter 17. After God had brought Abraham to that place, he was 99 years old. God never spoke to him.

For 13 years he kept quiet and Abraham must have wondered, what's happening? Just like Moses wandering 40 years in the wilderness. What's happening? Sometimes you have to wait a long time. And you don't hear God speak to you for a long, long time.

You know what God's waiting for. He's waiting for you to become spiritually helpless and impotent and small in your own eyes. You become a zero.

All the high thoughts that you have about yourself because maybe God has used you in the past to accomplish certain things and that has gone to your head. And you really think you're somebody. Okay, God says I withdraw my presence from you and I'll tell you something.

When God withdraws his presence from you, you will do the most stupid, foolish things. And like it says in 2 Timothy 3, your folly will become manifest to everybody. It's a mark that God has withdrawn his presence from you.

I've seen that happen again and again and again. That's why you suddenly hear some pastor fell into adultery and the folly becomes manifest to everybody. Or he does some other stupid thing and the folly becomes manifest to everybody.

That's because the guy began to suddenly think he was somebody. So God doesn't want that to happen. So with some of his greatest servants, what God has done is break them so thoroughly before they start their ministry so that they'll never make that type of blunder.

Many people have entered into full-time Christian ministry without being broken thoroughly. And that's why they make a mess later on, 30 years later. So God has to break and break and break.

It's better that God breaks you when you're a young man so that you don't do some blunder when you're 60 or 70 years old. Let God break you. That's the most important thing.

Even Jacob, you know, he was a very strong person, very smart, very shrewd, without deceiving his brother and all that. But God broke him so thoroughly, made him handicapped, had to walk with a cane. God said, now you're Israel.

From now you'll be Israel. The same principle throughout scripture. But in Genesis 17, God wanted to teach this to Abraham in a practical way, a lesson he wanted to print into his body.

So he tells him, Abraham, I'm going to make a covenant with you and your seed. And so listen to this. Genesis 17, verse 10.

This is my covenant which you shall keep between you and your descendants. Every male among you must be circumcised. Everyone.

Not only your children. Verse 12, last part. If a servant born in your house or a servant that you bought with money from a foreigner, they also, verse 13, must be circumcised.

So those servants also came into the covenant. Not just his own children. More than Abraham's children.

Even the servants in their house. And he further said, if any uncircumcised male, verse 14, is uncircumcised, does not allow that circumcision, he'll be cut off from the people and cut off from my covenant. So this is the significance of the circumcision.

And just like everything in the Old Testament had a meaning, the cloud, going through the Red Sea, the blood, what is the meaning of circumcision? It has a spiritual meaning. In Jeremiah chapter 4, he hints at that meaning, but you don't understand it fully in the Old Testament. In Jeremiah chapter 4, and verse 4, the Lord said to God's people, Israel, through Jeremiah, Jeremiah 4, verse 4, circumcise yourself to the Lord.

Remove the foreskin of your heart. Not your body. That's only a symbol.

There's something in your heart that needs to be cut off. But they didn't understand it. But once the Holy Spirit came to the Pentecost, He explained it.

Now we'll see the explanation. Turn with me to Philippians in chapter 3, where Paul explains this through the Holy Spirit in Philippians 3, verse 3. We are the true circumcision. We worship in the Spirit of God.

You know what Jesus told the Samaritan woman? Let me paraphrase it. In the Old Testament, they worshiped in body and soul. But the true worshipers will worship in the Spirit.

My belief is that 99% of Christian churches do not know what worship is. Because they think it's a question of singing well, or singing very emotionally in a way. You know how some people put a tremor into their voice to try and emotionally move people.

Okay. Good Old Testament worship. That's not New Testament worship.

Body and soul. Emotion, mind, body. New Testament worship is worship in the Spirit.

And worship in the Spirit is described in Romans 12, verse 1 and 2 as present your body, a living sacrifice to God. That means deny your hands from doing what they want to do. Deny your tongue from saying what it wants to say.

That's sacrifice. Sacrifice means I put my tongue on the altar. I put my hand on the altar.

Present your body as a living sacrifice. I put my eyes on the altar. I'm not allowed to look at what I want to look at.

It's sacrificed. You know who are the true worshipers here in our midst? Not the ones who sang well this morning. I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I want to tell you the truth so that you don't be deceived.

The true worshipers here were those who put their eyes on the altar during the last one week and did not look at what God did not want them to look at, did not read what God did not want them to read. The true worshipers are those who put their tongue on the altar for the last one week and did not say what they wanted to say, did not, and said what God wanted them to say, who denied, who did not do with their hands what God did not want to do. Hidden in this congregation are a few people like that.

Maybe you're not good singers. It doesn't matter. You're not good singers, but you're really good worshipers because you presented your body as a living sacrifice.

And Romans 12, let me turn that, Romans 12, 1 and 2. It's not only our body, Romans 12, 1 and 2, it says we must present our mind as well. First is, Romans 12, 1, present your body a living holy sacrifice which is your spiritual worship. Got it? Which is your worship in the spirit.

So you worship in the spirit by presenting your body. That means inwardly you have gone the way of the rent veil. You've denied yourself.

That means when your body wanted to do something, inwardly you said, no, that's dishonoring to God. I will not say that. You were tempted to say something to your wife or to somebody else and you put that to death because you wanted to be a worshiper.

That's where you learn to worship. You wanted to look at something and you turned your eyes away. You were worshiping at that time.

Did you know that? You wanted to do something with your hand or write something and you didn't do it because you felt it would dishonor God. That moment you were a worshiper. That is your spiritual worship.

The thing which God, Jesus told the Samaritan woman, those who worship God must worship him in spirit. It's explained here. That inwardly, in my spirit, in my spirit, my spirit will rule my body.

My spirit tells my eyes, don't look there, don't read that. Don't touch that with your hand. Don't say that with your tongue.

And my spirit rules my body. I am a worshiper in spirit. 99% of Christians, their body rules their spirit.

Their spirit says, don't do that. The body says, I still want to do it. They can come and sing beautifully here on Sunday morning and imagine that they are worshiping God.

They are not. And further, if you want to continue in the spirit of worship, Romans 12.2, don't be conformed in your mind to this world's way of thinking. Like the Phillips translation says, don't let the world squeeze you into its shape, into its mold.

No, resist it. The world is trying to squeeze you into its shape. That means to make you think in the shape of the world.

I'm not going to allow the world to mold me into that type of thinking. I'm going to think the way God wants me to think. That's why I want to study the scriptures.

Then you will understand what the perfect will of God is. That is worship in the spirit. In case you did not know, now you know how to come next Sunday to worship in the spirit.

It doesn't matter one bit to God whether you can sing in tune, whether you can sing with a tremor in your voice, or whether you can do all these things that clever musicians do. It matters immensely to God whether you have denied yourself throughout the week. That is worship.

And this is about the only church in the world you will ever hear that preached. Let me tell you. Tell me if you hear that anywhere else.

Most people, what they call praise and worship, it is not praise and worship. The words are praise, the words are thanksgiving. They say I worship you, but they are not worshipping God.

They say I worship you, That is what Jesus said in Mark 7. These people draw near to me with their words, but their heart goes after their lusts. They are not worshipping. But we want to make worshippers here.

Because Jesus said you shall worship and then serve. You cannot serve God properly if you don't worship. That is another thing I learned early in my life.

That if I wanted to serve God effectively, I had to learn to worship him first. I had to present my body, to present my mind, and let him control it. Then I could serve.

Otherwise my service won't be acceptable by God. Men may think it is great, but I won't get revelation. I will read the scripture and I won't get revelation.

I will still live under the old covenant. I will still practice the practices of most of Christendom, which lives under the old covenant. Turn back to Philippians 3. We are the true circumcision.

Verse 3. Chapter 3, verse 3. We are trying to understand what circumcision meant. Cutting off something. Physical circumcision is cutting off something and throwing it away.

So, first of all, I cut off this emotional type of worship and the clever mental type of worship and I worship in the spirit. And I glory in Christ Jesus alone. I don't glory in anything that I have done.

Very important. Circumcision means I cut off all glory in what I have done, what I have accomplished. Paul said, forgetting the things that are behind.

He says that later on in the same chapter. And that means, the way I've looked at it is, what does it mean to forget the things that are behind? For me it means this. That anything that I have done I forget it.

That means I serve God today as if I have done nothing for God in my life till today. You want to serve God effectively? That's the way to do it. That's the way I seek to do it.

I'm trying to do it like that everyday. Lord, I want to imagine that I've never done anything for you, one single thing for you till today. Today I want to do something for you out of gratitude for what you did for me.

This is the first day Lord that I'm really doing something for you. That's the meaning of forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forth to the things that are before. Some of you have done things for the Lord and you're very conscious of it and you remind yourself of it.

I've done this for the Lord and I've done that for the Lord. I'm not just an ordinary brother. You'll never be a servant of God.

You'll never be one till you learn to forget the highest Christian life. Are you happy with pass marks? 40%? Are you a 40% Christian or a 100% Christian? Do you want 100% or do you just want pass marks, 40%? How can I get to heaven? I'm not interested in 40%. I don't want pass marks.

I want 100%. If you want to be 100%, forget the things that are behind. And we glory in Christ Jesus, not in ourselves.

That's another thing there. We have no confidence in the flesh, in ourselves. So cutting off circumcision was a cutting off of the flesh in the old covenant.

Today it's a cutting off of confidence in myself. I can do it. In 13 years God will speak nothing to you.

Or 40 years He will speak nothing. You'll come to the meetings Right from Genesis chapter 1 we read one thing. Things happened on the earth only when it says God said something happened.

God said let there be light. God said let the trees come forth. Without that nothing happens.

That's the message in the first chapter of the Bible. All our cleverness, all our ability and all our confidence in our own ability has to be cut off. We have to listen to what God says.

And let that happen in our life. And in one day things will happen which haven't happened in your life in 20 years. It's amazing.

Have you learnt this? Circumcision? Cutting off all confidence in our own ability. The world is full of self-confidence. You can't get a job in a responsible place as a manager or something if you don't have self-confidence.

In the world you need it. It's exactly the opposite. You have to have confidence in God and zero confidence in yourself.

Out in the world you better be a self-confident person otherwise you won't be able to get a good job. But when it comes to spiritual things it's the exact opposite. That is the meaning of circumcision.

It's a cutting off of all confidence in the flesh. A cutting off of walking my own way. Worshipping God in my spirit.

Letting my body be controlled by my spirit and not by its own desires. Like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9 a beautiful way he says it, he says I discipline my body. 1 Corinthians 9 27 And the Living Bible paraphrases beautiful.

1 Corinthians 9 27 I make my body do what it should do not what it wants to do. Understood that? I buffet my body make it my slave. Meaning I make my body do what it should do.

I make my eyes see what it should see not what it wants to see. I make my eyes read what it should read not what it wants to read. Not a lot of rubbish but God's word.

I make my tongue speak what it should speak I make my hands do what it should do not what it wants to do. You live like that this coming week. You'll be a worshipper next Sunday better than anybody else here.

Even if you can't sing for nuts. True. Those who have years to hear will hear.

Many have heard this before but haven't taken it seriously. God's reminding you again. And one of these days it'll be the last reminder.

Christ will come. It'll be too late. I don't know how 2016 was for you but in 2017 I hope you'll be a worshipper.

I want to be a far greater worshipper this year than I have been in all my life. I want to forget everything behind me. I want to live every day as if I've done nothing for the Lord until that day.

And to say, Lord, I want to do something for you today. I've done nothing for you till now. I want to do something for you in gratitude for what you did for me on the cross.

That's how I want to live every single day of 2017. That'll save me from becoming conceited. It'll save me from comparing myself with other people who I think are not so spiritual or who I think haven't done as much for the Lord as I have done.

It'll save me from many temptations. I want to be circumcised in my heart. I hope you want to be also.

Let's bow our heads before God. As our heads are bowed before the Lord. I want to tell you another mark of a person who is truly circumcised who has no confidence in his flesh.

You know what it is? He will pray a lot more. He will pray a lot more. He'll be a man of prayer.

He'll be a woman of prayer. Don't you remember times in your... Some of you have been believers for many years. Don't you remember how in the olden days you used to pray a lot more? It's gone from your life.

It's been replaced by the internet and Facebook and 101 other not evil things, good things. That is God's way to eliminate... Your prayer is the expression of your dependence upon God. The Bible says we must pray always.

Seek to restore that in your life this year. Don't just take this as another message. The Lord is speaking to you because He loves you.

He doesn't want you to waste your life anymore. He doesn't want you to be a backslider. Some of you have become backsliders.

He doesn't want you to be backslide and backslide and backslide and you will finally end up as some other people who used to be in CFCR today. Backslidden. He wants to save you from that.

Take your life seriously, my brother, sister, you young people. Take your life seriously from now because God wants your life to count for eternity. He wants to do something with your life.

Bow before God in deep repentance. Begin your day before you get out of bed with prayer, with repentance. Go to bed at night and on your bed before you go to sleep, those last few moments, repent and pray to God.

And every now and then during the day, you don't have to be on your knees the whole day, but every now and then when you have a spare moment, ask the Holy Spirit to remind you to pray. Half-minute prayers. Fifteen-second prayers.

You don't have to spend long hours on your knees. What does it mean to pray always? It means very frequently during the day. That's the way to do it.

Start in the morning. Be a man of prayer. Be a woman of prayer.

And let your prayer be an expression of your helpless dependence upon God. Pray for your children who are not following the Lord. And those who are following the Lord, pray that they'll be more effective for the Lord.

And not just drift along with a good testimony. Pray for your home that it'll be a witness for Christ. And these little groups that we've now started, pray that you'll be an anointed leader for those groups.

And that in those groups, you'll be able to build up the ones who are meeting there with you to godliness and to become true worshippers. You can't do it. I hope you realize you can't do it.

And I hope you'll be cast upon God and say, God, I can't do it. I have no confidence in my ability. I'm going to be totally circumcised.

I'm not going to do a 180 degree circumcison. It's going to be a 360 degree complete circle circumcison. 100%.

360 degrees complete circumcison. No dependence on myself in any area. No glorying in the past in any area.

We glory only in Christ Jesus. No worshiping of my body. But worshiping of Jesus Christ alone.

No worshiping of anything. Holy Christ. I believe God is calling our church to serious repentance.

To a serious turning to Him. Everyone. Old and young.

So that we accomplish something in this year for the Lord and for His glory that we have never accomplished in our life so far. Don't sit back and say God can't use you. Say Lord, you can do great things through me.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Make these two verses your motto for this year. Without Christ I can do nothing.

Nothing means nothing. I'll be zero. And with Christ I can do all things.

Make these two verses your motto for the new year. Without Christ I can do zero. With Christ I can do everything.

Dear brothers, I plead with you. Take my words seriously. I am speaking in the Holy Spirit.

Say that to the Lord. Lord help me every day to say without Christ I can do nothing. Anything I do will only create a mess in your work.

Forgive me for all the mess I've created in your work so far. But I believe. I don't want to just say without Christ I can do nothing.

I also want to say with Christ I can do everything that God wants to do in my life in this year. The good works that God planned before the foundation of the world for me to fulfill in 2017 will be fulfilled. Say that to the Lord.

Lord there are works you planned that I should do in this year. Before the foundation of the world. Before I was born.

I want to fulfill that. I don't want to drift along. I don't want to be drifting in the sea.

I want to have direction in my life. That direction is not my will but yours. Every single step.

Be a man of prayer. Be a woman of prayer. Cry out to God even now in your heart.

Cry out to God and say Lord I want to take it seriously. Lord make me one who is dependent on you every moment of this year. I want to live one day at a time.

And every day of this year I want to live in dependence upon you. That is the spirit of prayer. Seeking you.

Seeking your help in the small things. In the big things. Seeking your help in the earthly things.

And seeking your help in spiritual things. In everything. I want to lean upon you as helplessly as the branches in the tree.

Our Heavenly Father. How greatly you love us. Our Heavenly Dad.

You love us so greatly. You are sure of that in our heart. We want your Holy Spirit to fill us.

As we cry out to you fill us with the Holy Spirit. Yes Lord. Fill us deep in our heart.

The love of God be shed abroad in our hearts. And the power of God shed abroad in our hearts. Pray my brothers that God will fill you with his spirit.

It doesn't have to be an emotional cry. If it's a sincere helpless cry. Even if it's in the silence of your heart.

It says Lord I'm a helpless person. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Right now God can do a work in your heart.

That will have results throughout this year. And walk in lowliness of mind. And preserve the power of the Spirit in your life.

Walk in lowliness of mind. Every day. Destroy those high thoughts.

Bring those high thoughts into captivity. To the obedience of Christ. Let there be a revolution in your life.

And a revival. Believe that you'll never be the same. God equips you to fulfill his purpose in this year.

Let there be a helpless cry in your heart. That never ceases. Every day as you begin the day in the morning.

As you wake up in your bed. Say Lord another day I'm going to lean on you. I can do nothing without you today.

But I believe I can do everything you want me to do today. In your power. And be filled with the Spirit.

I want a clean heart. Cleansed in the blood of Christ. Filled with the Spirit.

Thank you Lord Jesus. You paid the price and you purchased everything for us. We don't want to disappoint you.

We want to be the type of individuals you want us to be. We want to build the type of family you want us to build. And we want to build a church.

The type of church you want us to build. We want it to be your church. You must build it Lord.

We are unworthy vessels. Unprofitable servants. But you still deign to use us.

Yes Lord we believe you will. We believe things will be different in our lives. Especially those who are sincerely calling on you right now.

Thank you Lord. Thank you Father. Thank you Dad.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/bm4dUpKiBbk.mp4>

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