

(Christian Leadership) Lovers of the Truth

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving the truth and being upright in our conversation, as this is a condition for becoming God's mouth and avoiding deception in the last days.

Duration: 1:16:35

Scripture: Jeremiah 15:16, Matthew 5:33-37, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 23:16-22, Matthew 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

Topics: "Christian Leadership", "Gods Truth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the Bible is not written in a logical or mathematical way, but rather speaks to the heart. He shares an anecdote about preaching in a seminary where he was criticized for not following traditional preaching methods, but he argues that Jesus Himself did not adhere to those methods either. The speaker encourages listeners to turn to God for hope and transformation, emphasizing that God can take the mess of their lives and create something new and glorious. He also urges believers to love the truth and discern false teachings, and highlights the importance of being honest and avoiding seeking honor from others. The sermon concludes by contrasting the law given by Moses with the grace and truth brought by Jesus Christ.

Transcript

How the new covenant is superior to the old in many ways and one of the ways we read in Psalm 51, David said when he had sinned and he was repenting of his sin, he says in verse 6, behold O God thou didst desire truth in the innermost being. He didn't have it. I don't believe anybody in the old covenant could have it but he knew that God desired it.

Truth, reality in the innermost being and that means that one's external life or the impression one gives others of one's life is exactly what one is inside. That's the meaning of that verse. Truth means reality.

God desires reality in the innermost being. That means whatever impression you're giving to your fellow believers about your spirituality must be exactly the same, no difference and David realized that that was not possible in his time. He said Lord you desire it.

That's one of the blessings of the new covenant that that which David could not have, that which these great saints in the old covenant could not have, we can have and if we don't have it, then it's because we don't want it and it's because of one reason that we seek the honor of men more than the honor of God. And it's amazing the number of Christians who never think of this as a serious sin to seek the honor of

men, to try to impress people. I remember many years ago when I was young and I started preaching and the Lord asked me this question.

Do you want to impress people or do you want to help them? I said Lord I want to help them and the Lord said then stop trying to impress them. You have to make a choice, particularly when you get up in a pulpit and I know how it is for all of us because our flesh is the same. When we stand before people, whether it's before a group of ten people or a thousand, whether it's giving a message or a testimony, whether it's even in private conversation with other believers, we want to come across in an impressive way because we seek honor from created beings.

This is a terrible sin. God desires truth in the inner being and I pray that we shall all become lovers of the truth, of reality, that we hate unreality, that we hate lying in any form. The Bible says Moses brought the law, he could give commandments, many many rules and regulations.

It's easy. Throughout the ages religious people have been giving their followers rules and commandments. Every religion has got leaders who give their followers rules and commandments.

The law came through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. What does that mean? It means there was no grace that anyone could receive till the Lord Jesus came. It means that truth which Jesus brought was not possible for anyone to have till he came.

Wasn't there truth in the old covenant? What does it mean when it says that grace and truth came through Jesus Christ? This life of reality was not possible under the old covenant. I don't want to judge others but I must say that the vast majority of born again believers that I have come across are not real. They are not genuine and that's why the flow of living water through them is hindered and that's why God cannot walk with them.

That's why God cannot be with their mouth when they speak because they are not real. I want to say to you my brothers and sisters, you know the most important instrument that God uses, the most important part of our body that God uses in this new covenant age is the tongue. And that's why when the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit there were tongues of fire on top of their heads.

And they spoke in other tongues but the meaning of these tongues of fire was that from now on you would have a tongue that was completely under the control of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus called the spirit, the spirit of truth who will lead you he said into all the truth. And he's going to control your tongue so that your tongue will always speak the truth.

Your yes will be yes and your no will be no. And Jesus said you don't have to swear anymore. Every word of yours will be as good as an oath.

That's how God is. Every word he speaks is true. And in the new covenant we can partake of his nature.

I don't know whether you have a great intense desire to cleanse yourself from all lying of every form. But I believe that that is something so necessary in the day and age in which we live. If we are to be the light of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Shining his light for him. If we love the truth God will show us more and more. I want to show you a verse in Jeremiah chapter 15.

If the tongue is the most important instrument that God is going to use. Why is it that there are so few tongues that God can use? Why is it that there are so few in every country on whose tongue God can put his word? His prophetic word. Here is the reason.

Many many years ago God spoke this to me. Jeremiah 15 and verse 19. The Lord says.

If you return I will restore you and you will stand before me. And if you extract the precious from the worthless. You will become my mouth.

You will become my spokesman. There is a condition for becoming God's mouth. And I want to say to you.

To any brother or sister here. Yes even the sisters. In the new covenant the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the sons and daughters of God.

Every brother, every sister can be filled with the spirit of truth. Every brother and sister can be a witness for Jesus Christ. And the condition is this.

If in your conversation you extract the precious from the worthless. You will be my mouth. And there is no respect of persons with God.

If you fulfill the condition. And you stand before him. It says before me you will stand.

Get rid of that spirit of accusation that comes forth through your tongue. Get rid of that criticism. Backbiting.

Finding fault. Get rid of that complaining spirit. That you have in your home.

Complaining about this, that and the other. Get rid of fellowshiping with other people in your place of work. And criticizing the boss and criticizing the government.

Extract the precious from the worthless. Throw away the garbage. Be upright.

Speak the truth. Always the truth even if it goes against you. Even if you have to lose your life for it.

And God says you will be my mouth. Is it worth it? It certainly is. The work of God suffers loss.

Because God does not have many men and women like that. Who are upright. Honest.

Absolutely 100% truthful. In their business. And in every aspect of their life.

It's very common, you know, in our country. In India when lot of... We used to have very high customs duty. If you brought anything in from abroad.

And when Indians go abroad they buy many things. Electronic goods and various things. And it's a very common practice to cheat the customs.

When you enter the country. I suppose it's true in every country. But I remember once when I was coming in back to India from somewhere.

And I had a few things and the Lord said to me. Everything you bought must be right on top of your suitcase. Not hidden anywhere like other people do.

So that when you open it they can see it. The customs officers. And if you have to pay duty on it.

Pay duty on it. Whatever it is. And then the Lord said this to me.

I have no shortage of money. But I have a great shortage of upright people. So if you do something crooked.

Tell a little lie to save a little money. You are going to add to the shortage of upright people that God has in his church. Don't ever do it.

Don't do it in your business. Don't do it when you file your tax papers. Absolute truthfulness.

Do you want to be God's mouth? Is it too big a price to pay? He has no shortage of money. He has a shortage of upright people. It was not possible in the old covenant.

But under the new covenant. Grace and truth are realized through Jesus Christ. And that's why it is very very important for us.

To teach our children from very early in life. To speak the truth. That was far more important for me.

Than whether they broke something in the house. I didn't care if they broke something. I didn't care if they turned the furniture upside down when they were playing.

That was their home. They could do that. But they must speak the truth.

I believe that's very very important in the day and age in which we live. Now I want to turn to 2 Thessalonians. And chapter 2. It's more than speaking the truth.

You know there's a difference between. Well let me give you Lecopus verse first. It says about Jesus in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 9. That he was anointed with the oil of gladness.

For one reason. There are many times in Hebrews where it says. God didn't do this because he was his son.

But because of some other reason. It says. For example in Hebrews 5. That his prayers were heard.

Because he feared. Now although he was his son. He learned obedience through the things he suffered.

And why was Jesus anointed? Hebrews 1 verse 9 it says. He was anointed with the oil of gladness. Because he loved righteousness.

And hated iniquity. More than his companions. That's why he was anointed more than his companions.

The measure of the anointing oil being upon our heads. The measure of the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit being upon us. And especially the oil of gladness.

Of continuous joy. Of an overcoming spirit. Depends on the measure in which we love righteousness and hate sin.

Now there is a difference between avoiding sin and hating it. A thief may avoid committing a crime. Because he sees a policeman around the corner.

It doesn't mean he hates it. When we avoid sin. We haven't reached great heights.

It's when we hate sin. That we are following Jesus. When we do righteousness.

We haven't reached great heights. It's when we love righteousness. That we are following Jesus.

It's not speaking the truth. It's loving the truth. That's what we read in 2 Thessalonians 2. In 2 Thessalonians 2 it says here about the last days.

When there is going to be tremendous activity of Satan. The great liar. And verse 9. With all power and signs and false wonders.

Wonders that are a deception. Healing done in the name of Jesus. Demons cast out in the name of Jesus.

And when they stand before the Lord in the final day. He will say. Depart from me you workers of iniquity.

These people who did this. It's an amazing verse in Matthew 7. 23 and 24. He says many.

Not just one or two. Many Jesus said will come to me. In the last day and say Lord.

We prophesied in your name. We cast out demons in your name. It wasn't in the name of some heathen God.

It was in the name of Jesus. We did miracles in your name. And he will say depart from me.

You who work iniquity. Isn't that amazing? That people who heal the sick. In the name of Jesus.

Are finally going to hell. Not contrasted that with. Another passage where Jesus said about people who stand before him in the last day.

Where is Matthew 25 where he speaks about separating the sheep and the goats. And he says to the sheep. Come you righteous.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was sick. And you visited me.

You never healed me. Because you didn't have the gift. But you visited me.

You didn't pretend to have the gift. You just encouraged me. And went away and I was still sick.

Come in. The kingdom is for you. Isn't that amazing? That the man who healed the sick goes to hell.

And the man who visited the sick goes to heaven. There are going to be a lot of surprises when Jesus comes again. The first will be last and the last will be first.

It's not all these supernatural things God is looking for. He is looking for uprightness. Honesty.

Do you know what is the first sin? Mentioned in the Bible. It's not Adam's by the way. The first sin.

Not the first sin. That of course is Lucifer's. But the first sin mentioned in Genesis.

It's Satan telling Eve. You will not die. That's the first sin mentioned in the Bible.

A lie. The first sin mentioned in the Bible is lying. Do you know what is the last sin mentioned in the Bible? I never went to Bible school.

That's why I know. I studied the Bible. Not what other people said about the Bible.

Revelation 22 verse 15. It says about people who are outside the kingdom. Many many things and finally those who practice lying.

Lying is the first sin mentioned in the Bible. And it's the last sin mentioned in the Bible. Jesus said Satan is the father of lies.

You may be a born again child of God. When you speak a lie. Something that is false.

Something that is not true. It doesn't matter who you are. The devil is the father of that lie.

And you are the mother. It's a through a union of the devil with your mind. At that moment that that child was born.

A lie. The devil was the father and you are the mother. Imagine the number of times.

When we have allowed the devil to have that type of union with our mind. No wonder. When we stand to speak God's word.

God is not with our mouth. We can say a lot of clever things. We can say a lot of eloquent things.

But when God is with your mouth. He will take that word like an arrow to people's hearts. And convict them.

That's what we need. In all of our churches. We don't need more clever sermons.

We don't even need wonderfully arranged sermons. We need things that will go straight to people's hearts. And for that God says get rid of the garbage.

Take out the precious. Be careful about what you speak. Any brother, any sister.

Age doesn't matter. You can be 16 years old and a prophet of God. And you can be 60 years old.

And just an ordinary preacher. Now let's turn to 2 Thessalonians 2. It says here in the last days there is going to be a lot of these lying wonders. Deceptive miracles.

And there is going to be the deception verse 10 of wickedness. How can we overcome this deception? You are not going to overcome it by Bible study. We are going to overcome it by God giving us discernment.

And the more we love the truth ourselves. In every area of our being. The more we will have discernment on what is true and what is false outside of us.

But we got to love the truth inside of us first. If we want to see what is true and false in Christendom today. This is an age of deception.

The Holy Spirit speaks expressly. 1 Timothy 4.1 That in the last days there will be a flood of deceitful spirits. That means the Holy Spirit has underlined that verse.

All scripture is inspired by God. But that verse has been underlined. That is the meaning of 1 Timothy 4.1. The Holy Spirit speaks expressly.

He has underlined it. That there is going to be a flood of deceitful spirits in the world in the last days. How are we going to avoid deception? We must love the truth.

There is a lot of deception floating around today. A lot of Gospels being preached today which sound right to those who don't have discernment. There are preachers going around the world who appear to be men of God.

Who are humbugs and hypocrites. But who are fooling undiscerning people. How shall we give these people discernment? So that they can see through these crooked men.

Teach them to love the truth. In their own life. And then the anointing within them will tell them there is something wrong with that man.

There is something wrong with that Gospel. They don't need to be believers for 20-30 years. They are born again yesterday.

They love the truth. God will show them this is wrong. Remember this brothers and sisters.

I am not against supernatural gifts. I believe God can heal every time I am sick. I pray to God to heal me.

Whenever our children were sick at home. I would always lay hands on them and pray for them. I am not against medicine.

I would always give them medicine. But I believe that the thing I should do is commit them to God to heal them. So I believe in that.

I believe in the gifts of the spirit. But I say there is a lot of counterfeit. I believe in speaking in tongues.

But I am not being critical. Most of the speaking in tongues I have heard in my whole life. In many many churches.

This is my opinion. It is not of God. It is psychological manipulation of people.

Now that is not because I am against that gift. I speak in tongues. So you know I am not against the gift.

But 90% of what I have heard is not from God. There is a lot of deception around. By their fruit you shall know them.

And the fruit is not Christ like. It is not Godly. And lot of simple people are being deceived.

They are being manipulated. Because they don't love the truth. There is a lot of healing.

Which is just mental, psychological, psychosomatic healing. Which is supposed to be some miracle that Jesus did. It is a deception.

There is a lot of it going on in the world. And because people don't love the truth they are being deceived. I know in my country thousands of believers are being deceived by what is happening.

And when you get deceived you begin to think that anything supernatural is of the Holy Spirit. There are people falling down in my country and barking and everything is supposed to be the Holy Spirit. It is amazing how I can't imagine a man without any understanding of the Bible would say that is not the Holy Spirit.

And here are people who are supposed to be born again. Who are thinking this is all the Holy Spirit. It is not.

The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is to make us like Jesus Christ. And if he does not do that in our life everything else could be counterfeit. There are spirits in the world.

There are spirits that can heal. There are spirits that can make people speak in tongues. There are spirits that can do all types of things.

The Bible says here about the activity of Satan. With power signs false wonders. With the deception of wickedness.

And why did they get deceived all these people? Here is the reason. They did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence.

Just listen to this. It is one of the most scary verses in the whole Bible. Do you know what it says? Now earlier on it speaks about Satan deceiving people with false wonders.

That is not what is referred to here. Here it says God will deceive people. Just think of that dear brothers.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4 that I have got deceitful lust in my flesh. Lust that can deceive me. And you know that as well as I do.

Lust that tells me you will get a kick out of this and you will enjoy this. And ultimately it brings me to remorse when I have yielded to that lust. That is deception.

Lust. The lust for more money. People think they will be happier if they get it.

And ultimately they get more miserable. The lust in the area of sex. Thinking that you can get some pleasure out of it and ultimately it is remorse.

This is deceitful. Deceitful lust. Satan is also a deceiver.

He is called the deceiver of the whole world in Revelation 12. And here I have got these two great enemies out to deceive me. The lust in my flesh.

And the devil himself. Can you imagine if in addition God also is out to deceive me. I am finished.

I have got to be careful at least God is on my side. Then I can stand the deception. Against the deception of the lust in my flesh and the deception of Satan.

But here it says that God will send upon them a deluding influence. So that they may believe what is false. They will believe that is the gospel when it is not the gospel.

They will believe that the gospel is a way of making money. The prosperity gospel. The health and wealth gospel.

They will believe that is it. Why does God allow thousands and thousands of people to believe what is false. Why does he allow people to believe that so many of these preachers who appear on television.

Are men of God when they are not. Why does God allow so many thousands of people to send their hard earned money. To many of these deceivers.

Why? The reason is here. They themselves. These people who are watching and listening to these people.

Did not. Verse 10. Receive the love of the truth.

So as to be saved. And that applies to you and me. There is no respect of persons with God.

I remember many many years ago. As a young Christian. I said Lord.

You see I came out of a Syrian Orthodox Church. Which is pretty close to the Roman Catholic Church. And I did not know much of the Bible when I was converted.

41 years ago. And as I grew up I saw so many groups of Christians all holding the same Bible. And saying we are speaking the truth.

We are the right group. And everybody else is wrong. And through the years.

Through the last 40 years. I have seen those groups multiply. So many different groups.

Many more groups have come. Of all holding the same Bible. And saying we have got the right thing.

And everybody else is wrong. And you can imagine how confused a young Christian is when he sees all this. Because he does not know.

He is not smart to answer this cult group. And that group. And the other one group.

They are all quoting from the same Bible. All things that look so convincing. And this is what helped me.

Jesus said. You shall know the truth. And the truth shall set you free.

And I saw. That if someone was speaking the truth to me. It would set me free from sin.

Whatever doctrine it is. If it did not set me free from sin. It is not the truth.

Secondly. Whatever doctrine a person preached. If it brought me in bondage to him.

It cannot be the truth. A man who preaches the truth. Will not only set me free from sin.

He will set me free. From being his slave as well. He will set me free.

From rules and regulations and laws. To follow Jesus in freedom. You shall know the truth.

And the truth will set you free. The sun shall set you free. You shall be free indeed.

Jesus came to set people free. The devil is always seeking to bring people into bondage. There are lots of believers sitting in bondage.

To overbearing pastors and leaders. Charismatic people with charismatic in terms of personality. Leaders who have such a hold on people.

That is not the truth. The truth will set people free. If you are in bondage to any man.

You are in bondage to rules and regulations. You can be sure that is not the truth. The truth will set you free.

So that became a guideline for me. Okay. That is the way for me to test the truth.

Is it making me more free? More free from sin. More free from fear. More free from the devil.

More free from the world. Well, then it is the truth. Is it bringing me more into bondage to sin? More into bondage to some person? More into bondage to a system that cannot be the truth? And this is the other verse.

The Lord said to me. That if throughout my life. I would love the truth.

Which he showed me about myself. And acknowledge it. So that I want to be saved from my sin.

I would never be deceived. God would guarantee. He would never allow me to be deceived.

Because this verse says. Is those who do not receive the love of the truth. So as to be saved.

Who are deceived. I have a close friend of mine. It is not in our church.

Who went to a healing meeting. He was suffering from a serious sickness. And he said he got some experience there.

And he went up on the platform in that meeting. And testified that he was healed. Now I never knew about this.

I read it in the magazine. Put out by that healer who conducted this crusade. And I saw this photograph of my friend there.

With his testimony. I knew he was seriously sick. With an incurable disease.

And here was his testimony that he was healed. Well. I am like Thomas.

Unless I see I do not believe. So. I said.

Well I ought to find out this. And I met him some weeks later. And I found he was much worse.

Much worse. And I thought. Supposing he sends another testimony.

To that healer. Now. And says.

Well what I said earlier was not true. Actually he published that in that magazine. With his photograph.

Never. That is what I mean by deception. That is what I mean by fooling people.

That is the first hand. Example. That I came across.

Of the deception with which. Lots of people are being fooled today. They do not love the truth.

Now if that person really loved the truth. He would publish that second testimony. This fellow was not healed.

There is a lot of that going on. It is not only in the area of. Tongues and healing.

It is in many many areas. What was the first sin. That we read God judged.

Publicly. In the early church. It was a sin of lying.

Again. First sin mentioned in the Bible is lying. The last sin mentioned in the Bible is lying.

The first sin God judged publicly in the early church. Is also lying. Not adultery.

Not murder. Ananias and Sapphira. They were not guilty of adultery.

Or murder. They were guilty of a sin. Which millions of Christians are practicing today.

What was that? We read in Acts 5. That at a time when. Many people were selling their property. There was no command to sell property.

This is something people did voluntarily. And. They felt like doing it.

If there was a command like that. It would have been mentioned in the epistles. Very dangerous to follow.

Examples in the Acts of the Apostles. If they are not mentioned in the epistles. I just want to mention that to you.

There are many things in the Acts of the Apostles. Like Paul quarreled with Barnabas and all. These are not doctrines.

For us to follow. Paul shaved his head. And certain good things too.

But it was done voluntarily. They. Sold all their property.

And they gave it. And in the midst of that. Ananias and Sapphira.

They sold some property. Let's say they sold it for \$50,000. And then Ananias and Sapphira.

Sat and discussed it. And they said well. We'd like to keep a little bit back for ourselves.

For the rainy day. And we'll give \$25,000 to God. Now tell me.

Today if somebody sold his property for \$50,000. And gave \$25,000 to God. We'd call him a wholehearted believer.

How many people would give \$25,000. 50% of their sales proceeds to God. That wasn't wrong.

It was excellent. But. It was this impression.

He was trying to give. When he stood in the queue. In that meeting place.

That he was giving everything. That was the sin. God never told him to.
Sell his property. It was his property. He need not have sold it at all.
He could have kept it. God loves the cheerful giver. There's no law in the New Testament.
Saying you must even give 10%. Everything is voluntary. And he need not have sold his land.
And even after he sold his land. He need not have even given 1% of it to God. It was still his.
And Peter made that very clear to him. But Peter said. Ananias Acts 5.3 Why has Satan filled your heart.
To tell a lie. Now what lie did Ananias say. He didn't even open his mouth.
Do you know you can tell a lie without opening your mouth. Here was a queue of people coming up to Peter. And laying the money at the feet.
And Ananias also with a pious look. With all the others had. He also stood in the queue.
And quietly left the money there. Without saying one word. And as he was going.
Peter said come back. For we need more men like Peter. In our churches today.
I really believe that's the greatest need. And if we love the truth. We will be like that.
We can be like Peter. Who can have discernment. Who can see through.
The humbug. The deceivers. And he called Ananias and said.
Why have you told a lie. He hadn't opened his mouth. It was an impression he gave.
That I'm also whole hearted. I'm also giving everything. And God.
And Peter said to him. You have not lied to men. Verse 4. You have lied to God.
And his wife came later. And did exactly the same thing. Now.
Let's just examine our heart. Have you ever been guilty of a sin? Have you ever. Tried to give an impression.
When you talk about prayer. That you're a great man of prayer. Have you told people honestly.
That your thoughts also wander. When you pray. Mine does.
Even after 41 years of being a believer. It's a battle. You give people a wrong impression.
When you talk about fasting. You give people the impression that you're a great faster. One who fasts and prays.
What a lot of lying there is. In testimonies. Reports of Christian work.
I come from a country. There's a lot of mission work going on. Hundreds and thousands of reports.
Being sent from India to the United States. And other places. And everywhere.

It's supposed to be revival. I live there. And I know it is not true.

But I see all these reports going on. And all these gullible people in the west just believing it all. And sending money back.

I'm amazed. I've seen so many people come from western countries to India. With a great lust to start an organization.

To start a mission. And to start something which they can go back home and report was a success. And when you come to a country like India.

Where there's such a lot of unemployment. Even among Christians. There are multitudes of people ready to believe any doctrine you preach.

To agree with everything you say. Provided you pay them. And willing to give you any report you want.

They're happy. You're happy. The devil is happy.

Only God is not happy. This is what's going on. And why is it? It's because of this lust for statistics.

I heard it said by someone. There are three types of lies. Black lies.

White lies. And statistics. You know.

There's a tremendous lust for statistics. In the Christian world. To impress people with the size of our work.

The number of people there are in our church. How it's growing. This is all basically.

The sin of Ananias. Wanting to impress. It may not be in exactly the same way.

But it's the same spirit. Wanting to impress. Why? Because we seek the honor of men.

More than the honor of God. We care for the approval of men. More than the approval of God.

We want to be known. As men of God. You want to be known as a man of God.

I tell you. I don't. I look at Jesus.

Who called himself. The son of man. An ordinary man.

That's what he meant. He became like his brothers. In all things.

In order to save us. It's the first principle. Of Christian ministry.

To become like other people. In all things. That's why he said to his disciples.

Don't even take a title. Don't be called rabbi, reverend, pastor. Nothing.

Just be a brother. Just be a servant. That's our calling.

To be like our brothers. In everything. But.

Do you think Christian preachers and leaders want to be like that? No. They want to. Give the impression of being.

Great man of God. One who. Brings a sense of awe.

Upon other people. Great prophet. Great preacher.

Who's admired. Who cannot mingle with the ordinary people. Have you seen in these great meetings and crusades the preacher.

He just come on the platform. Before the meeting and disappear after he's spoken. You can never meet him.

He's not an ordinary man. He's a great man of God. This is not Christianity.

It's some other religion. It's another Jesus. And so many are being deceived.

Jesus became like us in every way. He mingled with ordinary people. He never disappeared after preaching a message.

He never appeared suddenly on the platform just before he spoke. This is all. The spirit of the film star.

Of the actor. The actress. Not the spirit of Jesus.

Why is it Christians don't see through this? Because they don't love the truth. About themselves. There's deception in many, many, many areas.

What did we read here? Second Thessalonians. Let's look at that verse again. Second Thessalonians and chapter 2. God.

For this reason. That is the reason. They did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

For this reason God will send upon them. A strong deception. A deluding influence.

I want to ask you my brothers and sisters. When you study the scriptures. And you find something there that does not seem to fit.

With the doctrine you have believed for the last 30 years. Are you willing to change? There your honesty is tested. And there you can be tempted to squeeze that scripture till it fits into the mold.

Of the doctrine you have believed for 30 years. Or the doctrine your denomination has believed for 30 years. You are not willing to change.

And in that moment. God has seen. That you don't love the truth.

And he'll allow you to believe. That lie. I had a friend who worked for Kodak.

And he was in the research department. And he was doing a number of experiments. I think it was about 10 experiments.

And 9 of them the results came out right. As expected. And the 10th one.

The result did not come out right in the laboratory. And he said he found a great temptation to fudge the results. And just make it similar to all the other 9. He could have done it.

But he decided to be honest. He went for a swim. And while he was swimming.

He suddenly thought. Hey this must be the reason. Why that 10th experiment didn't work out like that.

And he went out. And he discovered something. And it was a new discovery that Kodak patented and used.

And he says. How he would never have made that discovery. If he had not been honest.

You know when you come to scripture. And you read something and it doesn't seem to fit. With what you always believed.

You're at a fork in the road. You can get a new revelation from God that can change your life. Or you can fudge the results.

And just believe what you always believed. Because that's safer. You don't want to be different from the crowd.

I know the times in my life. Where God has tested me on this very point. And I said Lord.

I don't care which church I get thrown out of. I don't care who rejects me. I don't care where I never get called back to preach again.

I don't care what anybody thinks. If this is your word. I'll believe it.

And it's opened up new areas of revelation. Things that have changed my life. Be open.

Love the truth. Don't love the honor of your denomination. Or the people.

Don't seek comfort. And security. In people.

Find your security in God. When we are secure in God. We don't need a thousand people telling us you're right.

Let them say you're wrong. It doesn't matter. These are areas where we discover whether we love the truth or not.

And if you don't love the truth. I assure you. You'll be deceived.

You may not go to hell. But you'll miss out on God's blessings. And you're going to have a lot of regret.

When you stand at the judgment seat of Christ. And the Lord points out to you. Saying at that particular point in your life.

When you were 35 years old. I showed you something. That could have revolutionized your life and ministry.

But you didn't want to accept it. Because the church you were in didn't accept it. Your leaders said it was all wrong.

Well. You can have your choice. I want to love the truth.

And I want to be honest with scripture. God's word is true. Let God be true.

And every man a liar. Heaven and earth will pass away. But this word will not pass away.

What about honesty? Honesty in the impression we give about victory in our life. Particularly those who preach holiness. If you study the holiness movements through the years.

We find that some of them preached entire sanctification. That means you couldn't possibly sin again. But the honest people among them.

Later discovered that they were sinning. The dishonest ones sort of pretended that they didn't. But the honest ones discovered they were sinning.

And then what to do about this? Because we've already testified one year ago or last week. That we don't sin anymore. So they called it a mistake.

Now the sad thing is the blood of Jesus does not cleanse mistakes. It only cleanses sin. So if you've made a mistake.

I don't know what you're going to do with it brother. You've got to live with it. If it was sin you could confess it and the blood of Jesus would cleanse it away.

And that's where dishonesty crept into the holiness movement. And what's the result? We have lots of people entirely sanctified. Making mistakes every day.

It's tragic. If it were not so tragic we could laugh at the whole thing. But it's tragic.

God allows them to be deceived because they won't honestly admit that was a sin. I yielded to my lust. I sinned in my thoughts.

That was an unkind word. That was not the way I should have spoken to my wife. That's a sin.

And I have to go to her and say darling please forgive me. That was sin. The blood of Jesus cleanses us.

I can be justified. I'm declared righteous by God. But not if I call it a mistake.

Not if I'm dishonest. When we give people the impression we don't have any fears. We don't have any depression.

Well you must be better than the apostle Paul. Because Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 7. He says in 2nd Corinthians 7 verse 5. When we came to Macedonia our flesh had no rest. We were afflicted on every side.

There were conflicts outside and fears inside my heart. Fears inside the apostle Paul's heart. This mighty prophet and apostle had a fear in his heart.

He was an honest man. I thank God for the honesty of the apostle Paul. Haven't you had fears my brother? Why are you ashamed to admit it? Why do you lead those poor young brothers astray? By pretending to have a life which you don't have.

And which is perhaps not possible in this world. That's why you can't be a mouthpiece of God. God loves honest people.

God loved Paul. He was with Paul because he was honest. He said I had fears.

This is what God has shown me. God has taken me through situations where cult groups have taken me to court in India. Because I exposed their wrong doctrines.

And the first time I went I had never been to court in my whole life. Never knew what the inside of a court looked like. And naturally when you go into some new situation there are some fears.

And the Lord showed me something about fear at that time. He said it doesn't matter that fear, that's only a temptation. Don't act on that fear.

Then you're okay. So I decided, well I can't do anything about these feelings. But I'm not going to act on my fear.

I'm going to act in faith. In God. He's my father and he's going to take care of me.

So the fact that you have some fears in your heart doesn't mean anything. Be honest about it. Don't act on that.

Paul was honest. Not only fears. He says in the next verse, he was depressed.

God who comforts the depressed comforted us. And the interesting thing here is, He didn't comfort Paul with a verse from scripture. He comforted him by giving him the fellowship of a younger brother called Titus.

And that's perhaps the way God may comfort you. If you can value that younger brother. It may not be through some older brother.

Maybe through a young brother. But Paul felt that. But he was not going to act on the basis of his depression.

He's not going to pass on his depression to others. That's the point. I praise God for the honesty of these men of God.

They did not give people the impression that they lived a life which is impossible to live on this earth. A victorious life does not mean a life where we will never face any pressure. Where we will never face any temptation.

Jesus was tempted. As we are. And we're going to be tempted and face the pressure of temptation till our dying day.

What is temptation? How does temptation come to us? Let's be honest. A thought flashes into our mind. That's temptation.

It's not sin. It's when I yield to that in my mind that it's sin. So if I'm going to expect to live a life where no thoughts will flash into my mind, I've got to be in heaven.

It's not going to be here on this earth. And let me say that to all of you young people who have got a wrong understanding of the victorious life. I don't have to yield to it.

That's the point. It's like somebody said, I can't stop the birds from flying over my head, but I can stop them from building a nest in my... I don't have any hair, but if I had... On my head. That's the point.

I can't stop temptation from flashing into my mind, but I can stop them from building a nest in my mind. I say, no, I don't want it. So don't get condemned because some thought flashed into your mind.

Say, no, I don't want it. Could be a filthy thought. It could be an evil thought.

Say, no, I don't want it. That's not me. I'm a new man in Christ.

So many people are being condemned because of the unreality of people preaching in a false type of victorious life and they are not honest enough to tell them that they are struggling. Is the Christian life a struggle? I'll tell you it is. It's a struggle for me today.

But I'm not struggling with the same things I struggled with 25 years ago. Think of a student studying mathematics. He's struggling when he's five years old in the first grade.

He's struggling when he's doing a doctorate in mathematics at the age of 28. But he's not struggling with the same thing. When he was five years old, he was struggling with addition.

When he's 25 years old, he's not struggling with addition, but he's still struggling. He's struggling all the time. Say, no, I don't want it.

Could be a filthy thought. It could be an evil thought. Say, no, I don't want it.

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Struggle for me today. But I'm not struggling with the same things I struggled with 25 years ago. Think of a student studying mathematics.

He's struggling when he's five years old in the first grade. He's struggling when he's doing a doctorate in mathematics at the age of 28. But he's not struggling with the same thing.

When he was five years old, he was struggling with addition. When he's 25 years old, he's not struggling with addition, but he's still struggling. That's how the Christian life is.

We go on. We're struggling all the time. Remember, Jesus struggled in Gethsemane.

What about perplexity? Five years old, he's not struggling with addition, but he's still struggling. That's how the Christian life is. We go on.

We're struggling all the time. Remember, Jesus struggled in Gethsemane. What about perplexity? A lot of people think, if you're a Christian, you're never confused about anything.

You always know God's will perfectly. I tell you, I don't. Most of the time, I'm perplexed.

I don't even know what to do. That's the honest truth. After 41 years of being a born-again believer, many times I seek God and I say, I don't know what to do.

And I say, okay, well, Lord, I'm doing the best I know how, and I step forward. And I look back years later, I find God somehow led me. That's all I can say.

That's guidance. I don't hear voices from heaven saying, now go right or go left. Don't be fooled by all these testimonies and biographies and books written nowadays.

I find that most of these biographies that are written in the last 50 years are not honest. There were more honest testimonies written before the Second World War. There were more godly people.

There's a shallow, empty Christianity in the world today that's fooling lots of people. It's a deception. If you love the truth, you will be saved from it.

There's a lot of it floating around all over the world. And I believe God needs many people who are bold enough to expose it. And if you're honest, I believe God can make you His mouthpiece too.

Never give an impression, particularly to young people. I remember when I was a young Christian, you know how young men, one of their biggest problems is in the area of sex. I used to go to an assembly where I never heard a single message on that subject.

I heard about justification, and I heard about glorification, and I heard about sanctification. But my problem was not these things. My problem was sex.

They never spoke about that. Everybody pretended that they never had a problem with that. They kept quiet about it.

And you know what the result was for me as a young Christian? I thought I was a sex maniac. I'm just being honest with you. Years later, I discovered I was perfectly normal.

But all these preachers were just dishonest and trying to fool me. And I decided one thing, and I've practiced that the last 25 years in our churches in India. I decided I would speak straight to young people in this matter, and show them that Jesus can give them victory.

But it'll be a battle. There will be a struggle. If you have a struggle in this area, even as a married man, if you have a struggle, that's not abnormal.

All I say is don't give in. The Lord will help you. You can be an overcomer.

I suffered because people wouldn't tell me the truth. Don't let people suffer, my dear brothers, preachers. Don't make your poor congregation suffer by being dishonest with them.

By not telling them the struggles you're going through yourself. The struggle is not sin. It's the clearest proof that you hate sin.

That you don't want it. You're standing against it, you're fighting against it. Be honest with people.

I believe one of the greatest needs in the pulpit today is honesty. Absolute honesty. Loving the truth.

Total 100% truth. Your yes is yes and your no is no. That's how it must be.

You know that verse? I just want to say one more thing before I close. You know, a lot of people also give people the impression. We have this logical type of understanding.

The mathematical way of thinking many people. That makes them pigeonhole various things. You know, to put the Bible down into neat little doctrines.

And I discovered the Bible is not written that way. I remember preaching in a seminary once. Those students said, Brother Zach, you have broken every law of preaching that we were ever taught in this seminary.

You don't have an introduction, you don't have three points, you don't have a conclusion, you don't have a subject matter. But you speak to our hearts. So I said, well, when Jesus spoke, he didn't give any introduction.

He didn't say what subject he was going to speak on. And he didn't give three points. And he didn't have a conclusion.

But people's hearts burned within them when they heard him. So I said, when I was a young Christian, I decided not to make any preacher my example, but to look at Jesus and see. Well, how did he speak and try to speak like him? And one of the things I've seen is that many people give the impression that, you know, God's got a perfect plan for our life.

That's true. You heard me say that yesterday or the other day. God's got a plan for our life.

So now, therefore, logic tells me that if at a particular point I miss that plan, say I took the wrong turning, then for the rest of my life, it's finished. I can never get God's perfect plan again. It has to be God's second best.

And if I missed another turning again, then it'll be the third best. And if I missed one more turning and by the time I'm a believer for five years, I'm probably only going to get about the hundredth best of God's plan because I made so many mistakes already. Is it like that? No, it isn't.

The first page of the Bible shows me a world which God created perfectly in verse one, which became chaotic in verse two because of Lucifer's sin, and which God remade. That's the message of the first chapter of the Bible. That that which is messed up by sin, God remakes, and at the end of it, he says, it's very good.

And then we go to the third chapter of the Bible, Genesis chapter three, and there we see God had a perfect plan for Adam. Now let me ask you a question. Was the cross of Calvary part of God's eternal purpose or not? Yes, we're no doubt about it.

Was it part of God's perfect plan for man? Are you doubtful? Yes or no? Okay. Now I'm going to catch you. That perfect plan was necessary because man failed.

So are you implying that Adam had to fail for God's perfect plan to be fulfilled? Otherwise there'd be no need for Calvary. I'm just trying to show you, you can use logic and mathematics, but you can't use it when you come to Scripture. God says, my ways are not your ways.

As the heaven is high above the earth, so my ways are not your ways. What am I trying to say? I'm trying to say, even if you messed up your life, brother, you can still fulfill God's perfect plan. Logic doesn't seem to fit with that statement, but it is true.

What's the meaning of those people who, you know, when Adam and Eve sinned, God immediately came and said, He didn't tell them, well, sorry, you fellas have missed my perfect plan. And he said, no, long before this, I've already made plan. The seed of the woman is going to crush the serpent's head.

I praise God for that message. Jesus said about those people who came at the 11th hour. That means they'd messed up 90% of their life doing nothing.

92% to be exact. And they had only one hour left. And they got their reward first.

God can pick up people who messed up their lives in so many ways for so many years. Maybe even after becoming a believer and you're backslidden, you've gone astray. I want to say to you, the message of the Bible is a message of hope.

God, you can turn to God today and He can make your life so glorious. From the mess of your life, He can create a new heavens and a new earth. That's the message of the gospel.

I want to say, brothers and sisters, let's love the truth. Let's be honest with this younger generation that's growing up. And as we love the truth, God will give us discernment on all the false gospels, the false preachers, the false Christianity, another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel that is abounding in the world today.

There's a great need for men and women who have discernment. May God help you and me to be among that number. Amen.

Bow before God. There is a proverb that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. And perhaps there is one area in your life where you must begin to be honest from now on.

Don't think of a hundred areas. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Think of one particular area in your life where you've not been absolutely honest.

Where you've given impressions that are not true. Think of what you've lost all these years. Lost the opportunity to be God's mouthpiece.

Say, Lord, I'm going to take that step. I take a decision sitting here right now. Let it cost what it may, I'm going to take that step.

I want my yes to be yes and my no to be no from now on. I want to love the truth. And when you show me something in my life, I want to acknowledge it instead of trying to justify myself.

And find some excuse for it. I want to say, Lord, I'm guilty. Forgive me.

I've sinned. Heavenly Father, help us to be honest. To live before your face.

Not to let you down in this time of need in your church. Raise up men and women who will be your mouthpieces. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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