

Christlike Freedom from Racism and Partiality

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of constantly discovering more of the life of Jesus, comparing it to the passion of explorers and scientists seeking new discoveries. It challenges Christians to have a greater passion to discover and cleanse themselves of unchristlikeness, highlighting the need to purify oneself as Jesus is pure. The sermon also addresses the dangers of partiality, urging believers to be impartial like Jesus and to love the truth about themselves to avoid deception in these times of great deception.

Scripture: 1 John 3:2, 1 John 3:3, Romans 2:11, James 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 2:10

Topics: "Pursuit of Holiness", "Impartiality in Love"

Description

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Transcript

We were hearing from some about being more sensitive in our conscience and cleansing ourselves as Jesus is pure. Life must be, our life must be a constant discovery. You know, like these explorers who went into the heart of Africa to find new places and people who climb mountains, trying to get into new spheres, like even man trying to reach the moon.

There's, there was a pursuit in the heart of these, even the scientists who discovered various things through the centuries, the progress of science and man's way of life, discovery of computers and everything else, was because there was in the heart of people a passion to discover more and more and more. And any Christian who's not doing that, to discover more and more of the life of Jesus, should be ashamed when he looks at these scientists who have such a passion to discover something new. For example, the tremendous passion that so many pharmacy companies have in these, in this year to discover a cure for COVID-19.

So many competing and each saying, we got it, we got it. Of course, they're doing it for money. And I say my passion to discover more of unchristlikeness in me, things which are worse than COVID-19 right in my flesh, should be far greater than all these pharmacy companies.

I mean, God is greater than money. If they can do it for money, I can do it for the Lord. And it says here in 1 John 3 and verse 2, last part, when he appears, we will be like him.

But who are the ones who are going to be like him? I mean, a lot of Christians sit back and say, oh yeah, I just relax. And I'm going to, I have a hope that I will be like him. Well, let's look at scripture.

Scripture cannot lie. The proof that you have this hope, that you will be like Christ is written in verse 3, that you purify yourselves as he is pure. If you're not purifying yourself as he is pure, day by day, that means, Lord, I haven't yet come to your standard.

I want to be more pure. I want to be more pure. If you're not doing that, we don't have this hope according to 1 John 3. And I tell you, the most of the Christians I've met in my life, they're not seeking to become more like Jesus.

They're not seeking, saying, Lord, there are areas in my life I'm not Christ-like yet. Give me light. Give me light.

The passion that a lot of people have to get advancement in their job, to find a better job, to get more money. And all the immigrants who want to come to the United States, the passion they have to get a visa, what a lot of trouble. Boy, if Christians had half that desire to discover more of Jesus, they'd have made a lot more progress.

So I don't think a lot of Christians have that passion. They don't feel that there are a lot of undiscovered areas of self. And the only way to discover it is to look to Jesus.

Running the race, looking unto Jesus, is the only way we can get light on ourselves. If we look at Jesus and say, I see there's something and I don't have that. So I was thinking of a couple of areas.

It says in John chapter 4 that when Jesus was traveling, it says here, he went away, John 4 verse 3, he left Judea, that's where Jerusalem is, and went, it's a but the Jews would not take that straight line, the road, because it went through Samaria. And the Samaritans were not pure Jews. The Assyrian nation had occupied Samaria when Israel was split into two nations.

And there was a lot of mixture between the Assyrians and the descendants of Israel, of Jacob, that they were a mixed race. And so the pure Jews who were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would not even walk through there because they had a prejudice against it. They would go from Jerusalem eastwards towards the river Jordan and go right away, it's a long route, go up and turn back into Galilee.

That's how much prejudice they had against the Samaritans, even if it meant a much longer walk for them. And it says here that Jesus, verse 4, had to pass through Samaria. He was breaking down those racial prejudices and the disciples, of course, they were with him, they had to go with him.

And then he was found there speaking to a Samaritan woman and he says the disciples were surprised when they saw that. They had such a prejudice against the Samaritans. Another evidence of that is in Luke chapter 9, where we read in verse 52, Jesus sent messengers ahead of him.

Again, he wanted to go through a village of the Samaritans, Luke 9, 52, to make arrangements for him. But the Samaritans, you know, the Jews consider them low caste or lower level than us. And the Samaritans were upset with the Jews for that.

So they said, we don't care for this Jew coming down here. And they did not receive him, verse 53, because he wasn't really coming to Samaria, he was going to Jerusalem. And when the disciples, James and John, fervent Jews saw this and heard it, they said, shall we command fire down, come down from heaven and consume them? Why? Because they did not receive him, verse 53.

But the Pharisees in Jerusalem also did not receive Jesus. But you never find James and John asking Jesus, shall we command fire to come down on these Pharisees? Why? Because they were not, they were the same race. It was a racist thing.

Well, we won't ask fire to come down on the Pharisees because they belong to the same race as us. So they may have some weaknesses, but it's not so serious. But when the Samaritans do that, we got to bring fire down on them.

There's a lot of that among Christians. And we have to be careful living in a country like this in the United States, where a lot of these racist problems, that as Christians, we don't allow even an atom of that to enter into our heart. And if you're born in a particular family, whether you know it or not, the influence of parents, grandparents, there'll be a little bit of that in your heart.

And if you cleanse it away, if you acknowledge it and cleanse it, you'll be free. So there is an area where a lot of people don't seek for light. And it's good for us to ask ourselves whether we have it.

See in India, our churches are all full of people of all different mixed races and extremely poor people who are lowest class in India. You know, the lowest class where an upper caste Hindu will not go anywhere near that person and they get converted. And then there are people from the upper caste of Hindu who get converted.

We have hundreds of people who are converted from different religions and they come together in the church and build fellowship. And they have to see that my fellowship is equal with this person as with this person without any feeling of racism. And that's a good question for everyone to ask ourselves, particularly if you're blessed to be in a church with mixed races.

Because Jesus had zero racism in him. He loves all people equally. And the other thing I see with God, you know, one of the things that's one of the first verses that enabled me to see that Jesus was a person I could follow, that he was a man like me, even though he was God, he became a man like me, was not from Hebrews 4.15, which says he was tempted in all points as we are.

That was also helped me later on. But it was from Romans chapter 2 and verse 11 that I saw Jesus was like me. And that what God did for Jesus, he would do for me.

Like we sing in that song, what he did for Jesus, he'll do for you. But that's from Romans 2 verse 11. Romans 2.11 says, there is no partiality with God.

So I tried to find an illustration for that to help me to understand it. And I saw in my own family, I say, is there any partiality in the way I treat my children? Do I do more for one or the other? And a lot of parents have got partiality towards one child. Sometimes they have many boys and one girl and the girl is their favorite, or they have many girls and one boy and the boy is their favorite.

Or some other reason why the eldest son is their favorite. There's a lot of it in every worldly family. It should not be there in your family.

It should be zero. There's no partiality with God. And I discovered in Romans 8.29 that God wants Jesus to be my elder brother.

He wants me to be conformed to the image of his son so that he might be the firstborn, the eldest among all the brothers. So then I realized that in God's eyes, we are a family where Jesus is the eldest brother. So if I apply Romans 2.11 to that, there is no partiality with God.

I did not show partiality to my eldest son compared to the others. Well, God is better than me. He cannot possibly show partiality to his eldest son, Jesus, and not show that to me.

I mean, if he did something for Jesus that he would not do for me, that's partiality with God. Because he's my elder brother, according to Romans 8.29. And in that case, even I would be better than God because I didn't show it. So that opened my eyes to the fact, to the amazing truth that changed my life.

What he did for Jesus, he will do for me. But that's just one part of it. Now I have to be like him.

I have to be free from partiality myself. And I have to judge myself, not just to see that Jesus, what God did for Jesus, he'll do for me, because there's no partiality in him. And God, I have to cleanse myself, like it says, purify myself as he is pure, which means I have to purify myself from all partiality.

And there's a lot of partiality in our flesh, maybe not towards our children, but on the other basis. James chapter 2 says that, here's this verse, James 2 verse 9, to 11, partiality is equal to committing murder. Have you read that in the Bible? Showing partiality is equal to committing adultery.

You glory in the fact that you don't commit adultery. Wonderful. But do you show partiality? You're just as bad as somebody who committed both adultery and murder.

Let me read it to you. James 2 verse 9. If you show partiality, remember he's talking to believers, my brethren, verse 1, you are committing sin and you're convicted by the law as a transgressor. Whatever type of Christian, new covenant Christian you call yourself.

If you show partiality, you're a transgressor, not a new covenant Christian. And you can keep the whole law, but you commit partiality, show partiality. That's the one point, verse 10.

He's talking about partiality. Then you're guilty, verse 11, of adultery, murder, everything. That's what I said just now.

If you show partiality, you're guilty of murder, adultery, everything. James is particularly keen on that. Why does he say that? He says because he saw in the church, people being partial towards a rich person and, you know, putting poor people away.

And we see a lot of that in many pastors and preachers. I've seen it even in India among CFC elders. I'm sorry to say that.

Why? Because they've not judged themselves and seen that there's no partiality with God. There's no partiality with Jesus. And they've not purified themselves as they pure.

And then it ends up in their downfall. And I see a lot of this sometimes. You know, sometimes our partiality is seen at certain times it comes to light.

See, for example, in a time of like going on in USA now, election and post-election and before the new president is sworn in, there's a lot of conversation going on. And especially if you read the news, all types of things are going on. And it's very, very easy to be partial.

We can have our own views. That's okay. Have the view that Jesus had in relation to politics and political parties.

People say, should we read the news at all? Well, I'll give you one verse in scripture, which tells us that Jesus read the news in his time. Luke chapter 13, we read. Some people came to Jesus and said, told him about the Galileans, verse one, whose blood Pilate had mixed with the sacrifices.

And Jesus said to them, do you think those Galileans were greater sinners than the other Galileans? No, but if you don't repent, you'll all perish. And then verse four, here is the proof that Jesus read the news. If there was a newspaper in those days, he'd read it.

If the news is on the internet, he'd watch it. You suppose that those 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, how did Jesus know there was a tower in Siloam that fell? How did he know the exact number of people who died? If the twin towers fell, Jesus would know about it. Not because he's in heaven.

If he was on earth, he would know about it because he heard the news. He would even know how many people died. So I see that it's good to be aware of what's happening around us, but we have to be careful about partiality.

And I don't know if any of you are affected by this, but I find a lot of Christians, charismatic and otherwise, I find a partiality in them at this particular time. They're not lovers of the truth. They have a certain bent towards a particular party or a particular person, and then every bit of news item that favors that, they believe it.

This way or that way, I'm not talking about any particular side. If they happen to be bent in the other way, whatever news favors that, they believe that. That is partiality.

And I tell you that if you have that attitude, I tell you in Jesus' name, it'll affect your spiritual growth. It'll affect your Christianity. You will not be able to grow because you're not absolutely impartial.

You're bent towards a certain direction. That's okay. We have our choices concerning whom we want to vote for or something like that.

But when you're partial to such an extent that whatever that side says you believe in, you're believing a lie or you're partial the other way and whatever that news supporting that side says you believe it, you're partial. And that can affect you. It is a revelation that you are partial in your life.

And if you're partial in one area, it's quite likely that you could be partial in many areas in your life without knowing it. And so we need to be alert when something happens like that and say, Lord, am I being partial here? Just because this guy's my favorite, whatever he does is right. And because that guy's not my favorite, whatever he does is wrong.

Either way, I'm not supporting any side. By the way, I'm not on either side. I want to follow Jesus.

I believe he'd be absolutely neutral in a situation like this because he was totally without partiality. He's not on the side of the Jews. He's not on the side of the Samaritans.

No. So I mentioned this because it's a very dangerous thing because it shows that we don't love the truth about ourselves when the Holy Spirit is trying to show us something. So be alert to discover the truth about yourself.

That, you know, people talk about fake news these days. Make sure that what you believe about yourself is not fake news. What you believe about yourself must be the true news.

What is your real condition? But many believers are living in a fake news about their own condition, about their flesh. They think everything is OK. I'm perfectly balanced and upright and love the truth.

No, you're not. That's fake news. The devil's fooling you with.

You are biased in one direction. You're not absolutely like Jesus. And thank God for situations like this at this particular time that help us to judge ourselves if you want to judge yourself.

But it's possible you can sail through these next few months and come out on the other side, not having judged yourself, not having cleansed yourself and not progressed at all in becoming like Christ. But one who is judging himself in an opportunity like this, we have an opportunity to judge ourselves in every situation and say, Lord, here's the situation. And I know I like this side, but I see what they are doing is wrong.

That's the side I like. But I've seen that is wrong and I will stand against it because it's wrong. That is the impartial man who is willing to speak the truth, even if his side is wrong.

I've seen this with elders sometimes in our churches in India. Their own son does something which is not right. And they cover it up.

But if it's somebody else's son doing it, they pull him up. Such elders are totally unfit to be elders. And I've exposed it wherever I've seen it in any of our CFC elders, I tell them straight.

I've sought to be totally impartial because I've seen clearly partiality is equal to murder. It's equal to adultery. And I don't want to commit adultery or murder.

And I don't want to glory that I don't commit murder or adultery, but commit something else, which is equal to murder or adultery, as I showed you. I want to show you another verse, which is the danger of this. Second Thessalonians in chapter two.

Second Thessalonians two, it says here about the devil deceiving people. And again, it's referring to the last days. With all the deception of wickedness, second Thessalonians two, 10.

With all the deception of wickedness, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so as to be saved. There are two things mentioned in verse 10. Remember, love of the truth.

Truth about yourself. When God shows you in a particular situation, if you're willing to honestly face up to it, that you were partial. You're biased.

And you don't receive the love of the truth. You don't want to be saved from that partiality in your life. You don't want to be saved from that bias in your life that Jesus would not have.

Because your soul, you love some particular direction or some particular political party or position so much that even Almighty God cannot change you. That's serious. Then what will happen? Listen to this.

God himself, verse 11, will deceive you. I mean, our flesh deceives us. The devil deceives us.

On top of that, if God himself is going to let you be deceived, it's a terrible thing. And I say, in Jesus name, I say, I see it around me. Christians, people who say they speak in tongues and filled with the spirit, thoroughly deceived.

Why is God allowing them to be deceived? Because they are partial and don't love the truth. And it says here, those who did not receive the love of the truth, to be saved from impartiality, from partiality. God sends a deluding influence on them.

They think they are very spiritual. They're speaking in tongues, but they're thoroughly carnal and the devil to deceive them. They believe, verse 11, what is false.

I never want to be in that category. We are going into days of deception, my brothers and sisters. And if you want to be free from deception, you will not be free from deception just by sitting in NCCF.

No. By believing all the doctrines. The Pharisees believed all the doctrines.

They were thoroughly deceived. It is if you are ruthless with judging yourself, purifying yourself as he is pure. Then, and when God shows you something, you face up to it and say, Lord, thank you for showing me.

I was terribly biased here. And not only that, some people who are biased begin to air their views to other people, to convince them also, as if you're trying to win people for your political party or something like that. My dear brothers and sisters, be careful at this time.

If you have your views, Romans 14 says, you have a view on something, keep it to yourself. That's what Romans 14 says. Take some time to read it.

And above all, look at Jesus and say, Lord, I want to be like you, completely unbiased, completely impartial. Nobody in the church is my special favorite. No elder brother is a special favorite for mine.

I can say that honestly before God. They're all the same. I love them all.

And if somebody is wrong, he's wrong. I follow Jesus who could turn around to his closest co-worker, Peter, and say, get behind me, Satan. Imagine that.

Because Peter was avoiding the way of the cross in Matthew 16, Jesus was without partiality. And he could look at Judas Iscariot in the garden of Gethsemane, kissing him to betray him. And Jesus could put his arm around Judas Iscariot and say, friend.

Have you seen that? That he called Peter, Satan, and he called Judas Iscariot friend? Amazing. I say, Lord, make me like that, that I will be ruthless against partiality in my flesh. That if my closest co-worker is wrong, I'll say, brother, you are wrong.

I won't call him Satan. I have not come to the level of Jesus. I'll just tell him, brother, you're wrong.

I disagree with you. If he gets offended, so be it. But Peter didn't get offended.

He said, Lord, these are the words of eternal life, what you've given me. That's what he said when he responded to Jesus. At the same time, if someone whom I don't like or disagrees with me is right in some area, I must say, brother, he is right.

I mean, I don't agree with his view on certain things, but he's right. Yeah, I accept it. I see that Mother Teresa, for example, who's a Roman Catholic, was right in many areas where many so-called spiritual Protestants are wrong.

So I'm not going to say, no, that's the doctrines are wrong. But if she's right in some areas, she's right. I want to be totally, totally without partiality because I know then I will not be deceived.

And I'm moving into days of deception. And I have responsibility for many churches. I don't want to be deceived and deceive a whole lot of other people.

And my dear brothers and sisters, I want to urge you all, if you have a certain amount of influence on others, make sure you're not deceived yourself and make sure you don't go airing views which deceive other people. Let us really seek to follow Jesus. Amen.

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