

# (Church Leadership) 12. Hating Spiritual Death

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a 'doorkeeper' in the church who preserves it from spiritual death and the need for discernment in recognizing spiritual leaders.*

**Duration:** 59:49

**Scripture:** Mark 13:34, Acts 20:29, Hebrews 5:4-5

**Topics:** "Discerning False Teachings", "Wholehearted Devotion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of discernment and not being fooled by false teachings. He warns against being swayed by psychological gimmicks and encourages listeners to follow the example of Jesus. The speaker also highlights the need to seek and obey God's word, rather than just hearing it. He uses the story of Gideon and his army to illustrate the importance of wholehearted devotion to God and not being distracted by worldly desires.

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## Transcript

We were looking some time ago at Hebrews in chapter 5. We were seeing how no one can take the honor to be a leader of God's people. Verse 4, even if men appoint you to leadership, if God does not back it up, nothing will happen. And that is dependent on the individual.

As I said, Paul appointed elders in Ephesus, but after three years of observing them, observing all those elders very carefully for three years, he said to them in Acts 20, I know that after I leave, verse 29, wolves will come in, won't spare the flock. Why the wolves couldn't come when Paul was there? I don't know, supposing there were 200 churches, 200 people in Ephesus church. One man kept the wolves away.

And when that man was removed, the wolves just walked right in. Now this is how it was in the Old Testament. Moses led the people out of Egypt's idolatry and everything else.

He was away on the mountain for less than six weeks. Just 40 days and all two million of them went into idolatry. And the second leader Aaron was called by God, but he couldn't stop it.

God had told Moses, you and Aaron lead the people. It was like a joint eldership. But that second elder couldn't do anything.

The people said, we must do this. He said, okay, let's do that. He said, no, we must have some, let's make a car.

Okay, let's do it. Give me your ornaments. And it says he fashioned the car.

And then Moses comes down and he rebukes that man. How did you do this? And he gets scared. I don't know Moses, I put this gold and a car came out.

Liar. Elders can be like that, where they allow compromise. And Moses brought all of them back to God.

It was like that in Elijah's time too. One man brought them all back to God. Now it should not be like that in the New Covenant.

But here we see it was like that. This is long after the day of Pentecost. And we see how the elders and Ephesus were all backslidden in Revelation 2. You read about Diatrophes, an elder who defied the Apostle John in 3rd Epistle of John.

But John says, I am going to come there. See when the Apostle came, then people got a little fear. If Paul came to Ephesus back again, something would have happened.

Or if John went to one of those churches. See what you read in the New Testament, unfortunately, is that very often it is one man who preserves this church from going downwards. You read that in Mark Chapter 13, where the Lord says, He uses a parable.

He is like a house owner who is going on a long journey. Verse 34. And he gives responsibility in the house to each one of his servants.

You do this, you do this, you do this, you do this, you do this. And there is one special servant there. That is the door keeper.

The watchman. The other fellows are sweeping the floor and arranging the furniture and looking after the various things in the house. But the watchman, he is special.

So there are two categories there, all the servants and the watchman. And so much depends on the watchman. If the floor is not swept and the furniture is not arranged every day, that is not so serious.

If those servants are a bit lazy and don't sweep the floor every day, ok, some little dust may accumulate there. But if the watchman is sweeping, the whole house can be robbed. That is much worse than little dust accumulating there.

Every church must have a door keeper. You don't need more than one if he is a good door keeper. But that one person is the one who is going to preserve the church.

So I believe that wherever there is such a door keeper in the church, the church can be preserved. Otherwise the church suffers. And Paul was like a door keeper in Ephesus.

Not only for his church but also his co-workers. You read for example in Philippians. Philippians in chapter 2. He is talking about his co-workers now, not about a church.

Verse 21. They all seek after their own interests. Not those of Christ Jesus.

He looks around his co-workers. He says, I have only got Timothy whom I can send you. Verse 19 and 20.

See this is not, he is not looking at a church. Even in Acts 20 he was not looking at a church. He is talking to the elders.

Church being like that is ok. It is understandable. Babies, carnal people, half-hearted people.

People who want to live half for God and half for the world. Every church will have them. People in the outer court.

But when you have elders who are living in the outer court, that is pretty serious. That is the trouble in Ephesus. And here also his co-workers, full-time workers who gave up their jobs to serve the Lord.

I don't think they were like this in the beginning. Paul would never have selected them because we know how strict he was with John Mark. He would never have selected a half-hearted person in his team.

So can you imagine what type of people these were in the beginning? I have seen a lot of Christians like that in my lifetime. Full-time workers, elders who are really serious and whole-hearted in the beginning. Young people have seen like that.

On fire for God. And they get married. They have one or two children.

And they are absolute backsliders. Now they have to please their wives. Now they have to live for the world and make money for their children.

And their mind is all on that. Okay. You have to leave such people in the outer court.

But where are the leaders then? Where are the leaders who will lead the church? Or they get married to the wrong person. Who is either half-hearted or a legalist. I will tell you, between the two, the legalist is worse.

I was saying here to the other day that the greatest fear I had for my children as they were growing up was that they would become Pharisees. Because I have seen enough children of elders who are Pharisees. In Mali.

They are either Pharisees or thoroughly worldly. It was very rare for me to find among all the full-time workers and elders I met in India, children who were just normal children, who were neither Pharisees nor worldly. They were either legalists or thoroughly worldly.

And I said I would rather they are worldly than they are legalists. Why? I mean, best is if they are not either. They are balanced like Jesus.

But it is very difficult. This tendency is so strong. Particularly in our children.

Because from childhood they know, I am the son of an elder. I am the daughter of an elder. And there is sort of a legalism that comes into them.

Or a worldliness. I can do what I like because I am the son of an elder or daughter of an elder. So it is a great battle to preserve them.

And everybody else also is watching them. What dress are they wearing? What shoes are they wearing? What are they doing? What are they studying? How are they behaving? They are watching them. All the poor things can't live a normal life.

You may face that in your church too. I certainly faced it. And in the midst of all this I have to fight a battle as a father.

Say, Lord, my children have to live a normal life. And I would pray, why did I prefer that they become worldly rather than legalistic? If they have to fall, let them fall that side rather than this side. Best is they don't fall at all.

But if there is a little tendency in one direction, let it be towards that side, not this side. Because I saw in the Gospels that worldly people had a thousand times more opportunity to be saved than legalistic people. I have seen children of elders and full-time workers, they are thorough legalists.

I have very little hope for them. I have more hope for the worldly ones. That one day they will come to light and be repented.

Don't train your children to be legalists. Pray that they will grow up as normal children. That's why I say, don't push them forward too fast.

Even if they are whole-hearted, hold on, hold on. In your zeal, you push them forward and they become legalists completely. I have seen that.

Come on, come on. Go up, go up, let the church see you. That's the way to destroy them.

They are not ready for it. Be careful. So here were young, whole-hearted people who joined Paul.

And after some time they find, this Christian life is not as easy as I thought. When you are 20 years old and you have forsaken everything and you want to follow the Lord, it all looks great. And you get married and you have your children, you have to bring them up, you have to take care of their financial needs, so many needs.

And there are so many pressures. The church people, church needs and so many things. And then people say, Hey, we better seek our own.

We will still continue to preach and serve the Lord, but I have got to take care of myself. Otherwise nobody will take care. That's what happened to these people.

I don't think anybody in the churches could recognize that. Because 95% of the people in the church have no discernment. You can be a thorough backslider and 95% of the people in the church will think you are spiritual.

If you depend on your popularity in your church, you are doomed from day one. If you think, oh, 95% of the brothers and sisters accept me, you are doomed. I'll tell you that, I'll give it to you in writing.

I'm telling you after 40 years of observation, 95% of Christians don't have discernment as to who is spiritual and who is not. They are all fooled by shouting and noise and this, that and the other. Look at the number of people in our churches who are deceived by all these television preachers.

They never check it. Are these people preaching like Jesus preached? No. They don't have Jesus as their standard.

They are. It's like the film stars and the show and light and this and the other. They are impressed.

It's fantastic. And the way they sing and all that, it's so exciting. Is it leading you to a godly life? Is it leading you to be free from the love of money? Are you overcoming anger through listening to them? Are you overcoming the lust of the eyes through listening to them? No.

You're singing better. Go to the rock stars. They'll teach you 10 times better than these fellows.

I believe God has raised up this generation of preachers to test God's people to see what they want. And a lot of our people are falling for it. God says, I'm testing you.

God is shifting all the time. Shifting people. You know, when 32,000 people joined Gideon to fight against the Midianites, the Lord says, too many people.

Tell those who are afraid to go home. 22,000 went home. Thank God, I don't have to pray.

10,000 went home. 20,000 people were left. Bold, ready to go to battle.

The Lord said, no, there's too many. They are bold and all, but they are half-hearted. If they see something that attracts them in the world, they'll go for that.

So, Gideon says, let's go fight the enemy. They pass by a river. They're all thirsty.

9,700 of them put aside all their weapons and put their head in the river to drink water. They forgot all about the enemy. But out of the 300, they were ready, looking for the enemy and just quickly drinking water.

They were also thirsty. The Lord said, I tested them. They didn't know it was a test.

I brought them beside plenty of money and I wanted to see what they would do. 9,700 buried their heads in it. Ah, tested.

Failed. But some people, we all need money. Jesus needed money.

Took enough, but my calling is to live for God. The Lord, it could be money, it could be pleasure, it could be anything in the world. The Lord said, these 300, they're not like John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey and all.

They live normal lives. They build homes, bring up their children, educate their children, but they don't live for those things. They have compassion on people who are poorer than them.

They don't wallow in their wealth and not care for the poor. How can God use such people? 300 out of 32,000. 1%.

That's about like Paul says, all my fellows, people are seeking their own. Did you know that in a hundred situations you faced in your life till today, God was testing you. You didn't know that.

To lead you to a greater level of anointing. To make you a more effective minister in the church. To see whether you'd go after your job or after God's kingdom.

How many of you, if you had the opportunity to advance your kingdom, advance your earthly interest, would pursue that? If you don't have a calling from God, okay. Then it's alright. Pursue your earthly interest.

But here, your interest is to pursue your earthly interest at the same time you want to give the impression that you are an elder in God's church. How many of you would say, I don't want my promotion because I want to be here to help God's church. It's one of the first decisions I took after becoming a Christian.

God is my witness. My goal was to be the Admiral of the Navy and I was working towards that goal. And one day Christ came into my heart.

It was a real 180 degree turnaround. I lost my interest in advancement in my profession. From that day, I said, my job, my job is only to earn my living.

I don't want to be a beggar. I don't want to be dependent on other Christians. I never want to beg.

I never want to borrow. So I want to earn my living. But I don't have to be the Admiral to earn my living.

Let me be a junior officer. To say sir to people who are 10 years junior to me, I am willing to do that any day. I am willing to say sir to the auto rickshaw driver who drops me in my house.

That's no problem for me. I want to be a servant of God. I don't want the devil to have any place in my life.

Yeah, I can tell you God has tested me through numerous things. I remember when I, the day the Lord called me to leave my job, it was a rainy day. It was on the 6th of May 1964.

Somewhere here near Bangalore, I never knew I'd be living here afterwards. It was here that I decided in 1964. I was here in some ministry and that's where God called me.

And I went back to my work after I was on vacation. Determined to give my resignation letter. When I went, there on my table was a letter from naval headquarters that I had been selected for the most prestigious course that all naval officers want.

That would, that would guarantee me promotion to higher levels. This is exactly like the devil saying, I'll give you all the glory of the world if you just bow down to me for a moment. I didn't even take one minute to decide whether I should accept it or not.

I took it to my senior officer and said, Sir, here's my resignation letter. I don't want this. He said, Lieutenant Poonan, don't be foolish.

Think about it and come back. Okay, he told me to go back to my office. I have to go back and the military had to do that.

I sit there, do something else for half an hour and go back and say, I've thought about it, sir. Okay, I'll forward your letter. I've seen in Christian work at different times where I've been tempted to seek my own interests.

I remember when I came here to Bangalore some years ago, 33 years ago, I was, we were struggling financially. My wife and I and there was this wonderful western Christian organization that said, we want you brother Zach to be the director of our organization. Free car, free telephone, free house, free, I don't know what all free, a lot of free things.

We'll give you a free car, we'll give you a free toilet, we'll give you a free house. In Bangalore, if you want to do well, you must either be a businessman or join some Christian organization. That's the one who gets

free this, free that, free everything.

I didn't take one minute to think about it. I said, no, I'm sorry, I can't do that. Come back to me after one month, think about it, think about it.

God's not called me to sit behind the desk, He's called me to preach the word. I've seen numerous occasions like that where God tested me. It's like Abraham was tested.

Will you choose something else other than me? There are so many offers here, there. And finally, he passed the final test. The Lord says, I swear unto you by my name, Abraham, that nobody will be blessed as much as you.

I'll make you a blessing to every single person you meet. Brothers, God's been testing you through numerous events that have taken place in your past life to see how much of a ministry He can commit to you. You're studying the Bible, won't do.

That's good. Coming to leadership seminars, good, but that won't do. You have to pass the test.

And you have to convince God. God has to be convinced. But I tell you, if you pass the test, you'll get something that you don't even dream of today.

You will become a blessing to every single person you meet in your life. You sit with your little church and say, yes, God is blessing us here. There's no unity among the elders, there's conflict, there's strife, the young people are all worldly.

You're happy with that? Have you ever thought, why is it God is not mightily moving here, why isn't He sent a fire here? Why are people bored with everything I preach? Don't blame them. Ask yourself whether you passed the test. Only God can make you a blessing to others.

You can never make yourself a blessing to anybody. You can determine today I'm going to be a blessing to everybody. I've seen people who tried to do that, they were a nuisance.

Only God can make you a blessing. God said to Abraham, I will make you a blessing and nobody will be able to stop it. Your enemies will be my enemies.

What a wonderful place to come to. This is our birthright. Have you given it up? For some bowl of porridge here, some bowl of porridge there? What is that bowl of porridge? What is it that Esau sought? Something for himself.

Like Paul said, they all seek their own. Now, some people when they hear a message like this, say okay, now I must give up my job and become full time worker. And become dignified beggars or undignified beggars for the rest of their lives.

No, no, no. Don't do that. You cannot join the army or the navy or much less God's work without His calling you.

You can't go into full time work without God calling you. I have seen hundreds and hundreds of people in Christian work. Not at all called.

It's so obvious to me when I look at them, God hasn't called these people. So that's not the answer. The answer is to be wholehearted where you are.

See what it says in 1 Corinthians 7. 1 Corinthians 7 verse 20. Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. Are you a slave? Verse 21.

That means are you working for somebody? Some company or government or factory whatever it is. Don't worry about it. In those days it was slavery.

Even as a slave where you had no freedom, no salary, nothing. Who's even there don't worry. I mean slavery is so terrible.

If you can become free, free. But if you are not free, don't worry. Remain where you are called.

Unless God calls you to something higher. And if he calls you, he will provide all your needs. I can testify that for 40 years.

If he hasn't called you, you will end up joining some organizations begging or writing letters or hinting or all types of things. Or join some organization. And get a salary.

I am not against that. I am saying those are for people whom God has not called. Or you know where you give up your freedom.

I am not saying it's wrong for a Christian worker to be supported by people. Nothing wrong in that. Individuals can support.

Somebody can promise to support you or a church can promise to support you. Perfectly okay. But, like it says in verse 22, that prevents you from being Christ's slave, then it's wrong.

I would never in my life allow somebody to support me if I prevented me from doing what I felt Jesus wanted me to do. Before I supported myself, started supporting myself for a period, there were others who supported me. That's in the years before we started the church.

And I remember in those years that I still had one principle, that I will never accept support from anyone who wants to control my ministry. Or who wants to change my ministry. Make me sit as a director somewhere.

So, what I am trying to say is, you know, we think the other day we were talking about full-time work. Yeah, God may call somebody to full-time work. And there is nothing wrong in being supported financially by anybody.

There is nothing wrong in being supported. But, not that he controls you as his servant. That's very important.

All seek their own. That's the condition. In Paul's time, and it's also the condition very often today.

So, there are not going to be many. Not many can be doorkeepers. If you seek your own, how can you be a doorkeeper? We will produce people in our own image.

And that's the reason for all the conflicts in our churches. That's why the presence of the Lord is not mightily there in many of our churches. Because God is looking for someone who will not seek his own.

Someone who has passed test after test after test. To whom he can commit his word. Moses was like that. His fellow elder was not. So, Moses went away for one month, the whole congregation backslides. He comes back after a month, everybody comes back.

People are like that. We need more doorkeepers in our churches. It says about Jesus in Hebrews chapter 5, no one can take this position unless he is called.

But it's not enough to be called. We saw Abraham was tested. We saw Jesus was tested.

How do you know Jesus was tested? Because he got a certificate at the end of the testing period. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. I have watched him for 30 years.

He has passed all the tests. Have you noticed this dual expression that comes in Genesis 1? Have you meditated on Genesis 1? Have you seen this expression that comes twice again and again and again and again? Don't rush through any chapter of scripture. At least from today onwards.

Stop. You know there are sometimes when my scripture reading is one verse for many days. I am not in a hurry to go through the Bible in a year.

I am more interested in the Bible going through me. If I go through the whole Bible in one year and nothing goes through me, it's no use. So meditate.

Meditate. I want to encourage you to meditate. Here is this dual expression.

God said. God saw. Next day.

God said. God saw. That it was good.

God said. God saw. It's a principle in life.

God says something to you. He said something to you the last three days. What's the next thing? He sees.

Has it happened? Can he certify good? It's happened. I told the trees to come out of the earth. Came out.

Immediately. Good. Don't let it be just said.

And God said next conference and God said and God said and God said and God said and he saw it was not good at all. Can he see? I said something and he stopped seeking his own. He stopped seeking his own.

He started seeking the things of God first. He put God first. In other words, he became like my son.

Good. So life is a constant progression of becoming like Jesus in area after area after area. Not just in character, in ministry, in preaching, in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in delivering people from demons, in doing good to people, in being a blessing to people, delivering poor sinful people from condemnation, helping people to be free from sin.

Not only character, but ministry. So we read in Hebrews 5. It says in the Message Bible, verse 5, God told his son, you are my son, today I celebrate you. God wants to do that with us too.

You are my son. I want to have a celebration with you. Yes Lord, sure.

I am all for it. Go right ahead. Let's have a celebration because I am your son.

He gives me a ministry. You are a priest. That's what he said to Jesus.

That's what he wants to say to us. You are an elder in that church. Okay Lord.

What next? Verse 7. Prayers with loud crying and tears. Hey Lord, I thought it was authority and getting up and preaching and all that. No, no, no.

Wait, wait, wait. That will come. Before that.

Loud crying and tears, prayers, supplication. Oh Father, save me from all spiritual death. There must not even be a smell of spiritual death in me.

What is the smell of spiritual death? A little love of money. A little carelessness with the eyes. A little seeking my own.

Oh Father, save me from it. How to pray for it? You know, you can pray for it in a casual way. Yeah Lord.

I don't like these things. You know, if you can help me, that will be great. That's one way of praying.

The other way is Jesus praying. Loud. I don't ever see him praying with loud crying and tears in public.

Only once he wept in public, that is the tomb of Lazarus. Oh, but he prayed, it says, in the days of his flesh, means 33 years. Not, some people think that is only in the last day of his flesh in Gethsemane he did that.

No, no, no. I believe what scripture says, in the days when he lived on earth, in the days of his flesh, he prayed. That's why he went into the wilderness, so he wouldn't disturb anybody.

I mean, he was lived in such a poor home where he didn't even have a room to lock the door and pray. Many of you live in homes like that where you don't have a room where you can lock it up and pray. Some of you are rich enough to have your own room, but Jesus didn't have that.

He had to go to the wilderness. I mean, even if you had a room and you prayed and you started crying loud to people, not to know, hey, what happened? Are you okay? So he had to go to the wilderness. He didn't want to disturb anybody else.

So I used to ask the Lord. I said, Lord, there's no wilderness around Bangalore. What to do? If I start shouting and yelling in my room, people get disturbed.

I mean, the neighbors will wonder what's happening. My wife and children will get disturbed. Is he in some pain? Is he having a heart attack or something? So the Lord showed me.

He's got an answer for every generation, for every situation, for situations like Nazareth, where the wilderness is close by, and for concrete jungles like Bangalore, where it's only buildings, buildings, buildings. The Lord said, you can have loud crying and tears in your heart without a sound coming out of your mouth. I said, great.

I can follow Jesus right in my room. Particularly at night when you're alone, lying alone in bed, your wife is asleep and everybody is asleep. Without opening your mouth, without a sound, loud crying and tears in

your heart to God.

God says, what do you want, son? Oh, Father, not a smell of spiritual debt should be in The Prince of this world, gripping your people with money and pleasure, laziness, gossiping, carelessness in their speech. God, my Father, please, that's all I pray. I'm not asking for a better house, better scooter, nothing.

I'm not even asking for another pair of clothes. But don't let the smell of death come upon you. Everything else is secondary, Lord.

The other things, if you give me, I take it. If you don't give me, it's okay. And if you give me and take it away also, that's fine.

But spiritual death, Lord, I don't even want the Do you have a desire like that? Just like when you are filthy and you're really shy. Excuse me, brothers, I just want to have a bath before I come back. I'm stinking.

All perspiration, all that. I want to have a shower. Is it a very difficult thing for such people to want to take a shower or a bath every day? It's what we love to do.

All normal people feel clean at the end of having a bath. Why aren't we so particular about our spirit? How is it we can accumulate filth upon our spirit and not be disturbed? And then when he prayed like that, it says his prayers were heard because of his godly fear. What is the mark of godly fear? I say, Lord, I don't want the smell of spiritual death on me.

You know, James says even the garment spotted with the flesh, we must hate. And when we do that, here's the wonderful promise. I will be heard.

He will hear me. If Jesus recognized that only his father could keep him from spiritual death. What stupid people we are to think that we can keep ourselves from spiritual death.

Jesus could have said, Father, I don't need your help. I'm all right. I can keep myself from spiritual death.

He would never have prayed then. You know why we pray so little about these things? Because we are filled with self-confidence. Yeah, I heard that message.

I'm going to do it now. And that's why we fail. There's no cry.

I want to ask you, let's take another area of ministry. Let's take, okay, let's take sin first. Think of the area in your life where you're falling most frequently.

Is it anger? Is it sexual lust? Is it telling lies? Is it love of money? Is it seeking honor? I'm just trying to think through Matthew 5 and 6. That's all. I'm not inventing these things. I've read Matthew 5, 6 and 7 pretty thoroughly.

They come to me. Those are the things Jesus, all that I mentioned now, the things that Jesus mentioned most. Is it a bitterness against some enemy? That's also Matthew 5. Whatever it is.

When was the last time that you prayed with loud crying and tears to be free from that? I mean, some of you may have spent some hours preparing sermons. Good. Some people don't even do that.

But to cry for deliverance from all spiritual death? Yeah, he was heard. Why are we not heard? Even Jesus prayed like that. And that was a mark of his godly fear.

I believe that we live in a generation of people who do not have godly fear. And that's why that discernment of what is spiritual and is not spiritual is not there in them. See, it says here in the last verse of Hebrews 5, mature people are those who by practice have strained their senses to discern good and evil.

What is good? Jesus once said only God is good. So we can read this verse like this. They have trained their senses to discern what is of God and what is not of God.

So, when I listen to a preacher today, whether in a pulpit or on television or anywhere, my senses are discerned, can discern. I don't care if he is preaching truth. Some people say he is preaching the truth.

Supposing I stand up here and say, 2 plus 2 is 4. 3 plus 3 is 6. Hallelujah! 4 plus 4 is 8. Turn to your brother and say 5 plus 5 is 10. And I go on like that with all these Americanisms. Undiscerning people and say, brother, everything he said was the truth.

He never said 5 plus 5 is 11. He never even said 10 and a half. He said 10.

Is that anointed? Just because you say, oh, it was truth? People who don't have discernment are fooled by all this. A few hallelujahs and a few shouting and a few turn to your brother and sister and say this is enough for them to think. All these psychological gimmicks don't fool me.

Jesus is my example. I have seen reality. To discern between what is not of God and what is not of God.

I don't go around saying all these fellows are evil. That's not my business. My job is to light a candle.

But I'm not fooled. That's all I'm saying. I watch it and I'm not fooled.

You know the number of people in our churches who are thoroughly fooled by all this? Why? They are not mature. Their senses are not trained. They are so large hearted, they'll accept the devil himself.

Not if he comes as a devil, but if he comes as an angel of light. That's happening. But Jesus couldn't be fooled.

He wasn't fooled by anybody. He never talked about Judas Iscariot, but he knew. How do we know he never talked about Judas Iscariot? By meditation on scripture.

There's no verse that says that. But on the last supper, they all said, Lord, is it I? And nobody looked at Judas Iscariot. He also said, Lord, is it I? And the way he said it, everybody says, no, certainly not him.

He was the smartest of the lot. How do you know? If you can live with people for three and a half years and they don't know you're a crook, brother, you are smart. But Jesus never gossiped about him.

And God will expose him one day. But he was discerning. He knew who was a devil.

My brothers, we must have discernment. If you don't have discernment, you'll be fooled in this day and age. And that discernment comes through practice, where in your own life you're crying out that the smell of spiritual death should not be on you.

And verse 8, he learned obedience through what he suffered. So that's another part of our education. To learn obedience when obedience means suffering.

That's what it meant for Jesus. When obedience involves suffering, he still obeyed. You know this, some obedience does not involve suffering.

All of you brothers, please come for the leadership seminar. How much suffering was that? It's like telling a child, come on, eat up this ice cream. And after that, you must eat this chocolate.

How much suffering is there in that obedience? But when he's just about to win that cricket game or score a run or something, mummy says, come in, I've got some work for you. Their obedience will mean suffering. So there is obedience which does not involve suffering and obedience which involves suffering.

And it's the obedience which involves suffering where we are tested. That you get up and preach every Sunday, that's no suffering there. It's others who suffer most of the time in such cases.

You don't suffer. But suffering is where you have to deny yourself. He learned obedience.

Learning is an education word. Jesus got an education. And thus he completed his education.

Perfect means it got filled up, finished everything. It's not that he was imperfect at any time. Perfect means filled up, from childhood, tempted, past, tempted, past, tempted, past, tempted, past, completed.

And then he became the leader for others. That's how we become a leader. He became the leader for eternal salvation to all the others.

That's the way for us to go. Let's say, Lord, I want to follow you. That's the way to spiritual authority.

That's the way to overcome Satan. Let's pray.

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