

(Come Up Higher) Hearing and Seeing the Lord

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being in the Spirit to hear God's voice, see His glory, and live a life that glorifies Him amidst life's challenges.

Duration: 59:08

Scripture: Matthew 4:4, Ephesians 4:11

Topics: "Hearing God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of hearing God's voice like a trumpet and living by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. He encourages listeners to make it their goal to rid themselves of fleshly distractions in order to hear God clearly. The speaker emphasizes the need to not just preach the message, but to live it out in one's own life. He also highlights the significance of encountering the glory of Jesus and falling on one's face in reverence and awe.

Transcript

We position that Jesus is in. It says, we have been united with Christ and one of the wonderful things of being united with Christ is that as we died with Him, we choose to die with Him, we live with Him and we are raised up together with Him and I want you to see that same sequence in the book of Revelation. Let's turn to Revelation chapter 1. He says, I, John, was on the Isle of Patmos, and it says in verse 10, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

I suppose they called the first day of the week the Lord's Day because that was the day Jesus rose from the dead, and that was the beginning of a new creation. And so, he was talking about the first day of the week, the Lordy, what we call Sunday. And it's wonderful what he says, I was in the Spirit.

It's a wonderful thing when we come to the meetings on Sunday to be in the Spirit. You know what is the opposite of being in the Spirit? To being in the flesh. Well, he was not in the flesh.

He was in the Spirit. And he was so taken up by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, I'll tell you something, the Holy Spirit has one main ministry.

Well, let me say two. One flows from the other. You've often heard me quote that from 2 Corinthians 3. First of all, show us the glory of Jesus.

To show us the beauty of Jesus in the scriptures. And then, to make us like that. In those two statements, you have the complete ministry of the Holy Spirit.

To show us the glory of Jesus in his character and in his ministry. There was a glory in his life. There was a glory in his ministry.

And to make me like Jesus in my life and in my ministry. The total ministry of Christ, when he was on earth, was done all by himself. Because he was the body of Christ.

But today, that total ministry of Christ is done by many of us who are all different members of the body. I can't expect to have the total ministry of Christ, because I am not the body of Christ. I'm only a small part of the body of Christ.

I may be a little finger or perhaps a nail. And you've often heard me say, when you feel scratchy, there's absolutely no part of your body that can help you as much as a nail. So don't be discouraged if you're just a nail, small.

That means you're a great encourager. You go around looking, people feeling scratchy and they don't know how to do it, itchy. You say, okay.

And they feel great. I like this brother who comes in and encourages me. I was feeling so itchy and she just came and scratched my back.

I couldn't reach it, but she scratched it. So there's no part of the body which is unimportant. The tongue may stand in the pulpit, but the tongue can't help you when you're scratchy.

Remember that the greatest preacher in the world, there are things he cannot do. I see that very clearly. I see that there are so many brothers here who can do things that I can never do.

I'm honest, I'm not just being humble. When I looked at the way that Rabi and Selvam, especially Selvam, I don't think any of you can compete with him, the way he organizes the youth camp, Thoi. I don't think if I practiced for a hundred years I could do what he did.

It's a gift. I rejoice that God gives us such brothers. So I want to say to you, it doesn't matter who you are.

You have a part in the body of Christ. But to fulfill that part, you must be in the spirit. You must always seek to be in the spirit.

I really long for that. Especially my ministry is primarily preaching, traveling, ministering, encouraging people, writing a lot of emails and letters, dealing with elders, problems in churches. I always want to be in the spirit.

Especially when I speak, I want to be in the spirit. I want to encourage all of you, whenever you have to go to counsel somebody, whenever you have to go to pray with someone, or whenever you get up and speak somewhere, seek to be in the spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to lift us higher.

We read that earlier in Ezekiel. He fell at the feet and the spirit lifted him up. He didn't lift himself up, the spirit lifted him up.

And when you are in the spirit, the spirit will lift you up. I have found that so many times. I have found that even in physical sickness.

I can tell you a number of times. When I had some fear I would be lying down on a Wednesday evening in my bed, and I'd say, oh, it's getting on to 6.30. And I'd get up from my bed with my fever and go to the meeting. And I know that in CFC, if they see me in the meeting, they'll definitely expect me to speak.

And I go and sit there, and I get up to speak. It's an act of faith. The spirit lifts me up, and nobody knows I've got a fever.

And I say, I'm, and by the grace of God, by the end of the meeting, I'm alright. That's what happened the day before yesterday. I had a sore throat and a fever when I came here.

And I said, Lord, I can't allow this. Give me a drop, one drop, of your resurrection life in my body. That's what I call healing.

One drop. I can't have the full thing, but one drop. Give it to me, and I can serve you.

I don't want help to make money, or go and see places, or be a tourist. No, I'm not interested in all that. I want help to serve you.

I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, don't give in when you face a situation, or face a problem. Don't say, oh, what to do? Come in the spirit. And say, Lord, lift me up above.

Is it a mountain? Lift me up. Either bring this mountain down and flat, make it flat, or lift me up over the mountain and take me across. Those who wait upon the Lord shall mount up with wings like eagles.

A mountain is nothing to an eagle. Those who are earthbound, that's a mountain is a big problem. But when you dwell in the heavens, skyscrapers are nothing, mountains are nothing.

It's a wonderful thing to dwell in the heavenlies. Why are some things on earth so big problems to you? Because other attractive things on earth are also very big for you. If gold on the earth is very big for you, some pretty girl is very big for you, then the problems of earth will also be big for you.

Because you're dwelling on the earth. The skyscraper is big, the mountain is big. But when you dwell in the heavenlies, you know, let's say travel in a plane.

When you travel in a plane, say 20,000 feet, and you look down, supposing it's a clear sky, can you find out whether a girl is pretty, walking on the road? You can't. But if you're down on earth, oh, you see it very clearly. But up in the air, you're not even tempted.

You're not even tempted to take a second look. Isn't that a wonderful life? But when you look up, you don't know whether that thing on earth is gold or dust. Because you're up so high in the air.

Everything becomes different when you're in the heavenlies. It's not just a nice illustration. It's not just a nice parable that you can go and preach somewhere.

I find some people, they're all interested in this. They get a nice thought and say, I can go and say that somewhere. Brothers, you've got to live it.

That's the important thing. Many people ask me, Brother Jai, can we preach your messages? I say, sure. But live it first.

If you live it, it'll become your message. If you don't live it, it'll be photographs of biryani, which will only make people more hungry. You know that? If I show you a photograph of biryani here, you're going to be more hungry than you are right now.

And that's what a lot of sermons are. It's not life. It doesn't satisfy people.

The answer is to be in the spirit. Now when John was in the spirit, it says about two things here. First of all, he heard a voice, a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.

Do you know the number of people who have come to me and said, Brother Zak, I don't seem to be able to hear God's voice. How is it that John heard it like a trumpet? I mean, if somebody here blew a trumpet, and you say, what was that? I think something's wrong with your hearing. It's a triton, you can't hear it? It's deafness.

It's not that God is not speaking. Do you know that God speaks like a trumpet? It's in the last book of the Bible. His word sounds like a trumpet.

People who are in the spirit, like John, hear it loud and clear. Oh, I get that tune very clearly, what that trumpet is playing. But if my ears are plugged with all the sound gossip I've heard, with all the backbiting I've heard, with all the things that advertisers have filled my eyes and ears with, and the things of the world are clamoring, clamoring and clamoring, and God speaks like a trumpet, there are other trumpets louder than God's voice that are ringing in my ears, and that's why I can't hear God's voice.

So it's right when somebody says, I can't hear God's voice. He can't hear it because there are so many other voices clamoring for his attention. And I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, there are many voices clamoring to get your attention, and you have to make a choice which you want to listen to.

I made a choice many years ago. I believed, as I still believe, that of all the millions of books in the world, there's only one written by God Almighty. Only one written by my Creator.

Only one that can show me how I should live on this earth a life that is pleasing to God. There are many good books. I've written books.

I've tried to base them all on the scriptures. And if it helps you, that's why it helps you, because it drives you to the scriptures. Never read a book written by anybody that does not drive you to the scriptures.

Never listen to a preacher who does not drive you to the scriptures. God has appointed apostles, prophets, teachers in the church, but the purpose of all of them is to lead you to the hay. A spirit-filled man will do what the Holy Spirit does--glory of Jesus in scripture.

If you listen to a preacher and he doesn't show you the glory of Jesus in the scriptures, he's not spirit-filled. And not just that, he will lead you to show you how you can be changed into the glory of Jesus in the scriptures. When a preacher tells me that I can ask God for a lot of money, to me, I don't see that in scripture as the Holy Spirit.

Because I don't see Jesus like that. I don't see a single teaching of Jesus where he was telling me how to make money or how to be healthy. He taught people how to live a godly life.

And I'll tell you, if you seek the kingdom of God first, all the other things, including healing and health, will be added to you. Delight yourself in the Lord. He'll give you the desires of your heart.

Anyway, so he heard the Lord's voice like a trumpet because his ears were clear. He wasn't occupied with--you know, we need to be aware of what's happening in the world. We read the newspapers or we see on the internet the news of what's happening in the world.

We need to be aware. We read once that Jesus was aware--I think it's Luke 13--you read that a tower fell in Siloam. He knew about it, that sometime before, a tower had fallen and killed some people, and he quoted that example.

You know that tower that fell in Siloam the other day, he says? How did he know that? There's nothing wrong in being aware of what is being in the world, but you don't--he wasn't occupied with whether the tower in Siloam was constructed properly and all that type of thing. That's not what he was occupied with. You know, you can get so occupied with the things of the world that that means so much to you, where you have to read every sentence in every newspaper.

No wonder you don't have time to read God's Word. What is the thing that can change your life? You need to have a certain amount of information about what's happening. If a tower falls somewhere, okay, know about it.

But you don't need to know everything that's happening all over the world. Take time to hear the Lord's voice like a trumpet. Make it a goal.

Say, Lord, I know, I will know that I am in the Spirit when I can hear your voice like a trumpet. And I'm not going to stop getting rid of all the clogging of my flesh until I hear your voice like a trumpet. I want to live--if man can live, like Jesus said, only by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And if I have not heard every word that proceeds from God's mouth, think of how much of life I have lost. You remember that word? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. I'm supposed to live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth, and most of those words I haven't heard.

I've lost a lot of life. And maybe that's the reason why I'm so sick as well. I really believe the Word of God not only affects our spirit, but touches our body as well.

It touches our mind, makes us think clearly. It touches our emotions, it makes us happy. And yet, we have full control over ourselves.

I laugh, but I'm not uncontrollable in my laughter like some people say they experience when they are filled with the Spirit, not the Holy Spirit. We really need to learn what it is to be in the Spirit. And he not only heard the voice of the Lord like a trumpet, he turned around to see.

And when he saw, it says in verse 12, I turned around to see this voice, and then he says, I saw Jesus in all his glory. And he's using figurative language, the book of Revelation is full of science, but he saw the glory of Jesus. And how do you know whether you've seen the glory of Jesus in a meeting or not? Very likely we say, ah, the Lord was in that meeting.

I heard the Lord, I saw the Lord in the meeting. I'll tell you how you know whether you've seen the glory of the Lord in a meeting. He says, as soon as I saw him, verse 17, I fell at his feet like a dead man.

And I'll tell you, he did not fall backwards and show his soles and his feet to God. That's how the devil makes fools of people today. He fell on his face, just like Abraham, just like Joel, just like Moses, just like Peter.

That's how John fell, down on his face. Anything that reverses that is the opposite of Christ. And there's a word in the Bible for it, Antichrist, the spirit of the Antichrist.

I want to have nothing to do with that. I want to fall on my face before God and worship him. Not much opportunity to do that because we don't have much privacy in many of our houses.

We live in crowded homes, many of us. But I've discovered a wonderful place to worship God flat on my face. And that is my bed, early in the morning.

Don't you all have a mat in which you sleep at least? Before others are awake, turn around, put your face down and do what John did. Lord, I worship you. I want to see your glory.

It's a wonderful way to begin the day. I have to confess, it doesn't happen every day. Sometimes some other things crop up and I get something or the other on my mind, but I try my best to remember that.

This is the way to begin my day. Turn around, put my face down on my pillow, lie flat and say, God, I worship you. You are everything to me.

I want to hear your voice like a trumpet today. Not just in the morning, right through the day. Imagine if I'm facing some danger and I'm going that direction.

The loud trumpet says, don't go there. Okay, thank you. Isn't that good to hear a loud trumpet-like voice, protecting me from snares? Yeah.

I'll tell you when you get into eternity, and I believe many of you will be there in heaven, one of your greatest regrets will be that you did not listen to the voice of the Lord a little more carefully. One of your greatest regrets will be that you did not seek to worship him and see the glory of God so much. You went for a lot of conferences and meetings.

I hope there is a hunger and a longing in your heart to hear God speak to you like a trumpet. You know, brothers and sisters, the first word that Jesus spoke in his ministry, what's the first word that Jesus spoke in his ministry? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That's why he himself was so eager as a man to be an example, to hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of his Father.

If you ask me, Brother Zach, what has been the greatest failure in your Christian life? I would say the greatest failure in my Christian life is, I have not heard the voice of God more than I should have. Oh, I wish I had heard it more. I wish I had concentrated on that as the most important thing every single day of my life.

I try, I want to encourage you who are younger, develop this habit early in life, to hear the voice of God speaking to you. I remember at our wedding, Brother Bakhshing, who was India's greatest evangelist and apostle, whom I had the privilege of knowing, conducted our wedding about 40 years ago, and his

message was hearing the voice of God. And he said, if you have some disagreement in your home, he told my wife, supposing God tells your husband, go there, and you say no, how can you go there so soon after our marriage? Oh, he said, kneel down, seek to hear the voice of God.

What's God saying? If God is saying something and you hear it, you won't lose anything. Hear the voice of God. It's the most important thing, and I don't know any man in this country whom I know, who emphasized that as much as him.

I believe that is the secret of his life, and I try to learn that from him. And I want to encourage all of you, develop the habit of hearing the voice of God. You know, some people say, well, I'm a child, will God speak to me? Go and ask any father or mother here, whether they speak to their one-month-old baby, who can't understand anything.

You should sometimes seek, particularly if you are not noticing them, what all mothers will say to their one-month-old baby, all types of things, as if the baby is understanding everything. You know, God speaks even to little children. He speaks to everybody.

He loves us more than any mother loved her child. And when he fell like this at his feet, the Lord said to him, don't be afraid. It's the one word which he kept on saying to his disciples throughout the Gospels, fear not, don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

And here is the Apostle John at the age of 95, after 65 years of walking with God, he still needs to hear, don't be afraid. I say, Lord, as long as I live in this world, I know I'll need to hear that too. Even if I'm 95 years old one day, I'll have to hear Jesus saying to me, don't be afraid my son, I'm the first, I'm the last.

There was no one before me, there'll be nobody after me. What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of all these things, these little people in between? I'm the first, I'm the last. I had the first word in this universe, and I'm going to have the last word in this universe.

Don't be afraid. Do you hear that? Those of you who are afraid of something that's going to happen in the future? Have you made a mess of your life somewhere? You know what God wants you to do? Supposing you feel that, you look back over your life and you say, I think I made a mistake. I think many of us feel that way, about certain decisions that we took in the past.

I think I made a mistake there. I should not have gone to that place. I was greedy and I wanted to make more money and that's why I went there.

Lord, you know all you have to do is just say that to the Lord. Say, Lord, I'm sorry. I took this job because I just wanted to make more money.

I didn't seek your glory. The Lord won't tell you to give up that job. No.

He knows you've got to earn your living and it may not be possible for you to switch to another job at your age. But be honest. You know, when I was in Dubai and I was speaking to a group of people from different churches, I said to them, I will tell you something that no preacher who has ever come to Dubai would have told you.

And they don't tell you that because they all want your money. I said, I don't want your money and that's why I'll tell you the truth. And that is, the Bible says, I said to them, 1 Corinthians 10 31, whatever you do,

do all for the glory of God.

Aren't you all believers sitting here? Don't you all believe that's in your Bible? If whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. How many of you can say that you came to Dubai to seeking the glory of God? Is there one person here? No. You came here to make money.

Isn't that true? So what am I telling you to do? Go back to India? No. There are plenty of lovers of money in India too. You won't escape that by going back to India.

No. What I'm saying is, be honest with God. Supposing your husband and wife had sex before they got married.

Pre-marital sex. Or they didn't have sex but they fooled around with each other's bodies. Just a little caressing and all that.

Is that sin or not? What do you fellas think? No answer? Is it sin or not? It's sin. But they got married. So what should they do now? They have to confess to God.

They have to say, Lord, the fact that we got married does not mean that what I did before marriage was not a sin. I mean, if I do that now, it's not a sin, but I was not married when I did it. Then it's a sin.

And if any of you have done that, have you confessed it to God? Maybe that's the reason why some sin hangs over your unconfessed. What does it cost to confess it to God? The blood of Jesus was shed. The guilty pair, husband and wife, bowed down with care.

God gave his son to win. Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. The guilty pair bowed down with care.

God gave his son to win. Why not go to him and say, Dad, I messed up. I'm sorry.

God won't tell you to give up that husband or wife. No. Confess it.

Lord, I did something wrong. Your ears will get unplugged. Unconfessed sin is what blocks your ears.

You can't hear the Lord. He speaks like a trumpet and you can't hear it. If there's anything that you're aware in your life, God is very merciful.

He is rich in mercy. One of his greatest qualities. He's a billionaire in mercy.

Why are you afraid to go to him? Don't tell man because man's mercies are cruel. So don't go to man. David once said in 2 Samuel 24, Lord, please don't let me fall into the hands of men because even his mercies are cruel.

Let me fall into your hands. Any day. God is a good God all the time.

You can go and confess anything to him. I'll tell you that from years of experience. You know that wonderful verse in James chapter 1 which says, God will never scold you.

Many of you have experienced your parents scolding you. James 1 says, God never scolds his children. He corrects them, rebukes them, but he never scolds them.

There's a difference between scolding and correction. Many parents don't know that. They scold.

Husbands scold their wives, wives scold their husbands. These people don't have a clue about God's nature. They don't hear God's voice.

They just come to the meetings. They're deaf. How is it that you can scold your husband or wife and you never hear God shouting like a trumpet at you? You must be pretty deaf.

Some of you are in debt, but you're not making eager efforts to clear your debt. If you're making eager efforts to clear your debt, then you're fine, because the Bible says don't owe anybody anything. But if you're not making an eager effort to clear your debt, you should be hearing God speaking to you like a trumpet.

In other words, month by month, you're trying to pay back your debt, fine, then you're okay. But if you're lazy about it, or you say, well, that fellow doesn't seem to bother so much whether I repay it or not, or you conveniently forget about it, you're not going to hear the voice of God, even if you come for a hundred conferences. It's little things.

So when we see the glory of Jesus, it says, I fell at his feet like a dead man, and he placed his hand on me and said, don't be afraid. I believe there's no place for fear in the life of a Christian. He said, I'm the first, I'm the last, I'm going to have the last word.

I'm the living one. I was dead, and I'm alive forevermore. I have the keys of death.

It's a wonderful word. Do you know who's got the keys of death? Let me tell you. The devil had it until the devil hung the dead.

Today, I have the keys of death, Jesus says. That's why Jesus had to die and rise again. This is not some clever theory that I'm propounding.

I'm just reading scripture. I want to read to you from Hebrews chapter 2. Hebrews chapter 2, it says, verse 14, Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, Jesus also has the keys of death, took part of the same flesh and blood. Why? That through death, that's his death on Calvary, he might render powerless Satan, who had the keys of death.

Power of death means the keys of death. Keys are the symbol of power. It's what this verse is saying, that Satan, who had the keys of death, Jesus died and took the keys from him.

So, what that he might deliver us, who spend all our life in the fear of death and were slaves. Fear brings slavery. Every type of fear brings slavery.

The greatest fear is the fear of death, but before that, there are many other fears. Fear of sickness, fear somebody will harm me, fear of poverty, fear that our children will suffer this or that or the other, all types of fears. The worst fear is the fear of death, and Jesus took the worst fear and took it out of our way.

Every one of these fears brings slavery. It's a slavery in my mind when I'm afraid of something because you can't sleep at night. Why can't you sleep at night? Because this master called fear has gripped your mind.

It's a slavery. Turn around on your bed, put your head down like John. Say, Lord, you are the first.

You're the one who had the first word in this universe, and you're going to have the last word. God, you're my dad. I leave it to you.

I put the file on your table. Please take care of it. It's too much for me.

I can't handle it. God is a good God. So, when John was like that, he said, Don't be afraid.

I've got the keys of death. John, nobody can kill you before I open the door. I'm so thankful that my Savior, my Lord, has got the key.

Let me tell you this. Nobody can kill me till the Lord opens the door. I'm not afraid that cancer or a road accident or some anti-Christian activist is going to kill me before the Lord opens the door.

He opened the door for Paul. Nero chopped off his head, but he couldn't do that. You know, Paul was imprisoned a number of times, but nobody could kill him until his hour had come.

They tried to kill Jesus many times. They tried to arrest him many times, but it always says his hour had not yet come. And we walk as Jesus walked through the earth.

Until our hour comes, nothing can touch us. If you are doing the will of God, if your aim in life is to be a big man in the world, make a lot of money and live for yourself, then I don't know what's going to happen to you. But if your aim is to do the will of God, I'll tell you this, he who does the will of God will live forever.

The world and everything that you see in it will pass away. And so, it says here, he placed his right hand on me, and the Lord said to him, write, chapter 1, verse 11, what is the loud voice like a trumpet saying to him? Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches. John, write this.

Now, when you read Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3, I don't know whether you have ever thought how difficult it was for John to write it. I know a little bit about it. John was an apostle, and he had to write to an elder brother in a certain church a personal letter and say, dear brother, you who are an elder in this church, you are spiritually dead.

I've sometimes had to deal with difficult elders in different churches, and I tell you it's not at all easy. Not at all. You go through so much struggle.

It wasn't easy for John to write it, and then to write another one. You left your first love, you don't love the Lord like you did before. And John says to his messenger, read it out in the whole church.

Let the whole church know what is the condition of their elder. There are elders like King Saul who will say to Samuel the prophet, just whisper it to me. Don't let everybody else know about it.

I've backslidden, but let it be between you and me. And the Lord told Samuel after that, don't ever pray for this man again. He's seeking more for his own honor.

That was the difference between Saul and David. When Saul sinned, he told Samuel in 1 Samuel 15, don't tell anybody about this. Just let it be between you and me.

Just come along with me and pretend that everything is okay. But when David sinned, and then Nathan the prophet came to him and said, you are the man. He said, that's right, I'm the man.

And I'll let all of Israel know. He wrote Psalm 51 and said, I'll let everybody know I'm the man. That was the difference.

A lot of elder brothers are like Saul. Don't tell anybody. Just let's keep it between you and me.

Don't dishonor me. Elders should not be disgraced in the church. Try and tell John that, who asked people to read out these messages to the churches.

The elder sitting there in the front chair, read it out. You have a name that you're alive, but you're dead. You left your first love.

You're going after the prosperity gospel, the teaching of Balaam. You got a wife who's running the show. She's a Jezebel.

Imagine reading all that out publicly in a church. That wasn't easy for John to write it. But when you hear the voice of the Lord like a trumpet, you fear God more than you fear the opinion of any elder.

And you're not here to please anybody. John didn't have any partiality. He just wrote it, because he needed to protect the church, and to protect the flock, and to encourage the overcomers who were sitting in that church, who were getting discouraged because the elder was so dead.

This message from John encouraged them. God recognizes also that our elder is thoroughly dead, but he's got a message for the overcomers. Dear brothers, it's a wonderful thing when you hear the voice of God.

It's the most important thing of all. And John heard that voice, and the Lord said, write this. And he wrote it plainly.

And once he had done that, you know, when you do what the Lord tells you to do, even though it's, I tell you it must have been very, to write to the church in Smyrna in Philadelphia would have been very easy, because he was saying, I'm so happy with you brothers, but to write to the other five churches, it must have been very difficult for John, but he wrote it. And when the Lord saw that he did it, when the Lord saw that he did it, that painful, difficult thing, the Lord tells you, you may not be an apostle to write letters to elders, that may not be your calling. It may be some other thing that the Lord has called you to do something painful, but you don't want, you know, Adam didn't want to displease his wife, and you may not want to displease your wife, or you may not want to displease your children, let them do it, it's okay, they are my children.

But the Lord says, you shouldn't allow that in your home. And you allow your children to do something in your home, because you love them more than you love Jesus. I can prophesy, your children will go astray.

And you deserve to have such difficult children, because you honor them more than you honor God. That's what the Lord told Eli. Eli was the top leader, the equivalent of an apostle in Israel, he was the high priest.

God sent a message to Eli saying, you honor your children more than you honor me. Well, I'm going to punish you, I'm going to punish your children. Poor man, he honored his children more than he honored God.

You read that in 1 Samuel chapter 2 verse 30, that's the place where you get that verse, them that honor me, I will honor. It's pretty serious. But when John did that difficult thing, and when you do that difficult thing, because you want to please God, the next thing that the Lord told John was, where chapter 4 verse 1, John, you deserve to come up higher.

Come up higher now. You know when you will hear that voice, come up higher? When you have done that difficult thing God told you to do. Where you showed God that he was more important to you than Isaac, your darling.

When you showed God, like David, that he was more important to you than your reputation. Saul was worried about his reputation. Oh ho ho, don't let my reputation go down in the eyes of my people.

David said, I couldn't care less for my reputation. Let the people know I'm a sinner. No wonder he was a man after God's own heart.

I want to be a man after God's own heart. I hope you want to be a man or a woman after God's own heart. It's very simple.

Acknowledge your sin. There's a lovely verse in Jeremiah 3 verse 13. Only acknowledge your iniquity.

God can do miracles. I told these people in Dubai, I'm not telling you to go back to India. But tell God, Lord, I didn't come here seeking your glory.

I came here to make money. Please forgive me. I want at least the rest of my life to live to seek your glory.

I told them, God will not tell you to go back to India. Be where you are. God will do something with your life because he loves honest people.

Do you feel that you made a mistake in marriage? You didn't seek God's will? You disobeyed him? You did things the way people in the world get married? I love somebody. I'm going to marry him. Okay? Your marriage can become wonderful if you will acknowledge your iniquity.

But as long as you cover it up, cover it up, cover it up, I can prophesy it will not go well with you. It's a law of God. Confess it.

Put it behind you. God can do miracles. Out of a wasted earth without shape and void, darkness, out of that we read in Genesis 1, he made such a beautiful earth where he said everything was very good just because that earth listened to God's voice.

And your life may be like that, shapeless, empty, dark and all that. Just respond to God's word. Confess.

Only acknowledge your iniquity. What is it that's preventing you from acknowledging your iniquity? Isn't it your pride? No, no, no. I can't lose face and say that I made a mistake.

I can't lose face and say to God, Lord I tried to please my children instead of pleasing you. I tried to please my wife instead of pleasing you. Okay.

Stick on your stand on your pride and live the miserable life where you never hear God speaking to you. I decided years ago, I haven't done things perfectly in my life. I made so many blunders.

Even after starting the church, I didn't have anybody to guide me. I was 35 years old when we started CFC. I didn't have a clue about how to build a church and I made so many mistakes.

But I said, Lord, I will be the first person to say I made a mistake. You know who led this church into legalism? I plead guilty. I plead guilty.

100%. I've apologized to CFC for leading it into legalism. But I also said, I will be the first person to pull you out of that pit into which I'm sorry I led you.

And God's been very good to me. I didn't put the blame on anybody else. I didn't put the blame on my fellow elders or some other brothers visited us and they led us.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But who is the one who allowed it all? Me. Lord, I'm guilty.

Forgive me. Okay, I didn't know. I tried.

I thought that was the way, but I was wrong. It's like, you know, Paul, Saul of Tarsus. He thought that was the right way, this legalistic way of trying.

He was totally wrong. But when he realized it, he acknowledged it's me. I was a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Dear brothers and sisters, Saul became Paul because he acknowledged. Everything can be different in your life, if you will acknowledge. Paul had to speak like a dead man.

The Lord said, come up here. You will see sights that human eyes cannot see, human ears cannot hear, and it does not enter into the heart of man. The wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love him, those who wait for him.

I'll tell you honestly, my Christian life is exciting. It's exciting every day. I never find it boring.

I never get tired of preaching God's word, because the Christian life is so exciting. God is so wonderful. It's not because I'm perfect.

I'm far from it, but I'm honest. I never wanted my children to think that they had a perfect father, because that would be a lie, and that would discourage them in their married life. If I gave them the impression I was a perfect husband, a perfect father, which is not true.

I wanted my children to know that I'm an honest father. That when I bungled up something, okay, I'm sorry, I bungled that up. That's what gives hope to them.

That's what I wanted my church to know as well. I didn't want my church and CFC to know that they had a perfect elder, because it's a lie. But I wanted them to know that they had an honest elder.

If he did something wrong, he'd acknowledge it. It's okay. It's my mistake.

Sorry. I thought it was like that. I sometimes have had some email correspondence with Ian about certain things, about where we had some disagreement.

And then he would tell me, but brothers, if you said this in your email, and he sends me a copy of the email I sent him, I said, I'm sorry. I didn't realize I had said that. I'm human.

I make mistakes. And I'll tell you something else. As long as I'm alive, I will make mistakes.

But as long as I'm alive, as soon as I'm aware of them, I will acknowledge them. That's to encourage those of you who are ordinary human beings like me, who make mistakes. God is the only one who doesn't make a mistake.

So it doesn't matter what mistake you made in your life, where you bungled up. As I said, it's marriage. Don't look at your wife or your husband and say, boy, I made a mistake in marrying this person.

What can you do about that now? Are you going to divorce the person? When God has joined together, let no man put us under. When it says God has joined together, it doesn't mean that God led them together. Those people who get married in a Hindu temple or a Muslim mosque, they're also joined together by God, because that's a law for humanity.

When a man and woman have sex together, God has joined them together. It's a law. It's not that God led them together.

But we are not to put asunder anyone who got married in a temple or a mosque or anywhere, or in a registrar's court. We're not to separate them. But if you're honest, you can go up higher.

So let's not be earth dwellers. You know there's a phrase in Revelation, I want you to see this, in Revelation 17 and verse 8. It speaks in Revelation 17, 8, about the beast that comes up from the pit. And those who are earth dwellers, whose names are not written in the book of life, will wonder when they see the beast.

They'll be deceived by the devil. Who are the ones whose names are not in the book of life? Earth dwellers. Are you an earth dweller or a heaven dweller? It says also, let me show you the judgment, the Message Bible, it says in verse 2, let me show you God's judgment on the earth dwellers, who are drunk with the warish lust of Babylon.

You know who gets fooled by counterfeit Christianity? Counterfeit Christianity that offers people money, riches and health and all that? Earth dwellers. They are the ones, it says in Revelation 17, who get fooled by Babylon. Earth dwellers.

It's a phrase you find in the Bible, in the Revelation many times. Chapter 13 and verse 14. And the false prophet, the second beast, works all types of signs, dazzling people with all these miracles.

Whom does he deceive? Verse 14, the earth dwellers. Do you know who gets deceived by all these false miracles that are done in the name of Jesus? Earth dwellers. I don't get deceived.

I can see through it immediately. Earth dwellers. Earth dwellers.

Somebody told me the other day, brother Zach, you should see the number of people who get up from their wheelchairs and walk. I say, I go to the airports, I see a lot of people getting up from wheelchairs and every airport I've been to, they get up and walk into the plane. If you haven't seen that, just go to the airports, you'll see it.

I see it all the time. I'm not impressed by these things. I'm not an earth dweller.

God's opened my eyes. He's opened my ears. He deceives the earth dwellers with all these miraculous signs and dazzles them.

Chapter 11 and verse 10. It speaks here about two prophets in chapter 11 who spoke strongly for the Lord. And they are finally killed in verse 9. And the earth dwellers celebrate and rejoice when these trits are killed.

They send gifts to one another because the two prophets tormented the earth dwellers. A true prophet torments the earth dwellers, saying you're not supposed to be dwelling on the earth if you're a child of God. They don't like that voice.

They'll call him a heretic. They'll call him a false teacher. And they'll wait for him to die.

He can't die before God's time, because they don't have the keys of death. The prophet's Lord has the keys of death. Chapter 3, Revelation chapter 3, verse 10.

It's a promise to the church in Philadelphia, the good church. Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I will keep you from the hour of testing. That means I'll keep you from falling in the time when testing comes.

That time of testing that's going to come upon the whole world to test the earth dwellers. The earth dwellers are going to be tested. We're being tested.

When your salary suddenly becomes double three times, you didn't know it. The earth dwellers are being tested. What are you going to do with it? I'm not here to tell you what you should do with it.

Listen to the voice of the Lord like a trumpet. Don't fail in the test. God has got better things for you.

Come up higher. Look at those things from heaven's standpoint. Chapter 14.

It says here, verse 4, verse 3, the 144,000 were delivered from the earth, redeemed from the earth, purchased from the earth. They were no longer earth dwellers. And that's why they could learn a song which nobody else could learn.

It's the song of the heaven dwellers. My heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay. For faith has caught the joyful sound, the song of saints on higher ground.

Have you heard the song of saints on higher ground? I've heard it. You know, when I was a young Christian and I was longing for this deeper walk with God, I would read every book on it. I would read about how people entered into a second experience where they had come to a life of rest in God.

And I longed for it. And most of the believers around me didn't have any such. Most of the people were up and down type of Christianity.

Every once in a while, I would meet one person. There was such a radiance about that person. I said, boy, there's something about this man which is different.

Not that great preaching, there was something about them which was different from other Christians. And then I would be challenged. And then for years would go by, I wouldn't meet any other Christian like that.

Again, I would meet someone and I knew there was some people had entered into this life. There was a Joshua and a Caleb. But all the other secret thousands were just wandering around.

But the Joshua and the Caleb I met assured me that there is a Canaan's land I can enter. And that's what kept my heart alive. I said, Lord, my heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay.

For faith has caught the joyful sound, the song of saints on higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand by faith on heaven's stable land. Let's pray.

There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest you, near to the heart of God. That's where you can live.

Jesus purchased that place for you with his blood. Don't despise it. It doesn't matter who you are.

What do you have to do? Only acknowledge your iniquity. Have you spoken against the elders? Please go and confess to them. Acknowledge your iniquity.

I tell you, it'll never go well with you in a hundred years as long as you cover up. You will only sin even more. God is a merciful God.

Come to him. Call upon him when he is near. Heavenly Father, thank you for your love and your mercy and your long-suffering.

Help us to respond to that. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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