

(Come Up Higher) the Spirit Will Lift Us Higher

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being blameless and genuine in our relationship with God, and warns against the dangers of worldliness and legalism.

Duration: 1:00:38

Scripture: Exodus 25:22, Judges 7:2, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 14:4

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Separation From World"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of discerning the spiritual condition of believers by asking their opinion on famous television preachers. He expresses gratitude for these preachers as they help him gauge the spiritual condition of his flock with just one sentence. The speaker emphasizes the need to follow Jesus in every situation, even when it means going against the opinions of friends. He warns against the gradual merging of the church and the world, urging believers to remain separate and not be influenced by worldly desires. The sermon concludes by highlighting the contrast between believers who rely solely on the cleansing power of Jesus' blood for salvation and those who add additional works to their testimony.

Transcript

So, we come to our last session. I want you to turn to Revelation chapter 14. We saw that there's a contrast in the book of Revelation between a great multitude in chapter 7, whose only testimony was that they were cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, that salvation was entirely due to God, what Jesus did, which is true of all believers, you and me.

But the smaller number in chapter 14 could say that plus something more. There are two types of believers in the world. As some, all they can say is, Jesus died for me, it's because of him I'm saved, his sins have washed my robes white.

That all of us can say, but among this great multitude that can say that are a much smaller number that can be counted. Throughout the Bible, you read about such people. Among the whole crowd of people in the world, in Noah's time, God had eight people, Noah and his family.

In all the heathen nations, multitudes of wicked people, evil kings like Nimrod, etc., in Genesis 11, God found one man, Abraham. And we find that, for example, when they were entering the land of Canaan, among 600,000 people, God found two, Joshua and Caleb. When Gideon gathered 32,000 people to fight

against the Midianites, God said, send them all on home.

I'm only going to select 300. You always find that among the big, the 32,000 in Gideon's time all enjoyed the victory, the benefits of the victory, but 300 actually fought the battle. So I told you the other day that like in the tabernacle, there's always the call, come up higher.

First you're out in the world, and the Lord says, come up higher, and you get saved and come to the outer court. And then you hear a voice saying, come up higher, and you go on from the outer court to the holy place where you're active in the Lord's work. We found that in CFC.

There are some people who just come out from the world and get saved, and they sit in the church for 25 years, they come to all the meetings, but they do pretty much nothing for the church. They come, they're saved, I hope they go to heaven, I don't know whether they will, but they're there, they break bread, because of which they assume that they will go to heaven, but I'm not so sure. I'm always not sure about when people are on the outer court, you know, the outer court, the gate to the outside is pretty close.

You don't know whether they're outside the gate or inside the gate. Some people are always like that, sometimes it looks as if they're outside, sometimes it looks as if they're inside. They're so close to the gate that you don't know whether they're on the inside or the outside.

A lot of people like that in CFC. You don't know which side of the gate they're on. I hope they're on the inside, but I'm not so sure.

But then there are others who moved on, who are baptized in the Holy Spirit and really want to seek to do something for the Lord. But there are very few who press on beyond that, who hear the voice saying, still come up higher, where the Lord says, you're taken up with me, not my work, not my salvation, but with me. You know, it's like a husband telling wife, don't get taken up with my house and how many nice bedrooms you have here or how wealthy I am or that we can travel the world.

Be taken up with me. That's a really happy marriage. Think of a wife who just enjoys all the wealth of her husband or his fame or something like that, but is not taken up with him.

I think many people come to Jesus like that. The people who come to the highest level of the Christian life are those who are taken up with Jesus. And for that, you have to, you know, go through the rent veil.

We don't have to rent the veil again. Jesus rent it when he died on the cross, it has never been stitched up again, it's there. But to go through the rent veil means I must go the same way, which means I must go through the way of death to self, death to the flesh.

If I go that way, deciding to die every day to myself, all of my life, I will enter into a fellowship with God which most Christians, even in CFC, are completely ignorant of. You'll find you come into a life of rest and victory where you're completely undisturbed by the low-level conflicts that other believers have. You're not disturbed, you live at a much higher level, and that's where the Lord invites you to come.

So this is a small group in Revelation 14, out of this great crowd, and they've learnt a song, a song of the Lamb, a song of death to self, nobody else can learn it. They can, others could learn it if they want to, but think of the number of people sitting here who have heard about the way of death to self, but you don't practice it. When you don't practice it in your daily life, it's like saying you haven't learnt the song.

It's another way of saying it. You haven't learnt the song. You know how you can read the words of a song on a screen and you don't know the tune? It can be like that.

You can know all about death to self, but you can't sing the song, because you don't actually take up the cross in your daily life. Many of us have heard about the cross so much that we can explain it a lot, but you don't know the song. It says here, nobody could learn the song except these, because in their daily life they chose to go that way.

They kept themselves from defilement with the women mentioned here of Babylon, the mother of harlots and all the harlots. They kept themselves from that defilement, Revelation 14, they kept themselves pure from spiritual adultery, you know, compromise on Christian principles. You know, I find, I'll tell you a true story, there was a sister in our church, I asked her once when she went to some public meeting here for some healer, I said, sir, how was the meeting there? She said, yeah, they said the same things that we preach in the church.

Oh, I said, good. Immediately I knew her spiritual condition, just with one sentence. She went to a healing meeting and she felt they were speaking the same thing we were saying in the church.

I didn't argue with her, I said, okay. Sometimes with one sentence you can find out a person's spiritual condition. We have so many famous television preachers nowadays, all I need to ask some believers is, what do you think of so-and-so preacher? This woman, this man, that other man, there are about eight or nine famous ones, I ask them, what do you think of so-and-so? In one sentence I can find out their spiritual condition.

I tell you, I thank God for these television preachers because they helped me to find the spiritual condition of my flock, with one sentence. How would I do it without these people? How would I do it without these people being, preaching all across India? You can't fight with God. Many people, there are elders in our churches, who don't have discernment, they're taken up with good preaching, and can't taste the spirit of a person.

Many years ago, these people, this 144,000, they were not defiled with the spirit of Babylon, but we mentioned here, are later on mentioned in chapter 17 as the harlot and her daughters. There are many of them. What is the mark of a harlot? There's a very beautiful poem that I have read, which goes something like this, the church and the world walked far apart on the changing shores of time.

The world was singing a giddy song, and the church a hymn sublime. Come walk with me, the world said, change your dress for something fanciful like mine, instead of that something you're wearing. And initially the church said, no, no, no, no, no, but gradually the world said, come on, I will give you gold, and I will give you this, and I will give you that.

Gradually this wonderful pure bride of Christ, that walked in simplicity, moved closer to accept the things the world suggested. Come watch my movies, and come watch this, and watch that, it's not sudden, no, no, no. Suddenly if you do something, immediately it looks pretty bad.

It's a gradual merging of the church and the world. And it's almost so slow that it's just, you know, it's like an airplane dropping about one foot in one hour. In one hour if an airplane drops one foot, you don't even notice it.

And then another foot, and then another foot, but you know where it's headed for a crash. Some move pretty fast, some slowly. In CFC, many glory that we're not worldly, I think it's just a matter of time.

We haven't crashed yet. Maybe your rate of fall is not as fast as in some other churches, but ask yourself. I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, don't look at any church as your example.

Don't look at any person, unless you see in that person the spirit of the bride of Christ. So when it says here, this 144,000 did not defile themselves with Babylon, all the invitations of the world, they stayed away from. Multitudes went, but this small group said no.

They looked odd. Everybody makes fun of them, why are you so, you're legalistic, that's the word to scare people nowadays. If you want to scare somebody today, just say, you're legalistic.

Am I legalistic? Okay, I'll do whatever you say. Am I legalistic? You know how many people have tried that on me? You can try it on me all your life. You're not going to make me worldly, by saying I'm legalistic.

Do you know how many people I have met, who in avoid to avoid the label legalistic, they become worldly, and the devil's quite happy. Legalism is serious. But I tell you, it's no better than worldliness.

And the tragedy in Christendom is, there are legalists and there are worldly people. What was this? He was not legalistic, he was not worldly. That is the narrow path between these two.

The church has often suffered from what I call pendulumitis. We're legalistic, we say, ah, we were wrong. Swing like a pendulum, say we are free from legalism.

You've just fallen over the cliff the other side. First you're falling over this side, you come up from there and fall over the other side, and the devil says, I don't care which side you fall over. But these were wise.

They stayed apart from the world, the spirit of the world. See that's, harlotry is that, where you claim to be engaged to Christ, but your aim is not to please Christ, but to please your friends. You college boys and girls, when you want to talk about the things your folks of your age want to talk about, and would you change the conversation if Jesus suddenly came into that group that you're talking, or would you continue speaking the same way? You know, nowadays a lot of men are working with women in their workplace, and I say be very careful about speaking in a jovial way with people of the opposite sex, boys with girls or girls with boys.

I say, how to find out? Well, if you're married, and you're a man, and you're talking very freely with some woman in the office, ask yourself this question, supposing this moment, my wife came right here into this room, would you continue to speak in the same way? Then you're okay. Or would you have to change your way and concentrate on your work now? Then you know that it's wrong. Or, if you're sitting around with your friends in school or college, or with certain worldly believers, and you're talking and joking, and some godly brother suddenly comes into the room, would you continue? I'm not talking about a legalist, I'm talking about a godly brother, who's not a legalist.

Would you continue to talk about those things, or would you have to change the subject? You change the subject when a godly brother comes into the room? And you don't have to change the subject when Jesus himself is in the room all the time? Then you don't believe that God is there, you don't believe God is everywhere. Theoretically, we all believe God is everywhere. If I were to ask you, how many of you believe God is everywhere, we'd all raise our hands.

How many of you practically live acknowledging that God is everywhere? The answer is probably 10%. That's the difference. So there's a very small number that really keep, who, like it says here in verse 4, Revelation 14, they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

You see, that means, if in a particular situation you feel that Jesus is going this way, and your friends are going this way, you follow the Lamb. There's nothing wrong in watching certain television programs. Make sure it's the programs where Jesus is watching.

If Jesus is turning to this channel, and your friends are turning to this channel, follow the Lamb wherever he goes. That's the point. In every situation, follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

In this situation, which direction would Jesus go? Which channel would he press the remote into? Okay. Everything in life is like that. What would he talk about? That's what I'm going to do.

Follow the Lamb wherever he goes. It's a very small number. These are the people who were purchased from the earth.

Verse 3. That means they are not earth dwellers. They came up to heaven. Not only purchased from the earth, they were not occupied with things of earth, it also says they were purchased from men.

That's another thing. That means they were freed from man's opinions. They were not only freed from the earth, they were freed from man's opinions.

You can be freed from earthly things, and yet not be freed from man's opinions. You know a lot of these sannyasis who say we have given up everything, we don't have any property, we don't have anything, but they are not freed from man's opinions. They want everybody to think they are holy, right? That's a deception.

You have to be freed not only from earthly things, you have to be freed from man's opinion. There are two things mentioned. Freed from the earth, freed from men.

And they become the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And one characteristic of them was no lie was found in their mouth. It doesn't say they were perfect.

They were blameless. Do you know the difference between blameless and perfect? World of difference. Only God is perfect.

Jesus was perfect. The Apostle Paul said I'm not yet perfect, I'm pressing on to perfection. But blameless means according to my conscience, at this moment, I'm perfect.

To use an illustration, I've got 100% in mathematics. But I don't know everything about mathematics, I'm only in second standard. You understood? 101%? No.

How much did you get? Perfect score. 100%. But, I'm only in second standard.

I don't know geometry, and trigonometry, and calculus, and I don't know all that yet. I've got a long way to go to perfection in mathematics, and I'll tell you, those people who got PhD in mathematics, they'll be the first people to say, I've got miles to go to understand mathematics. So perfection is a long road, but we can be blameless.

Blameless means I can't get 101%, I got 100%. And next year, when I get to third standard, and I learn a little more, I'm hoping to get 100% again. But then, my capacity is increased, I've got more light on what is sin.

You know, I've got more light on what is sin in 2007, than I had in 2006. So my 100% in 2007 is different from my 100% in 2006. You understand that? The difference between 8th standard 100% and 9th standard 100%? That's how we are to grow, blameless, but not perfect.

100%, but still in this standard. Next year, again blameless, perfection, a long way to go. To become like Christ will take a whole lifetime.

But even though I'm not perfect, I can be without a lie in my mouth, or like some translations say, there was no guile in them. No guile means no pretense. Now you know that in my ministry, I have dealt with various people.

And I'll tell you something, it is not with the holiest people that I've been able to fellowship most freely. Now isn't that surprising? You would think that someone who's interested in holiness would find it easier to fellowship with people who are more holy. It's not true.

I have found it easiest to fellowship with those in whom there is no guile. That means no pretense. They may not be very holy.

In other words, if they're in 1st standard, and they're getting only 50%, and I ask them, Son, what class are you? Uncle, I'm in 1st standard. How much are you getting, son? 50%. Great.

I can really have fellowship with you. But here's another person in 1st standard, and I ask him, which class are you? 6th standard. Oh.

How much are you getting? 100%. Uh-huh. Okay, goodbye.

Let me talk to somebody else. You see the difference between guile and dishonesty? There are believers like that, who are in 1st standard who pretend that they're in 6th, who get 50%, who pretend that they're getting 100%. It is very difficult to fellowship with them.

That's why I find it very easy to fellowship with young brothers sometimes, more than older brothers. I find it easier to fellowship with some young brothers than with some elders in our churches. Because there's guile in those elders.

I can see it. I don't tell them to their face. I hope God will root to them.

But I found it very difficult, almost impossible to fellowship with a brother or sister who's got guile. And it's very easy, at least I can find out pretty easily. Talk to a person for five minutes, sometimes just by looking at their face, in five minutes of conversation, I can make out.

Not whether he's spiritual or not, whether he's genuine or not. That's all I want to see. Is the guy genuine? I mean, it may be a woman in Samaria, who's divorced five times, now sleeping around with a person who is not her husband.

She can be without guile. She's not perfect. Oh, no, she's done a lot of wrong things, but she's without guile.

That's right. You know, when the Lord said, you had five husbands and the one you're living with is not your husband. What did she say? No, no, no, Lord, it wasn't true.

Those men left me. Nothing like that. She said, I know you're a prophet.

I know that everything you said, you know everything about my life. That's right. When she said, I know you're a prophet, she was acknowledging.

That's right. She didn't blame her five husbands for leaving her. No, it's true.

I love to fellowship with such people who've made a mess of their life, but who are honest. But I find it very difficult to fellowship with people who appear to be so holy, always talking about holy things. There's no brokenness in their life.

There's no humility. You can't build a church with people with whom there's guile. We're always talking about, this is what I'm doing for the Lord.

That's what I'm doing for the Lord. Just like Martha, I've made so many chapatis already. Now I'm making this curry and that curry and the other curry.

I said, excuse me, Martha, I'm a bit busy right now. Talk to somebody else. I'm looking for the Marys.

I've met people like that. And I know they're trying to impress me, how spiritual they are. They're doing this for the Lord.

They're doing that for the Lord. They're going here. They're going here.

They're doing this outreach, that outreach, the other thing, the other thing. What insecure people. They don't know God.

They are orphans. Orphans trying to impress people how spiritual they are by all their activity. How many chapatis you've made in the kitchen? How many different curries you've made for the Lord? The Lord will say, Martha, you're worried about so many things.

one thing is needful. Sit at my feet and listen to my word. These are the 144,000.

There was no guile in them, there was no pretense. They were themselves. So that's what I say to all of you.

Don't try to be spiritual, just be yourself and we'll get along fine. It's when you try to act spiritual, I find it very difficult to fellowship with you. I may not say that to your face, but it's true.

There are number of believers in our churches with whom I find it very difficult to fellowship. Number of elders, I find it very difficult to fellowship with them. Because, not because they're not perfect, nobody's perfect, I'm not perfect myself.

But I'll tell you, the greatest commendation almost that I've longed for from Jesus on earth. When I get to heaven, it is well done, good and perfect, faithful servant. But on earth, the thing I long for before I get to heaven is, there is a man in whom there is no guile.

I want that. I say to you in Jesus' name, brother, sister, seek for that commendation from Jesus. Don't be like the Pharisee and give people impression, I pray so much, I do this and I do that and the other.

Seek with all of your heart to be a person like it says here, there was no guile in them. They were what you saw. There's an expression in computer language called WYSIWYG.

W-Y-S-I-W-I-G, which stands for, what you see is what you get. W-Y-S-I-W-I-G. What you see is what you get.

And this is what I am. I'm not perfect. I have an invisible board hanging in front of me which says, renovation in progress.

We are renovating to serve you better. Please bear with us while this construction and work is going on. And it's on my back also by the way.

It's visible but it's there. Renovation is in progress. And it's being done to serve you better.

Have you seen these notices in airports and buildings? We are renovating to serve you better. Recognize that that's what we are, a work under progress, renovation. And don't be ashamed that you're not perfect.

But be without guile. Don't pretend that everything is perfect. It's not.

Because then it will be very difficult for you to acknowledge a fault. How can a perfect man acknowledge that he did something wrong? I met very good brothers like that. Their only defect is when you point out something that's wrong and say, yeah.

They'll never say those ten difficult words. What are they? I'm sorry. That was my mistake.

Please forgive me. They won't say that. Ah, ah, that's right.

That's right. It's different from, I'm sorry. That was my mistake.

Please forgive me. See, that man who says those ten words, he's not interested in a reputation. I'm not perfect.

I'm a work in progress. Renovation is going on. Yeah, brother.

You threw that construction site and stumbled and fell somewhere. I'm sorry. We'll try and fix that up so you don't stumble and fall next time.

But we are in renovation. You know, these things happen. Forgive me.

It's the amount of pretense there is among believers. I never thought I would see so much of it in our CFC churches. It is there in CFC brothers and sisters.

It is there in CFC related churches. I'm not looking for perfection. There's no perfection in me.

But for freedom from guile. Long for that. And it'll go very well with you.

Those are the people who have the best fellowship. Those who are without guile. But who are also seeking for perfection.

You know, there can be a prostitute in the world who says, Oh, I'm a prostitute. What do you plan to be? A prostitute all my life. Uh-huh.

I don't want fellowship with you. Thank you. I don't mean that type of freedom from guile.

I'm talking about those who are free from guile and say, Yeah, this is what I am. But I'm not happy with my present state. I'm pressing on to perfection.

I want to be better. I'm not just a construction site where no work is going on. I want to be in a construction site where work is going on.

Every day. So that's how these people were without guile. And I want you to see something about how the Lord lifted John higher.

It says, you know, we saw that in Revelation chapter 1. That when he saw Jesus, it says he fell at his feet, Revelation 1 17, like a dead man. Oh, Lord, I worship you. I die.

That's the place I must be in. I died to all my rights, my reputation, my name, my ambitions. I am a dead man before you.

And I will never get up till he lifts me up. But his spirit, he puts his spirit upon me. In C chapter 4, the Lord says in verse 1, the same voice verse 1, which I heard like the sound of a trumpet.

You know, the first time I heard the sound of the trumpet, I fell flat. Now the same voice says a second time, come up here. You know who hears that second voice? The one who responds to the first voice and falls flat like a dead man.

That's the one who will hear the voice the second time saying, the trumpet blowing a second time. This is the second time he heard it. The first voice, which I heard like the sound of a trumpet was speaking again, come up here.

You know, there's a lot of difference between God saying to you, come up here and me preaching a message on come up higher. I hope you know that. What I speak to you can be a challenge.

When God speaks to you with the voice of a trumpet and says, come up here, something's really going to happen. Have you heard God say that to you? You know to whom he says it? Those who responded to the first voice of the trumpet and fell down flat as dead. Lord, I'm a dead man.

You're, you're everything to me. The old Zach Tonin, the old you is dead. I had ambitions, plans, desires.

I'm hurt with somebody and got this opinion. That opinion is dead. Dead man's given up his opinions.

He's not hurt with anybody anymore. He has no bitterness against anyone. He's got no plans, no ambitions.

He's dead. And the Lord says, really? I want to test you out. Test me out.

He finds I'm dead. He speaks to me a second time. The voice of a trumpet, come up higher.

It's dead people whom he lifts higher. Resurrection comes through those who die. If I die with him, I will live with him.

And the wonderful thing again, I told you the other day, Jesus never raised himself from the dead. Nowhere in the Bible does it say Christ arose from the dead. You may sing that in a hymn, but you'll never find it in the Bible.

In the Bible, it always says God raised him from the dead. There's a principle there. When I'm immersed by somebody in a baptism tank, I don't struggle to get up.

He lifts me up. In true baptism, it is like that. God lifts me up.

That's why I'm not afraid when people crucify me. I mean spiritually. You and I experience many times when people crucify us.

Why do you resist? You resist because you're not sure whether God will raise you up. That's why I'll never allow myself to be baptized by an enemy. Why? When any enemy of mine baptizes me, he may not lift me up.

He may just put me under the water and keep me there. I'd like to be baptized by somebody I can trust. So we are crucified by our enemies and we accept it because I know God will raise me from the dead.

If you're not sure that God will raise you from the dead, you'll fight that person who's trying to crucify you. When your wife tries to crucify you, what do you do? When your husband tries to crucify you, what do you do? It all depends on whether you believe that God will raise you from the dead or not. If you don't believe in God, if you don't believe there's a God in heaven who watches everything, who will raise you from the dead, then you will fight.

You'll resist it. There's a natural tendency in us to resist anybody who tries to kill me. Why is it Jesus didn't resist? Why is it Peter took out the sword but Jesus said, take me? Peter didn't believe in the resurrection.

He thought, I've got to defend my savior. Jesus said, no. My father gave me this cup, not Judas Iscariot.

Judas Iscariot is only the postman. The cup came from my father. I may not like the face of the postman, but I still receive the money order he brings.

Right or wrong? Have you ever refused a money order saying I don't like your face? No. 10,000 rupees in the money order and you don't like the face of the postman so you turn it away? Jesus never refused anything that his father sent him. It could come through Caiaphas, Annas, Herod, anybody in the world, Pilate, makes no difference.

They're all postmen. But my father sends me a cup. I'll drink it.

There's a proverb in Malayalam which says the cup of the Lord may be bitter, but there's no poison in it. The cup of the Lord may be bitter, but there's no poison in it. The medicine you give may be bitter, but there's no poison in it.

It's for healing. So the father's cup is not always sweet, but it's always to heal me. It's for my good.

And it doesn't matter to me whether it's Judas Iscariot or Annas or Caiaphas or Pilate. Who brings it? It's fine. I see the world full of postmen, mailmen, postmen that are coming around to me with money orders of all types sent by my heavenly father.

I'm a very happy man. I'm a very rich man because of all these spiritual money orders I get from different people who attempt to harm me, but do me good. Can you imagine how frustrated a man gets when he tries to harm me and it turns out for my good? Like somebody was warned when he was transferred to Bangalore, go to any church, but don't go to Zagponin church.

So you know what he did? He said, that's funny. Why did he tell me to go? I mean, there are a thousand churches in Bangalore. Why did he tell me not to go to just this one? Let me go and see.

And he comes and sees that he gets stuck here because he's blessed. How would he have ever come if somebody had not warned him? I mean, that guy tried to do him harm and us harm, but he did good. Can you imagine how mad that fellow gets? I wish I had never told him about that.

Sorry, you did it. You know how mad the devil is? Oh, I wish I hadn't crucified Christ. It's too late now.

I wish I hadn't crucified Christ, because there he beat me. The devil is always getting mad because he's doing stupid things. Do you believe that? Do you believe that God is in control of this universe? That if you give yourself to die, you will hear another voice like a trumpet saying, come up here, higher.

And you don't have to lift yourself up. It says here, when he heard the voice, immediately, verse 2, I was in the spirit. Like we read in Ezekiel, when Ezekiel fell on his face, the spirit lifted him up.

It's principle always in scripture. I do not lift myself up. Got it? Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and you will exalt yourself.

Is that it? You know that verse? Ezekiel chapter 4, you know that verse? Yes or no? 1 Peter chapter 5. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and who? He will exalt you. He. What is this mighty hand of God? Haven't you, many of you prayed, oh, let the mighty hand of God come upon me.

For Judas, the mighty hand, for Jesus, the mighty hand of God was Judas Iscariot. When you pray for the mighty hand of God and you find some enemy comes and does something to you, do you see that as the mighty hand of God? Humble yourself under that mighty hand of God. Don't fight against it like Peter.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will exalt you. When I face a difficult circumstance and I find people opposing me or a difficult boss or difficulties in home or with neighbors, I say, Lord, this is your mighty hand. It's a storm.

But I'm going to humble myself, believing that you're going to lift me up above this in some wonderful way and lift me to a higher plane of the Christian life than I have ever known. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will exalt you. So the way up is down.

Sandeep spoke yesterday about the arithmetic of heaven. What is the arithmetic of heaven compared to the arithmetic of earth? I would say in one sentence, the arithmetic of earth is plus, plus, plus, plus, plus. Keep on adding more and more things in your life.

And the kingdom of God lifts you way above all those fellows who are adding, adding, adding, adding, adding. Seek first the kingdom of God, forsake this, forsake this, forsake this, ultimately you end up above all those other fellows. That's the difference.

The arithmetic of earth is plus and the arithmetic of heaven is minus. Not what you gain, but what you give measures the worth of the life you live. It's a little jingle that I've sung in my mind for many, many years.

Not what you gain, but what you give measures the worth of the life you live. Not what you gain, but what you give measures the worth of the life you live. The arithmetic of earth is plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus.

What happens when you give? Your wealth becomes minus. Your energy becomes minus when you spend your energy for doing something else. Minus, minus, minus, minus, minus.

Jesus went all the way down to zero from heaven. He didn't come to earth to gain anything. It was minus, minus, minus, minus, minus.

But see where God exalted him. He will exalt you. It's wonderful.

Do you want to come up higher? Follow the minus way, not the plus way. The world is full of people. There's a gospel being preached by many television preachers saying you've got to get this, add this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this.

That's the way of the devil. The devil already had so much, and he said, no, I want some more, plus some more. I want to be like God.

What happened? Have you seen it? Jesus, who was there, already had all the pluses anybody can ever have. He said, minus, minus, minus. He went down, became a slave, became obedient to death.

See where he is today. There are two spirits operating in the world today. One wanting to go up, that'll be pushed down by God, and the other wanting to go down.

That'll be raised up, like we saw in the Bible study. He who descended is the one who made people apostles. Apostles are those who descend, who go down and serve others.

Prophets are those who descend. Evangelists are those who go down. Shepherds, pastors are those who go down.

Teachers are those who go down. Don't follow these apostles and prophets who are climbing on above you with your money. Do you know the number of people in the world today, so-called preachers, pastors, apostles, who have climbed up to heights of financial wealth with the money of poor people? It's like climbing on top of a lot of poor people.

Come on, get down there, let me climb on top of you. One more fellow, get on top, let me climb, climb, climb. And all these poor fellows meekly submitting for this so-called pastor to climb on top of them.

What stupid people they are. I sometimes say they deserve to be deceived because they don't read the Bible. They listen to a man more than they listen to God.

Don't you think such people deserve to be deceived? Sure. Of course, the pastors are crooks. But why do they get deceived? Let me read you a passage from Luke chapter 16.

Luke's gospel chapter 16. Let me just paraphrase this and add a little color to this parable, not parable, this true story that Jesus spoke. This is the story of a rich man and Lazarus who sat at his gate.

Luke 16 verse 19. He was always dressed in purple and linen, enjoying himself and didn't care for this poor man who was at his gate. Luke 16 verse 20, covered with sores.

One day, you know, this is a great passage which says, let me tell you a few things that I notice in the Bible. What do you notice in verse 22? All you people with sharp eyes who find faults in other people very quickly. Do your sharp eyes find something in this verse which is a contrast, which you can see? What is it? Who can tell me loud enough? That's right.

I see that some people have heard my messages before. The poor man was not buried. The rich man had a fancy burial.

Why do I say that? There are Christians who, before they join our church, say, brother, do you have a burial ground? You want to know whether we have a burial ground? We have a burial ground in the baptism tank where we put the old man to death. I mean, if you're thinking of that, that's fine. But other than that, I'm particularly bothered whether the Bangalore corporation takes my body and dumps it in some pit.

That's fine. I won't even be here. I'd be in heaven already.

I don't want a fancy funeral with a rich coffin and some bishop saying he was a good man and all that. The guy's burning in hell. No.

But the point is this. When he went to hell, he got the surprise of his life because he was a rich man. And I'm pretty sure such rich people would have paid their pastors well.

Yes. And the pastor must have been such a crook that he never told this rich man to help poor Lazarus. He just said, God has blessed you, brother.

That's why you're rich. Why hasn't God blessed Lazarus? Oh, he doesn't believe. He doesn't have the word of faith.

That's why he's lying there like a beggar. If he had faith, he wouldn't be like that. You got faith, brother.

You're rich. It's a prosperity gospel right here. Jesus spoke about it.

And then he's in hell and he gets a shock of his life. Like a lot of people who believe the prosperity gospel are going to get a shock of their life when they end up in hell. And their pastors are there too.

They'll be having a fight over there. And then, but he says to Abraham, Father, can you please, you know, I'd like to, I don't want to be over here. And Abraham says, child, remember, during your life you received so many good things, verse 25.

Then his burden is down. He knows he can't get there. He says, please, I have got five brothers, verse 28, who are still attending that church, where they're listening to that prosperity gospel from that crooked pastor.

Will you please send Lazarus from heaven to tell them that's all false, what they're listening to. And Abraham says, they don't need Lazarus or brother Zach or anybody to go and tell them. They have the Bible.

They have the Bible. Why do they need Lazarus or brother Zach to go and tell them that's all humbug, what that guy pastor is preaching. They've got the Bible.

They're too lazy to read it, then they deserve to be deceived. I'm not going to send letters. I'm not going to send brother Zach.

They've got the Bible. Have you got the Bible? You know, the word Moses and the prophets is just another phrase for the Bible. Those days Old Testament, now the whole New Testament as well.

They have got the Bible. If they don't listen to the Bible, they will not listen even if brother Zach preaches to them. Or Lazarus goes from heaven and preaches to them.

They followed the lamb, it says in Revelation 14, wherever he went. How did they know? How do you know in a particular situation? Which direction is the lamb going now? I'm sitting in front of a television program and which program is Jesus going to walk? Channel. Do I hear a voice from heaven saying channel number 23? No.

No. I hear the voice of the Holy Spirit saying, Jesus wouldn't be interested in watching that. How do I hear the voice of the Holy Spirit? Because you read the Bible.

If you don't know the Bible, you will think certain voices in your heart are the voice of the Holy Spirit. Like all these false prophets who get up and squeak saying, And thus said the Lord with that funny voice of the tremor. Don't be fooled by all these people.

I've seen enough preachers like that, pastors who try to impress people. When they pray, they say, Oh God. You say, what's wrong brother? Are you okay? Fooling people as if the Holy Spirit is making them shake.

Acting. Acting. No.

You've got the Bible. The Bible shows you how Jesus lived. Read the Gospels.

You don't need anyone to teach you. The Holy Spirit will show you how Jesus lived. And if you say, Lord, that's the way I want to live.

You'll be okay. And you'll see, there was no television in Jesus' time. But you'll see in the Gospels the things that Jesus liked.

And the things he hated. And that will renew your mind so that the Holy Spirit will use that data that you have put into your computer called your brain. And will use that to show you, in this particular situation, the Holy Spirit is better than any computer.

You know how you put data into a computer and the computer processes it and gives you an answer? If you don't put the data into a computer, the computer cannot give you an answer. You put this data and this data and this data and this data and say, give me an answer. The computer processes it pretty quickly and gives you an answer.

It's the same principle. Jesus also, when he was 12 years old, he knew the Scriptures, all the data. He had to read, he had to listen, pay attention.

He didn't have a written Bible at home. He paid attention whenever he went to the synagogue and the Sabbath school and he heard. And the Holy Spirit processed that information so that one day, when he was tempted to turn the stones into bread, he said, no, I'm not going to do it.

Because it is written. You know. Word came from the Holy Spirit.

Because he had got it in his mind. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Another temptation, another verse.

Another temptation, another verse. That didn't come automatically. It won't come to you if you haven't read those verses.

If Jesus had not read those verses, it would never come to him. Even for Jesus. That is why I say you must be familiar with the Scriptures.

That's what Abraham said. They've got the Bible. If they don't read that, they deserve to be deceived.

They deserve to go to hell. Now, if some barbarian in the jungle doesn't have a Bible, I think God will judge him by another standard. Because Abraham can't say they have a Bible, they don't have a Bible.

But you are not like that. Some of you have got the Bible in 26 translations. What do they all say? They all say you can't follow Jesus unless you take up the cross and deny yourself every day.

Whichever translation you look. You know, there are some people in America who are always saying, King James Version, King James Version. I see you talk so much about King James Version.

Have you read it? Do you read it? Do you study it? Every single translation I've read in my life says you've got to take up the cross to follow Jesus. You cannot follow him without denying yourself and taking up the cross. Every translation of the New Testament I've ever read says, you will live with him only if you die with him.

Why argue so much about translations? Oh brother, you're using this, you're using that. But doesn't it tell me that you've got to die in order to live? Are you doing that? They've got the Bible. Do you want to come up higher? Fall on your face before Jesus like a dead man.

And you hear the voice of the trumpet saying, come up here. And the spirit lifted him up. That's what we see in Revelation 4. Immediately, I was in the spirit.

And the spirit lifted me up. I won't do that. The Christian life is not a life of struggle where I, like a mountain climber, go up and up and up and up.

No. You know, there's two ways to reach the top of Mount Everest. There's a difficult way.

There's struggle. Struggle. After many weeks, with frostbites, and so many things, I finally reached the top.

The other is to get into an aeroplane. Hey fellas, I got you before you. You know, I've been up to 30,000 feet pretty often.

Higher than Mount Everest. I didn't even do anything about it. The aeroplane lifted me up.

This is what John had. The spirit lifted me up. This is the difference between Old Covenant and New Covenant.

Throughout the Bible, you toil all night and try and catch a few fish, or nothing. Then Jesus comes and you almost do nothing, and he fills the boat with fish. That's New Covenant.

That God does the work. Allow God to do a work in you. And say, Lord, I want you to do a work in me.

Lift me up. Like these people experienced. Ezekiel, John.

The spirit lifted me up. This is why I keep on telling people, Brothers, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you have a problem with the phrase, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, call it by whatever you like.

I mean, if you don't want to call water, water. I don't like the word water. This is H₂O.

Fine. Drink H₂O, brother. I mean, I'm not arguing about, you want to call it H₂O, I call water.

It doesn't matter. You want to call it, I call it Baptism in the Holy Spirit. You say, no, no.

You don't like that. Call it whatever you like. But make sure, rivers of living water come out of you.

He who believes in me, out of his innermost being, shall flow rivers of living water. I've had discussions about this with many people. Brethren, Baptists, Pentecostal, all these people.

I say, listen, the point is not whether you speak in tongues. And the point is not, whether you are saved or not. Jesus said, that if you believe in him, rivers of living water will flow from you.

Have you ever been to any place in India, where you've seen a river flowing, and the sides are all brown and dead? Tell me a place like that. If you see a place like that, anywhere in the world, you'll never see it. Wherever you see everything brown and parched, there's no river.

Any place in the world, where you see a river flowing, it's green. Have you ever seen a place, where it's raining, and it's parched and dry? You know why the Sahara Desert is a desert? There's no rain there. It's no use saying, I believe in the Holy Spirit, and be like the Sahara Desert.

What's the use of that? I want to have rivers of living water flowing out from me. I want to be fresh all the time. All the time.

I'll tell you honestly, this is what I have longed for, and what God has done in my life. Always fresh. Never in a bad mood.

When you get up in the morning, when things go wrong, things go right, it doesn't make a difference. Never in a bad mood, because the Holy Spirit never has bad moods. How do you get there? It's not by climbing.

The Spirit lifted me up. The fullness of the Holy Spirit, the real baptism, and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, which has been counterfeited, by so many Christians around the world. They've got a counterfeit.

It makes them lovers of money, they speak in tongues, they've got bad moods, they shout, they yell, they are angry, they sin, and they say they are filled with the Holy Spirit. It's a disgrace. If a man is filled with the Holy Spirit, he'll be more free from the love of money, he'll always be in a good mood, he'll never be discouraged, he'll never be condemned, never condemn himself, he'll be fresh 24 hours of every day.

You wake him up in the middle of the night, he'll be fresh, because he's filled with the Holy Spirit. You know, that is what rivers of living water mean. It's not barren and dry and say, yeah, I speak in tongues.

What's the use of that? Where are the rivers? Don't be satisfied, my brother, sister, with anything less than the Spirit lifting you up, anything less than rivers of living water flowing through you. It doesn't matter if you forgot everything that you heard in this conference, cry out to God that your life will be fresh. With rivers of life flowing from the throne of God, through you, to bless others.

Shall we do that? Okay, three or four are willing to do that? Shall we do that? Great. Let's stand up. Let's stand up and respond to God.

I want to say to you, God is a good God. He loves you. He loves you personally.

You're not just one in a crowd of people standing here. You are a personal individual. You are a personal son or daughter of Almighty God.

And He knows you by your name. And He wants to speak to you by your personal name. Or if you have a pet name, He calls you by your pet name.

That's how close God is to you. He doesn't call you by your official name. He calls you by your pet name.

Because you are so precious to Him. Respond to Him. Imagine for a moment, if it's only you and Jesus in the room.

Only you and Jesus. Imagine this is a closed room, where only you and Jesus are there. What would you tell Him? What is the desire of your heart? Ask Him for it when He is near.

He can hear your thoughts. Say, Lord, I don't want to count what I have done for you. That's the arithmetic of the world.

I want to count what you have done for me. And I want to think of all the wonderful things you will still do for me. Despite all the wrong things I did.

Lord, we gladly acknowledge. I did wrong things. I'm sorry.

I made some mistakes. I made messes, perhaps, of my life. But Lord, you know my heart today.

I don't want to live that way. A lot of people don't think much of me because I made a mess of my life. Lord, it doesn't matter.

You know my heart. I acknowledge it. I want to be all that you want me to be.

I'm not trying to be better than anybody else, Lord. I say to you, Lord Jesus, I'm not trying to be better than anybody else here. But I want to be all that you want me to be.

I want to be better than I am now. Not better than anybody else. I'm not in competition with anybody.

I want you to work in my heart and make me more like Jesus in the year 2008. Do it, Lord. Make this a turning point in my life.

I want rivers of living water to flow through me. Yes, Lord. I want you to be delighted with my life.

And in any little way that you can use me to build your body, I'm available. I'm available, Lord. I want to live for the things of eternity.

No longer the things of time. Heavenly Father, Oh, help us. Help us, Jesus, to experience what the Apostle John experienced of the Spirit lifting him up as we hear your voice like a trumpet saying, Come up higher.

Higher. Look at things from my viewpoint. Allow the Holy Spirit to lift you up.

You cannot do it on your own. Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit to lift you up to a higher plane than you've ever known. He will do it.

He will do it, my brother, sister. Trust Him. Trust Him.

Yield everything to Him and cry out to Him and don't give up till you experience more and more of this in your life. And may your walk with God be one of a continual cry to go higher and higher and higher. Oh, Father, thank you for hearing us.

You are a good God. God is good all the time. We confess that.

We believe that. And every soul from here is going to go encouraged. Challenged but encouraged.

God will do it in me. That's our confession. God is going to do it in me.

What I've asked Him for. Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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