

Discarding Rubbish and Gaining Christ

by Zac Poonen

Paul's radical and wholehearted pursuit of Christ is the secret to his life, and it is the key to experiencing a life of always in triumph, rejoicing in the Lord, and an anxiety level of zero.

Duration: 1:06:09

Scripture: Luke 16:15, John 17:3, Romans 8:16, Philippians 1:23, Philippians 3:8, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:9

Topics: "Christian Living", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking to know Christ deeply and fully, comparing the attitudes of minimum Christians who do the least for God and maximum Christians who seek to do the most for Him. It challenges listeners to evaluate their values, seeing everything the world offers as rubbish compared to Christ, and to live wholeheartedly for Him, like Paul did, seeking to know Him better each day.

Transcript

When we look at the extremely satisfying Christian experience that a man like Paul had, we need to understand the secret of it. If you are serious about living the same type of life. I think many Christians are not really serious about living the same type of life.

And that's why they never seek to find out the answer. See, those of you who have migrated to the United States from other countries, if you look back to the time when you were in your home country, there was a reason why you decided to come here. You felt you could have a better life.

There's nothing wrong in that. And I'm sure you made a lot of efforts to find out how it was possible. I've seen in India how people stand outside the United States consulate from two o'clock in the morning.

Some people overnight sleep there so that they can get in first in line to get an interview for a visa. It's amazing. I wish Christians would have five percent of that much interest to seek out for God because they feel if I can get to the United States, I can live a far better life than in my own country.

Now they wouldn't sleep overnight outside of some small African country to get a visa to go there. There are no lines outside those consulates of those embassies. Why is that? I say no, I'm not going to get much there.

We are very wholehearted about something we know will be good for us and for our children. Many people who come here for the sake of their children. And I am convinced that if only we would understand the life God wants to give us is a million times better than anything you can get in the United States.

You would sleep overnight anywhere any number of nights in order to get it. Why is it Paul came to such a wonderful life where, let me just give you a little picture of his life. I believe the Lord has allowed, you see in the New Testament there are two lives that are described in greater extent than anybody else's.

One is Jesus in the Gospels and the other is Paul in the Acts of the Apostles and in most of the episodes. At least 13 of the episodes are written by him. And we get a lot of understanding of his life.

And of course Jesus' life is perfect. But then a lot of people say well you know most Christians even if you understand that Jesus was like us and he was tempted like us they still can't believe it's possible to walk like Jesus walked. It says that in 1 John 2.6. Every Christian must walk as Jesus walked but they say it's not possible.

What about Paul? Do you believe at least he was a human being like you? I think that's the reason why God's also given Paul for people who can't rise up to have faith that I can walk like Jesus. I'd say can you at least walk like Paul walked? I mean if you believe that Jesus was not like you, do you believe Paul was like you? Paul was not born of a virgin. He was born like you and me.

And he was a pretty rotten sinner in the sense he opposed Christians for 30 years. Certainly he was like us. But look at the life he came to when he met Christ and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

He was radical from day one. He was radically against Christ from the beginning. See that was the secret of his life.

Paul was a student in a Jewish Bible college in Jerusalem run by a professor called Gamaliel. And he taught them the law which said in the book of Deuteronomy 13 that if anybody comes to you and teaches you to worship another God, you must kill him. It was a law.

Even if he does signs and wonders, if that prophet does some signs and wonders but he leads you to worship another God, kill him. And Paul spent years studying this under Gamaliel. And here was this prophet from Nazareth who was doing signs and wonders and teaching people that he was God.

You couldn't think of anything more blasphemous than that. And people were falling down and worshipping him and he was accepting it. Paul was convinced this falls under the category of Deuteronomy 13.

He's got to be killed. His followers have got to be killed and spreading. This religion is spreading.

Now his professor Gamaliel, you read about him in Acts chapter 5. When he heard that Christianity was spreading, you know what he said? When the people said, we got to get rid of this religion, kill the leaders. Gamaliel, Acts 5.34, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people because he was the top professor in the Bible College, stood up and said put these men outside for a while. I want to say something.

Men of Israel, verse 35, take care what you plan to do. Because there were different men who tried to rise up, verse Judas and verse 37, Judas, and then nothing happened and got scattered. So in the present case, I say stay away from these men.

Because, verse 39, if it is of God, you won't be able to overthrow it. You may be found fighting against God. Now, you see how his attitude was, I'm not so sure, but his student Paul said, I'm absolutely sure.

There's no doubt this is something that's got to be destroyed. Paul was like a ship going full speed in the wrong direction. God could turn him around.

Gamaliel was like his auto ship, stationary. You know it's easier to turn a ship around when it's going full speed in the wrong direction than when it's stationary. I've been on ships for years and I tell you, you cannot turn a ship around when it's stationary.

You can try as much as you like, but a ship going full speed in the wrong direction, in a moment it's around the other way. That's why Gamaliel died as a Jew, I don't know where he went, probably to hell, because of this moderate attitude to Christianity. We don't know whether this is the truth.

Let's not take it too seriously. Let's not fight with them. We don't know whether Hinduism is true or Buddhism is true or Christianity is true.

We don't know whether Roman Catholicism is true or Protestantism or Pentecostal. We don't know whether this little group that meets here in this building, that's true, or some other big churches, we don't know. This attitude ends up with a whole lot of Christians exactly like Gamaliel.

And there are others like Paul who are determined at any cost to find the truth. They may be completely wrong when God will turn them around, because God's looking for people who are wholehearted. And that's why in the world you find so many moderate type of Christians who never get anywhere.

They never, I mean, look at the communists. They're completely wrong, but look how much they accomplish. They're serious.

I mean, I read years ago, I think Billy Graham read a letter that a young communist wrote to his girlfriend. He said, hey, I've become a communist now. This is years ago, maybe 60, 70 years ago in the United States.

And he said, I got to break our friendship. I have no time for, you know, going on dates and going for dinners with you. Communism demands all my attention.

Every bit of spare money I have, I have to give it for the cause of communism. I can't waste it on you, my girlfriend. So, sorry, we got to break it up.

Imagine if there were Christians like that. You'd have a different type of Christianity. Paul was like that.

And that's why he says things like this. Second Corinthians 2, verse 14. Thanks be to God who always leads us in his triumph in Christ.

Now, these are not words written casually. We believe that they're inspired by the Holy Spirit, and I don't believe the Holy Spirit would have allowed Paul to write a lie, even in one word. So, if he said always, he must have meant always.

If what he meant was most of the time, the Holy Spirit would have said, hey, hey, don't write always. It's not true in your life. Be honest, Paul.

Write most of the time. But he wrote always, and the Holy Spirit endorsed it. What is it? Always in triumph.

I don't do it. God leads me always in triumph in Christ, and manifests through me the sweet aroma, there's no stink there, the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Christ through my life in every place I go to. Whether people put me in a prison, or people put me on a pulpit, or people, it doesn't matter whether I'm making tents, working with others who are, who hate Christianity, you have the sweet aroma of Christ from me.

It's not that everybody gets converted. No, because to some, verse 16, we have the aroma of death. To the other, the aroma of life.

That depends on them. I'll show you, let me show you another verse. He's talking about his life.

Verse 30, Romans 8, and verse 35. See, these are areas where he's giving his own testimony of his own life. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, distress.

See, most of these things mentioned in verse 35, none of us have ever faced. We talk about our trials and our problems, which are like little mosquito bites. Oh, this mosquito bit me here, and then these guys were facing lions, not mosquitoes.

Shall tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword. I mean, Christians those days faced things like this. Not, I didn't get my promotion because I was a Christian, or they didn't give me an increment in my salary because they found out I was a disciple of Jesus.

One of the things people fight against today, oh, in the school they don't allow prayer. They never allowed school. They never prayers in the schools in India for a year, never in the history of India.

These are not the things people, he thought about. They were facing tribulation, and persecution, and distress, and famine because they were Christians. And nakedness, and peril, and sword, and being put to death, verse 36, the whole day long.

But in all these things, verse 37, in all these things, we don't just conquer. We overwhelmingly conquer. As King James says, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

There's a spirit of triumph in this man's life. I don't get a smell of, oh, occasionally I'm sort of depressed and defeated. Always in triumph.

It doesn't matter if it's persecution, for I'm convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, or things present, or things to come, nor powers. Nobody can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. What I want to ask you, dear brothers and sisters, is do you believe that that is a life a human being, just like you and me, born of Adam, who lived in sin for 30 years, killing Christians, could come to? You know why? Because he was radical.

Wholehearted. His marriage to Christ was total. Whereas most Christians, their marriage to Christ is like a woman who's married to a man, but occasionally she wants to fool around with other men.

That's why their marriage is not a happy marriage to Christ. Imagine if your wife was occasionally going around with other men. Whatever marriage would yours be? That's exactly the Christianity that most people have.

There are other things in the world that attract them. They are careless in the way they spend money. There are many things in the world that mean a lot to them.

The opinions of men, the honor of the world, getting on in the world and being somebody. If somebody spoke something bad about them and they feel depressed about that, think about that. They can't forgive that person.

Where will such people come to the life Paul had? Not in a hundred years. They live and die as miserable people who just go to churches and sing songs and always hope for a better life, which will never come. I guarantee it'll never come.

Because they're not serious. They're half-hearted. They pursue their profession more seriously than they pursue Christianity.

If the eagerness with which you sought to get a visa to come here to the United States or the eagerness with which you sought to get a job when you didn't have one, that eagerness was there to pursue Jesus and to overcome sin and to please God at any cost. I tell you, all of us would be much better Christians by now. I'm not trying to make anybody feel guilty or condemned.

I often think that I'm like a person who's taking a scan of people's lives and telling them, hey, this is what this cancer is. You don't have to be sick. Here's another guy.

He lives in the same area as you with the same limitations, but he's healthy. So here's Paul and the reason why he lived this life was we read it earlier in Philippians 2, sorry 3, Philippians 3 and verse, he says, I'll tell you what I was before, Philippians 3, 6. All my zeal, you know, we talk about being zealous. My zeal was to persecute the church, Philippians 3, 6. My goal was not to study the Bible.

My zeal was to kill Christians, persecute the church, destroy this religion, and what about my righteousness? My righteousness, what my external, according to the law, means my external life. I didn't kill anybody. I didn't commit adultery.

I didn't steal. I didn't bear false witness. I didn't worship idols.

My external life was good, but I was a persecutor of the church. But all these things that brought me honor in Israel, you know, in Israel, if a man was like that, he was respected. He says, I counted all rubbish, and if in a Jewish person in those days accepted Christ, he was rejected.

You worship that false prophet, Jesus. He says, I counted all loss. I found Christ.

And he says, I count, this is an amazing verse, verse 8. Think about it. Think about it. You've already probably memorized it, some of you, if you haven't memorized it now.

I count all things as loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ, my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ. He says, the things that the world thinks so much of, I count it all as trash. In India, we have some very, very poor children from the slums who I see sometimes going into the trash cans to pick up leftover bits of food.

You know who they remind me of? Christians who go into the seeking something in the world to find satisfaction. It's exactly like those poor children looking in the trash cans for a bit of food. This is all rubbish.

So you ask Paul, according to verse 8, how do you gain Christ? He says, I counted everything in the world as rubbish. Oh, you say, Paul, you gained Christ like that. I got it much cheaper.

I still have an interest in a lot of things in the world, and I've also gained Christ. Really? Paul says, you gained the same Christ I got? Well, your life doesn't look like that. There you see the difference, why Paul came to this life.

He considered everything on earth as rubbish compared to Christ. It was rubbish. The honor of this world, the wealth of this world, the glamour, the style, the fashions, and everything that the world considers great.

You can see in television and movies and the billboards and the advertisements, all that the world considers great. And when you imitate them, and you dress like them, when you behave like them, and you want to speak like them, and you want to own what they own and do what they do, you know that you don't consider that rubbish. You don't go into the garbage cans to pick up things.

Paul counted it all as rubbish. If you were to ask him, hey, what are you doing, Paul? He said, I'm an apostle. Oh, I see.

I thought you were a tent maker. Oh, he's a tent maker. That's just a profession to earn my living.

My job is to be a witness for Christ. You know, that's how every one of us should be. You're supposed to be a witness for Christ primarily.

Your job, just a means of earning a living. We have to earn a living, otherwise we'll be beggars and parasites on society. But our job, our primary job on earth, is to be a witness for Christ.

I was, you know, when I was about 14 years old, I was in finishing my high school. I was quite a young age. And I was 15 when I finished.

My father said, I want you to join the military academy. It's like West Point here in the U.S. I want you to join the Navy and become the Admiral of the Indian Navy. I said, fine.

I worked. I got admission. I joined.

I completed my course. And I was moving up. I was top of my class.

And I said, hey, I'm going in the right direction. And when I was 19 years old, like Paul says, Christ laid hold of me, came into my life. And all my ambitions disappeared immediately.

I did not receive Christ to go to heaven. I did not receive Christ merely to get my sins forgiven, or to escape hell. I responded to Christ because I said, Lord, you gave your entire life for me.

I'm going to respond with my entire life for you. I will not live for myself anymore. My turning around was not 90 degrees or 130, it was 180 degrees.

And I found very soon that I had to give up my worldly ambition. There's nothing wrong in being an Admiral or being a big shot in the world. But if it conflicts with Christ's purpose for your life, you've got to give it up.

It's all a question of priority. It's all a question of whether you see. Paul didn't take time.

You know, some people take 20 years to gradually discover, oh yeah, the world is rubbish. I better give it up. It's like, you know, wallowing in the sewage and taking 20 years to come out.

I want to get out immediately. That's how Paul got out. Because he saw it was all sewage and rubbish.

If you're lying in the sewage, the garbage dump, and if you think you take time to come out of there, there's something wrong with your understanding. And that's the trouble with a lot of Christians. They don't understand what the world is like.

Of course, their eyes are to be opened. I don't claim to be better than any other Christian. I can only say, not like the blind man said, once I was blind.

Now I see. I thought greatness in the world was something important. I thought money was very important.

I thought of a comfortable life was very important. I was blind, but he opened my eyes and I could see what was really valuable and what was not. I really believe that's what happened to Paul.

His eyes were opened on the Damascus road. You know, when the scales fell off his eyes three days later, it was not just physical, but inside his heart he saw what is the only thing worth living for on this earth. What did God Almighty, weave me in my mother's womb for, and bring me out for what? And he said, I want to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me.

That's the expression he uses, beautiful expression, in verse 12, the last part. I want to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me. Jesus laid hold of me for a purpose, and I can never lay hold of it if I don't consider everything else as rubbish.

That's why he came to this life of always in triumph, and here he speaks in Philippians 4 of rejoicing in the Lord always. If I ask you, do you believe that Jesus could rejoice in the Lord and the Father all the time, you say yes. What about Paul? He was like you.

In fact, he faced more trials and problems than any of us have ever faced. He was imprisoned so many times, beaten so many times for the sake of the gospel. Sometimes he didn't have enough money to buy food.

He starved, he fasted. He speaks about starvation and fasting separately. Fasting was out of choice.

Starvation was when he wanted food, he didn't have money. You read about it all in 2 Corinthians 11. Sometimes he didn't have enough money to buy a blanket to cover himself in the Roman prison.

He writes in 2 Timothy 4 to Timothy, please send my blanket. I'm shivering here in the cold. But he was rejoicing always.

It doesn't matter. This is all for Christ. A man who rejoiced always.

It says a man, where's Philippians 4, 6, who was anxious for zero. Anxiety in Paul's life was zero. If you said Jesus' anxiety level was zero, that we can understand.

But Paul, you know where he wrote this by the way? Philippians. Philippians was written from a prison in Rome. And prisons in Rome were not like prisons today where prisoners can lie on beds and watch television and all that.

It was a dungeon with rats and mosquitoes and all types of things crawling around, a hole in the ground. That's where he lived. And he writes, be anxious for nothing.

Rejoice always. Let your mind always be thinking of things which verse 8, which are honorable and pure and right and lovely and excellent. Don't waste your time thinking about all the evil that other people have done to you and it'll just make you more miserable.

And I see, I read this as a young Christian and I said, Lord, this is the life I want. My goals were something else and I did not know you. But I see this as a life.

As much as I pursued advancement in the world as my goal, now I want to pursue living for Christ alone. When I came out, and so that was the first stage in my Christian life when I, the Lord asked me to give up my pursuit of a worldly goal and to give it up and follow Him. And then I found as I sought to follow Him, five years later, God called me to leave my job and I quit it.

I'd given up honor in the world. Then I found as God had gifted me to speak God's Word and I was traveling around and I found that giving up honor in the world, I could gradually begin to seek honor in Christendom. With my gift of preaching and my abilities God had given me, I could use it to get honor, I could use it to make money.

And that's the second thing the Lord said, give up. Now you've given up honor in the world, now give up honor in Christendom. I said, sure, I gave it up.

That's when the Lord said, seek to gather with those who want to be wholehearted disciples, will obey everything written in the New Testament, even if they're only two or three. Before that, I was preaching to thousands traveling to different countries and speaking at international conferences, the radio program that is from all over Southeast Asia every week and the written books and all that. This is when I was 30 years old and the Lord said, give it all up and I said, fine.

But I've seen one thing, God is never in debt to anyone. You give up one thing for God, He'll give you a hundred times back because He'll never be in debt to you. You give up something for the sake of Jesus, you think God's going to be in debt to you? Impossible.

He will repay you, He'll repay your children and He'll repay your grandchildren. Believe me, it's true because He'll never be in debt. He'll never be in debt.

That's why the people who are afraid to give up something for God are so foolish. They live such miserable, spiritually poverty-stricken lives because they're holding on to something which they think which will make them happy. Give it up, my brothers.

Be wholehearted like Paul. God wants people like that. Once I was gripped by these things, honor, position, great numbers in my church didn't interest me anymore.

The honor of the world did not interest me, the honor of Christendom didn't interest me. I knew it was all garbage. I don't know whether you've seen it as garbage.

It would make a world of difference. That's how Paul gained Christ. He says, Philippians 3.8, I gained Christ by counting everything else as rubbish.

You tell Paul, well, I gained Christ without counting everything as rubbish. Well, no wonder why your life is so shallow. Must be another Christ you've got or half a Christ.

But if you want all of Christ, this is it. It means total obedience to God's Word. I mentioned this a number of times that in my early years as a Christian, I found very, very few people who were radical Christians.

Very few. I used to attend an assembly where the elders were, well, they were born again, that's about all. They'd come away from Roman Catholicism and dead Protestantism and formed a little local church.

They were not radical Christians. I couldn't look up to them as men of God. I couldn't look up to them as men who knew God, who could speak with God face to face like Moses did.

So I couldn't respect them, but they were elders, so I submitted to them and I sat in that church. But now and then, in those years, once in a blue moon, as they say, once in a while, I would see a really godly man, really godly man. And he would always be extremely humble.

It was the primary thing I saw in godly people. They were extremely humble people who would treat me, a young man, as if I was equal to them, even though they were much older than me and so godly. There were two things I found in all of their lives.

They believed the Bible to be the Word of God. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, two things. I said, Lord, that is the secret.

I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not just have an experience, but a genuine feeling of the Holy Spirit, and I need to believe the Bible as God's Word. I started doing that and changed my life, began to seek God and say, Lord, whatever the cost, whatever the price I have to pay, I want a genuine and filling of the Holy Spirit exactly equal to what the apostles got on the day of Pentecost. There were 120 people there.

Mary was there, the mother of Jesus, many others, but all of them didn't do healing and miracles. No, that was given to some. I didn't ask for healing and miracles.

I said, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be like Jesus, to walk like Him, to have this life that Paul spoke about, always in triumph, never anxious, always rejoicing, no matter what the circumstances are. And I said, Lord, no, I want to be filled with the Spirit so that I can be a witness for you in India. I never thought of anyone else anywhere outside of that.

And I was married and I said, I want to be a really good father so that all my children will follow Jesus. And I want to be a witness in India, not to bring people who find people who want to go to heaven. Everybody wants to go to heaven.

You know that we have 1,200 million people in India who want to go to heaven. That's the entire population. I've never met a man who wants to go to hell.

But I was not looking for such people. I was looking for people who wanted to wholeheartedly follow Jesus on earth before going to heaven. That number is very few.

Even today, in every country in the world. Not who wants to go to heaven. I'm not interested in asking that question.

Who wants to wholeheartedly obey everything in the Bible? By everything, I mean everything. By 100 percent, I mean 100 percent of every single thing written in the New Testament. And obey it, whatever the price, whatever it costs me, I want it.

I say, Lord, I'd rather have 10 people like that. I often thought, Lord Jesus, if in my lifetime I could make 11 disciples like the ones you made, I would say, Lord, I can depart in peace. I've done my life's work.

11. I mean, imagine Jesus, son of God, walked on this earth and he couldn't produce more than that. And after that mighty ministry of three and a half years, how many people waited for the Holy Spirit on the day of the cross? 120.

How many were healed? Thousands. How many saw the miracles? Thousands. How many wanted the Holy Spirit's power? 120.

So I saw that the Christianity that these describe in the Bible is so different from what I saw around me, which is all mercenary, connected with money. And Christianity was like a business. It started in those early days in Palestine as a mighty, powerful movement from heaven.

And it's ended up today as a business in America, India, everywhere. But it's supposed to be, a church is supposed to be a body. And I was reading something very interesting the other day.

When a body is used as a business, the word for it is prostitute. It's only a prostitute who uses her body for business. And that's what the church has become.

In the midst of this corrupt Christendom, the Lord is looking for one here, one there, one there, to come together and be an expression of his body. Not first of all loving one another. No, that would be a club.

But loving him, counting everything as rubbish. If the mark of this church is that you love one another, there may be clubs in the world that are better than you. But if the mark of this church is that everyone here considers everything on earth as rubbish compared to Christ, then you're in the right direction.

Then your love for one another has value. It's a Christian love. Otherwise, I'll tell you honestly, communists love one another.

There are clubs where they love one another. There are families that will sacrifice and love one another. But that's not the first commandment.

First commandment is love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And then love one another. A lot of people, you know the reason why there's a great attraction to cult groups that form in different places.

How do you know that a little group meeting together is not a cult? I'll tell you an easy way to find out. Many people are drawn to cults like the Moonies and different, different cult groups that have risen up in the world because they are small and they care for one another. They help one another.

They help one another financially. They help one another move house and they help one another in so many ways. It's wonderful to belong to instead of this impersonal type of mega church where you just sit and watch a performance and go home.

You see, I like to be in this little group. But it's a club. It's a cult because it's horizontal.

It's all helping one another and caring for one another and standing by each other through thick and thin, through difficulties. It's a nice little club of people who, and people join it who want some type of earthly security. And I found this.

Some churches like that, where especially immigrants who come to this country, they like to be there because immigrants are the most insecure people in the country. So they like to be in a group where, ah here's a nice place where I feel a little secure. You can't call that a church.

It's a nice club, Christian club maybe, but it's not a church. No, it's not the church of Jesus Christ. It's a nice little club.

And if it's to become a church, it must have people who are, consider everything on earth as rubbish compared to Christ. Jesus is everything. Not one of the most important things in my life.

Everything. All that the world considers important, I've thrown it in the trash because I found Christ. Do you know, is this the Jesus that you know? I believe there are different Jesuses in the world.

You know, the one Corinthians, second Corinthians 11 says about another Jesus. There are many Jesuses. Some who are not worth giving up everything for.

That's the Christian, that's the Jesus that many Christians know. But the real Jesus that Paul knew was one, he says, I gained Christ by counting everything as rubbish and I suffered the loss of all things and it's really okay. I lost everything.

Give up everything in order to get Christ. And as I said, when you say, oh Paul, I didn't have to pay such a price. It's like, you know, some very, very expensive gadget.

Highly expensive. I can't think of anything but some highly expensive electronic gadget which costs, say, 10 million dollars. The man says, ah, I'm gonna put my life savings into that and get it.

I need it. And there's some cheap counterfeit down the street that you can also buy. Looks exactly the same like this.

Looks exactly like that for maybe a couple of hundred dollars. And you look at this guy who's spent 10 million dollars. Hey, you spent 10 million dollars for this.

I bought the same thing for 200 dollars, man. You got cheated. Really? Well, you wait and see how long your product lasts and wait and see how long his product lasts.

That'll be the difference. And many, many things. There's a Christianity that's duplicated which looks like the real thing.

It's not. It's not the type of Christianity Paul had. Because if you want that, you've got to pay a price.

And you go for something cheap, you know. We always go for something cheap. It looks nice.

It looks the same. But it's not the same. So when you sit here, my dear brothers and sisters, I want to speak to you plainly because I don't want you to.

You've got only one life, man. You don't want to spend your life being deceived with the wrong thing. This is not like buying the wrong electronic gadget.

This is a matter of eternity. You can't afford to have the wrong thing. You must have the genuine thing.

And the genuine thing is in the scriptures. My Christianity has come only out of reading the Bible. And wherever I found things in Christendom, even in great preachers, which is not according to scripture, I say, God bless you, brother.

I'm not here to judge you. I'm sorry I can't follow you. I can't work with you.

A lot of Christians I can't work with. I'm sorry. They can call me exclusive.

They can call me a liar. They can call me a liar. I'm not going to go that direction.

Many years ago, I was gripped by this truth in Luke 16. Luke 16. Jesus.

These are the words of Jesus. Luke 16 15. In the last part, it says Luke 16 15.

That which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the eyes of God. Or as the King James Version says, King James Version, is an abomination in the eyes of God. That which is men value highly is an abomination in the eyes of God.

I say, Lord, I want to remember that. God's values are so different from man's values. So many things.

Look at your own life, my brother, sister. Evaluate your own life honestly and see if there are things in your life which are done or practiced only because people around you esteem that very highly. An abomination in the sight of God.

Abomination. You know, in the Old Testament, I looked up that word abomination once. And it came in the book of Deuteronomy where then the children of Israel were out in the, wandering in the desert for 40 years.

You know, they didn't have toilets there. So the Lord would say, whenever you want to go to the toilet, you go outside the camp, dig a hole in the ground. Go with a spade always.

Dig a hole and when you're finished, cover it up. Because the Lord your God moves in your midst and does not want to see any abomination there. So you understand what abomination is.

It's like an unflushed toilet. And the Lord says, all that is big and great in the eyes of men is like an unflushed toilet in my eyes. Look at the crazy Christians who go after that.

But no wonder. They're sick. If you keep licking the toilet bowl, you will get sick too.

Sure. You got to face up to it. So, when I look at things from God's viewpoint, there's a translation of Colossians chapter 1 verse 9. You know where Paul prays.

I mean this English is a bit complicated. That's where I sometimes like a paraphrase. I don't use paraphrases for doctrine because a paraphrase is like commentary.

I use Living Bible, Message Bible like a commentary. I don't never use it for doctrine because a man is expressing his view there. This is what I think this verse means.

For doctrine, I would take an exact translation of the Bible like the New American Standard Bible, NASB, which I use. I've used it for 40 years, but sometimes a commentary can give you a make you think of a verse in another light. And that's sometimes how these paraphrases help me.

So, if you keep that in mind, it's good to use a paraphrase. Colossians 1 9, he says in the last part that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Boy, that's a bit tough for my brain.

Paul was a great intellectual. To be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. What do you get from that? I read a paraphrase of it which said that you may learn to see things from God's viewpoint.

How do you like that? Much easier for my inferior brain to understand. To see things from God's viewpoint. To evaluate everything from God's viewpoint.

To look at people the way God looks at them. To look at money like the way God looks at it. To look at pretty women the way Jesus looked at them.

To look at Pharisees the way Jesus and God looks at them. To look at the money changers in the temple like God looks at them. Not to be kind and nice to them like we would like to be.

And to look at everything. To look at evil and corruption in the world the way God looks at it. That is the meaning of to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

To see everything in this world in its proper value. I think that's the difference between a child and an adult. In the Old Testament the Bible says they were like children or like servants who were uneducated.

The Bible says then that's why nobody could call God father. They're not even children. They were servants.

That's why in the entire Old Testament nobody could look up and say, oh dad, he was not their dad. He was their master, their ruler. That's why they had to pay income tax, which is called a tithe.

I've never paid a tithe because I don't pay tithe to my dad. God's not my master. He's my dad.

How much would you give to your father who sacrificed everything for you? Ten percent. My relationship, how much would you give to your husband? Depends on your relationship with him. Christ is my husband.

I don't pay income tax. I love him. In India I have a joint account with my wife.

That means her name, my name are both on the account. She can take anything. I can take anything.

I have a joint account with Jesus Christ. I put in my two cents and he puts in his billions of dollars and says you can have. And if I'm foolish and say no, no, no, no, I'll only pay ten percent of my two cents to you.

And the Lord says okay you can have ten percent of my wealth as well. But when you go to the Lord and say Lord all that I have is yours, he'll say all that I have is yours too. It's a different relationship.

So in the Old Testament there were servants, but in the New Testament we are children and sons. The Spirit of God comes in and one of the first things he says in Romans 8 16 says Abba, which means dad. Abba translated from Hebrew would be dad.

In the Indian languages it is Abba. That's not a formal word. Father is a formal word.

Hardly anybody calls their father father. They say dad, daddy. That is Abba.

That's how we're supposed to call God, our Heavenly Father. It's a wonderful relationship and the relationship of the son is very different from the relationship of a slave. See a slave may not have much understanding of the value of things.

They are relatively lower in the social level and but a son shares his father's view. A slave can only think of, or a servant can only think of, you owe me a salary. End of the month has come and give me my paycheck.

A son never asks for a paycheck. All that the father has belongs to him. A lot of Christians go to God exactly like servants.

They don't feel they have a claim on God because their whole attitude to God is also, what is the minimum I can do for you? You know like a servant in an office, well I'll be there on time, nine o'clock. By time it's six o'clock in the evening I have to go. I've got to have my lunch break also from 12 to 1, so eight hours a day.

My 40-hour week and I'll go. Many Christians, their Christianity is like that. A son doesn't have a 40-hour week.

Son's not paid, servant is paid. There's a relationship with Christ that we can have that's very satisfying. Which is like a wife who's married to a very loving, compassionate, wonderful husband.

This is very different from a servant who works in the same house. He or she, a maid for example, never has the relationship with the man of the house that the wife has. I think these are two types of Christians.

Most Christians I've met are like the maid in the house. They get a lot of benefits. They get maybe food and salary and all that, but not like the wife.

The wife doesn't get a salary. She's far happier. She owns everything that her husband has.

She can ask him for anything anytime. There's an intimacy there. I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, do you know Jesus like that? Christianity is to know Jesus.

Eternal life, John 17 verse 3, Jesus said, is to know Jesus Christ. I'm so thankful that I've come to know my Savior like that. My whole, when Paul says in Philippians 3.10, almost towards the end of his life, he says my passion is to know him better.

You know, that's my desire. My desire is not to preach or to travel. It's to know Jesus better.

All my service is just an overflow of that. So I see a servant's attitude is, what is the minimum I have to do for my master? A wife's desire is, what's the maximum I can do for my husband? My husband is in need. She'll go to the ends of the earth to serve him, look after him.

Think of wives who look after invalid, sick husbands, morning till night, still look after, look after, look after. What do they get paid for it? Zero. But a servant, sorry sir, 40 hours is up.

I can't stay anymore this week. I've got other things to do. And where's my salary? The end of the month has come.

There are Christians who have that type of attitude to God. In other words, I call them minimum Christians and maximum Christians. Minimum is, okay, what is the minimum I have to do for God? Be a good Christian.

What is the minimum amount of money I must give in the offering? What is the minimum number of meetings I must come to in a week? And what is the minimum I have to do to be in a good standing in a church? Everything is minimum, minimum, minimum. And maximum is reserved for how much can I enjoy the world maximum and what can I get from the world maximum, etc., etc., etc. And there's another type of Christian whose attitude is, I've got only one life.

What is the maximum I can do for Christ before I leave this earth? Jesus did not come to earth saying, what is the minimum I have to do for my father before I leave? No, I've got only 33 and a half years. What is the maximum I can do for him before I leave? That's why I used to stay up late nights and do so many things while other people were sleeping. You know, what is the maximum I can do for Christ in my one life? Paul once said, in Philippians only, he says, I tell you honestly, he says, to depart and to be with Christ, that's far better.

Philippians 1.23. But if you give me a choice, I'd rather be in heaven right now. But I have to stay here for the sake of you Philippians. You're not yet mature, so I want to stay on for your sake.

He wasn't seeking anything for himself. Even in going away to heaven, he says, no, I can't go. I'll stay a little longer.

It doesn't matter if I have to be in prison or something, if I can help you guys. Are you living on earth like that? You see, the only reason I'm living on this earth is so that I can do something for Christ. Something more for other people to serve them and bless them.

Something more for Christ before I leave this earth. Or is it, well, I'm waiting for the day when I can leave this rotten earth and go to heaven. I've told the Lord, I said, Lord, if you give me health, I'd be glad to live up to the age of 100.

I'm only 74. It's a long way to go. But if you give me health, I really want to live for you.

100%. If I can do a little more for you. But if you think there's nothing more I can do for you here on earth, I'm ready to go.

There's nothing here that holds me. Everything on earth, which is great in the eyes of men, is an abomination to God. And evaluate your life and see whether you've got a proper sense of values.

Things which are great in the eyes of men and things which are great in the eyes of God. And it'll make a lot of difference in your life when you see all that the world offers as rubbish compared to Christ. The devil makes temptation so attractive to us by saying, this is great.

Sex. Oh, it's great, man. And if he's convinced you about it, you'll have a battle all your life.

Even if you're 90 years old, you'll be battling. Sex is great. I can't have it.

I must get it. But if you call the devil's lie, you can be free from it even as a young man. Unmarried.

You call the devil's bluff and say the sex is not a great thing. He can tell you money, hey, that's a great thing. You need it.

Or honor of men, honor in the church, you must get it. And you call the devil's bluff and say money is not a great thing. Honor in the world is not a great thing.

Honor in the church, nothing. The devil will have no more power over you. Because everything he considers great, you say it's rubbish.

You can't fool me anymore. I'm not going to fight over it. Be an adult.

I often think of this game called Monopoly. I used to play it at home when the children were small. You have this board where property, you throw the dice and you land on a place, add property, that's mine.

Or you come and land on my property, you better pay rent. It's a very interesting game with all this paper money that's called dollars. Now imagine an adult playing with a child.

Will you fight with that child or make him pay his rent if there's a little doubt about whether he should be on this square or that square? Or hey, that's my money, that's not yours. I cannot imagine. I say you, you're an adult and you're behaving like a child.

Because you know that in one hour we're going to fold the game and fold the board and put the money in the box and the game is over. The angels look down at this big Monopoly game going on in the world, you know, with all these squares of property here and there and people saying, hey this is mine, you have to pay rent and this, I'm going to buy this and I'm going to buy that. The angels say, if only the people knew that very soon God's going to fold up the board and put the money on the box and say, folks, the game is over.

It's true. Have you lived for something worthwhile? This is only a test to see whether you would live for things as worthless as worthwhile. I thank God for one thing.

God has opened my eyes. You know, I can't convince you. I'll only pray God will open your eyes because when your eyes are open you'll be able to distinguish between garbage and gold.

Otherwise it's impossible. Let's pray. My dear brothers and sisters as our heads about in prayer, I want to ask you whether you just heard an interesting message or whether God spoke to your heart in a way that'll change your life forever or you're only temporarily moved.

Jesus often used to say, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, dad in heaven, Father, I've tried my best to share what a glorious thing it is to be a true Christian. But words can never, never convey what only the Holy Spirit can convey.

So, Father, please let your Spirit take this home to the hearts of those who have ears to hear that they will not rest until they have come like Paul to say, I count all things as rubbish that I may know Christ. It will not be just an emotion that comes for a moment and disappears but change the whole direction of all of our lives in the days to come. We pray in the name and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/x68-40wEbul.mp4>

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