

Doing Greater Works Than Christ

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of doing God's will and becoming more Christ-like, and that the works of Jesus are characterized by a principle of 'it is finished'.

Duration: 55:33

Scripture: John 14:12, John 17:21, Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Galatians 5:13, Ephesians 3:10, Ephesians 4:16, Philippians 2:3, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Christian Service", "Unity In Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of serving in the New Covenant out of love, becoming more Christ-like, and doing the will of God. It discusses the need to listen to God, deny our own will, and work together in unity despite differences. The speaker highlights the significance of each believer fulfilling their specific ministry and the wisdom of God displayed through unity amidst diversity.

Transcript

Yesterday, we were talking about two aspects of being a New Covenant servant. First, we saw how the Old Covenant was, obedience was motivated by the fear of judgment or the offer of a reward. Whereas in the New Covenant it had to be out of love and if love was not motivating us in anything we did, it was worthless.

And then the other thing we saw was that the fruit of all our service in the New Covenant was that we'd be more Christ-like. And because that's our ultimate destination towards which God is seeking to lead us and if that's not taking place in our life year by year, we have to question whether our service is really New Covenant service. And today I want to speak about another aspect.

There was something that just could not take place in Old Covenant times. In fact, even Jesus himself could not do it. Do you know that we are supposed to do something that Jesus could not do? It's a pretty daring statement, but that's what it says in John 14 and verse 12.

Whenever you come to a scripture which you find difficult to understand or interpret, by all means look at commentaries if you can get them, but I found a lot of difficult verses. I've never found much help in commentaries. For example, the difference between the old man and the flesh.

Most Christians don't know it. And I know I was terribly confused because I thought they were both the same. We need to distinguish between the things that differ.

But it's not my subject right now. John 14, 12 says, He who believes in me, truly, truly, I say unto you. The very few statements that Jesus said which began with the words, truly, truly, I say to you.

You must be born again, truly, truly, I say to you. Here's another one. Oh, verily, verily.

He who believes in me. And that applies to everyone because that's the phrase we use for forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We say, I believe in Jesus and I have eternal life.

He who believes in me out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. That's for everybody. John 6, he who believes in me will have eternal life.

John 7, he who believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out of him. And John 14, he who believes in me will do the works that I do. I can't say I accept the first part of John 6 which is, he who believes in me has eternal life.

I must also believe that if I believe in him, rivers of living water will flow out from me. That's not a separate level of belief. It's the same level of belief that brings me forgiveness of sins and eternal life as mentioned in John 6. And likewise here.

If I believe in him, I'll be able to do the works that he did. And greater works than these. That means things that even he couldn't do.

So what do you do when you come to a verse like this? I don't know what, for years I would just skip over it. And like that rock in the middle of a plowed field. Unplowed because I couldn't get it out of the ground.

But the time came when I said, Lord I want to grapple it. Because whenever you find a verse that you find tough, there must be some great truth hidden in it. And you're going to miss it if you don't work at it.

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. And I think of what the Lord told Adam, by the sweat of your brow you will earn your bread. Remember that when you study the scriptures.

If you want bread, you've got to sweat. But if you're lazy in studying the scriptures, you won't get something out from it. So the works that Jesus did.

If I were to ask people, the average Christian, the average believer. Can you tell me some of the works that Jesus did? He'll immediately talk about the miracles. He fed the 5,000 and turned water into wine.

I said, you're telling me what he did in 10% of his life. That's what he did in three and a half years. Tell me what he did in his whole life.

Didn't he do anything for 30 years? The works that I do, the works that he did. And I believe the works that he did can be described in one sentence. I call it the one line autobiography that Jesus wrote of his life.

John 6, 38. This is a description of his entire life. I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

All his life, he denied his own will and did the will of his father. From the earliest age, as soon as he came to the age of understanding good from evil as a child. He always did the father's will, never did his own will.

So that's a one line autobiography of his whole life. He didn't come from heaven to earth to die for the sins of the world. He came from heaven to earth, according to his own statement, to deny his own will and to do his father's will.

That was the cross that he carried for 33 years. That's the cross he tells us to carry. My will and God's will.

That's the cross on which we are to die. That's the cross on which he died every single day of his life. And it's impossible to follow him, if I'm not willing to die on that same cross on which he died every day.

Where his will clashed with the father's will. I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. When he was in heaven, he could say, I do my own will.

Because it's the same as my father's will. But the moment he became a man, just like us. He had what we call my will.

Which was different from the father's will. Now that's very difficult for many to understand. Many think it's heresy to believe that.

We can be so brainwashed from childhood into having an image of Jesus. I believe that many evangelical Christians have the opposite heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses, or the Russellites, they believe that Jesus Christ was not God.

He was a created being. Evangelical Christians would all accept that he's God. But for all practical purposes, he was not a man.

He was not tempted like us. It's very difficult for people to understand that, even though it's written plainly in Hebrews 4.15. And if you want to know how strong the feeling of people is against that, there are many, many believers groups in India, who have written articles against me, calling me a heretic, only for that one point. That I believe Jesus was tempted like us.

Hebrews 4.15 I wonder if all of you believe it. Because that is the secret of a godly life. It says in 1 Timothy 3.16 The great is the secret of godliness.

Christ was manifest in the flesh. It means he had a thing called my will that he had to deny on earth. Otherwise he could not have been tempted like us.

If he had holiness handed out to him on a platter, it's not handed out to me on a platter. If I want to be holy, I have to battle. But if I have to battle and be holy, and Jesus could live on earth without a battle and be holy, I'd say, Lord, you don't understand what I'm struggling.

But it says we have a high priest who understands, who can sympathize with our infirmities, but who was tempted in all points as we are, but did not sin. He is the captain of our salvation, who never allows us to face a battle he didn't face himself. So this is a great mystery.

Like the Living Bible says, 1 Timothy 3.16 It's true that the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter, but the answer lies in Christ who came to earth in our flesh. Now many people would only think of the fact that he came to earth to die for our sins on the cross. Unfortunately, that is all the gospel that many people know, and that's all the gospel we think we have to preach to people.

It's enough if they know that Christ died for their sins and they are forgiven and they go to heaven. Well, if that was all, I think we could have reduced the Bible to about 10 pages. Why has he given us a Bible of 1,000 pages? Are we supposed to know all these things? Why is the New Testament itself about 200-300 pages if all we need to know is that Christ died for our sins? There's a lot more in the Epistles.

Because God wants us to live a holy life. The works that he did was the will of God. He denied his own will and did the will of God.

And it's possible for you and me to do the works that he did. It's not that... He did not do certain things, for example. He did not heal everybody.

He went to the pool of Bethesda where it says there was a multitude of sick people, John 5, and he healed one person. And walked away. You think the others didn't want to be healed? You think the others would not have believed when they saw Jesus healing this one person? Why did he walk away? He came to do the will of his Father.

Have you read of the lame man who was sitting at the gate of the beautiful gate of the temple in Acts chapter 3? Peter and John saw him and he stretched out his hand for alms and Peter said, Silver and gold I have none, but what I have in the name of Jesus rise up and walk. That man was over 40 years old, lame from birth. Had been carried there every day.

Imagine the number of times Jesus passed by him. For three and a half years, Jesus went to the temple frequently. He would have seen that man and when he stretched out his hand for alms, you know what Jesus did? He gave him money.

He would see him the next week, he'd give him money. He'd see him next year, he'd give him money. Jesus was so sensitive to the voice of the Father.

Father, you want me to heal him? No. No, no, no, no, no, for three and a half years. Because if he had healed him, there wouldn't have been that revival in Acts chapter 3 and 4 where 5,000 believers were converted as a result of that miracle.

You see the importance of not only doing God's will, but doing it in God's time. There's a time for doing something right. And Jesus was so sensitive to that.

I want to encourage all of you to study the life of Jesus. It's the most wonderful study you can do. I've spent my life, 50 years, trying to study the life of Jesus because I know that my destination is to become like him.

So if I study the way he lived on earth, I know that is what God the Father is trying to make me like. And this is one of the things I discovered. That I'm not supposed to do certain things, even if I have the ability to do it.

If it's not the Father's will, somebody else is supposed to do it. It's one of those things which natural man cannot understand. We think we have to do all the good we possibly can.

If I have the ability, I do it. Jesus certainly had the ability to heal a lame man. He could raise the dead.

But he wouldn't do it. Even Lazarus, if he's sick, he hears he who loves is sick. It says when he heard it, he stayed two more days in that place.

This is so contrary to human reason. If you hear somebody you love is sick, seriously sick, you don't decide, therefore I will stay two more days here before I go. God's ways are not our ways.

And that's what I learned in looking at the life of Jesus. Not my will, but thine. And we need to allow our mind to be renewed.

To think like Jesus thought. That's a wonderful thing that the Holy Spirit has come to do. To me, unfortunately, with all the emphasis on the external emotionalism and all related to what they call is the Holy Spirit.

I think people are completely missed out on the main function of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to fulfill. Which is to make us think the way God thinks.

To make us look at circumstances, people, the way Jesus would look at them. That's the whole purpose. So then I begin to understand, this is what Jesus did.

Everything in life he would seek to do the way the Father wanted it. I can imagine as a little boy, if he was called by his mother. He was a 12 year old when he was playing baseball or whatever they played in Nazareth those days.

And when it came to his turn to bat, and his mother says, Jesus come here, I want to have some help. He would drop his bat and go. That can be the most difficult thing for a 12 year old boy.

Those are the works that he did. To do things that he didn't naturally want to do. Because he knew to please the Father.

This has application in husband wife relationships. Not what pleases me. It's an amazing statement in Romans 15 verse 3 that Christ never pleased himself.

Never once did he please himself. He didn't do what he felt would satisfy him or please him. If his mother sent him to get a bucket of water from the village well, he would take that wooden bucket and fill it up to the brim.

Not bring a half bucket or three quarter bucket. If he did a job, he did it perfectly. When he cried on the cross, it is finished.

It was a principle that characterized him all through his life. As a carpenter, if he made a table, it would be as perfect as any human being could do it. And if it took longer, he would work on it longer.

If it needed work over time, beyond the time he would close the shop, he would finish it. It was a principle, it is finished. It characterized his life.

He would never leave a job half finished. Or if he left it half finished, he would complete it the next day. He wouldn't deliver a table or a stool to somebody, to a customer, just half done or incomplete.

Everything in his life was like that. The works that I do, you can do also, if you are willing to deny your own will. And not please yourself.

This is what will distinguish us from the rest of humanity. The rest of humanity will only work in a way that so long as people think I am doing my job, that's enough. But Jesus, that was not enough.

Can God certify about it? Approved. That's what I learned from the first chapter of Genesis. Every day, it says God made something and he examined his own work.

Imagine God doing a thing and examining his own work. And it says he saw it was good. And the next day he did something, God examined it and said it was good.

I look at my life and I say, I have done something today. God must examine it. Say, that was good.

Do you do your work like that? That's how Jesus did his work. Every single day of his life. Christian life is very simple.

It's not a tense life. It's a very relaxed life. I remember when I was working in the Navy.

And I was a Christian. And I wouldn't take part in all their extracurricular cultural activities like drinking and dancing and all that. But I felt as a Christian I was doing every bit of my job on that ship perfectly.

And the commanding officer, when he had to write my annual report at the end of the year, he said to me, Lieutenant Poonen, I can't find a single thing wrong with your work. But you're so unsociable. Don't mix with people.

So I said, Sir, I don't do my work to please you. I'm a Christian and I do my work to please God whether you look at me or don't look at me. I do my work perfectly.

But I don't have time for some of these activities other officers engage in. I believe that all of our work must be before God. When I study the Bible, I don't do it to ease my conscience.

Oh, I must read the Bible today. No. I want to know God's mind.

I want to know God's mind. And I want to know how can I do it in the way he wants it done. How can I glorify God? If I were to ask you, how many of you want to glorify God? All of us would raise our hands and say, yes, I want to glorify God.

But listen to this, John 17, verse 4. At the end of Jesus' life, again you find that spirit of it is finished. Which he finally said on the cross. I have glorified you on earth, John 17, verse 4, having finished the work that you gave me to do.

I am very thankful that God has opened my eyes to see more and more as I have grown in the Lord. That there is a specific task God has given me to do. And if I listen to him, I will do it.

I think of that story, I remember 50 years ago as a young Christian, the Lord pointed me to one verse in scripture that he has reminded me for 50 years consistently. Many times on my birthday, I would ask the Lord, Lord do you have a word for me? And he would refer me to that verse. Years later on my birthday, I would say, Lord do you have a word for me? He would refer me to that verse.

It was Luke 10, verse 42. One thing is needful. It's quite a verse.

When Jesus says one thing is needful, you better pay attention. It's not just for Brother Zach, it's for everybody. And what is that? Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

And the story is of Mary and Martha. Martha, very busy, doing a lot of sacrificial work for the Lord, not for herself. She wasn't cooking the meal for herself.

She was cooking the meal for 13 hungry men. And that requires a lot of work. To cook a meal for 13 hungry men who had come to visit her home.

As soon as Jesus came with his disciples, she went into the kitchen and started working. You would commend her. And she was disturbed there because Mary was not helping her.

And she comes to complain to Jesus. Jesus says, Martha, the problem is with you. You're concerned about a lot of things I'm not bothered about.

She could have said, Lord, I'm doing all this for you. But it's not what I want. What is Mary doing? She was sitting at his feet and listening.

That doesn't sound more spiritual than serving the Lord, does it? How many of you would think that somebody who spends his time sitting at Jesus' feet listening is doing something more important than somebody else who is serving, busy, morning till night, running around, doing this, that and the other for the Lord. Well, I hope you will get a well done, good and faithful servant when you stand before him. It's not that Mary didn't serve.

But she listened before she served. Because she didn't come here. We are not sent here on earth to do something for God.

Don't just waste your time. Go and do something for God. We get all worked up.

Yeah, I better do something for God. It sounds very spiritual. I've discovered, at least for myself, that's not what God wants me to do.

The works that I do, shall he do also. In the fullness of time, God sent his Son. God could wait for 4,000 years and see millions of people go to hell.

He never sent his Son. Jesus could come to earth and live for 30 years and not do a single thing to save a soul. Can you understand that? Not if you are a Martha.

You will if you are a Mary, if you have understood the one thing needful. And I'll tell you something. When we stand before the Lord, you will discover that the Mary's accomplish more in terms of eternal values than the Martha's.

Though on earth, the Martha's have more statistics that impress people. It's not a very popular message. You probably never hear anybody else speak about it.

But I must be faithful to my calling. It's not all there is in Scripture. I always say I'm a very imbalanced person because I'm only one member in the body of Christ.

And I don't say once you listen to me, you shouldn't listen to anybody else. You should. But this is one part of Scripture, like I said yesterday.

God's called me to teach the things that other people do not teach in Scripture. Not outside of Scripture. There's no revelation outside of Scripture that I get.

But I find a lot of things in Scripture that are not emphasized. Like some of the things I'm saying right now. Jesus, Mary heard.

You know, Jesus taught us, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. As the first prayer of mine should be, Lord, let your name be glorified. I prayed that for years in India.

Lord, I want your name to be glorified in India. I don't know how it will be. But I want it to be done.

How did Jesus glorify him? I've glorified you by finishing the work which you gave me to do. Not the work that a whole lot of other people felt I should do. Not the work that I felt I should do.

The work you gave me to do. And that's what Mary was waiting for. Lord, I want to listen to you.

And I want to do what you tell me to do. Is it possible to hear God's voice? In my younger days, I worked with a man of God in India called Brother Bhaktsingh. I consider him the greatest man of God I've ever met in India.

He died many years ago. It was my privilege to know him when I was in my early twenties. Now, he was converted from a Sikh background.

You know, violently against Christianity. Before he was converted, having torn the Bible and all that. And then he got converted.

And he started reading the Bible. And I remember him saying, when he read the first chapter of the Bible, the thing that struck him was this phrase, and God said, and God said, and God said, and God said, and God said. I read that so many times, it didn't strike me like it struck him.

But the way it struck him was, boy, the God of these Christians is a God who speaks. Whereas the God I was worshipping never spoke to me. Is your God a God who speaks to you? Who tells you what you should do? Like Mary could hear? Or is it one of these other Gods that never tells you what you should do? Are you one of those who hear men, but you can't hear God? What is the message in the first chapter of the Bible? Every day, God speaks.

He who was yours to hear, let him hear. People are too busy to hear, that's why. There's a very lovely prophetic reference to Jesus in Isaiah 50, in verse 4, that says, in the middle of that verse, the Lord God awakens me morning by morning, Isaiah 50 verse 4, it's a prophetic reference to Christ.

He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple. So Jesus heard the Father every day. Who are you? Who do you deny to say, I don't need to hear him every day? Now I'll tell you something, this is not referring to a quiet time.

It's good to have a quiet time. If you have the time for it. But, this is not referring to that.

It's saying here that he woke me up in the morning to listen and kept my ear open throughout the day. He was listening the whole time, he was having a quiet time the whole day. Inwardly, listening as a disciple.

And because he listened, the Lord gave him, first part of verse 4, the tongue of a disciple to have exactly the right word for every single person who came across his path. You don't have to be a preacher for this. The weary one, the first part of verse 4. How many weary people come across our path? The path of every believer.

Weary unbelievers, weary relatives, weary believers. What they need is a word from God. Not a sermon.

A word from God that would really lift them, help them, deliver them. And here Jesus had a word because he listened. His attitude always was, speak Lord, I'm listening, I'm listening, I'm listening.

And because he kept on listening, he always had a word for anybody who came to him anytime, whether it was a crowd or an individual. Whether it was a single woman of Samaria or an academist or 10,000 people. He had a word for them because his whole life he was listening.

He did his father's will, whatever he did. We can also do, but we can only begin by listening. And as we listen, we can do his work.

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in my life on earth.

As it is done in heaven. How is it done in heaven? I mean Michael doesn't, Archangel Michael doesn't tell Gabriel, come on, go and do something for God. Don't just sit around doing nothing.

No. They wait upon the Lord for ages. That's how God's will is done in heaven.

And God says, Gabriel, I want you to go down to Nazareth and speak to that girl. Or speak to Zechariah the priest. He goes down and finishes that.

Comes back before the Lord. What shall I do next? That's how the angels do the will of God in heaven. And that's why they accomplish so much with so little.

And that's why the work remains. Jesus said, I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. And I have meditated on that.

Lord, that's the way I want to do your will. I want to do your will not the way I think I should do it. But thy will be done in my life as it is done in heaven.

And that's why Jesus said about Mary. One thing, Mary has chosen that good thing which shall not be taken away from her. Sat at Jesus' feet and listened.

The other thing Jesus said in John 14.12 was, Greater works than these shall he do. Not just the works that I do. I've explained that part.

Greater works than these. What is the greater work than Jesus did? Something beyond what he did. Is it possible? Again, if I were to ask the average believer, can you tell me the greatest work Jesus did on earth? Well, they would say he died on the cross.

Well, I can't do that. I certainly can't do a greater work than dying on the cross for the sins of the world. So what else? He raised Lazarus from the dead after three days.

What's a greater work than that? Go to the graves and raise up somebody who has been dead for five days? I don't know of a single believer I met like that in my life who has done it. But yet, here it says everyone who believes in him will do it. This must be something that every single believer, not just some occasional apostle once in a century doing it.

No. This is something that every believer can do. Like I explained the first part.

Every believer can do the Father's will if he denies his own will. If he wants to please God and not please man. And every believer should be able to do this greater work.

And I meditate on it and I see there's only one work that Jesus could not do in his lifetime. He could not make his eleven disciples one. Despite all his effort, for three and a half years, they listened to the greatest preacher that ever walked on the earth.

The man who lived every word that he preached. And at the end of eleven years, their discussion was, when he dies, who's going to be the next leader? You or me? Can you imagine? What a pathetic situation. Jesus had prayed many times, more than John 17, Father I pray there will be one, there will be one, there will be one.

Like you and I are one. And they were not one. They were still competing with one another.

Who's greater? You or me? Who's going to sit at the right hand of Jesus and the left hand of Jesus? You or me? We better grab those seats before anybody else grabs them. This is how they were. Had they forsaken all? Sure.

They've given up jobs and professions, like many of you have. They were utterly dedicated. They'd sacrificed.

Peter could have made a lot of money as a fisherman. Matthew could have made a lot of money as an accountant in the Roman government. He quit that job.

In spite of that, they were not one. I've seen multitudes of missionaries who've come to India, Christian workers in India, who've sacrificed for the Lord, who've given up jobs, just like Matthew, just like Peter, just like James, and just like John, but they're not one with each other. There's competition, there's jealousy, there's strife.

Just like pre-Pentecost days. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was one of the purposes, was to fuse them into one body. I picture the baptism in the Holy Spirit like a furnace into which 120 pieces of iron were put in and they came out as one piece of iron, melted and made into one.

That's another purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But how cleverly the devil has led people astray and made this such a controversial subject. Greater works than these shall he do.

Jesus said, after I'm gone. Why couldn't Jesus make them one? Only one reason. Those disciples did not have the Spirit dwelling within them.

And if the Spirit is not dwelling within them, if they are not full of the Holy Spirit, it's impossible to make people one. No matter how much they know the Bible, no matter how much they want to be one, they will not be one. I mean, think of Christian husbands and wives.

Forget larger number of 11 or 12 or 100. How many Christian husbands and wives are one with each other? Who claim to be filled with the Spirit. Husbands and wives who speak in tongues.

They are not one with each other. Is that important? If you want to know its importance, read John 17. And try and understand the heart of Jesus.

As I told you, the burden God's given me is not necessarily the burden God's given other parts of the body, because we have different functions. And I see the need for others, whether they see the need for me or not. I see the need for other members of the body.

But I will not do the function of other members, and I'm not going to change what God's called me to do. I picture evangelism and other ministries in the body, evangelism, prophecy, teaching. I told you how God's put apostles, prophets, evangelist teachers.

I look at it like this. What is the purpose of evangelism? It is not to take people to heaven. It is to make someone who is not a member of the body of Christ, a member of the body of Christ.

That's how I see it. That is the full good news. So here is someone who is not a member of the body of Christ, non-Christian, atheist, barbarian, or whatever it is.

It's not just to get his soul saved and take him to heaven, but to make him a member of the body of Christ on earth. That is the goal. Otherwise we could just save them and say, okay, forget it, now we move on to the next person.

Yet Paul and Barnabas didn't do that. After they brought people to Christ, you read in Acts 15, they said, let's go back and see how they are getting along. You say, Paul, what do you mean go back? Look at the rest of the world that has not heard the gospel.

What are you wasting your time going back to these people? They have already heard it. Were they wrong? To take a person and make him a member of the body of Christ, I picture it like this. I think in illustrations and it helps me a lot.

Here is a potato, picture of an unbeliever. Here is my body, picture of the body of Christ. Now I have to make that potato a part of my body.

How do we do it? The first step is evangelism. The eye. Seeing.

The hand. Taking that potato. Putting it inside.

The mouth. This is evangelism. When you put it inside the mouth, does it become a part of your body? You can keep it there for years.

It will just rot. Okay. The mouth chews.

The throat swallows. It goes down to the stomach. Has it become a part of your body? You can stuff your stomach with potatoes if they are not digested.

You will vomit it all out. It is exactly what is happening today in a lot of evangelism. People are asked to say the magic words, Lord Jesus come into my heart.

Get baptized and you are a Christian. Okay, that's it. If we endure to the end, we will be saved.

Hebrews 3.14 says, We are made partakers of Christ. If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm until the end. A lot of people who say they are not Calvinists are actually Calvinists when it comes to their evangelism.

Without a doubt. It is almost as though we don't have to hold fast firm until the end. I have a certain understanding of eternal security which I have found from scripture.

I have written an article on it. If you go to our CFC India website and go to the articles you will find an article on eternal security. If you want to know a fuller study on that.

If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm until the end. This potato has to become a part of my body. And it has to be chewed.

It goes in the stomach and the stomach throws all the acids on it. That's not very comfortable. This is a very gentle action, taking the potato and putting it in the mouth.

But to have acids thrown on it, to break it down is no longer a potato. That's prophetic ministry. Not very comfortable.

But it breaks it down and smashes it and crushes it and lo and behold in a few weeks that potato has become flesh and blood and bones. Miracle. Become part of my body.

And nobody can take it out and make it a potato again. So I see, which ministry was the most important here by the way? Could anyone do without the other? Why is the church called a body? I was mentioning how God gives each of us a specific responsibility. The great danger is thinking that ours is the most important.

I've seen that all over Christendom. The hand can think this is the most important part of the body. How in the world will that potato ever get into this mouth if I don't take it? I believe the hand is the first ministry.

I don't believe it is the most important. And in fact I don't believe any ministry is most important. The head is most important.

That I agree. Who controls everything. But there are so many different functions.

Even in evangelism I've discovered very often the last link in the chain gets the credit. I mean there may have been a hundred links in that chain. Maybe five years ago somebody gave him a tract and somebody else he saw Christ like in his office.

And he led so many people to Christ. Really? He'll discover in the day of reward that there were 99 other people before him who influenced that man till this man had the privilege and the joy of leading him to Christ. So it's good for us to humble ourselves and acknowledge Lord you've given me a function I want to fulfill it.

But I'm only one member. Let this be just one little member one teeny weeny member of the body of Christ fulfilling my function faithfully. And how do you know what your function is? The burden God gives you in your heart is the ministry God has chosen for you.

And you'll find fruit in that ministry. I have a tremendous respect for Mother Teresa. I don't agree with her doctrine.

She was a Roman Catholic. I personally believe she was a born again Christian. I read her writings and boy she really knew the Lord in some areas far better than me.

Sacrificed far more than I've ever done. I think she'll be miles ahead of me in God's kingdom. But I'll never do what she did.

I wouldn't join her organization despite my tremendous respect for her. I think she did a great work. She presented Christ in a unique way to India in a way I wonder if anybody else has done.

Sadhu Sundar Singh was another great saint in India. In my childhood I had tremendous respect for Sadhu Sundar Singh. Read his biography.

I couldn't do what he did. He was a bachelor. He was unmarried.

There were a lot of things he could do. Married men can't do. But that was his unique ministry.

Very important member of the body of Christ. Each of us has a specific function. It may not be as spectacular as Sadhu Sundar Singh's or Mother Teresa's.

I don't know how many people Mother Teresa actually brought to salvation. I don't know. I'm not the judge.

God will take care of all that. But she sought to present one aspect of the life of Jesus to India. Compassion and care for the poor.

I think if Jesus were walking in the streets of Calcutta I think he would help some of those poor people like Mother Teresa did. I walked the streets of Calcutta or Bangalore and I don't do what she did. Do I feel guilty? I don't.

Many of you have gone to India. Do you do what Mother Teresa did? When you see the beggars on the streets? Does that mean you're unchrist-like? I don't feel condemned. I say Lord you've given me a ministry.

I have to do that faithfully. And I don't compare myself with others. I'm glad to recognize other people's ministries.

They're probably doing a better job than I am. Fine. But I can still only do my job.

You have to do that which God called you to. If he gives you a burden he will indicate that is and the anointing God gives you the Holy Spirit is to fulfill that particular burden that particular calling that you have in the body. The wonderful thing about the human body is every little part knows its job.

And it's prompted by the head. And it cooperates with others. Is it possible for two people to work together? Here are two hands that have never once had a fight in 71 years.

Isn't that great? Have you met two believers who've worked together for 71 years? Is it possible? What does it mean to be in a body? They're different. Completely different. Look at this.

In one the thumb is on the left in the other the thumb is on the right. Have you found anything more opposite than that? Imagine if these were both the same. It would be pretty odd.

God puts us together with people who are very different from us. I remember years ago I sought the Lord. I asked the Lord some questions like a little child.

I said, Lord, there are 31,175 verses in the Bible. If you could add just another 10 more verses and explain whether speaking in tongues is for everybody or not. What is the mark of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is infant baptism scriptural? What is the right form of church government? Just 5-10 verses on this.

So many controversies in Christendom would not have existed. Just 10 more verses. I said, Lord, didn't you know all this would happen in 2000 years? Of course he knew.

Why didn't you add those 10 verses? And the Lord said to me, because if you see eye to eye with everyone it is easy to love one another. I want to show my love. I want to manifest how you can love one another when you don't see eye to eye with each other.

There is a wisdom of God that God is showing to the angels through the church. Did you know that? That we are witnesses? The Bible speaks in Revelation 12-11 about giving our testimony to Satan by the word of our testimony. I always encourage people to give their testimony to Satan.

Tell Satan, I don't belong to you, Satan. I resist you in Jesus' name. I tell every new convert when they come to Christ to say that to the devil to be free from him.

We have to give our testimony to people. We give our testimony to unbelievers. To the devil, to unbelievers, we give our testimony to believers.

We have a testimony to angels too. It says in Ephesians 3 and verse 10 that the manifold wisdom of God is made known through the church to the spirit beings in the heavenly places. That refers to good angels, bad angels who are seeing the amazing wisdom of God in the church.

What is that? God says look at these two believers completely opposite and they even have differences of opinion on some of these doctrines but they love one another. One speaks in tongues and one doesn't and they love one another and they work together. That's the wisdom of God.

Look at this husband and wife so different from each other brought up in different ways. One is so slipshod leaves everything lying around here and there. The other is so neat and tidy but they don't fight with each other in the home.

Boy, and the angels say that's amazing. That is what Jesus could not do. Look at these gifted men but nobody is competing for leadership.

Everybody is saying if I can take the last place in that and be a servant or somebody comes later on to join that church or that organization and he is made a leader over this other person who has been there for so long and that other person is not jealous not disturbed he is so happy to be a servant to serve this other junior brother who came ten years after him. Like you know Paul who became an apostle ten years after Peter rebukes Peter for something and Peter says thank you Paul that was a blessing. You read how Peter writes about I mean that incident is in Galatians 2 but you read about how Peter writes about Paul in 2 Peter 3 our beloved brother Paul according to the fantastic wisdom God has given him has spoken about certain things that are difficult to understand.

I mean Peter himself struggles to understand some of those things that Paul wrote. He is a humble who is this man Paul ten years junior to him and you rebuked him publicly for something Peter did wrong. Boy that's not the same Peter who sat at the last supper wondering whether he is the leader.

God had done something. Has God been able to do that in you? Has he succeeded in making you one at home with your husband and your wife? At least from your side I mean you can't do anything about the other part. If your wife or husband doesn't cooperate then you are not responsible but from your side are you willing to die and say Lord I am willing to die to myself I never want to do my own will.

I don't want anything from myself. Are you willing to work with others who are different from you? Allow them to go ahead. Allow the person who comes in the eleventh hour to get the reward first and rejoice.

Even though you came in the first hour and you bore the burden and the heat of the day. That is true Christianity. And I will tell you something it is very rarely seen in the United States or in India.

I often think a lot of evangelism is an incomplete work. The potatoes in the mouth are in the stomach. It's not being made a functioning part of the body.

Because we have valued one ministry more than another. We should not be guilty of that. God wants us to work together for the glory of the head.

None of us are indispensable. God's work I often say to myself God's work went on in this earth long before I was born. It will carry on long after I am gone.

I am here for a short period of time. One small teeny weeny person among all of God's millions of servants. I got to do my job and move on.

God's work will go on. Years ago I read a piece of poem a poem which says if ever you think you are indispensable I don't remember the exact words of the poem but the message in the poem was this any day you think you are indispensable do this. Very practical instruction.

Take a bucket of water put your hand right inside it this is the indispensable man and pull it out and the hole that is remaining will be how much you are missed when you are gone. That's it. None of us is indispensable.

We may have outstanding gifts God's given me a gift but I am not indispensable. John the Baptist said God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones. God's given us something let's be grateful thankful walk in humility say thank you Lord for the privilege in my short lifetime on earth to do a little bit for the body of Christ as an expression of my gratitude to you for having died for me on the cross.

That's it. But let it never go to our heads to think that what we are doing is the most important ministry of the body of Christ. It is an important ministry, yes.

Every one of us. The helps they are an important ministry too. But to recognize that I need you you need me.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we are so slow at learning have mercy upon us. We hinder your work so much in our homes in the church in your work but we want to learn to do it better.

Fill us with your spirit. Give us more of the mind of Christ. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/dbStjTnW2S4.mp4>

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