

Don't Neglect This Great Salvation

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not neglecting the salvation we have received, urging believers to press on to perfection by overcoming sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. It warns against willful sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, highlighting the severe consequences of neglecting God's grace and mercy. The focus is on looking to Jesus as our example and forerunner, who endured the cross and overcame, encouraging believers to fix their eyes on Him and run the race with perseverance.

Scripture: Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 4:12, Hebrews 2:14, Hebrews 3:17, Hebrews 10:26, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Perseverance in Faith", "The Consequences of Neglecting Salvation"

Description

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Transcript

In this church, we are not afraid or ashamed to repeat a message any number of times. When can we say that we have heard enough of a particular message, only when we have experienced it fully in our lives? And until we have experienced something fully in our lives, we need to hear it again and again. So, for many years, we have had in the front of our pulpit here the words, let us press on to perfection.

And that has been one of the distinctive features of what we have preached in this church for 42 years. But it's very easy to slip from that. There are people who accuse us saying, you people think you are perfect.

I say, that's because you don't read English properly. What does it say there? It doesn't say we are perfect. We are saying, we are pressing on to perfection, which is the clearest confession that we are not perfect.

It's like saying we are aiming for the top of the mountain, it doesn't mean we reach the top. It also doesn't mean we keep sitting at the bottom forever. And it also doesn't mean that because we made some progress and we are better than some others, that we stop there.

No, we are continuously pressing on to perfection. And I pray that every single person who comes to this church will have that as a goal in their life. No matter how far you have progressed, you will always have this word in front of you.

Let us press on to perfection, because that is the will of God for every single Christian. There was no perfection possible in the Old Testament, mainly because the Holy Spirit did not dwell within people. The Holy Spirit only equipped people in the Old Testament to preach, to prophesy, to predict the future, to tear lions in pieces, to defeat enemies, to kill Goliaths and things like that.

But to overcome sin? Not even one person. Not even the great Elijah, who would get depressed and go to a cave and say, Lord, take away my life. Not even John the Baptist, the greatest prophet who saw the Spirit coming upon Jesus and a little later he sends a word to Jesus, are you really the Messiah? Unbelief.

In the Old Testament, I don't blame John the Baptist or Elijah. They were a thousand times better than you and me, but they did not have the Holy Spirit within them. And therefore, because we have the Holy Spirit within us, we can rise higher than them.

To use an illustration I've often used, it's like saying because I have a computer, I can calculate things faster than Einstein, the great mathematician. It doesn't mean I'm cleverer than him, he was a hundred times cleverer than me, but I have a computer. Those Old Testament saints were far more wholehearted, but because I have the Holy Spirit, I can rise higher than them.

The question is, are you rising higher than those Old Testament saints? Or higher than David who said, I'll never give to God that which costs me nothing. Think of one statement, I'll never give to God that which costs me nothing. How many Christians say that? You have to rise higher than that if you are in the New Covenant.

So this phrase, let us press on to perfection, is found in the book of Hebrews. And that's a very important book for any Christian who is serious about pressing on to perfection, any Christian who is serious about understanding the New Covenant. So turn with me to that verse, if you're not familiar with where it is, you should be familiar by now, but it's in Hebrews chapter 6. And what it says there is, let us leave aside, verse 1, the elementary teaching about Christ.

And let us press on to maturity or perfection, means the same thing, the spiritual maturity, even if you're in the kindergarten, say start but aim for a PhD, spiritually. Don't aim to, I want to reach second standard, no. That's okay in the world, but not spiritually.

Wherever you are, you must aim for the highest. Let us press on to perfection, let's press on to maturity. And if you want to press on to maturity, you have to leave aside this elementary teaching about Christ.

And don't lay again a foundation, don't keep on polishing the foundation, let's build on the foundation. There are three pictures used here about perfection. One is in Hebrews 5 and verse, the previous two verses, 13 and 14, everyone who partakes only milk, spiritually, is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he's a baby.

Then what is he accustomed to? He's only accustomed to the word of forgiveness. I sin, I confess my sin, and I'm forgiven. That's milk.

And then I sin again, I confess my sin, and I'm forgiven. Remember, babies need milk, and you cannot stuff meat down a baby's throat. But if your baby is never going to go beyond milk, you can say it's not growing.

So a Christian who's only in this circle of, I sin, I confess my sin, and the Lord forgives me, and I sin again, and confess my sin, and the Lord forgives me, is a baby, and he's not ready for solid food. And there were Christians like that in the first century. And it is to such Christians that this writer is writing in verse 12 of Hebrews 5, he says the time has come when you should have been teaching others by now.

You should have been in a graduate college now, but you're still in kindergarten. Someone has to teach you again the elementary principles, and you need milk and not solid food. So the Holy Spirit is rebuking people who live in this endless cycle of sinning the same old sins, confessing the same old sins.

I'm not saying we don't struggle against sin, let me make that clear. We will struggle against sin till the end of our life. That's like saying a student struggles to understand CAT is cat, and BAT is bat in the kindergarten.

And when he gets to the PhD level at the age of 25, he's still struggling, but he's not struggling with CAT and BAT. He's struggling with post-graduate, post-post-graduate stuff in different subjects. So at every level of education, a serious student is struggling.

So we will be struggling with sin till the end of our life, but it should not be with the same old sins we were struggling with 20 years ago. You know, if your child in school is struggling with the same old mathematics problems that he was struggling with 10 years ago, you know that he's in the same class. He hasn't grown.

Now we would be terribly concerned if our children were in the same class, struggling with the same old things for 10 years, or even 2 years. But we don't seem to be concerned that we are struggling with the same old sins for 10-15 years. And that means we would tell such a child, you're not taking your studies seriously.

And I would say, you're not taking sin seriously. That's why. A child who takes his studies seriously, I believe, can go on from addition to subtraction, from subtraction to multiplication to division, definitely.

We've seen that with our children. Even with some who are not very clever, they move on. But those who are careless and who are not interested in their studies, they don't move on.

So we must face up to that, that if I'm not moving on, and always with the same old sins, it means I'm not serious about sin. Exactly the same word that you would say to your child, you're not taking your studies seriously. God says to us, you're not taking sin seriously.

That's why. And you will remain like that forever and ever. That's why the Bible speaks with finishing with anger, finishing with murmuring, finishing with grumbling, finishing with certain sins, so that we can move on.

So that's the point here. You're still needing milk. And if you only are interested in milk, verse 13, that means you're not accustomed to the word of righteousness.

You're only satisfied with the word of forgiveness. And then you're a baby. But solid food, verse 14 of chapter 5, is for the mature.

And maturity is a gradual process. We don't reach perfection till Jesus comes again, but it's constant growth until then. In the Old Covenant, it was not like that.

There was static. There was no growth in the Old Testament. No, you can't say that David grew spiritually.

In fact, I think David was a better disciple when he was looking after the sheep and writing psalms than when he was a king and committing adultery. Don't you think so? But Paul was different. Paul started off very low, but look how high he went.

So solid food is for the mature who, not by study. This is the important word here, by practice, their senses got trained to discern between good and evil. To discern between good and evil, that is a definition of spiritual growth, is the tree of life, discerning between good and evil.

The other tree is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is like a book or a preacher who tells you, this is wrong, this is right. This is bad for you, this is good for you.

You got a list and you follow that. A lot of churches have lists of what you should not do. You should not watch dirty movies.

You should not watch pornography. There is a list of do's and don'ts. It's like children.

You have to tell children, you can't take a knife, you are only two years old, you will hurt yourself. Don't put all those stones into your mouth. You have to give a lot of rules like that for children.

Wash your hands before you eat your food. So many things like that. Don't put dirty fingers into your mouth.

So many rules for children and that's knowledge of good and evil. But the mark of maturity in all of us is nobody has to tell you those stones, nobody has to tell you, a grown up person, don't put stones into your mouth and things like that. Because we have discerned, that's not good.

Not because somebody tells me, because I know it's not good. And that's the difference between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. The tree of life is where the life of God comes into me and I discern, hey that's not good.

You know a pig puts dirty stuff into its mouth and it enjoys it. If I put food into my mouth, which is even a few days old, spit it out because I know it's spoiled already. But not that pig.

What's the difference? He's got a tongue, I've got a tongue. But my tongue is more sensitive to food that has been spoiled, your tongue too. But the pig's tongue is not disturbed by it, it's perfectly happy, it eats all type of rubbish.

That's the difference between one who is, it's not a question of tongue, it's a question of discerning, discerning. One person discerns and as you grow spiritually, there are more and more finer things that you discern, hey this is not right for me, this is not right, it's not right to speak like that to my wife, it's not right to speak like that even to a beggar. This is discerning, this is becoming more and more spiritual.

I was a bit unwise there, I need to go and apologize. That's discernment. People without discernment never apologize, they never feel they ever did anything wrong and I've met people like that.

They have not grown spiritually, that's the problem. They've got knowledge of good and evil, they don't do any of the serious things like putting mud in their mouth. But discernment, I'm sorry to say, there are many brothers and sisters who after many, many years have not grown in discernment.

The list of good and evil increases as they hear a message. They hear a message, oh that's one more, I've got to add to that list. Many of us got a big list of good and evil and we add to that as we hear something.

That's not discernment, that's being a child, it's second best. That they had in the Old Testament, they had 613 commandments, don't do this, do this, don't do this. That's the Old Covenant.

In the New Covenant it is discernment. I don't need those things because I have the Holy Spirit within which says, no, don't do that. You know, if you're watching something on the computer or television, you don't need a law which says that's not good.

The Holy Spirit immediately says, that's not good for you to watch, turn away from that. Or you're reading something, the Holy Spirit says, don't read that. That's discernment.

And the more, the closer you get to perfection and to God, the more sensitive you become to unhygienic things, spiritually unhygienic. That comes through discernment. That is pressing on to perfection.

So never be satisfied that you have a lot of knowledge, you can explain a lot of doctrines, it doesn't mean anything. If you're not able to discern between good and evil, in the way, by the life of God, I want to say to you, you're not growing. And you won't be able to help others spiritually either.

See for example, the Bible says, in the glory of God is seen in Jesus full of grace and truth. Now how to find the balance in there? You can make a list of things, these are things I shouldn't do, these are things I should do, because I have to be both grace and truth. That's the knowledge of good and evil tree.

But when the Holy Spirit gives us discernment, you come to a situation and you know, well here I have to be firm. That's discernment and people who are living by the law will never be able to understand that. Because the law doesn't tell you all those things.

They've got their 613 commandments and this is not in that list. So how do they know? But the one with discernment doesn't need a list of 613, he can have 600,000 commandments are not needed. He's got discernment all the time.

Hey, there I've got to act firm. And here I've got to just let it go. That only comes through a knowledge of God.

There's no way one brother can teach another brother. You can watch a godly brother doing certain things and try to imitate it. Good.

It's second best. But the best is if you can understand how did he come to that knowledge? He came through a knowledge of Christ. He pressed on to know Jesus more and gradually he discerned.

And you'll see when you act on discernment, God bears witness to your actions. The way we bring up our children, how do we know when to be firm and when to let it go? You can have a rule book. You can read all types of books on bringing up children.

It will not give you that wisdom. It's knowledge of God that brings discernment where the Lord says, you've got to be firm here. You've got to let that go.

It is impossible for any human being to teach you that. Can another person give you that sense in your tongue, no matter how much he instructs you? This is good food. This is bad food.

No. You've got to have that sense in your tongue. Mud is bad, which a one-year-old doesn't understand.

Or this food is spoiled. So discernment is like that. It is very, very important.

My dear brothers and sisters, this is spiritual growth. And if you are not growing in discernment of what is divine and what is human, what is a human way of reacting and what is the divine way of reacting to that? If we don't discern that, we're not growing. This is why earlier in chapter 4 of Hebrews, Hebrews is a great book.

It speaks about in verse 12, Hebrews 4.12, the Word of God is living and active. Now when we think of the Word of God, we think of the Bible. That's good.

It is the Word of God. But I'm thinking now of the Word of God that proceeds from God's mouth. Jesus said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds, continuously proceeds from God's mouth.

Not that proceeded from God's mouth 2,000 years ago when the Bible was written. No. Man shall live by every word that proceeds, present tense, from God's mouth.

I need to hear what God is saying now through the Bible or through the Holy Spirit. Two ways God speaks. But it must be a word that proceeds from God's mouth where I read something in the Bible and something hits me.

It's a living word. That word is living, Hebrews 4.12, and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it pierces through to the dividing of what is human and what is divine.

That's the meaning of dividing of soul and spirit. The Word of God, if you're really listening to God's Word that comes through your conscience the Holy Spirit, and through the Word of God through the Holy Spirit, it will show you where your reaction is a human reaction, and where your reaction is a godly, Christ-like divine reaction, and where what you're planning is a human type of plan, and where what you're planning is according to God's will. Who can explain that? You can go to an older brother for advice, and he can advise you concerning a particular situation.

But we face numerous situations every day sometimes in your office, in different places. The only way to know what to do is to be in touch with God and to have that discernment that the Holy Spirit gives. And I say, my dear brothers and sisters, covet this, covet it, covet it more than anything else.

I say, Lord, I want this, because this is the only way to grow, this is the only way I can save myself from making a mess of my life, and creating all types of problems for myself and my family and my place of work, by discernment, discernment, discernment. God wants to give it to us. And that is why I say you must always, always keep a clear conscience.

If you don't keep a clear conscience, you will not have this voice of God coming clearly to you. He, later on, he says, you know, in chapter 5 and verse 11, there's so much we have to say concerning Jesus, of

Jesus coming in the flesh, and it's very hard to explain. Because you people are not intelligent? No! You're all very intelligent, but you're dull of hearing the voice of God in your heart.

He was writing Jewish Christians, the word Hebrews itself means Jewish Christians, and Jews are some of the most intelligent people in the world. Everybody knows that. So it's not lack of intelligence.

He says, you guys have got a lot of intelligence, but you're dull of hearing, you can't hear God's voice in your conscience. Why can't you hear God's voice in your conscience? Because there is some unconfessed sin, there's somebody you have not asked forgiveness from. You hurt somebody, and you never asked forgiveness from that person.

You become deaf, or you haven't forgiven somebody who hurt you long ago. You haven't released that person. Inwardly you're catching him by the throat, okay.

You become dull of hearing. What have you gained? A little grudge against that person. What have you lost? Spiritual discernment.

And when you get into eternity, you will say, oh Lord, what a fool I was to sacrifice these things just so spiritual for something so valueless, earthly stuff. I hope we will be wise in this church with all that we hear. So he says, concerning Jesus, we have so much.

It's hard to explain because you become dull of hearing. So Hebrews 4.12 says how this division comes between soul and spirit. That means it shows me what is divine and what is human.

You know, there were so many things that Jesus did which others couldn't explain. For example, we read once that he came into the temple and walked around and saw everything and went home. And the next day, he came into the temple and looked around and he took a whip and chased everybody out.

How is that? They were not sinning more on the next day than the previous day. And then why is that? That's a good example to see. Turn with me to the Gospel of Mark.

Because Jesus is our example. So when we look at his life, we see how he acted in Mark chapter 11 and verse 11. Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple and he looked around at everything.

You see that? He looked around at everything and he left for Bethany because it was late. On the next day, he left Bethany and verse 15, he came back to Jerusalem and he entered the temple and immediately he began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, overturned the tables of the money changers and seats and tubs and he wouldn't permit. What happened between those 24 hours? That's what I mean by discernment.

If you live by law, it is you shall never drive out the money changers or you shall always drive out the money changers. That's how people live under the law. I must always do this, this is the right thing to do.

Never do that, that's the wrong thing to do. Jesus never lived like that. He lived by every word that proceeds from the Father's mouth.

He saw all the evil that was being done. The Father said, nothing, okay, I do nothing then. And the next day also, he would have done nothing if the Father had said nothing.

But the next day he came in, the Father said, act now, and he did. And do you think the disciples understood that? No, they thought he must have lost his temper. And the wonderful thing I see about Jesus is he never tried to explain to them, hey listen, I want you to know I've not lost my temper, because he was not interested in their opinion.

Do you ever try to explain to people, hey listen, I want you to know I didn't lose my temper, the Lord led me there. All this human justification, the Lord says to the Pharisees, you people are those who justify yourselves before men, because you want a good reputation before them, you want them to know that you didn't lose your temper, you're not satisfied living before God and God seeing that you didn't lose your temper, you want the opinion of men. No wonder we don't grow in discernment, because we care for the opinion of men so much.

I believe this is the trouble with so many preachers and so many servants of God today. They care for the opinion of men so much that they want to justify their actions and prove that they are not carnal. Jesus was never interested in that.

Never, never, never. When he sometimes said to the disciples, how long shall I be with you, you people of unbelief? He didn't afterwards try to explain, hey by the way, I wasn't getting upset, you know, I was just telling you something important. Never.

You'll never find him doing that because he was living before God's face. Why all this self-justification and explanation and all that? It's amazing how much we live before man's face. That's why we're dull of hearing, I'll tell you that.

When you live before God's face, you will not become dull of hearing, you'll become very sensitive because you're listening to only one voice, the voice of God. But you're also listening to what will that person think of me because of this action of mine or this thing that I said or this thing that I did. The easiest way to become spiritually deaf.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us press on to perfection. We all start at this low level, but we press on to perfection. We have to divide between soul and spirit, between what is human and what is divine.

In the book of Hebrews, turn back, it's a wonderful book. Here is a word which says this in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 3. I just want to pick out some verses in Hebrews which are really very, very important. Hebrews chapter 2 verse 3. How will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? Now the way that is normally preached is, how will you escape if you reject such a great salvation? This is not talking about rejecting, no.

These people have not rejected it. They have neglected it. Do you know the difference between rejecting a child and neglecting a child? Rejecting a child means, I don't want this child.

People have a baby born, a girl usually, they don't want it, they say we don't want it and they go and dump it outside some hospital or in some garbage bin for somebody else. That is rejecting. Neglecting is, you feed the child and take care of the child but you completely neglect the child.

You don't care for its development. There is a difference between rejecting and neglecting. I don't believe any of you have rejected God's salvation.

Who would want to do that? If this is the way to have eternal life and to go into God's kingdom. But neglecting it. Have you ever taken Hebrews chapter 2 verse 3 seriously? Have you ever felt Hebrews chapter 2 verse 3 could be referring to you? And that you can't escape.

A lot of people think, oh I can't escape hell if I reject the salvation. But what is the thing you will not escape if you neglect? Hebrews is not speaking about rejecting salvation. Hebrews is speaking about neglecting such a great salvation, which is more than any other salvation, which is not just salvation from hell, which is not such a great thing.

In Psalm 103, David said a thousand years ago that God saved him from hell. But this is something more. It's being saved from sin.

You shall call his name Jesus, first promise in the New Testament, Matthew 12:1. Because he will save his people from their sin. That is the salvation from sin.

Have you neglected it? You have not neglected salvation from hell. Have you neglected salvation from sin? How will you escape if you neglect being saved from anger? How many of you are fed up with getting angry? I used to get angry very frequently. I was just a normal child of Adam, by the way.

I wasn't born in some other race. I had anger, love of money, murmuring, crumbling, dirty thoughts, and name it. Everything that every human being has.

Because all flesh is the same. I always say my flesh is no different from the flesh of the suicide bomber, who goes and blows other people up. And the terrorists who go and blow buildings and airplanes.

My flesh is the same. Why is it I don't do it? Because my upbringing was different from that guy's. That upbringing protected me.

And that upbringing is what protected you. But it was a great day for me when I discovered that all flesh is the same. That saved me from looking down on somebody else, thinking that my flesh is superior to theirs.

There could be a lot of you sitting here, who look down on somebody else because you say, Oh, I'd never do that. Have you ever said that? I'd never do that. Or have you ever thought like that? I'd never do that, what that guy is doing.

That's because you think your flesh is different. It's not. It's because your upbringing was a little different and protected.

And because you came to CFC as a young kid, that's why you were protected. Otherwise you'd be just as bad as that suicide bomber or that terrorist. I believe that.

And that is what has put me down at the level of all human beings that has saved me from despising anybody. I say that before God. So there are two revelations you need.

One is that my flesh is the same as the flesh of all human beings. The second revelation I got was that Jesus came in my flesh and did not sin. That's what changed my life.

And that's what Hebrews speaks about. Very, very important to understand this. So that's what he says later on in chapter 2 and verse 14.

I was reading this just last week. And I've read it so many times, but it hit me afresh so strongly. Sometimes, you know, you meditate on the word of God and you get something.

Hebrews 2.14 Why did Jesus come in flesh and blood like us? Listen to this. Because the children have flesh and blood. That's why he came.

In flesh and blood. He didn't come like the angels. Because the children have flesh and blood, he took part of the same because otherwise he would not be able to die.

Angels don't die. If he had come like an angel, he couldn't have died. Some people say, Jesus was like Adam before the fall.

Really? But do you know that Adam could not die before the fall? No. It was impossible to kill Adam before the fall. It's only after the fall that death had power over him.

So that is a lie. The clever people say, Jesus was made like Adam before the fall. Then he could not have died.

No. He was made like us. He took part of the same flesh and blood.

So that he could die. Do you understand that? Do you know that Adam never had to, before he fell into sin, he never had to perspire. He could work ten days continuously and he would not perspire.

In the hot sun, he would not perspire. Not Jesus. Jesus would work 3-4 hours in the carpenter shop and he would be perspiring.

Why? Because perspiration is one of the parts of the curse that came on the human body. Did Jesus have a body like ours? Did he perspire when he worked? If he accidentally, while trying to hit a nail with a hammer, accidentally hit his thumb, like we have done, would it pain him? It wouldn't have pained Adam before the fall. There was no pain before the fall.

But if Jesus hit his thumb, he would have felt the pain. I am trying to show you how Jesus was just like you. And if a thorn got into Jesus' foot, would he have felt it? There were no thorns in Adam's time, but even if there were, it wouldn't have hurt him.

Jesus was not like Adam before the fall. He was made, in verse 17, in all things, like his brothers. It can't be clearer than that.

And yet, there are people who have not understood it, who fight it, who resist it, and they live their defeated lives. I lived a defeated life until I saw this wonderful truth, that Jesus was made like me, his brother, in all things. Who are his brothers? Jesus told Mary Magdalene on the day of the resurrection, Go to my brothers.

That's the first time he referred to the disciples as his brothers. Go to my brothers and say, I am ascending to the Father, to my Father and your Father. Nobody in the Old Testament could be a brother of Jesus.

Nobody could have God as their Father in the Old Testament. It's such a wonderful privilege, not only to say to God, my Father in Heaven, but to look at Jesus and to say, my elder brother. He was made like his brothers.

It says he had to be made like his brothers. In verse 14 it says, he had to take part in flesh and blood, so that he could die. And why did he have to die, verse 14? Because there was someone called the devil, who had the power of death.

Do you know that Satan had the power of death? Right from the days of Adam, he could kill people. Unless God stopped it. You know, when God allowed Satan to make Job, touch Job's body, he said, you can make him sick, but you can't kill him.

Why did God have to say that, if Satan could never kill anybody? God could have said, do whatever you like. If he had said that, he would have killed him. But God knew, Satan has the power of death.

So he said, you can't kill him, you can't do anything else. Satan had the power of death. It's a wonderful thing to see the truths of scripture.

And the only way that Satan could be defeated, so that that power of death will not come over us, is by somebody dying. That perfect human being dying. That's why Jesus had to come like us, and die.

So that, it says here, it's all here, that he can make the devil powerless, not kill the devil, but take away his power. Which power? The power of death that he had. He took it away, so that we, verse 15, might be free from the fear of death, because he doesn't have the power of death over me anymore.

Hallelujah. And how this fear of death has brought slavery, it says in verse 15, to human beings everywhere. Every human being in the world lives in a slavery to the fear of death.

Oh, I may get cancer, I may get this, I may get that, I may have an accident, I may have this, I may have that, I may die. Every human being lives in this. A lot of you are living in this, I think.

But do you know you're not supposed to live in the fear of death? That's why Jesus died. It's a wonderful thing to be free from the fear of death. And if you're not free from the fear of death, I think I'm older than almost everybody here.

I'm not afraid of death. No. I don't live in the fear of death.

Not at all. I'll tell you why. Not because I'm cleverer than you.

Because I believe that somebody died and took away that power of death from Satan. That's why. Why is it I don't live in guilt of my past sins? Same reason.

Somebody died and took away the punishment for my sin. The same somebody also took away the fear of death. But unfortunately, preachers don't preach that.

And if you had never heard that Jesus died for your sins, you wouldn't believe that either. You believe that Jesus died, that you might never fear death again? Because the one who had the power of death has been made, that power has been taken away from Satan? That is why Jesus had to take our flesh and blood. He couldn't come like Adam before the fall who could not die.

He couldn't come like angels. He had to come like us. So that he can free us, verse 15, who all our lives were enslaved to the fear of death.

I need not live in that slavery to the fear of death for a single day or a single moment. I never have to go to God like Elijah and say, Oh God, take away my life. Somebody is trying to kill me.

Queen Jezebel is coming. Now he is after me. No.

I can stand like Jesus before Pilate. And Pilate said, Do you know I have power to kill you? Jesus, I think he had a smile. No, you don't have that power.

Imagine telling a ruler who is trying to kill you. You don't have that power. Sorry.

I live under my father in heaven. And the only power you have over me is what he gives you. What a dignity.

My brothers and sisters, this is the dignity with which every child of God must walk on this earth. You live with the dignity of a child of God? Are you afraid to leave alone death? You live in the fear, my boss may sack me. Being fired from your job is not as bad as death.

You live in that fear. You know we are not supposed to live in fear because fear of death is the greatest fear. Fear of losing your job, fear of getting sick, fear of financial difficulty are all inferior fears.

You get rid of the top fear, you get rid of all the other fears as well. You know when David killed Goliath, it says all the other Philistines ran away. Have you read that? So if you kill the top giant, all the others will go.

It's the fear of death that is there in many many believers. And that's the reason why Jesus conquered death and rose up from the dead to prove that death did not have any power over you. You don't have to live in the fear of death.

Nobody conquered death till Jesus came. This is the wonderful message of the gospel. Let me show you something in Acts chapter 1. Very very important.

Acts of the Apostles. Before the day of Pentecost, Judas Iscariot had gone away, left the group of twelve, betrayed the Lord and committed suicide. And so Peter says that now we have to get one person to replace him.

Acts 1.21 It's necessary that of all the people who accompanied us, we must select one person to replace Judas Iscariot. That's the context here. Who will do what? Verse 22 Who will be a witness with us, not of his crucifixion, no, but of his resurrection.

I'm sorry to say, most Christians witness to the crucifixion of Christ. Their main message is, do you know Jesus died for your sins? It's true. But we are to be witnesses that Jesus rose from the dead and conquered death.

He didn't just die. See in that old hall that we have in Dacosta Square, we have a cross. A lot of crosses that you see in different places, you find Jesus hanging on it.

That's a lie. Such cross is not a lie, because he's not hanging on the cross. It's completely wrong to have a cross with Jesus hanging on it.

He came off that cross 2,000 years ago. That's why we wrote on that cross, Jesus Christ is alive today. Go and see that.

Why did we put that on the cross? To prove that he's not there today. He rose from the dead. That is our testimony.

It's very, very important. I don't know whether you guys have noticed it and the importance of that statement that you put on a cross, Jesus Christ is alive today. He's not hanging on the cross.

And that's the difference between the cross we have and the cross a lot of other people have in their homes and different churches. We are witnesses, not of his crucifixion, but of his resurrection. And always, the apostles spoke about being a witness of his resurrection, everywhere.

To be a witness of his resurrection. So, coming back to Hebrews, it says here, verse 17, He was made like his brethren in all things because that is the only way. Now, earlier on, it is written he had to take our flesh and blood because that's the only way he could die.

Why did he have to die? Because that's the only way he could take away the power of death from Satan so that we don't live in fear of death anymore. Now, here's another point. Not only he took our flesh and blood, that's one point, he had to be made like us in all things.

Why? Now he's not talking about delivering us from Satan's power. Now he's talking about delivering us from the power of temptation. He's already finished with talking about Satan's power.

Now, because then only, because he could be tempted, and verse 18, because he was tempted and he suffered in those temptations, suffered means he denied himself, he's able to help us when we are tempted. That's another thing. This is what Hebrews is talking about.

Telling us how we can press on to perfection. How we don't have to stay in the foundation. How we don't have to live drinking milk all the time.

We can press on. Jesus came in flesh and blood and died so that we might never live in fear of death. He was made like us in all things to become a high priest.

Not only to make propitiation for our sins, that's one thing. They deal with our past sins, but also, verse 17 is dealing with the past. Propitiation means he has satisfied God's anger against sin.

But secondly, so that now that we are tempted, now he's not talking about past sins. Now he's talking about the present tense when we are tempted. He can come, run to the aid.

What a beautiful picture. When I'm tempted, Jesus runs to come and help me. I'll tell you my testimony.

This is what changed my life when I believed Jesus was made like me. It took 16 years after I was born again. 16 years of defeat, defeat, defeat, defeat in all types of sins.

But born again. Till one day, I got so fed up. Not one day, over a period of time.

Fed up, fed up, fed up, fed up, fed up, fed up. And then God filled me with the Holy Spirit and opened my eyes to see you know, Jesus was made like you. That he can help you when you're tempted.

That you might not sin. That you might overcome. That you can rejoice not only in past sins forgiven, but in present temptations overcome.

That's what changed my life. And I can say that before God. It's been a different Christianity for me since then.

And that's the basis on which we built CFC. CFC was built not only on the foundation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also on the fact that Jesus was tempted like us. And is our forerunner.

One who went ahead of us. And in Hebrews chapter 3, it's all the same subject really. He says, I want to give you an example from the Old Testament, he says.

Verse 17. Hebrews 3.17. Why was God angry? Verse 16. He delivered people from Egypt through Moses.

Hebrews 3.16. But why was he angry with them for 40 years? Deliverance from Egypt is a picture of being saved from the power of Satan and Pharaoh. Pharaoh was a picture of Satan. After and going through the Red Sea is a picture of water baptism.

Here are people who are saved, baptized and God is angry with them. Do you believe that? Otherwise, what is the meaning of this? Why is he writing it here if it doesn't refer to us? Because they did not enter the promised land. That's why he was angry.

The unbelief. It says here, he was angry with them and their bodies perished in the wilderness. Why did their bodies perish? Because when God told them, go and conquer the land, kill those giants, I'll help you.

They said, no, no, no, they are too big for us. Exactly like many believers today whose sins are forgiven, who are water baptized, who had the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the cloud coming down from heaven upon them, but still are defeated by sin. Many people haven't understood the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What a tremendous deception the devil has put across the Christian world by saying, the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to make you speak in tongues. Absolute nonsense. I thank God for the gift of tongues.

But that's not the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. No. The pillar of cloud protected them from the heat of the sun.

Correct. The pillar of cloud at night was a pillar of fire, protected them and gave them light in the darkness. Correct.

But that was not the purpose. The baptism of the Holy Spirit may give me the gift of tongues and some excitement and all that, but that's not the purpose. That's only like the protection they gave to the Israelites.

The purpose of that pillar of cloud was to lead them into Canaan day by day by day by day by day to follow that and enter Canaan. That was the purpose of that cloud and they didn't understand that. And the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to lead us into the promised land where all the giants of sin are killed.

And that's why God was angry with them because when they came to the borders of the promised land, they said, no, no, no. Sin is more powerful than our God. You know, if I were to paraphrase what those ten spies who Moses sent told the people of Israel.

Oh, we are like grasshoppers when we think of sins like anger and murmuring. No, no, no, no, no. We cannot conquer them.

We cannot conquer them. They are too powerful for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot conquer them.

And God says, you insult the Holy Spirit like that? He gave them, he was patient with them for some time, then he said, you will never enter that land. You will perish in your defeated life all your life. How many years you've been hearing about an overcoming life? You've been hearing about overcoming sin, coming here to CFC week after week after week after week, and you don't even take these sins seriously.

And you don't believe that Almighty God, the power of the Holy Spirit can help you overcome those sins. You honor the devil by saying those sins are more powerful than your God. Except Caleb and Joshua.

They said with our God, these people will be like bread for us. We can eat them up. You read Numbers chapter 14 and God said because Caleb and Joshua had another spirit, I will lead them into the promised land.

That's what's mentioned here in Hebrews 3. How shall you neglect? They didn't reject coming out of Egypt. They neglected the salvation which was to take them into the land of Canaan. And I believe there are many people sitting here who have not rejected coming out of Egypt or the blood of the Lamb or water baptism, but who have neglected the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to lead you to conquer every giant that dwells in Canaan.

You know, I looked at the map of the land of Israel, the land of Canaan. And I said, hey, this looks so much like my body. From head to foot.

And that's where the giants are dwelling. The giants are dwelling inside this body. And God says, I want you to bring all those giants down and conquer their land.

Because they are not supposed to rule this land. God told Israel, I, Jehovah, am supposed to rule this land. Not these Canaanite giants.

And that's what the Lord is telling you. Anger is not supposed to rule your body. Grumbling, murmuring are not supposed to rule your body.

Telling lies are not supposed to rule your body. The love of money and the pursuit of, endless pursuit of wealth is not supposed to rule your body. Covetousness, always wanting more, much more than what you need is not supposed to rule your body.

Bitterness and unforgiving spirit is not supposed to rule your body. Dirty thoughts and lusting after a woman whom God has not given you is not supposed to rule your body. Looking at pictures of naked women who are not your wife.

What a terrible thing! Lusting, coveting is not supposed to rule your body or your eyes. Do you believe that? And yet you say, what to do brother? I'm so tempted. Even the mighty Holy Spirit is not able to conquer that.

You insult God by that and God says you'll never enter the promised land. You'll live there, you're defeated life forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. I'm warning you today my brothers and sisters, repent.

Repent for insulting God by saying that the Holy Spirit who you say is dwelling in you is not able to conquer this filthy sin which you know is filthy, which you know is dishonoring God and you keep on doing it and you keep on saying, no, no, no, I can't conquer it, I can't conquer it. You're insulting God and God is angry. Okay? I don't know whether a time will come, for those people a time came and God said, okay, finished, you guys are finished.

Maybe your children will enter the promised land but you will not. That's what he told those Israelites. 600,000 people.

It says God told them, you guys will never enter the promised land because I gave you enough chances. I gave you 10 chances. You read in Numbers 14, I gave you 10 chances.

Now you will not enter in. And they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Turn with me to that very serious passage in Numbers chapter 14.

He pleaded with, Moses pleaded with the Lord to forgive them. He said in verse 19, pardon I pray you father, please pardon the sin of these people. Just as you have forgiven the people from Egypt, until now you have kept on pardoning, pardoning, pardoning, pardoning, pardoning.

Please pardon once more. And the Lord says, verse 20, I have pardoned. But I want the earth to be filled with the glory of the Lord.

And so all these men whom I have pardoned already, your past is forgiven, yes, who have seen my glory and what I did in Egypt, you have put me to the test these 10 times. 9 times I forgave you. But this is the 10th time you will never enter this land.

But my servant Caleb, and that includes Joshua, verse 24, he had a different spirit, him I will bring into the land. And just like God said those 600,000 Israelites missed the bus, they couldn't get onto it. And you know afterwards, you know what happened? They said, oh we're sorry.

They see in the morning of chapter verse 40, same chapter, 1440, in the morning, I don't know whether you have noticed this, they tried to go into the land. They said, here we are, we have sinned, okay, we're ready to go. Just 24 hours later, they said, okay, we're sorry for what we did, we'll go in.

And Moses said, no, sorry, you missed the bus, you can't go now. If you go now, you'll be defeated. But they did not listen and they went, verse 44, these are the Israelites trying to go into Canaan, verse 44, and they went and the Amalekites, verse 45, and the Canaanites came down and struck them and beat them and hammered them and defeated them.

Did you notice that after the Lord, after Moses said you can't go in, they tried to go in? Just within 24 hours, it was too late. I've thought about that, that there is a time when you can provoke God to such an extent that God says, okay, you've just taken advantage of me too much, you're finished. You can be forgiven, but you'll never enter the land because you've never taken it seriously after all these years.

I don't know whether that happens today. I'm not here to decide that I'm not God. But I believe this, that the things that are written in the Old Testament are written for our instruction.

See, 1 Corinthians chapter 10, 1 Corinthians chapter 10, it says here, these things, verse 6, 1 Corinthians, happened as examples for us. So, verse 9, let us not tempt the Lord as some of them did or grumbled. These things happened as an example, verse 11, they are written for our instruction.

So, the one who thinks he stands, verse 12, take heed that he doesn't fall. All I say is, don't take advantage of God's goodness. There's a very serious word in Genesis in chapter 6, which I like to remind you of.

Genesis chapter 6, verse 3, My Holy Spirit will not strive with man forever, because he is flesh. So, his days are numbered. For that day, it was 120 years.

For the Israelites in the wilderness, it was 2 years. That's all. For us, I don't know.

It's different for different people. But those days, in the days of Noah, he preached and he preached, turn from your sin, turn from your sin, turn from your sin, 1 year gone by, 2 years gone by, nothing's happening, no flood, no judgment, 10 years gone by, 50 years gone by, Noah is still preaching, turn, turn, turn, nothing has happened, 100 years have gone by. People said, this old man is still preaching, turn from your sin, turn from your sin.

But then, the last day came. And it says, I don't know if you noticed, it's not Noah who shut the door. It says, God shut the door.

On the ark, you read that. Then they realized, when the rain started falling, hey, my spirit will not always strive with man. You keep on going, taking advantage of God's goodness, taking advantage, taking advantage, you keep on hearing, you keep on rejecting, rejecting, rejecting.

I want to tell you, God's spirit will not always strive with man. That proves you don't fear him. Jesus is our example.

Don't neglect such a great salvation. One or two more verses in Hebrews. We read in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 26.

First of all, verse 19 and 20. We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus. Verse 20.

By a new and living way, which Jesus inaugurated for us through his flesh, he was tempted like us, and he did not sin. He overcame, overcame, overcame, made a way for us to overcome. But, having heard all that, verse 26.

If you keep on sinning willfully. It's not if you accidentally fall. It's not talking about accidentally fall.

But you keep on sinning willfully. After you've received the knowledge of the truth. Is there anybody here who can say, I have not received the knowledge of the truth? If you've been coming here to CFC for a few years, boy, you certainly got a knowledge of the truth.

But after receiving the knowledge of the truth, we're not talking about those people who have not heard these wonderful things that you've heard here for so many years. But you heard these wonderful things, and you keep on sinning willfully. This is New Testament.

There no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. You say, Brother Zach, are you talking Old Testament stuff or New

Covenant stuff? By the way, this is not Deuteronomy. This is Hebrews.

This is not in the Old Testament. This is New Testament. He's talking about those who have entered the most holy place, verse 19 and 20, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way.

After coming there, they keep on sinning willfully. Then he says, OK, you talk about the law of Moses, those who set aside, verse 28, the law of Moses died without mercy. How much severer punishment do you think he'll deserve who's trampled underfoot the Son of God? These are verses which many people don't like to read.

God says, Vengeance is mine, I will repay. The Lord will judge, not the heathen, verse 30, the Lord will judge his people. It's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This is New Testament. Verse 39, but let us not be among those who shrink back to destruction. And then he goes on in chapter 12 to say, let us run this race with perseverance, chapter 12, verse 2, looking unto Jesus.

And that's what I want to conclude. Who endured the cross every day, despised all the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. We don't look at all these examples of people who have fallen away.

We look at Jesus who conquered and overcame. He's our Savior. And he's our forerunner.

And it's like a bride who longs to be with her bridegroom, a wife who loves her husband so much that even if he's going through a difficult path, she says, I want to stick with him. Even if it's poverty, she says, I want to stick with my husband. I love him.

And that's the picture here of one who wants to be with Jesus and looking at him and him alone. And not looking at half-hearted believers around. I want to encourage all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, please turn your eyes away from half-hearted worldly believers that you may see in CFC who've got habits that are shameful.

Okay. Forget them. They've heard enough.

Look at Jesus. Turn your eyes away from everything else and everyone else and say, Lord, I'm going to follow you. I'm going to press on to perfection.

I'm not going to live just with milk. I'm not going to just live with elementary things. I'm not going to just lay a foundation.

I want to press on and complete the building that you want to build in my life. And I tell you something. Here's the promise with which Hebrews concludes.

Hebrews 13 verse 5, the last part. He says, I'll never desert you. I will never forsake you, the Lord says.

So you can boldly say, the Lord is my helper. I'm not afraid of any giant. I will not be afraid.

What will any man do to me? What can he? No sin can stand against me. The Lord is my helper. Praise the Lord.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we know you want to make us more than conquerors, not just conquerors, more than conquerors because of Jesus who loved us. Thank you for this wonderful life.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you came in flesh and blood and died that we might never live in the fear of death. That you took away that power of death from Satan so that he cannot threaten us anymore. That we need not be afraid of Satan anymore.

And you came like us completely so that you could be tempted like us. I thank you, Lord Jesus, that you didn't come like Adam before the fall, but you came like me. That you could be tempted.

We don't want to waste our time analyzing that, but to see the encouragement we get from that. That as you overcame by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can also overcome in our daily battle against temptation and follow in your footsteps and little by little by little press on to lay hold of that wonderful prize, the goal which you have set before us to become like you completely. We know you will do this.

And Lord, I believe there are a number of us here whose faith is rising up at this moment to lay hold of this. And I pray that you would say to them, according to your faith, be it unto you. Amen.

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