

Everything Comes From God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of faith working through love, rooted in the assurance of God's intense love for us. It contrasts building our lives on man's ideas and abilities (wood, hay, straw) with building according to God's plan and power (gold, silver, precious stones). The speaker encourages seeking God's will, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and living to glorify God, drawing inspiration from Jesus and the Apostle Paul's examples of finishing the work God has given us.

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Scripture: Galatians 5:6, John 14:15, Ephesians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 3:10, John 6:38, 2 Timothy 4:7, Philippians 3:12

Topics: "Faith in Action", "Building on God's Foundation"

Description

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Transcript

I thought of this verse in Galatians chapter 5 verse 6. I'm sure we've all read it. We've all read Paul's letter to the Galatians and but I thought of just the last part of that verse. In Christ Jesus, circumcision, uncircumcision, these external actions and rituals like circumcision or we can say today, so many other things that we do means nothing.

But faith working through love. So all of our life must be faith working through love. And faith speaks of our confidence in our heavenly father, being ensured that he is really a loving father.

A lot of people seem to live with every now and then, having a doubt about it. I believe with all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, you have to come to a place where it's once and for all settled that God is a loving father. Otherwise, I find so many believers, they always sort of, sometime in their life they begin to behave like orphans.

They're not too sure, is God happy with me, is he angry with me. As long as you have all this uncertainty, you're really not going to make progress in the Christian life and I find a lot of believers don't make progress because their lives are not firmly established in faith and the foundation of faith that not only

Christ died for my sins and Christ was risen from the dead and ascended, but my father in heaven loves me intensely. Jesus sought all his life to try and impress that upon his disciples.

You are not orphans. The Holy Spirit has specifically come to remove from us that orphan syndrome or the orphan spirit. The early disciples had it and that's why even after they saw Jesus after his resurrection, they were still locked up in a door inside a room.

But when the Holy Spirit came, they were free and we have to see that the most loving, think of the most loving father there is on earth and multiply that by a million and you get a brief understanding of what God is like as a heavenly father. That is faith. Anything less than that is not the faith that the New Testament speaks about.

You know, this type of faith was not at all possible in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, they were constantly unsure. Does God love us or not? Have we paid our tithes properly? Is it exactly 10%? Did I pay only 9%? All these questions in their mind and everything was changed when the Holy Spirit came.

Jesus said, I will not leave you as orphans. I will send the Holy Spirit and one of the main functions of the Holy Spirit is to flood our hearts with the love of God and that initially means to be absolutely assured that God loves me, no doubt about it at all. Now, you may think this is a very elementary truth but it's sometimes these elementary things that we need to be more established in.

I know in my own personal experience as I've often said, and you probably heard me say that, that from the time I was born again 61 years ago, for the first 16 years, I wasn't really assured on this. I mean, if you had asked me, are you a born again, I'd say yes. Are you a child of God? Yes.

I had all the right answers. I could explain justification by faith. I was preaching and preaching many wonderful truths.

I knew about taking up the cross and all that. But this uncertainty of, does God really love me intensely? I slipped up here. What does God think of that? I did a little mistake there.

Is God upset with me? Is He angry with me? And when I examined my life in those days, as I look back now, it's all gone now. It's gone completely. But it took a revelation of God as Father.

I don't mean an explanation. There's a world of difference between revelation and explanation. Explanation is for the mind.

And very often, you know, even you can hear me now and you can get an explanation. God is Father. You being evil know how to give good things to your children.

How much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him? Yeah, yeah, we know all that. That's an explanation that it's logic. And that's all that Jesus could do in those days.

He used logic. If you earthly fathers know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him? Yeah, yeah, I understood that. But yet, in a moment of testing, the doubt comes in.

Is He going to let me down here? This prayer was not answered. Does He really love me? Or I slipped up here. Is He so angry with me now because I slipped up? I hurt Him.

I tell you, it's so important. And if father and mother are not assured in this, are not settled in this, you find the children also grow up with that type of insecurity. In the love of God, it's so important that our children grow up assured in God's love.

It's not a sort of a wishy-washy type of love that allows you to do anything you like. A loving father will not allow his children to do anything they like. The Bible says a loving father disciplines his children.

I thank God for God's discipline of me. But I never feel that it's out of anger. Never, never, never.

God is never angry with me. I'm absolutely sure of that. He's sometimes sad, and I hope as I walk with the Lord, He's less and less sad with my life, and more and more happy.

That's how it should be with us. But I don't know whether any of you have the feeling God is a bit angry with me because I did this or I didn't do the other thing. You need to be very careful.

Faith is the solid foundation. It's very, very important that we are established in this, and I feel that there's no extent to which I wouldn't go to emphasize this. We must be firmly established in it, and it's only the Holy Spirit.

I mean, beyond what I say, it's only the Holy Spirit can assure you. The Bible says the Holy Spirit comes within us and cries out, Abba, Father. It's an awareness.

So all I'm giving to you now is knowledge of the love of God. But it won't root you in it because tomorrow, next week, or next month, you'll forget all about it. But when the Holy Spirit takes these words and makes it revelation to your heart, it'll be very different.

My whole life changed when the Holy Spirit made it revelation in my heart. I wonder whether you brothers and sisters have a great longing to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said if anyone thirsts, I find lots and lots of believers don't have a desperate thirst to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's a laid-back attitude in their life. Yeah, everything's okay. Everything's okay.

I belong to a good church, and I'm sure of my salvation. I break bread there, and we listen to good messages. I attend all the meetings.

Not enough, brother. You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit every single day of your life. You need to be definitely sure that Almighty God has filled your heart with the Holy Spirit.

That is the ultimate answer to be rooted and grounded in the love of God. That's our purpose. Then we'll be unshakable.

It's very, very important. It says in Ephesians 3 and 17 that you may be rooted and grounded in love to know the love of Christ which passes all knowledge. If you find it difficult to love somebody, the reason is always because you are not rooted in the love of God.

Something is shaky in the foundation. The fault is not on the third story or the third or fourth floor. The fault is in the foundation.

That's why there are cracks coming in the wall. The foundation is shaky. So it's very, very important to be rooted and grounded, and I would never stop emphasizing that.

And I say if you're not like that, please seek God that you have a very, very clear foundation. Everything else you read in Galatians in Chapter 5 is worth nothing but faith which works through love. That faith is this foundation I'm talking about.

And from there we work through love. So having stated something about the foundation, now let me go to 1 Corinthians in Chapter 3. We started with Galatians in Chapter 5 where it says circumcision, uncircumcision or any other commandment that we try to follow means nothing if it doesn't come out of faith working through love. That's very, very important.

A work which is not a work of faith has no value before God. A work that is not done in love is not of value before God. And faith, as I said, means to be convinced that God is my loving Father.

It's very, very important. You know how a father who loves his child so much will feel terribly insulted almost if the child has doubt about his love for him. And so faith working through love.

Please keep this in your mind always. Nothing is of value before God if it is not originating in faith and working through love. Faith is that foundation through which we serve in love.

So now we come to 1 Corinthians in Chapter 3 where again it speaks of this foundation and building. I told you this foundation is faith and on that we build in love for God and love for one another. So here also Paul says, I've laid a foundation and someone else is building on it.

And in your life, he says, you cannot have any other foundation than that which is laid with Jesus Christ. So the foundation of our life is based on what Christ has done for me and I just accept what Christ has done. I can do nothing.

We all know that I can do nothing to have my sins forgiven. I can do nothing to make myself acceptable before God. It's very, very important.

Otherwise, we go back under the law, trying to please God by our actions. We need to recognize clearly that our righteousness is like filthy rags. The best works we have done will not make us acceptable to God.

Our foundation is only Christ. Christ and Christ alone is the foundation on which I build my life. I'm accepted because Christ died for me and rose again and because he chose me and I'm in him and he is in me.

God accepts me and it will never be on any other basis for all eternity. But on this foundation, which the Holy Spirit has laid in our hearts, we have to build because it says here, let every man be careful how he builds. If a man builds on the last part of verse 10, let everyone be careful how he builds.

The foundation is laid. Now, how do you build on this foundation? Your life, your daily life, your thoughts, your words, your actions, your attitudes, your motives. This is what you're building.

And let every person be careful. And there are two types of material with which you can build. It says in verse 12, you can build with gold, silver, and precious stones, which will last forever, or wood, hay, and straw, which will perish.

But whichever you build with, one day your work will be tested by fire, verse 13. Now, it's not the foundation that's being tested. It's your work.

Every man's work, that means his entire life. And to me, that means from the time I'm born again, all the thoughts I had, and all the words I spoke, and all the things I did, and my attitudes to people, and the motives with which I did things, all of that is going to be tested. And there is a, I'll just come to it in a moment what exactly is going to be tested.

But it's going to be a test of fire. And when you compare that with verse 12, you know that if we have built with a spiritual equivalent of wood, hay, and straw, it'll all be burnt up. So there's a possibility that our work will remain, verse 14, or it'll be burnt up.

Now, if a man's work remains, and remains means he did not build with wood, hay, and straw, he built with gold, silver, and precious stones, and his work remains, he will receive a reward. Forgiveness of sins is not a reward. No, that's in the foundation.

No, that's clear in verse 11. Let's not mix up foundation with superstructure. God wants us to build a skyscraper.

But many people, Jesus himself said in Luke 14, let me just read that verse and come back to 1 Corinthians 3 later. Luke 14, Jesus said about people who lay a foundation, and then verse 29, he said, hey, I don't have enough money to build the skyscraper. Jesus, those days, said they were building a tower, verse 28, today we'd say a skyscraper, a hundred stories.

That's what we have to build, because we've got a whole life. But here's a person who laid a foundation, and then they calculated the cost, and he said, no, I can't build the skyscraper, forget it. And he doesn't do anything but the foundation.

And he leaves it, and men begin to ridicule him, and say, verse 30, this man began to build and is not able to finish. I think there are lots and lots of Christians like that. And it's spoken there in the context of being a disciple, because people don't want to be disciples, and they never build anything on it.

They just want to go to heaven when they die. I'll tell you something, those whose only goal in life, this is my conviction, those whose only goal in life is to go to heaven when they die, my conviction is they'll probably not go to heaven. Because God's not going to have a bunch of selfish people who live for themselves and live for everything this world has to offer, and just want to go to heaven when they die, whose aim in life is self all the time.

I want the best here on earth, and I want the best in eternity. You're going to be deceived. So our foundation is Christ.

Now it's possible that a man's entire life, life's work, that means everything you did from the day you were born again to the day Christ came or the day you died, 1 Corinthians 3, we come back to 1 Corinthians 3, verse 15, the entire life is burnt up, and he will suffer loss. But because his foundation was okay, he was saved. But through fire.

Now the question that comes up for many people is, is heaven a place where we'll have any regret? I know many people disagree with me. My conviction is, if you have not lived for the Lord, even if you are born again and you get to heaven, you can have regret, not for one or two days, but for all eternity. You don't have to agree with me, but that is my conviction.

And I base it here. I'll tell you, let me take my own case, so that I'm not trying to judge any of you. Supposing I'm absolutely convinced Christ has saved me, I don't have any other foundation than Christ, I don't trust in my own righteousness, I've come as a sinner to the cross, and he saved me by his grace, I'll never forget it, and he forgave all my sins, he accepted me, came and dwelt in me, and made me a child of God, the foundation is clear.

And then, in my life, I did not build with gold, silver, and precious stones. I did not build with material that would last, go through the fire of God, of God's testing. I'll explain to that here in a moment what that means.

But supposing I lived like that, and I can't go through my entire life, and I finally stand before the Lord, and the Lord tests my life, the video of my entire life is displayed there on the screen, and everything is tested, and my entire life's work is burnt up, but I'm in heaven. Tell me, do you think I'll have regret? The regret will be when I see, not that God's going to punish me, no, no, no, no, or God's angry with me. I'll tell you where the regret will come from.

And I don't think we realize it sufficiently on earth. One of the things, I believe one of the main things that's going to amaze us when we see Jesus Christ, when he comes, is the extent to which he loved us. I don't believe any of us, any Christian, has an understanding of the extent of Christ's love, the extent of his sacrifice, how much he suffered, how much he loved, and how much he was willing to give up and sacrifice just to have us.

And when I see that, in the clear light of heaven, I'll be so overwhelmed by the fact that I lived for myself, that I refused to deny myself in situations where he asked me to, that the glory of God was not my passion, that I used my money just to enjoy myself, that I used my time just for myself. I'll have such tremendous regret that I polluted my mind with dirty pictures, whether you watch it on a television or anywhere else. If you pollute your mind, okay, you may say, Christ's blood cleanses me, it's all this easy believism, Christ's blood cleanses me, you can say all that, I believe the blood of Christ cleanses us, but the regret you'll have when you see Jesus face to face, and see his tremendous love, how he longed that purity was not for his sake, but for our sake, that he asked us to keep ourselves pure.

You'll have such tremendous regret. When is it going to go? And say, Lord, I don't have another chance to live this life. I believe that lots of people are going to feel like that.

I wish I could go and live my life again, on earth. I'll tell you, I don't want to have that regret. I don't want to stand in heaven and say, I wish I had done it a little otherwise over here.

I wish I had loved money a little less over here. I wish I had done this other thing a little more the way God wanted. I wish I had denied myself a little more here.

I wish I had overcome my anger, taken anger more seriously. I wish I had taken dirty thoughts more seriously. I wish I had really sought to forgive everyone who hurt me.

I wish I had loved the people who hated me. I wish I had done it. Lord, I took these things so lightly because the surrounding atmosphere and Christians around me was so shallow and cheap.

I'll have tremendous regret. And how will that regret go after a thousand years in heaven and I enjoyed all the goodness of God in heaven? Is it going to reduce that regret? The more I see of God's goodness, the more I'll have regret. Lord, I didn't realize you loved me so much, you did so much for me.

Every command of yours was for my good. You told me to deny myself every day and to follow you and I took it so lightly. How will I get over it? I don't think I'll ever be able to get over it.

I know Jesus will wipe away the tears from my eyes. And I'm not saying I look miserable in heaven, no. But I don't believe I can get rid of that regret.

I wish, Lord, I had lived for you. And I don't have another chance to live my life. That's, for myself, it has gripped me so much.

That's why I take overcoming every sin seriously. I want to never get offended with people. I never want to hate anyone.

I never want to have anything but love in my heart towards every human being. I disagree with a lot of people on many things. And then, as you know, I'm very strict when it comes to God's standards.

And because of that, a lot of people get offended and even some people in CFC get hurt when I speak strongly. That's fine. I don't mind all that.

But I don't seek my own. And I say, Lord, I really want to live every day for you, at least the rest of my life. Please take that attitude, dear brothers.

Remember this day will come and every single thought of yours will be tested by fire. Every word of yours will be tested by fire. Every action of yours will be tested by fire.

If you took any sin in your life lightly, oh, it doesn't matter. I won't forgive that person. Oh, boy.

I'm not threatening you with hell. I'm wondering, how will you feel in heaven? When you get there and you have this attitude towards someone, I wonder even if there are such people who will ever get there. Because Jesus said, if you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you.

Now, I don't want to forgive others just to go to heaven. No. That's a very selfish reason.

A lot of things, you know, it's selfish reasons people obey the Lord. I want to forgive people because Jesus forgave me a million times more. You know the story of the king who forgave somebody 10,000 talents and that guy went and grabbed somebody's throat who owed him a few denarii or something.

And the king said, I forgave you so much and you couldn't forgive that person? I believe unforgiving and unforgiving attitude is an absolute evil. It's an evil from hell. When you realize how much God has forgiven.

So, we don't forgive in order to go to heaven. We forgive because God has forgiven us so much. That's what I mean.

The motive is so important. So, coming back to how shall I distinguish between gold, silver and precious stones and wood, hay and straw. So, many years ago, God gave me this revelation.

It was probably 40 or early days of CFC. I got this revelation. One of the amazing things God revealed to me after he filled me with the Holy Spirit.

The Bible became a new book because the one who wrote this book, the Holy Spirit filled me. And showed me things I had not seen before. So, this is how it came to me that I still remember that day when God gave me this revelation.

And interestingly, he gave it to me while I was speaking in a meeting on this subject. And I was going to speak and suddenly God gave me the revelation. What wood, hay and straw are and what gold, silver and precious stones are.

I wrote about it in my book called Living as Jesus Lived. If you want to read more about it, it is there. But this is the verse that came to me.

Romans 11 and verse 36. From God and through God and to God are all things. All things from God, through God and to God.

Everything. And that can be instead of from God, through God, to God. It can be from man, from me, through my power and to, for my glory.

From man, through man, to man means initiated by my own bright ideas. Done through my power and for my own honor or some credit for myself. That is wood, hay and straw.

Wood, hay, straw. From my bright ideas, through my power. I don't seek the power of God.

And for my glory. And gold, silver and precious stones would be like written here. From God, where I sought to know what God wants me to do.

And do that. And through his power, that means I constantly seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. And it's done for God's glory.

Now, as I studied the scriptures, I found this thing way back in the beginning of scripture. You know, when man rebelled against God in Genesis 11. It says there that, you know, the Tower of Babel, you all heard about the Tower of Babel.

Where God scattered people because they tried to build this tower to reach heaven. And God scattered them as an act of mercy. They were so crazy that they thought they could build a tower to reach heaven.

Well, how far would they reach? They would all die after building a few feet. And God didn't want them to waste their time. Because they didn't know how far heaven was.

And so God mercifully confused their language so they don't waste their time trying to do some impossible thing. But I want you to see in Genesis 11 how they did this. And you'll see from man, through man, and to man.

They said, come. They got a bright idea. Come, let us make bricks and burn them and then make a tower.

Who gave them that idea? It's from their own mind. And, how are they going to do it? We've got tower, we've got mortar, and we've got the power to do it. We've got the material and we can do it.

To their own resources. Genesis 11, 3 and 4. And what is it being built for? Verse 11, chapter 11, verse 4. To make a name for ourselves. A bright idea comes into my mind to do something.

Maybe to do something for God. You know the number of missionaries who've gone out into mission fields and God never sent them there. It is a bright idea.

Some preacher challenged them, what are you sitting down here working somewhere when there are people out there dying who haven't heard the gospel? And they hear that challenge and they go, did God

call them? No, some preacher called them. It did not originate in God. And I've seen numerous missionaries like that in India.

And seen the mess they've made of God's work in India. And I've often thought, why in the world did these people cross an ocean and come here to mess up God's work? God's work here would have been far better if some of them had not come. Not all.

There are some wonderful men and women of God who came to India. Few. Like Amy Carmichael and folks like that who did a tremendous job.

They were led by God. And they lived sacrificially. But a lot of Christian work is from man, through man.

And it's through man because that's why they had to constantly write letters asking for money. We're doing this, give us money, give us money, give us money. It's 100% through man's abilities.

They don't seek for the power of the Holy Spirit as much as they write prayer letters asking for money. And very often it's for their own glory. The prayer letters are all, we've done this and we've done that, and so many people are converted.

So in contrast to this from man, through man, and to man, which is all wood here and straw, you see another building in the next book of the Bible. This is the Tower of Babel. And this, by the way, is the beginning of Babylon.

You come to Revelation 17, you read about Babylon. Babylon is basically a Christianity that is built from man, through man, and to man. And when you come to the next book of the Bible, Exodus, you find another building.

And that's described in Exodus 25 onwards to 25 to 40. It's a tabernacle. And this was built not according to, Moses didn't have a bright idea one day and say, okay, let's build something, a tent to worship God in.

No, he had no such idea. He didn't even have a thought about it. They were just traveling in the wilderness, but he was listening to God every day.

I believe Moses listened to God every day of those 40 years in the wilderness. And as he listened, one day God told him, Exodus 25 verse 8, construct a sanctuary for me. Whose idea was it? God's.

And how should you do it? According to all that I'm going to show you. As the pattern of the tabernacle and its furniture and everything, do everything exactly like this. You know, when God told Noah to build an ark, he gave him exact dimensions and everything.

He even told him that he must put pitch between the pieces of wood and, you know, tar to sort of seal so that it doesn't leak in the water. And every detail God gave him. And here also, if you read the details that God gave to Moses for the tabernacle, remember, Moses was the prince of Egypt.

It says he was, in Acts chapter 7, it says he was taught in all the wisdom of Egypt. Such a clever guy. And God tells him all the little, little things.

Remember, Moses grew up in a country that built pyramids. Even today, engineers wonder how these pyramids were built. That's the place where Moses came from.

Yet he knew engineering. And if God had told him, build a tabernacle, he'd have built a fantastic structure. The only thing, the glory of God would never come out of it.

Because it was built through man's plan. But Moses did not change God's plan one bit. And God had broken him through 40 years in the wilderness.

That's why he was willing to give up his own plans. At the age of 40, when God had asked him to make a tabernacle, he said, just leave it to me, Lord. I'll make it much better than this simple design you have made.

He would have made a fantastic structure. The only thing, the glory of God would not have rested on it. So many Christians today have got bright ideas how they should do God's work.

That's not God's way. Man shall not live by these bright ideas, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth, God tells you what you should do. I felt that if I were living in Noah's time, I would have joined Noah and invested everything in building the Ark.

And I would have joined Noah and not altered one single thing from God's instructions. If I were living here in Moses' time, I would have completely devoted myself to build this tabernacle and I would have checked every little detail. What length should the rods be? And what should this be? Where should be the gold and where should be the silver? I would have followed it exactly.

Whether it's building the Ark or building the tabernacle, when it comes to building the church, it's the same thing. I say, Lord, I don't want to have my bright ideas how to do your work. I want to do it exactly like you have commanded.

I don't want to change it. And I find a lot of Christians don't seem to follow exactly what God has planned for the building of the church. And so many changes people make and modify it and say, God is merciful and he forgives, etc.

And because it was built exactly according to God's plan, from God, and we know that it was done through God, because we read here, the first time you read in Scripture that people were filled with the Spirit of God is here in the building of the tabernacle. And God, the Holy Spirit says that those whom God called to build the tabernacle in Exodus, and let me get to that chapter one minute. It says God filled the builders of the tabernacle with the Holy Spirit and that is how they built it.

Chapter 31 and verse 2 and 3. The Lord says, this is the first time you read in Scripture that God says, I filled someone with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God came upon them in wisdom and understanding so that they can make all these things. Two people, Bezalel and the son of Khuri, the son of Khur, and I filled them with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Adam, verse 6. These two people were filled with the Spirit of God.

So we saw first of all that it was built according to God's plan and with God's power. Now I'm sure these people had some skill and understanding, otherwise they wouldn't have been chosen, but that was not good enough. They had to be filled with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, all kinds of craftsmanship.

And I say, Lord, to build a tabernacle, which along with a little human understanding could do, you had to fill them with the Spirit of God. I've got to be crazy to think that I can build God's church without being filled with the Holy Spirit for every little detail. I've got to seek God for every little detail.

That's why from the beginning in CFC, churches when we started 45 years ago, we said we're going to do it exactly like God has said. We're not going to alter one little thing, big or small. That's what Bezalel and the Holy Adam did.

They didn't change one little thing. Everything that God told them, they did it exactly, they did it with God's power. And what was the result? The result we read is, we read finally in the last chapter of Exodus, Exodus chapter 40, we read that the glory of God came and filled the tabernacle in Exodus 40, 34.

You see that? From God, through God's power, for God's glory. Exact opposite of the Tower of Babel, which is from man through man to man. And this tabernacle was the pattern for later on for the temple and which is finally depicted in the church.

And which is called Jerusalem in the book of Revelation. So Babylon and Jerusalem, the false church and the true church. The basic difference between the two is this.

Babylon is built like the Tower of Babel, man's ideas through man's cleverness and ability and raising money and all these techniques and all types of methods of singing and lighting and all that to excite people and all types of things to man's ability. You don't need the Holy Spirit. You just need some good musicians and a lot of instruments and raise enough money through many techniques.

Why do you need God in all this? You put in God's name just to make it sound spiritual. And then ultimately who gets the glory for all this? Some preacher, some man. It's all going to be burnt up, I'll tell you this.

You don't believe it? Well, too bad because you're going to get a big surprise when Christ comes. It will all be burnt, reduced to ashes because it came from man's ideas, built with man's abilities and ultimately for man's glory. And that's why it's very, very important in our life that we seek to find the will of God in our life.

You know, I've often said that the one-sentence autobiography of Jesus' life is what we read in John 6, 38. If you were to ask me, give me a one-sentence description of Jesus' life, what he did on earth. One sentence.

John 6, 38. He never did his own will, but he did the will of his Father. That's why he prayed so much.

He'd go and say, what shall I do? He sought the Father's will. Everything in his life, he wanted it to be from God. And he prayed so that it would be through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Imagine the perfect man. Because he came in our flesh, he needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit every single day.

He needed to be anointed to serve. He did not dare, he did not dare to go out into the ministry without being anointed in the River Jordan. He was already filled with the Spirit from the time he was born.

30 years he had lived a Spirit-filled life, but now he was going out to serve the Father, and he prayed. Do you know that he prayed? Do you know that he was anointed to the Holy Spirit because he prayed? Have you seen that in Luke chapter 3? In Luke chapter 3, it says in verse 21 that Jesus in his baptism, while he was being baptized, he was praying. While John was dipping him into the water, he was praying.

He was not concerned about whether the water would go into his nose. He was praying as he went down into the water. And I know what he was praying for, because Jesus' prayers were always answered

immediately.

As soon as he came out, the Holy Spirit descended on him. That's what he was praying for as he was being dipped in the water. Father, anoint me now.

I've got a ministry to do. And the voice from heaven said, I'm pleased with your 30 years of your life. He wanted that assurance, too.

I want to be sure you're pleased, Father. Yes, I watched you for 30 years. I'm thoroughly happy with you.

Here I'm anointing you with the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn't dare to go out into the ministry. It had to be through God, not only from God, through God.

And, of course, everything in his life was for the glory of God. He came to glorify his Father. He said that towards the end of his life in John 17.

He said, Father, I have glorified you on earth. John 17, 4. How do we glorify God on earth? How do we do it? Jesus is our example. Verse 4, by finishing the work you gave me to do.

I often said this to the Lord after understanding this. Lord, I don't want to do any work you did not give me to do. Because if I spend my time doing that, I will not be able to finish the work you gave me to do.

I've often thought, would there be anything wrong in Jesus taking a holiday and going to Rome? Yeah, I heard Rome is a nice place. Let me go there. I've been working, working, working, working.

Let me take a one-week holiday and go to Rome. There would have been no sin there. But it was not in God's will, so he wouldn't even go there.

In fact, he hardly ever went out of the borders of Israel. Just once or twice, just across the border he went. Otherwise, he never went.

He was quite satisfied to be where God put him. For so many years, he was in Nazareth. He never went out of Nazareth.

Then when he came to the ministry, he didn't have a longing to go to India or China or Europe or any such thing. Or Rome, no. The place where the Father has put me.

You know, Christians have such a lust to go here and go there and go to the other thing. They never seek the will of God. I'm not saying they go to hell.

I'm just saying that some part of God's plan for their life may not be fulfilled. Does God reveal his will? He certainly does. If you are desperate, wanting to do his will, I'm not saying by voice from heaven, but he will unconsciously guide your life that you don't miss his will.

I have a tremendous fear in my life that I don't want to miss God's will. I want to be able to come to the end of my life and say, I finished my work. Finished the work you gave me to do.

But you know, we can compare ourselves with Jesus and say, but he messed up so much of our life. Jesus never messed up a single day. But I say, when I look back over my life, I say, Lord, so many years I messed up.

I told you, 16 years I was wandering here and there, spiritually. And what about all those years that I wasted? Well, I find great comfort in the example of the Apostle Paul. Paul said at the end of his life, similar words to what Jesus said.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 4, verse 7, I have finished the course. Just like Jesus said in John 17, 4, Father, I finished the work you gave me to do. Paul says at the end of his life, I finished the work you gave me to do.

And I say, hey, Paul, you messed up the first 30 years of your life, man. You didn't do God's will at all. You went against God's will for 30 years.

And how can God's planning for your life be fulfilled when you messed up 30 years of it? And the answer is, God knew that. God knew from the beginning that this person would mess up the first 30 years of his life and go the wrong direction. Even persecuted Christians, God made allowance for that and said, that's okay.

I'll begin to fulfill my plan in his life from a certain point in such a way that by the time he comes to the end of his life, Paul can say, I finished my course. That's been a great encouragement to me. And I hope it's an encouragement to you because we've all messed up different parts of our life.

And so what about those years, Lord, I messed up? I said, don't worry. Take an example from Paul. I didn't mess up 30 years of my life.

He was against Christians. I was never against Christians. I never killed Christians.

Look how he messed up his life and yet he could say at the end of his life, I finished my course. That's a great encouragement to me. I don't have to look back in discouragement.

And I want to encourage you, my brothers, don't look back in discouragement. Start today and forgetting the things that are behind and pressing to the things that are before. Say, Lord, I want to lay hold of that for which you laid hold of me.

Those are the words of Paul, Philippians 3. I want to lay hold of that for which he laid hold of me. You see in Philippians 3, verse 12. I lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me.

Beautiful words. Christ laid hold of me for a purpose. I want to lay hold of that.

But Paul, what about the mistakes you made in the past? Never mind. Forgetting, verse 13, Philippians 3. Forgetting what lies behind. I press toward the mark for the future.

I can't do anything about the past. And I'm not going to, you know, shed my tears over spilled milk. Okay, I spilled a lot of milk.

Wasted a lot of my life. But I'm going to forget the things that are behind. I'm going to press forward to the things that are before.

And yet, I believe I can fulfill in some wonderful way. I'm going to finish my course. I want to say that to every one of you.

If you will take my words seriously from today and say, Lord, I want to seek your will for my life. I want to seek the power of your Holy Spirit in my life. That I'll seek to do your will in my life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

That not a day will go by in my life without my seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when you've done it, I want to give you all the glory. I don't want to take a single bit of the credit for myself.

I will not receive honor for myself. I want to be debt to the world and its applause and to all its customs and fashions and laws. And I want to not at all be interested.

I'm not looking for the approval of men. I want to please you, Lord. I want to please you.

In Christ Jesus, nothing is of value except faith which works through love. Let every man be careful how he builds on this foundation that I believe laid in Christ. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, please help us to be gripped by the things that you are speaking to us. Help us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.

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