

Faith Is Helpless Dependence Upon God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of moving from a life of struggling under the law to a life of rest and victory through faith in God. It highlights the need for humble dependence on God to receive His grace and overcome sin, drawing parallels from the Old Testament Israelites' journey to the promised land and the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. The message encourages listeners to seek a life of obedience that stems from faith, leading to true transformation and victory over sin.

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Scripture: Hebrews 4:1, Romans 6:14, John 5:5, Romans 6:14, Hebrews 4:11

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Description

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Transcript

Dear brothers and sisters, it's a long time since I met you all and spoke to you, but it's a great joy to be able to meet together again. So you've been hearing in the last couple of days about faith, sorry, and a good conscience. In the Old Testament, faith was never emphasized, that grace was never emphasized, and faith was never emphasized.

In the Old Testament, the main word was obedience, and God gave the Israelites through Moses 613 commandments to obey in the book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Somebody's counted it, that's how we know it's 613, out of which there were the 10 main commandments. And in the 1,500 years of Israel's history, they learned one thing, that they could not keep those commandments.

Leave alone the 613, the external things like offering sacrifice and all they could do, but the main commandments that had to do with the heart, they could not keep. And if you turn to that 10 commandments, let's begin there. Exodus, please turn in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 20.

This is the place where you read the 10 commandments, and I'm sure you've all read Exodus 20 and you're familiar with the 10 commandments. So let me just mention them to you one by one, Exodus

chapter 20. We read, first of all, the Lord said to them, I am the Lord, your God, and you shall have no other gods but me.

That's where you begin. And the second is, you shall not make an idol. Now, these are all very easy to obey.

I mean, all of you, if I were to ask you, you believe only in Jesus as God? Yeah, you don't. When he talked about idols, he was talking about the old covenant about physical idols. Today, people worship the idols of money, pleasure, honor of men, so many things like that, but that was not there in the old covenant.

It was just physical idols. You're not to bow down to an idol, you just only worship the true God. The third commandment, verse 7, was don't take the name of the Lord in vain.

The fourth one, keep the Sabbath day holy. The fifth, honor your father and mother. Verse 13, you shall not murder.

Number six, you shall not commit adultery. Number seven, you shall not steal. Number eight, you shall not bear false witness.

That means never tell a lie. That is impossible for them to obey, but don't bear false witness in a court. That is easy.

So those first nine commandments, decent people could keep. Even today, there are Hindus and Muslims. Not Hindus, but there are Hindus worship idols, but other than that, a lot of people in the world who have no faith in Christ who can keep those nine commandments, but the Lord added a tenth commandment, and that was you shall not covet, and in the Romans chapter 7, that is translated as lust.

You shall not lust in your heart after your neighbor's house. That means desire. It's not talking about stealing your neighbor's house.

That is already dealt with earlier on in the commandment, you shall not steal. This is desiring it. You desire something you don't have which somebody else has, and you desire your neighbor's wife or anything that is your neighbor's, last part.

That means your neighbor's daughter. Every woman who walks down the street is your neighbor's daughter, and the commandment was you should not lust after her. There was not a single man in Israel who could keep it.

That's why God added a tenth commandment there, which he knew nobody could keep. Why? There are Christians today who find it extremely difficult to keep it. Why did God add that tenth commandment, which he knew that no man could keep, and women may not lust with their eyes, but they can be coveting what somebody else has, somebody else's house or clothes or something that another person has.

That's true of men and women. Now, God knew that nobody could keep it, and I'll show you the proof of that. He turned to Mark chapter 10.

I'm talking about obedience, which is the main word in the old covenant. We've got to begin there. Okay, in Mark chapter 10, verse 17, we read about a rich young ruler who came to Jesus, knelt down before him.

Mark 10, 17. He said, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And the Lord said, keep the commandments. And Mark 10, 19, notice the commandments Jesus mentioned to him.

Read carefully. I don't know how many of you have noticed this. You must read the Bible carefully, because if you're exact with God, God will be exact with you.

I found this through, I was born again 63 years ago. And one of the things I've discovered in these 63 years, from the time I was 19, now I'm 82, is God is very exact if you are exact with him. So see here, see the commandments Jesus mentioned, verse 19, don't murder.

You know, Jesus knew that in Israel at that time, nobody was idols or taking the Lord's name in vain. That was all understood. They were honoring their power.

They were keeping the Sabbath. But the other commandments related to man, you see what he mentioned, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness, don't cheat somebody, honor your father and mother. What about the 10th commandment, the most important one? Why didn't he mention it to that young ruler who came? You know why? Because God knew that nobody could keep it in the Old Testament.

And that's why he said, I've kept all these things. If the Lord had included the 10th commandment, he could not have said that. But he stopped at nine, number nine.

He said, I kept it. Good. He said, now I'll tell you about the 10th commandment.

There's one thing you lack. You have a tremendous lust for money and property, possessing things. You give that up and you'll follow me.

And he went away. He didn't want to give it up. I've thought about that rich young ruler.

I don't know whether he ever changed his mind later on in life. But today, if he didn't change his mind, he's in hell today. And he's had 2000 years in hell to think about whether it was worth it to give up his love for money.

And I'm sure he's, you go and ask him in hell today, he'll tell you, that was the biggest mistake I made. I was a foolish person. Okay, let us assume that towards the end of his life, he repented and he did give up his love of money, but he's wasted his whole life.

Supposing he repented when he was 80 years old and God had a plan for him from the time he was 20. He's wasted 60 years of his life. And I believe a lot of people are going to have regret in heaven, even though they've gone to heaven because they wasted their whole life.

And if any of you who are listening to me say like this, well, what does it matter? I'm going to be in heaven, eternity with Jesus. That indicates the selfishness of the human heart. I want to go to heaven.

That's all I want. I'll give you my own personal conviction. I believe there are people who are going to have a regret in heaven.

Regret for what? They're going to feel sorry about the way they lived on earth, even though they did get to heaven at the end of their life. And I'll tell you what will aggravate and make serious that regret in many believers' hearts. I don't think any of us here on earth understand fully how much Jesus loves us.

I mean, I myself have discovered a lot about the love of God for me now, which I did not know when I was first converted 63 years ago. Over the years, one of the things I've been discovering in all my life is how much God loves me. I'm just amazed at God's love for me and his mercy upon me.

That's one of the things that's made it very easy for me to forgive people. Many Christians have difficulty forgiving somebody who did some wrong to them in their life. I'll tell you, you haven't understood the love of God.

That's the problem. If you would only understand how much God loves you, it'll be the easiest thing in the world to forgive people. It's as easy as my picking up a pen.

How difficult is that? It'll be that easy to forgive anybody in the world. I'm telling you from my experience, no matter how much harm they did to you, if you see the love of God, all people who find it difficult to forgive their husbands, difficult to forgive the mother-in-law, difficult to forgive their wife, difficult to forgive this person, that person, the other person, I'll tell you, you guys have not seen the love of God at all. You heard about it.

You know about it. You know that John 3, 16, God so loved the world, but you haven't experienced in your life God's love. So that's the regret this man will have, even if he did get converted towards the end of his life.

Now I want to show you another verse, Romans chapter seven, where Paul says, you know, Paul at one time he said, I was blameless in Philippians three, according to the righteousness of the law. Maybe I should show you that first. Turn to Philippians and chapter three.

He says here in Philippians chapter three, verse six, Philippians three, verse six. In the middle of that verse, Paul says, as by the standard of the righteousness of the law, I was blameless. I got a hundred percent.

If God tested me, according to the law, Paul says, I got 100% the first nine commandments. That's all. In Romans seven, he tells us about his problem with the 10th commandment.

So when he says in Philippians three, that I'm blameless according to the law, it is assumed you're going to keep only up to commandment number nine. All the Jews understood that. Now Romans seven, Paul says, please follow me, with me carefully.

Romans seven, verse seven. There's something wonderful here. If you will understand it, it will change your life.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? May it never be. Romans seven, seven. I would not have come to know what sin is without the law and which commandment is he talking about? I would not have known about coveting or lusting unless the law had said you shall not covet.

He's talking about the 10th commandment. And so he tried to keep the 10th commandment. He had kept the other nine.

This is the apostle Paul before he was converted. But sin, taking opportunity through this 10th commandment, produced inside me lusting of every kind. Any honest man, there are very few honest people, but any honest man will say what Paul said.

In my unconverted days, I found lusting of the entire circle, 360 degrees, every type of lust for money, for property, for position, for honor, for pleasure, for comfort, for women, for everything, everything, the whole 360 degrees of lust. He says, I found coveting of every kind. And you say, Paul, you're telling me that you were lusting in so many different ways.

He says, absolutely. I was thoroughly defeated. So what did I learn from that? It showed me what a terrible sinner I was, even though I kept the other nine commandments.

And there we see a reason why God has put the 10th commandment there, to see how many people will be honest when they go through the list of commandments, to admit that they're not kept the 10th one, that there's lusting of every kind in their heart, even in the heart of women. Desiring this, desiring, many people think of lust only as sexual lust. No, there are 101 different ways of lusting.

You know what it says there about desiring what somebody else has. What you don't have could be somebody's position. It could be on some honor in the church.

Can you find somebody else getting some honor in the church and you want that, or you want some comfort that somebody else experiences this, all this jealousy. Jealousy is always because of some type of lust. And that is in every human being.

So God kept that 10th commandment. Let me listen to me to find out how many human beings will be honest. Did you get it? He knew nobody could keep it.

God Almighty knew nobody could keep it, but let me see how many will be honest and say, Oh God, I'm trying to keep it and I can't keep it. I tell you, even among believers, there are very few honest people like that. Paul was honest.

He was honest and he writes it down for everybody to hear him. Yes, there was lusting of every kind in my heart and I could not overcome, but you know, he came to an overcoming life. You know that sin could not rule over him because he received the grace of God.

So I mentioned that to say that under the old covenant, obedience was required, but not faith. When you come to the new covenant, you read in Romans chapter one, I want to explain the gospel of salvation to you, not the gospel of forgiveness of sins, but the gospel of salvation from sin. Okay.

Before I go to Romans, let me show you Matthew chapter one. Okay. In Malachi, the old covenant is the old testament is finished.

As soon as you turn into the new testament, the gospel of Matthew, the first page, you see one promise there in the very first page of the 27 books of the new testament. There is a promise. Have you seen it? Verse 21, the angel told Joseph, Mary will bear a son and you call his name Jesus.

And the reason why his name is called Jesus is because he will say not forgive. No forgiveness was there in the old testament. Also Psalm 103, bless the Lord who forgives all my sins.

This is more than forgiveness. He will save his people from their sins. So my dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you this.

If you've only got forgiveness, you are in the old testament. Still, you can talk about Jesus, but you're in the old testament because the very first page of the new testament says Jesus will save his people from their

sins. And you know the difference between being saved from something and being forgiven something.

I use this illustration sometimes. If my little boy, if you say was seven or eight years old, is standing outside the gate and I said, don't go onto the road because the city people are digging a big hole there to lay some pipes. If you go near it, you'll fall into that pit.

And you know how little boys are, they're curious and they experiment and they, he goes near the pit and he falls in into that deep pit and he cries out daddy, daddy. And I come running to him and say, what happened son? And he says, I'm sorry, dad. I disobeyed you.

Please forgive me. And I say, okay, son forgiven. Goodbye.

Have I forgiven him? Yes. Have I saved him? No. Forgiven, but not saved.

He's still in the pit. When you commit a sin and you confess it to the Lord, one John one nine, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Forgiven.

But are you saved from that sin? Are you saved from the sin of shouting at your husband and wife? Forgiven? Yes. Maybe many times a day you say, Lord, forgive me, forgive me, forgive me, forgiven, forgiven. You are a very good old Testament person.

You're a good Jew, but not a new Testament. Because the first page of the new Testament is Jesus. The meaning of the name Jesus is he will save his people from their sins.

And you say, I never heard that. Well, you heard it in CFC. You won't hear it in other churches because the devil has blinded the minds of people from this true gospel.

The main gospel that most people are preaching today is Jesus will forgive your sins. He died for your sins. Then don't even preach that he rose from the dead.

He Christ died, Christ died, Christ died. Let me ask you, haven't you seen numerous pictures of Jesus hanging on a cross? I've seen so many in my lifetime. Let me ask you a question.

How many pictures have you seen of an empty grave and Jesus coming out of the grave? You may have seen it in some Bible story book, but almost never. Because the devil blinds people to the fact that Jesus conquered sin and death and the devil and came out alive. The apostles always used to say we are witnesses of his resurrection.

Today, people are witnesses of his crucifixion. I thank God for the crucifixion, but I thank God even more for the resurrection. I'm a witness that Christ rose from the dead.

Because of that, he can live in me and he can give me his power to overcome sin, to overcome the devil like he overcame the devil on the cross. That is the main reason why he gives us the Holy Spirit. So I showed you the first promise in the New Testament.

So what is it that's going on? Now turn to Romans 1. In Romans 1, we read, Paul says, I have been made an apostle and I have received grace. I'm reading Romans 1, verse 5. Please look in your Bibles, Romans 1, verse 5. It says, through Jesus Christ, I have received apostleship. That is a ministry and grace.

What for? To bring about among all the nations of the world, Gentiles means all the nations of the world, for Christ's name's sake, there's something I have to bring about. Something I, not just preach it. He doesn't say I have to preach this.

No, I have to bring about something in many lives around the world. What does he have to bring about? Not obedience. But the obedience of faith.

That's what I wanted to point out to you. Old Testament was obey, obey, obey. They try, they can't keep it, especially when it comes to the 10th commandment.

In other words, you see nine commandments related to the outside of the cup. 10th commandment is inside, in the heart. You shall not desire this.

You shall not lust after that. And you shall not want this. And you shall not covet this.

And you shall not inwardly, inwardly. The Pharisees were not honest. They pretended to be holy, even though they did not keep the 10th commandment.

They kept the nine, their external life was good. That's why Jesus said, you people, you clean the outside of the cup. You kept the nine commandments, but the inside is filthy.

What did he mean? You guys have never kept the 10th commandment. Paul was a Pharisee, but one day as he began to try to keep the 10th commandment, he could not keep it. And that's what made him turn to God and say, Lord, and I want to say to you, every believer who's honest and goes to God like Paul and says, Lord, I find all types of desires in my heart for position, for honor, for comfort, for all types of things.

Some things, so many things that are contrary to your will. Please deliver me from that. Deliver me from this dirt inside my cup.

Those are the people who really understood the gospel. And I'll tell you honestly, my testimony, I never heard this, what I'm preaching now. I never heard anybody preach it in my younger days.

I used to go to a good brethren assembly. They used to academically study the Bible, but the people who preached it did not have victory and they did not preach about victory. All they preached was, we will sin.

Every day we will sin. You may lose your temper 10 times a day, but the blood of Jesus is there to cleanse us. Always the blood of Jesus is there to cleanse us.

That's the only gospel I heard for 16 years after I was born again. And I got so fed up with my own defeated life. I said, Lord, I don't want to live like this.

This is not the gospel. Every time get dirty, dirty, dirty, dirty, dirty the heart. In other words, no better than the old Testament.

Lord, why in the world did you give a 10th commandment if nobody can keep it? That's where I began to understand the obedience of faith, different from obedience. You heard in the earlier sessions about faith. So I want to explain to you about the obedience of faith.

I have seen for myself. Anyway, after 16 years, as I said, I came to such an end. I was so thoroughly defeated in my inner life.

I said, Lord, I give up. I will not preach anymore. This is exactly what I told the Lord 47 years ago.

I said, Lord, I'm not going to preach anymore because I'm an absolute hypocrite. I'm not practicing what I'm preaching. That's fooling everybody, preaching high standards, but I'm not living up to them.

I love money like anything, even though I was a naval officer and I was earning a lot of money. I said, Lord, I'm defeated. Please help me.

And the Lord allowed me to sink and sink and sink and sink and sink to utter defeat till I knew my case was hopeless. And then one day, 47 years ago, in his great mercy, he met me and filled me with the Holy Spirit. It changed my life completely.

Then I knew what the day of Pentecost meant. And from that day, 47 years ago, I had hit rock bottom slowly. I didn't suddenly reach the top of the mountain.

No, no, no, no. It was a gradual climb up, up, up, up. And I'll tell you honestly, it has been steadily going up all these 47 years.

I still haven't reached the top of the mountain, which is total likeness to Christ. That'll happen. But I find so many things I get light on becoming more and more like Christ.

That is the Christian journey where you can overcome anger. I used to get angry in my early days of marriage, just like all married couples. And I longed for a life where I would live 365 days of the year without ever getting angry once in my home.

And I tell you, the miracle of God did it. It can happen in your life, the obedience of faith. So I'll explain what faith is, is they didn't have in the Old Testament.

The best example of faith I can find is what Jesus said, abide in me like the branch is in a tree. A branch in a tree is a perfect picture, at least for me, of what faith is. The branch is not struggling.

If you're struggling, you haven't understood faith. Faith is not something sometimes, you know, people praying for this, they struggle. If I have faith, I get this.

I'm praying for this. I'm praying. I don't have faith.

I'm struggling, struggling. Brother, that's not faith at all. If you really have faith, it'd be like a branch in the tree.

You see a branch struggling anytime. That branch is without effort, effortlessly. It's a beautiful word, effortlessly.

That means without any effort, it just stays in that tree. And that liquid sap from the tree flows into the branch. The branch doesn't do anything.

And suddenly, fruit comes on that tree, oranges, apples, whichever tree it is. The branch is not struggling. The Christian life is not a struggle to overcome sin.

It is resting. We struggle to teach us that you can't do it. But then you come to the life of rest.

Turn with me to Hebrews chapter 3. You know, the Old Testament story of the children of Israel came out of Egypt. How did they come out of Egypt? They had to put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and on the lintel. That's the picture of believing that the blood of Jesus can redeem me.

And then they went into the Red Sea and out, which is called baptism. In 1 Corinthians 10, it says they were baptized into Moses in the Red Sea, 1 Corinthians 10. So believing in the blood of Christ, what a baptism.

And when they came out the other side, the pillar of cloud came upon them. That is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Three things.

The blood of Christ, cleansing their past. What a baptism, very important, testifying to my break with the world and with myself. And thirdly, the coming of the Holy Spirit, filling a person.

That is how they started their life. And that is how people started their life on the day of Pentecost. And that's how every Christian is supposed to start their life.

But when I got converted, nobody told me about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. So I had to sort of discover it myself and seek for it myself. But I tell you, it changed my life when I did.

You know, there's a law in the Word of God, which says that when you will seek me and find me, the Lord says, when you search for me with all your heart. And when I searched for God with all my heart, I found him. So when they came, the purpose of the Holy Spirit, the pillar of cloud was to lead them.

The pillar of cloud did not make them stop grumbling, but it would lead them to the promised land, which is Canaan. So they walked and walked and walked and walked. And they came after two years to the border of Canaan.

They did not go in because they didn't have faith. So they turned back and wandered another 38 years. And after 40 years, God brought another generation to the borders of the promised land, and they went into the land of Canaan.

Do you know what the land of Canaan is called in the New Testament? If you read the Bible carefully, you will know. It's Hebrews chapter 3. It says here, towards the end of Hebrews 3, verse 16, it's talking about the Israelites who came out of Egypt. Who are the ones who provoked God when they had heard? Not all who came out of Egypt.

600,000 people who came out of Egypt provoked God, disobeyed and they died. But two, Joshua and Caleb did not provoke God. They had faith.

That's why it says not everyone was 16. Two of them did not provoke God. But all the others, Hebrews 3.16, provoked God, and so they did not enter into Canaan.

And he was angry with them for 40 years, with all that 600,000 people. God is angry with those who don't enter the promised land of victory. And therefore, their bodies fell in the wilderness.

And God swore, verse 18, that all those 600,000 people would not enter Canaan. And what, notice here carefully, read the Bible carefully. What is Canaan called here? God's rest.

They could not enter into God's land of rest. You know, in the wilderness, I'll tell you the difference. In the wilderness, they had to fight themselves when they fought with enemies.

But as soon as they entered Canaan, God pulled down the walls of Jericho and God did miracles to them. He stopped the sun. He did all types of things to help them get victory.

As long as they had faith, they could overcome every giant. You know, a lot of people ask this question, how did David kill Goliath? If I were to ask you that question, what is the answer? Children will say with a sling and a stone. Okay, that's all right for children.

But when you grow up, you discover that a sling and a stone will not kill a giant. He killed Goliath by faith in God. You read 1 Samuel 17 carefully.

You know what David told Goliath? You come to me with sword and spear and all of you. I come to you not with a stone and a sling. That's not what he said.

Read it. You must read the Bible carefully. He did not say you come to me with sword and spear, but I'm coming with a sling and a stone.

No, I come to you in the name of the Lord whom you have defied. It was faith. David killed Goliath by faith.

Otherwise, he couldn't have aimed a sling and a stone so perfectly that it hits exactly in the spot where it could knock Goliath down. No, that was faith. And by faith, they were to enter and overcome the giants in Canaan.

And then, now listen to this, they could not enter, verse 19, because of unbelief. They did not believe that God was able to kill the giants. You know, the ten spies said, oh, we are like grasshoppers when we look at them.

But Joshua and Caleb said, what? They are like bread that we can eat if God is with us. Now, what is the lesson there for us? My dear brothers and sisters, please read Hebrews chapter 4, verse 1, very carefully. Hebrews 4, 1, let us fear when there is a promise for us for entering a rest today.

There is a life of rest God has promised us today, just like that land of Canaan. And some of you who are born again may not enter it. He's writing to born again people.

Turn to chapter 3, verse 1, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, Jesus Christ is our apostle and high priest. Is he writing to believers or what? Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, Jesus is our apostle and high priest. You holy brethren, you may not enter the life of rest because you don't have faith, just like those people.

They came out of Egypt, they were baptized and all, but they never entered into that life of victory and rest. And I tell you, that is the condition of many, many believers today. Even many in CFC churches who have heard me again and again and listened to my messages on YouTube and enjoy listening to the messages and all, but they don't come into this life of victory and rest.

Has your life changed since you understood the gospel? I'd like to ask your wife, I'd like to ask your husband, not other people in the church, they don't know, one day when God exposes the hidden inner life of all people, believe me, you will discover something, that many people who look so holy and sat in church buildings were just as bad as those ungodly non-Christians in their private life, just as unfaithful

with money as those ungodly non-Christians, because they did not earnestly seek to enter the land of Canaan, they did not earnestly seek to enter the rest. They tried to obey, obey, obey, but they had no faith. What is it that Joshua and Caleb had, which all the other Israelites did not have? It was not that they were more muscular, no, they had faith.

Our God is able to bring these giants down. The giants are the different sins that have ruled our life from the time we were born. To have faith is to believe that God can bring them down.

And that by faith, we enter into rest. See further down in Hebrews 4, it says here, there remains verse 9, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. So even the Sabbath, which the Jewish people kept seventh day, is a picture of the life of rest God wants us to have, which is a different from the life of struggle.

As I told you, the branch in the tree, always picture the branch in the tree as perhaps the best definition of faith. See, we have heard so much preaching about if you have faith, you can heal the sick and you can do this and you can do miracles and you'll have so many things, you'll have more money and all types of, that's a lot of rubbish. Yet it says, if you have faith, you'll enter the land of Canaan, the life of victory.

That's what the faith will bring you. The obedience of faith will lead you into a life of overcoming sin. So the Sabbath was also a picture of that.

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was a day you're not supposed to work at all. And here, the life of rest is called a Sabbath in Hebrews 9. There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. What is the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath for us today? That I come to a life of rest from struggling, defeated, defeated, defeated, defeated to come to rest.

So it says here in verse 11, Hebrews 4.11, let us be diligent to enter into that rest so that nobody fails through following the same example of disobedience. So it's really very simple. God hasn't made it complicated.

Remember the first people whom Jesus chose as his disciples to explain this new covenant gospel were not scholars and people who went to Bible school, they were fishermen. I've been to the coasts of India, Chennai, Kerala, Kutukurin, and I've seen fishermen. I'm sure you've seen them also.

If you've seen fishermen on the coast of India, what do they look like? Are they intellectuals? Most of them have not even finished high school, leave alone go to college. Many of you have gone to college, but those first disciples never went to college, but they had faith. They could not explain things like some of us can, but they had faith.

That is the most important thing. And I want to urge you to really ask God to help you to come to this obedience that comes through helpless dependence upon God. When you come to the place where you say, Lord, I cannot do this.

I cannot overcome. That's what Paul said. I tried and tried and tried and tried, and I came to the end of my life and said, I can't overcome.

Then he trusted God. See, I believe that is God's way. He waits until we come to the end of our struggling.

I see that in the story of Lazarus. Jesus got a message once saying, Lazarus, the one whom you love is dying. And what would you do if you heard a message that someone you love very much is dying? Your

mother or your wife or your husband is some distance away, dying.

Someone you love. The message Jesus got was the one whom you love is dying. He would rush.

Jesus did not rush. He was teaching us a lesson there. He waited three days.

And by the time he came to Lazarus's house, Lazarus had been dead for four days. He was buried. The body had begun to stink.

Why did Jesus wait? I see a parable there in that miracle. At that moment when Jesus got the message, Lazarus was not dead. He was struggling to live, struggling to live.

This is a picture of a man trying to overcome sin. Think of Lazarus. I don't know what fever or sickness he had dying in the bed and difficulty to breathe or whatever.

Struggling to live, struggling to live. That's a perfect picture of people, maybe some of you, struggling to get victory over sin. And Jesus doesn't come.

You pray, Lord, come, come, please help me, help me. He doesn't come. Have you had that experience? Why doesn't he come? I want victory.

Struggle, struggle. Finally, Lazarus comes to the place where he cannot even lift his finger. He's absolutely helpless.

And he dies. Then Jesus comes. And to make sure he's dead, he allows him to be in the grave for four days.

He says, Lazarus, come out. So that Lazarus would never be able to say, by my determination, by my prayer, I became healthy and came alive. No.

What would Lazarus's testimony be? If he was healed when he was sick, his testimony being I took this particular medicine. That is the thing that healed me. I thanked God for this doctor which prescribed this medicine.

Or I struggled or I did some exercise and I strengthened my mind and I was healed. But what could he say when he came out of the grave? I did nothing. Jesus brought me out.

I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, we do not really, at least it's true in my life, I could not really come to a life of victory until I had come to the end of my life, the end of myself and my own ability, my confidence and my own ability to overcome. And when I came to the end of that, like Lazarus, and I couldn't even lift a finger, Jesus came. And I say this to any of you who have not come to a life of victory.

It's probably true of many of you. Jesus is waiting. He's waiting till you come to the end of yourself and your confidence in your own self.

Faith is to have zero confidence in self, but total confidence in God. It's like the branch saying, I can never produce any fruit by myself, no matter how much I struggle. So I'm going to depend helplessly upon the tree and the tree will produce the fruit in me.

This is how the Lord brings us to a life of overcoming. Now, you may understand that in theory, but if you are desperate and really eager, it'll become a reality in your life. What God did for me, he'll do for you.

That then you come into a life of rest, like it's spoken of here. And that is God's will for every one of you. Can you imagine the disappointment a father has when he sees his son failing again and again and again and again in the first grade or first standard or whatever you call it? Failing.

He joined first standard or first grade when he was six years old. He's 26 years old now. He's still sitting in the first standard.

What would you think if your son was like that or your daughter? Then you can see the disappointment God has when he's got some children who say they were born again 20 years ago. But where are they today? They're in the 20 years in the school, still sitting in the kindergarten. What can you do? God is very patient.

But I want to say, my brothers and sisters, time is short. Seek God earnestly. It's not some new theory you need to hear.

What you need is a passionate desire to say, Lord, I want to live an overcoming life. I want a life where sin does not rule over me. That is a life of rest.

Romans 6, verse 14 is one of our favorite verses in CFC Churches. Romans 6, 14, let's read it again. Sin shall not rule over you.

Will you take that as a promise today? Faith, not by struggling. No, as long as Lazarus is struggling, Jesus will not come. You've got to come to the end of your life, the self and say, Lord, I cannot make it.

Sin shall not be master over you when you stop struggling under the law and come under grace. You know, there's only one requirement to get grace from God, and that is humility. Every truly humble person gets victory.

A proud person will be defeated. A proud sister will be defeated. A proud brother will be defeated.

No matter what church they go to, no matter what doctrine they believe, but God gives his grace to the humble. And how do you know whether you're humble? I'll tell you, you'll get grace. If you're not getting grace, it's up to the fact that you're not humble.

How do you know you're not getting grace? Sin rules over you. Romans 6, 14 says if you get grace, sin cannot rule over you. I want to ask you an honest question, and you don't have to answer it to me or to your neighbor.

Answer it to yourself. Is there some sinful habit that is making you its slave, some thought pattern, some way of speaking, something in your life which your conscience tells you is sin, but you never seem to get rid of it? You've prayed so much. You've attended so many meetings.

It's still there. It's ruling over you. You know what God is saying through that experience? My dear child, you're not getting grace.

That's why you can struggle, struggle for another 50 years. You'll still be in the same place like those Israelites wandering in the wilderness. What you need is grace.

Humble yourself. Put yourself into God's hands and say, Lord, I want to be like that branch in the tree, helpless. I don't want to think too much of myself.

I want to lean upon you. And that's faith. Faith is leaning upon God in helpless dependence.

It's like Lazarus struggling, struggling, struggling. Now, finally, he can't even lift a finger. Drop dead.

Zero. When you come there, you can have faith. Lord, I cannot make it on my own.

So then we come to the obedience which comes out of faith, which is different from the old covenant people who struggled and struggled, struggled to obey. Do you know how many years they wandered in the wilderness? It says after two years, they came to the borders of the promised land. And then for the next 38 years, they wandered.

They were supposed to enter after two years. But we read here, they came. And then after two years, the Lord said, go in.

But they didn't go in. You read that in the book of Deuteronomy. I don't have time to show it.

The Lord said, another 38 years, you're going to want to begin a total of 40 years. I'll give you an example of that in the New Testament. You turn to John chapter five.

You know the story of the man who was lying at the pool of Bethesda. There were many sick people at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus healed one person.

Why didn't he heal all the others? To me, that's a picture of a hundred people struggling to get victory over sin and one person gets it. A hundred people were lying there at the pool of Bethesda. It says in verse three, John five, verse three, one man got healed.

A hundred people in a church struggling for victory over sin, one person gets it. I'll tell you why. It says here, this Jesus went to this man, verse five.

He had been lying there for 38 years. And 38 years reminds me of the 38 years that Israelites wandered in the wilderness. Two years after they came out of Egypt, they came to the borders of the promised land and the Lord said, go in.

And they did not go in. So they wandered another 38 years. And Jesus asked them, do you want to get well? That's what he asks every one of you today.

Do you want to get victory over sin? And his answer is, I've tried and tried and tried and tried, but I'm not succeeding. Always somebody else gets in. He says, I can't, I can't make it.

I've given up. Finally, you've given up. The Lord says, okay, you're going to be healed today.

When he came to the end of himself after 38 years, just like the Israelites entered the land after 38 years, he got healed that day. All these miracles are like a parable also. The Lord wants us to come to an end of ourselves.

Now you probably understood it and probably are excited by what you heard, but you say, yeah, it won't work in my life. The moment you say that, I can tell you it will not work in your life. I want you to speak a different language today, the language of faith and say, Lord, it is going to work in my life.

I am going to be an overcomer because that is your promise for me. I'm going to receive grace. I don't care what it takes to understand humility.

I'm going to humble myself and you will give me grace and my life will be changed. My home life will be changed. Your home will be like a little heaven on earth.

Don't you want that? You won't be enslaved by things that make you feel so condemned and rob you of your confidence even to testify in the meeting. Because when you get up to share something, the devil tells you, huh, you're going to speak, what type of life have you lived? And your mouth is shut, or you'll be a hypocrite and continue to speak. God doesn't want you to be like that.

God wants you to be an overcomer. I say to every single one of you who's listening, it is God's will for you to be an overcomer. Ask God to show you what the obedience of faith is.

Helpless dependence upon God. Lord, let me be like Lazarus come to the end of myself. And I ask you to fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to overcome and keep the 10th commandment that lust will go away from my life, that I will not lust to get angry or lust to possess that.

Lust is a strong desire. It's a strong desire within you that makes you angry with other people. It's a strong desire within you that makes you disregard God and do things contrary to his will.

That's what lust is. Lord, I want to overcome it. Help me.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God. Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to pray a little prayer.

Say, Lord, teach me what it means to humble myself, because I know that every humble person will get grace, and I want grace. I desperately need it. I don't want to just be a member of a good church.

I want a personal life of overcoming so that I can be a witness for you like a light that shines. Not that like a bulb that goes on and off and on and off and on, but is always shining. Heavenly Father, please help each one of us.

We pray in Jesus' name.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/710_4NKWKjY.mp4

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