

Finishing the Course - 03 the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

The Holy Spirit is the most important thing that distinguishes the church from the world, and it brings love and holiness into our lives.

Duration: 1:59:48

Scripture: Genesis 18:27, Genesis 42:21, Job 42:5-6, Isaiah 6:5, Matthew 17:6, Luke 5:8, Revelation 1:17

Topics: "Finishing Well"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being free from the opinions of men and instead being open to the influence of the Holy Spirit. He highlights how in the Old Testament, whenever people received enlightenment from the scriptures, they saw Jesus and had a profound reaction of humility and awe. The speaker encourages the audience to seek not just to hear about God, but to truly see Him in their meetings and encounters with Him. He also shares a story about children trying to tell the biggest lie to win a dog, illustrating the need for humility and honesty in our interactions with others. The sermon concludes with the speaker expressing his desire to preach in a way that shines the light on Jesus and blows the trumpet of truth, even if he himself remains unseen or unknown.

Transcript

Our theme these days has been what we have back up there, growing up in all aspects into Christ and filling up that which is lacking in our own life, finishing our course and staying within our boundaries. And I'm sure there are many many things which we haven't looked at yet fully, which you can think of as the Holy Spirit shows you, particularly those of you who are elders in churches, you have a responsibility to make sure that as your church is exposed to the whole truth of God, you can thereby lead people to maturity. Because remember, it says we have to grow up.

That's a very important word, growing up. Sometimes parents tell their young sons and daughters, when are you going to grow up? What they mean is, when are you going to behave like a grown-up? That's what they mean. And very often in the church also, a lot of, when I look at the behavior of people who've been in the church for so many years, I feel like asking the same question, when are you going to grow up? When are you going to behave like a grown-up and not like a baby? When are you going to be mature and patient, that if somebody insults you, you don't get offended, you don't nurse that grudge for days or weeks, not even for an hour.

That's a grown-up person. A grown-up person ignores insults and he knows that the only person whose opinion matters is God. I've often asked people this question, if 10,000 people call you a prophet, will you become a prophet? Is it so easy? Get 10,000 people to call you a prophet? What about if 1 million people call you a prophet? What about if all the people in the world say you're a prophet? Will that make you a prophet? Six billion people consider you to be a prophet? You know, if that happens, it's very easy for you to also imagine that you're a prophet.

That is how much we have become slaves to the opinion of people. Why six billion? Hundred people in a church think you're a great man of God and you imagine that you're a great man of God. That is the stupidity of the children of Adam.

Even, I want to tell you something brothers and sisters, please listen to me, even if all, not only your little church of hundred people, if all six billion people in the world feel that you're a great man of God or a great woman of God, I want to tell you the sad news that you will not become a great man of God or a woman of God that way. Equally, if 10 people call you a devil, you don't become a devil. If 1 million people call you a devil, you don't become a devil.

And if six billion people in the world say you're definitely a devil, I'm still not a devil. Do you believe that? Then you will never be discouraged at what people say about you. And you will never be puffed up when people think you're a wonderful person.

Because none of these six billion people are going to sit in the judgment seat on the final day to evaluate you. If I'm writing an examination and all the other fellow students say, I think you've done really well. And I know I haven't done well.

And all the people sitting in the classroom, no, Zack, you've done really well, I'm sure you're going to get at least 95%. And I think I'll get about 10. Is their opinion worth anything? Because the one who's going to evaluate my paper is none of these people.

None of the children sitting in the classroom is going to evaluate my question paper. Somebody else evaluates my paper and says, you thought you were going to get 10, you actually got about 2. So, it's good to get the opinion of the one who's finally going to evaluate us. Not the opinion of all our fellow students.

We're all like students sitting in an examination. Me also, I'm not the evaluator. I hope none of you got the crazy idea that I'm going to sit on the throne in the final day to evaluate you.

Why do you care about what Brother Zack thinks? You think it has got any worth? You think I'm even a junior evaluator? Sorry, I'm not. I'm a student sitting there, writing my examination paper just like you. I'm just encouraging you to do it better.

You see, in the Lord's examination room, there's one difference. We are allowed to help one another. That's not cheating.

In other examinations, you're not allowed to help one another. But here, we are allowed to help one another. We are allowed to open our books, you know, see the answers.

And it's a wonderful examination. You can open the books and you can see the answers. You can go to your neighbor and say, hey, what's the answer to this one? Yeah, that's right.

You must never judge anybody. That's right. You got the answers and you still write the wrong answer.

You go and judge people. Isn't that terrible? What a wonderful examination this is. You can even go and ask the teacher.

What a wonderful examination this is. And at the end of all that, if you get 2%, I don't know what to say. Imagine that.

At the end of it all, you get 2%. Open book examination, ask anybody, ask the teacher himself. And the teacher is always available.

That's a wonderful thing. Always. Ask him any question on any, even the tough ones, small ones.

One word answers. Lord, what's the answer? Don't do it. Yes.

No. One word answers. You know, there's multiple choice.

Shall I watch that particular movie? No. It's finished. That's it.

That's it. You know, it's so simple. So, it's good for us to be free from the opinions of men.

Because the more free we are from the opinions of men, the more we can be open to the most important influence that all of us should be open to. And that's what I want to speak about this morning. And that is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

You know, if you went to an Old Testament person, a Jewish person, and asked him, what is the most important thing that characterizes, that makes you Jewish people special? You know what he would say? He would say, the law. The law. The law distinguishes us from all the people of the world.

God gave His law only to us. And they were right. The other people finally got their ideas from the Ten Commandments.

All the countries in the world have got their teachings basically from the Ten Commandments. If non-Christian people teach their children to honor father and mother, you got to go back 3,500 years, they got it from the Ten Commandments. If there are laws in this country against murder, adultery, giving a false witness in court called perjury, these are all serious crimes.

Theft, it all came from 3,500 years ago when only Israel had it, the law. But the sad thing was that Israel thought, this is only for us. God never gives anything only for one person or one group of people, because He Himself is not like that.

God is love. And one of the primary marks of love is, we give. You know those whom you love, don't you give gifts to them? God is like that.

He was the first giver. God so loved, that He gave. What did He give? To Israel, He gave the law.

In Deuteronomy 33, verse 2 and 3, it says, God gave a fiery law to Israel that proves that He loves the people. What a verse. A lot of people in Israel thought, ooh, this terrible law.

No, that proves that He loves the people. Just like you parents know that when you give certain rules to your children, it's because you love them. You tell little children, don't go switch on the gas.

Why did you tell them not to switch on the gas? A five-year-old can burn himself if he turns on the gas stove. And little commandments you give like that to your children, aren't they all out of love? Israel never understood that. And so, God wanted Israel to receive this law and then bless others with it.

But they didn't do that. They just kept it to themselves. So God said, I'm gonna set you aside.

I'm gonna start a new group of people called the church, the body of Jesus Christ. And I'm going to give them something better than the law. I'm going to give them My Holy Spirit.

So today, what is it that distinguishes the church from all the rest of the people in the world? What distinguished Israel, the law? What distinguishes us? It's the Holy Spirit. I want to say, my brothers and sisters, never forget this. That the thing, I mean, I don't want to use the word thing, the Holy Spirit is a person.

The distinctive feature of the church compared to everyone else should be that we have the Holy Spirit. And I wish, I wish in 2,000 years that Christians had at least placed an emphasis on that word, Holy Spirit. Because some people, their Trinity is Father, Son and Noisy Spirit.

Noisy Spirit? You know, why do I say that? Because some people have come to our meetings and said, there's not enough noise here. Holy Spirit can't be here. I say, no, no, no.

You mean noisy spirit is not here? Holy Spirit is here. They confuse. Either they don't know the difference between holy and noisy.

Maybe an English problem, I don't know. But they say there's not enough noise here, so you don't have the Holy Spirit. That doesn't fit.

If they had said there's not enough noise here, so you don't have a noisy spirit, I can understand. Or if they had said there's not enough holiness in your midst, though you don't have the Holy Spirit, then I can understand. But how can you say there's not enough noise here, and so you don't have a Holy Spirit? Something is mixed up there.

That's so obvious. I mean, even your child can understand that. It's not Father, Son and Emotional Spirit.

It's not Father, Son and Clever Spirit. Some people think because they are clever, know the Bible, they got the Holy Spirit. No, no, no.

The thing that should distinguish us was that God has given us His Holy Spirit. And I want to say another thing. Holiness is not primarily paying our taxes, not getting angry, or not getting into debt, or not lusting after women.

That's not primary. Those are all aspects of holiness. That's the fruit.

What is the root of all this? Holiness is love. Please remember that all your life. Holiness is love.

If you don't have love, you don't have holiness, whatever else you may think. Because I've seen a lot of people in the world who preach victory over sin and high standards of holiness, and they don't love others. They love people in their own group.

I mean, the communists may also love people in their own group, the Naxalites love people in their own group, and the fundamentalist people of religions love people in their own group, but they hate everybody else outside that group. I mean, look at all the chaos going on in the world today with fundamentalist groups attacking people outside that group. But within that, they'll never attack anybody in their own group.

No. They work together to attack people outside. And if the people in a church just love all the people in their group, and hate people in some other denomination, and hate people who think differently from them, actually they are no different from these fundamentalist groups.

God is not like that. God's love is not something you can switch on, switch off. You look at this person, off.

You look at this person, on. That's not God's love, that's human love. When you meet somebody here, on.

You meet another person, off. What's that? Brother, sister, you need the Holy Spirit, without a doubt. You really need the Holy Spirit.

If you can switch on, switch off, I guarantee that is human love, whatever you may call it. It may be noisy and all that, emotional and all that, and even clever, but it is human love. Something you can switch on, switch off.

Switch on, switch off. But a lot of, I fear that number of people sitting here have got that type of, what you call love. On, off, on, off.

That's not God's love. God said, He'll make you like the sun, which shines on good people, bad people. God doesn't approve of what people do.

That's another thing. God exposes sin. But His love is to all people.

You know, I've seen so many evidences of that in the world. Why is it that God allows unconverted atheists to be healthy? Why does He allow people who are fighting against Christians to live long lives? Why does He allow people who are persecuting Christians to win elections? Why does He allow people who are crooks to make a lot of money? You know, there's a worldly expression that marriages are made in heaven. And people say, Oh, if somebody gets married, God bless them.

Well, look at all the non-Christian people and crooks and Godless people who get married and they have healthy children. You think it's only God-fearing people who have healthy children? Some people think, if you get a pretty wife, God's blessed you. Oh, then these film stars are the ones who are blessed the most.

I'm talking about Christians. Christians who got all these crazy ideas in their head. They think they're wholehearted brothers.

They are not at all wholehearted. They're probably 5%. That's about it.

Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't marry a pretty girl. That's not my saying. I'm saying don't bring God into it.

You say, I like that. Fine. That's okay.

But when you bring God and all your, try to sanctify your desires with all those things, I see something wrong. God blesses, I'm saying God blesses all people because of His goodness. He makes the sun to rise on the good and the evil.

He sends the rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. He's a good God. And He wants to make us like that.

His nature is something that is basically good. To all people. And when the Holy Spirit fills your life, one mark of it will be that you'll be good to all people.

Not just something you can switch on and switch off and switch on and switch off, good to certain people. And I'm not saying that we can help all people equally. No, no.

We're not like God with such a big ability and heart to take care of six billion people in the world. My heart and my ability is very small. I can't create worlds by speaking a word.

No. And because my heart and my ability is small, it doesn't mean I hate other people, but the number of people I can care for becomes limited. My children, that's your primary responsibility is your children.

Obviously you cannot even care for somebody else's children in the church as much as you care for your own. Naturally. That's natural.

That's not because you're evil. It's because your capacity is small. So don't feel guilty.

I remember, I never forget how when we started 27 years ago, there was a brother, a very legalistic person who was in our church. He left long ago, thank God. He, I remember, he got up in a meeting once.

You know, this is how legalistic people are. They put burdens on people. He said, when your child is sick, you're burdened about it.

Why aren't you equally burdened when somebody else's child is sick? What is the purpose of that message? That is only to bring people under condemnation. I refuse to get condemned with such preachers. I have an answer when he asked me that question.

Why are you not as burdened when somebody else's child is sick? I say, brother, because that person is not my child. I mean, that may sound unspiritual, but that's honesty. I say, we want honest people in the church, not these super spiritual humbugs who tell lies.

Because my capacity is small. That's why. There's no human being in the world, unless he's insane or something like that, who can have as much concern for somebody else's child as his own child.

And you need never feel condemned about it. That doesn't mean you're unloving. It means your capacity is small.

That's all. Maybe your capacity is a teaspoon. God is like an ocean, but it's the same water in the ocean, which is in your teaspoon.

The quality is the same. Quantity is less. That's all.

God can love all six billion. I can love only a few, but the quality of my love is the same as God's love. It should be.

Even though amount is less, why is it as an elder, I can only care for certain number of people, I can't care for all the believers in the whole world. That's impossible. It's not that I hate them.

I love the brothers in South America and Korea and Australia and Japan and everywhere. I don't have the same responsibility as I have for those who seek to accept me as their elder. That's a very small number.

That doesn't mean it's not God's love. It means I've got only a little cup, but it's the same water in the cup, which is in the ocean, which is in God's heart. And another brother who's grown more than you, can handle more people than you.

But our love must be the same quality as God's. And the Holy Spirit has come to shed abroad. See Romans 5.5. The Holy Spirit has come to shed abroad in our hearts.

The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. This is what the Holy Spirit has primarily come to do. Don't get your doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the Acts of the Apostles.

Get it from the Epistles. Some people go to the Acts of the Apostles, Romans Acts 2.4 and say they all spoke in tongues. And they force people to speak in tongues today and 90% is counterfeit in all their churches.

Why? Because they force people to do something which God may not want to give them. I'll tell you what God wants to give everybody. What is taught in the Epistles.

Supposing I say the Holy Spirit filled Paul and he shaved his head. I'll show you that in scripture. Acts 9. The Holy Spirit came upon Paul.

Later on in Acts 21 or 22, he shaved his head. So all of you who are filled with the Holy Spirit, sisters also, you know what you're supposed to do? Got it? What doctrine is that? I get it from Acts of the Apostles. That's what a spirit-filled man did.

Don't get your doctrines from Acts of the Apostles. It's a history book. It doesn't tell us doctrine.

It tells us what happened. Paul, when he was converted, fell down from the horse to the ground and became blind for three days. I can find out now who's really converted.

Did you fall down to the ground and were you blind for three days? What all strange doctrines you can get from the Acts of the Apostles. It was never meant for doctrine. It was meant as a history book.

If you want doctrine, go to the Epistles. Go to the teaching of Jesus. You follow the simple rule and you'll never go wrong.

Where in the Epistles or in the teaching of Jesus does it say that every believer should speak in tongues? Nowhere. But I'll tell you where it says that every believer should have the love of God in his heart when he's filled with the Holy Spirit. Romans 5.5. And I tell you, if Christendom had gone to Romans 5.5 instead of Acts 2.4, we would have had a different type of Christianity among those who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The love of God. But when the love of God fills my heart, it depends on my capacity. It may be a cup.

It may be a bucket. It may be a tub. That depends on the capacity of my heart.

In Paul's case, it was like a river. Paul said, my heart is enlarged towards you fellows. Your heart is so narrow, he told the Corinthians.

My heart is enlarged. So when God fills me, I have so much of his love. Well, you fellows, you go to God with a little wee teeny cup and say, God fill me.

Okay, God fills you with the Holy Spirit. How much have you got? You got so little. Capacity.

So the quality must be the same. Even if capacity grows as we grow older, to fill our hearts with the love of God must be our goal in the coming days. And it is from love that the gifts are exercised.

We have mentioned in the past that one of the things we have lacked in the church is perhaps the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Right. But you know what Paul said about the gifts of the Holy Spirit? I wish all of Christendom had understood this.

Do you know where Paul speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit? 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians Chapter 12, he speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He says, there are gifts of the word of wisdom.

Verse 8, 1 Corinthians 12. Word of wisdom means to know the right word to give to help a brother or sister solve a complicated problem that he's having in his family or his life. A word of wisdom.

You know, God can give us that sometimes, if we are open to the Holy Spirit. A word of knowledge. And that is, I know if any of you have read Pentecostal charismatic books, every single Pentecostal charismatic book I've read in the world on this subject says word of knowledge is to supernaturally know what somebody else is hidden.

Knowledge is never used like that in the New Testament. A word of knowledge is to know the scriptures. It's a supernatural gift to be able to impart biblical knowledge, the knowledge of God through the Bible to other people.

That's what the word of knowledge is. And I'll tell you this, you will not find that written in any book in the whole world, as far as I know. Because everybody follows what somebody else said.

And particularly Indians are great people at imitating Americans and what the Westerners write, we just repeat the same old thing. I find that I've hardly met in my life even one or two Indians who have an original knowledge of God that goes completely against what the Western peoples teach, on any doctrine. Maybe there are a few in our churches coming up now, but outside everybody is a blind imitator.

When you go to the scriptures, you got to get rid of all your preconceived concepts if you want to know God. I'll tell you that. If you come to the scriptures with preconceived concepts which you read in books and magazines, I can give it you in writing, you'll get everything wrong in your understanding of God's word.

Okay. Then the faith. And that is not the fruit of faith, it's the gift of faith.

Gift of faith means the ability to trust God for, you know, like George Muller could trust God for 2,000 orphans without reporting his needs to anybody. If there was no breakfast one morning, he would just put all the plates on the table and say, let's sit down and give thanks. And there's no milk, no bread.

And say, let's give thanks. And by the time he finishes thanks, one milk van will break down outside his gate and the driver doesn't know what to do with all the milk that'll get spoiled. And he'll say, okay, let's give this to George Muller's home.

And says, by the time he's opened his eyes, the milk has arrived. That's the gift of faith. Not everybody has it.

Some people have it. Because it's for a ministry. That's different from faith to believe that sin shall not have dominion over you.

That's the fruit of faith. You know, promises in his word which are related to life. This faith is for ministry.

You know, to move a mountain which is standing in the way. You may not have faith for that because that's not your ministry. Faith to cast out a demon.

You may not have faith for that because that's not your ministry. That's a gift of faith. So don't get condemned if you can't do what George Muller did or what somebody else does, casting out demons.

That's a ministry. You must have the fruit of faith which is for the promises in his word. The gift of faith we must have in the church, at least with some people.

But everybody doesn't have to have it. Everybody doesn't have to have the word of knowledge or the word of wisdom. A few people is enough.

But we should have these gifts. Gift of healing. Now healing is different from miracles in the sense that healing is praying for the sick.

And you know, it's like the difference between making a scooter and repairing a scooter. You know, to make a scooter from raw material is one thing. To repair a scooter that's defective is another thing.

Healing is repair. Miracle is making something. So that's healing and that's miracles.

I want to also say these gifts are very rare today, particularly healing and miracles. Don't be fooled by all these fellows who say they are doing healing crusades. I'll tell you what I believe.

I believe 99.99% of what goes on in these big healing crusades is absolute deception, without a doubt. That's my conviction. You don't have to agree with me.

But I'll tell you where healing in the name of Jesus is taking place today. Even miracles and perhaps even raising of the dead. In villages where people have never heard the gospel.

Even in India, remote villages, there are supernatural healings and miracles taking place right now. When you read the account, why? Because that is a gift specially given for those who reach out to unreached areas. These fellows who conduct healing crusades who come from Western countries, they never go to these unreached areas.

Have you ever heard a healing crusade in some remote village in North India? Nobody has that. They always come to reached areas and that's why 99.99% of it is all hoax and humbug. The only blind stupid Christians who go and sit there and pay their money and open their mouths and believe all that.

There are lots of... You know there was an American man who was one of the first people who started the circus industry in America. His name was P.T. Barnum and he had all types of funny things in his circus like bearded women and short people and I don't remember. There were some amazing things he had like that.

And it's not a woman with a beard. It's just stuck on you know like and he used to collect money from people who wanted to come into this tent to see this bearded woman and there would be a woman sitting there with lipstick and all of the beard and they'd pay their money and go out. All types of deception like this.

And somebody asked him, how is this you're able to... He became very rich and he said, a sucker is born every minute into this world. We might as well collect his money. What he meant by sucker was one who can be easily fooled.

He says every minute there's a sucker born into the world. I just collect his money. That's all.

He comes to see a bearded woman and he pays his money and goes away. And he comes to see some, I don't know, toothless tiger or something like that and pays his money and goes away. All types of things.

And today's a lot of these evangelists who stood up, stand up on these huge stages have realized that there are a lot of suckers in Christianity also. You can collect their money easily. Just fool them with somebody falling down and laughing or just collect them.

Nobody becomes holy. Nobody becomes godly. None of these fellows want to go out and preach the gospel in difficult places.

They just fall down and laugh and get up and go running after making money. And they go and give the money to this evangelist. A sucker is born every minute in Christendom in the 21st century.

I hope there are none in our CFC circles. I remember once there was a sister here in CFC. She wasn't really, I don't even know whether she was saved, but she came along and she went one day to one of these big healing meetings that was in some stadium here in Bangalore.

So I asked her after she came back and I said, what did this man preach there? She said, Brother Zach, the same thing that we hear in the church. Oh really? Okay. You know, I thank God for these healing preachers because that person showed me where this lady stood.

Till then I thought she was really a believer. Now I knew that her discernment was zero. Because she said that that man was preaching the same thing that we were preaching in the church.

That was the first time I knew that her discernment was zero. She had absolutely no understanding of God or his word. How did I know that? Through that preacher who came to Bangalore.

Shouldn't I be thankful for such people? Of course. That's why we never stop anyone from going to these meetings. Because when they come back from the meeting, I can find out how much discernment they have.

What did you hear there, brother? Oh, same thing we heard in the church. Okay. Good.

You don't need much discernment after that to know where such people stand. It's not only these meetings. They go to some other emotionally charged meeting and they get some type of experience.

What did you get there? Oh, the Holy Spirit came. Oh, I see. Okay.

You get some understanding where these fellows who you thought were so spiritual sitting in your church, you find that they just nod their heads in the meeting. Their discernment is absolutely zero. And that shows that they don't have integrity in their life.

They are challenged by emotions. They are challenged by noisy praise and worship meetings and false teachings of grace that allow them to live defeated by sin day after day after day after day in their personal life, in their family life. They talk about grace.

Oh, brother, we heard about grace finally. If you really heard about grace, sin will not have dominion over you. If you really heard about grace, you will not get angry in your home.

Then I know you got grace. Otherwise, it's all cheap counterfeits with which you're being deceived. The gifts of the Spirit, distinguishing of spirits, it says in verse 10.

Prophecy, preaching the word prophetically, distinguishing of spirits, tongues, to communicate to God burdens that we cannot express with our mother tongue, an interpretation of tongues whenever the tongue is used in public. I want to share three things, I believe, particularly that the Holy Spirit would seek to do in our lives. And I want to use three words for that.

Enlightenment, encouragement, empowerment. Easy words to remember. Enlightenment, encouragement, empowerment.

The Holy Spirit fills us, comes upon us to enlighten us, to encourage us, to empower us. And when the Holy Spirit fills us, His purpose is that we go around enlightening other people, encouraging other people, empowering or strengthening weak people around us. And I believe this is one of the greatest needs in our midst, in our churches, to be those who are enlightened and enlighten others, those who are encouraged continuously and who can encourage others, those who are empowered continually, so that they can strengthen others.

So let me look at these three things, first of all. Enlightenment, we cannot get enlightenment without God's word. 2nd Corinthians 3, 18, it says, we behold with an unveiled face.

I want to paraphrase verse 18 today in a way that you'll never, never misunderstand it, or in a way perhaps that you've never seen before. Now, I want to go slowly, 2nd Corinthians 3, 18. I believe this is one of the most wonderful verses about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the entire New Testament.

So I want to explain each phrase. First of all, with an unveiled face. It says here that even today, verse 15, when people read the Bible, when they say Moses, that means that was their Bible those days.

When they read the Bible, a veil lies over their heart. Supposing I have frosted glasses, like frosted windows, and I try to read the Bible, Lord, I can't understand anything here, naturally. That's the meaning of that.

There's a veil over their heart, like cataract. You know, when people have cataract in their eyes, can't see, and they can't read the Bible. No, they don't understand it.

What is this veil? Listen, it's the law. It's a legalistic attitude. The more legalistic your attitude is, the less you will understand the scriptures.

Legalism is like cataract. It blinds your eyes. You'll see things in the Bible which are not there.

And we have a lot of examples like that in our churches. And they get up, and if they are elders, oh, then it's terrible, because they put this legalism on a whole lot of people in their church. And a lot of people in their church suffer, because that's what this fellow saw in the scriptures.

But he saw it through this frosted lens called the law, legalism. And when such a person sits in a meeting, even in a conference like this, and he can hear a wonderful message of liberty, and freedom in the spirit, but he's got this legalistic lens, and he understands it all in a different way, and he goes back to his church, and preaches it in a completely different way, and brings everybody into bondage. He can listen to the most liberating message in a conference, and go and preach it in a legalistic way back home.

If he can do that with the Bible, why can't he do it with Brother Zach's message? If they can do it with Moses and Paul, why can't they do it with us? Sure. Where did these legalistic fellows get all their legalism from? By reading Paul. And Peter, and John, but they got it all crooked in their minds.

The problem is not with Paul, Peter and John. The problem is with the veil over their heart. How to get rid of this veil? There's this very simple way to get rid of this cataract.

No operation, no charges. How? Next verse. When a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Till then he was looking at the letter. Who is the Lord? Next verse. The Holy Spirit.

It's the one place in the Bible where the Holy Spirit is called the Lord. Now the Lord is not talking about Jesus now. He's talking about the Holy Spirit.

So what he's saying is, brothers and sisters, when you read the Bible, don't use the dictionary. Don't try to analyze what it means. You'll get it all wrong.

Turn to the Holy Spirit and the veil will be taken away immediately. There is only one way we can get rid of the veil when we turn to the scriptures. And that is by saying, Lord, what does this mean? Lord, I'm a dumb, stupid person.

I tell you, that's exactly how I go to the Bible even today after studying it for 43 years. Lord, even donkeys are cleverer than me. Please show me.

Otherwise I'll get it all wrong and then I have responsibility for other people. I'll teach it all wrong and I'll bring so many people into bondage like some of my fellow elders have brought people into bondage in their churches. Why can't I do that? I may do the same thing.

I've done it in the past also. That's why I don't throw stones at others. I've done it and I've repented of it so much.

I say, Lord, I never want to do it again. I want to bring people into what it says in verse 17, liberty. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

There is no bondage. If you ever preach a message which brings people into bondage, you can be absolutely sure that message, you did not have the Holy Spirit. You don't have to think about it anymore.

No matter how much liberty you felt you had, no matter how much emotion you had, no matter how much freedom you thought you had, if you brought people into bondage through that message, it was not the Holy Spirit, it was the letter. Yes, you quoted scripture, but it was the letter, letter, letter, letter, letter, letter. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Not liberty to be worldly. That's where people have misunderstood it. Oh, I'm free.

I've got the Holy Spirit and they become worldly. That's not liberty. That's bondage.

We need to define bondage and liberty clearly. Liberty is to be free from sin. Liberty is to be free from the prince of the world, to be free from Satan, to be free from that God who wants to run my life, to be free from the nature of Adam that has controlled me, from the selfishness and the pride and the self-centeredness.

That's liberty, to be break free from those shackles. Do you know that self-centeredness and selfishness are shackles and the Holy Spirit breaks the shackles and I'm free. I'm no longer a selfish person and I'm no longer bound by pride and arrogance towards other people.

That's all bondage. It says here that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, freedom from the nature of Adam, freedom from the power of the devil and his schemes and his tricks. So, that's the first thing we need, an unveiled face.

I hope all of you from today onwards, when you read the scriptures, you'll get rid of the veil. How do you get rid of the veil? Just go to the Holy Spirit. It says in verse 16, turn to the Holy Spirit and say, Lord, just teach me this word.

Otherwise, if I use my clever brain, you know I've seen that happen in CFC, where people use their clever brain and the cleverer they are, the more they try to use it. I thank God for all the dumb people in CFC who don't have so much brains to think of such clever things. But even the clever people like Paul can also have revelation if they humble themselves and say my cleverness is no use.

What I mean is, somebody reads something in the scriptures, a clever fellow, he reads something and he thinks of a wonderful illustration for that and says, oh boy, I can share that next Wednesday in the meeting. That's a really clever thought. Can you imagine how people will be impressed with me? Like little Jack Horner, stood in a corner, he put in his thumb and pulled out a plum and said, what a good boy am I. You know that nursery rhyme that children sing? That's what often has happened in our CFC Wednesday meetings.

They put in their thumb, pulled out a plum, what a good boy am I. Did you hear this clever thought that I just brought out from scriptures? And I'm sorry to say there are some dumb people who sit and appreciate that, not me. I say, I can see that that's just that fellow's cleverness. He's not judging himself, he's trying to impress.

He's not bringing life from that. You need to know the difference between clever thoughts and revelation. Revelation comes from obedience in your life.

Clever thoughts come by sitting in an easy chair and thinking, what shall I say next meeting to impress people in the church? You just try that. Sit in an easy chair, take the Bible and say, what shall I say, some clever thing to impress in the church next meeting? And one after the other, the devil will give you clever thoughts. The cleverer you are, the faster your brain will work to give you clever thoughts.

You say, boy, God gave me a message. Which God? The God of this world. Jesus never got messages like that.

He obeyed for 30 years and then he preached what he obeyed. Do that. That'll be revelation.

How do you distinguish between revelation and obedience? I'll tell you. Whenever people got revelation in the Old Testament or New Testament, whether it was Abraham or Isaac or Job or John in Patmos, they fell on their face and said, God, I'm a nobody. I'm nothing.

If that happened to you, brother, I'd like to hear what you heard. If that did not happen to you, but just a bright idea came into your head and said, boy, that's something that will impress people, please don't waste time in the meeting sharing all that. Go and share that with some dumb people whom you want to impress.

Don't waste time in the church meetings with all that type of garbage. Your lovely illustrations and your lovely thoughts, which have never brought you on our face before God. No wonder we have so many boring things going on in our meetings.

You know what we need? We need preachers who have fallen on their face before God, like John, who says, I saw Jesus and even though I walked with him for 65 years, when I saw him, I fell. And Jesus said, don't be afraid. Send this message to the seven churches.

When such a man speaks, my ears are open. I want to listen because he's fallen on his face before God. He's got a message for the churches.

Why can't we be like that? That's what I mean by enlightenment. That's what the Holy Spirit comes to do. And that's what it says in 2nd Corinthians 3, when this veil is taken away, when I'm not looking for clever thoughts, when I'm not looking for, you know, things to impress people with, and I turn to the mirror, the mirror is God's word.

What do I see there? I don't see a message. I don't see a clever thought. It says in verse 18, I see the glory of Jesus.

That's what it says there. The Holy Spirit shows me the glory of Jesus. Jesus said that before he went away to heaven.

He said, the Holy Spirit will come. He will take of the things of mine and show it to you. You read that in John 15 and John 16.

He will take of the things of mine and show it to you. He will glorify me. Have you noticed this? The Father sent the Son into the world and the Son never glorified himself.

He glorified the Father. You got to see something wonderful in the Trinity here. The Father sent the Son into the world and the Son doesn't glorify himself.

He glorifies the Father. The Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world and the Holy Spirit never talks about himself. He glorifies the Son.

son. And the father, he never glorifies himself, he glorifies the son. What about you? You want to know whether you are like God? You want to know whether you are filled with the Holy Spirit? You will glorify Jesus.

That's the nature of God. It's not this little Jack Horner, put a lot of plums, what a good boy am I? No, no, no, no. That's the devil.

And the devil sometimes takes scripture. I heard of a dream that Martin Luther had. Martin Luther was a man who fought against the whole Roman Catholic system in his day.

There were some areas he didn't have light. He lived 600 years ago. We have much more light than him in many areas, because we are living 500 years later.

But he was a bold man. Imagine standing against the whole system and they were trying to kill him. But he was a man, he had a dream once, at least I have read the story, I don't know how true it is, but there is a message in it.

He was in a dream going through a huge building with many, many halls, pillars and halls and he heard somewhere, somebody preaching. It was not like this wrong doctrines of the Catholic system he was in. It was all correct teaching about justification by faith.

He said, boy this is wonderful. I want to see who this preacher is. Because that's what he was standing for, you know.

Justification by faith, salvation is not by work, salvation is by faith. Search, search, search, search, search. He finally came to an empty room and he looked at the preacher and it was the devil.

He said, Satan, you are preaching this correct doctrine. And a voice said, do you know that even the right doctrine, if it's not preached in the right spirit, brings death. He got a message from that dream.

The right doctrine, not preached in the right spirit, brings death. Many of us need to remember that. Because we preached right doctrine, we have heard it in CFC through the years, but I am sorry to say that many of us in our churches have not preached it in a right spirit.

We have scolded people, I have done it, I have repented of it, I have been in bondage, condemned people, excommunicated people for silly reasons. Oh, what all we have done. What a need for repentance.

And yet the doctrine is all right. It's the devil himself in the pulpit. But how many people have that discernment to see that was the devil today in the pulpit.

Who came, he can come through a serpent. Can the devil speak through a sincere God-fearing man? Yes or no? I want to ask, did he speak through Peter once to Jesus? God can speak through a donkey and the devil can speak through Peter. How do you like that? Can the devil speak through apostles? Peter? Can God speak through donkeys? Balaam's donkey? Don't just think that because a man is a man whom you respect that everything he says is right.

If he brings you into bondage, I don't care who he is. That day anyway, the devil was speaking through him. And if a man bores you to death, you can be pretty sure that wasn't God.

However much you may respect that brother. And if a man scolds you and tears you to pieces, you may respect that brother a lot, but that day he was not speaking in the Holy Spirit. That you can be sure.

He got angry with something and that anger came out in his system, even though the Bible says the anger of man can never accomplish the righteousness of God. It says in James 1, the fellow forgot it that day. He tried to scold people and make them righteous, even though the Bible says the anger of man can never achieve the righteousness of God.

It will produce a certain righteousness, like you know, we can get angry with our children and make them do some righteous things. That's not the righteousness of God. But people try it in the church, because they don't know God.

They haven't got enlightenment. Their hearts are not filled with the love of God. Their hearts are filled with knowledge, right doctrine, preached in a wrong spirit.

Remember this, please remember this picture. Whenever people got enlightenment in the scriptures, they saw Jesus. And whenever they saw Jesus, there was only one spontaneous reaction.

When Jesus said something to John, he didn't say, Lord, that's a clever thought, I can share that next meeting. No, he fell on his face. God, like Isaiah, I'm an unclean man.

Like Job, he heard four preachers and then he heard God. He got a lot of ideas from these four preachers, but when he saw God, he said, won't open my mouth anymore. I've seen you Lord, till now I only heard about you, but now I saw you.

You know those words of Job, in Job 42, Lord, I heard about you till now, but now I saw you. I want to say to all of you, my brothers and sisters, that in the meetings, you can either hear about God or see God. The person sitting next to you may be seeing God, hearing the same message, and you may be only hearing about him.

It's true. How is it that two people sitting next to each other, one person hears about God and the other person sees? Because God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He gives grace to the humble.

He rewards each person according to what he sees in their heart. And I want to say to all of you, seek to meet with God in the meetings. And those of you who preach God's word, let your longing be that through your words, people will come to meet with God.

I remember as a young man, I read a little piece of poetry, which challenged me as a preacher. And I said, Lord, that's how I want to be. I can't remember the exact words of that poetry, but the message in the poetry was this, that that man, talking about the preacher, held the lamp of truth, so clearly, in a dark world, let's say he used a torch or a lamp, that lamp was lighting up that picture.

In darkness, you know, if somebody shows a torch on a picture, and the picture was a picture of Jesus, and everybody saw the picture of Jesus, they did not see the hand that held the torch. I said, Lord, I want to preach like that. Then he says, the next verse, another picture he uses, the person blew the trumpet so loud and clear, that people heard it and prepared for battle, and got the message clearly.

They knew where the enemy was coming from, that the person who blew the trumpet was not known, from somewhere, they didn't know who this was, somebody blowing a trumpet. The blower of the trumpet was not seen, the message came through. And I believe that's how we should be, you know, where we seek to lift up Jesus.

In our meetings, Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto myself. I want to encourage all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, to not make the mistakes I have made in my younger days of preaching doctrine more than Jesus. I don't want my boys to make the mistakes I made in my younger days, no.

How many of you want your children to make the mistakes you made in your younger days? I'm sure none of your parents want your children to make the mistakes you made in your younger days. Don't you wish? I hope my children will never make the mistakes I made. I hope they will be protected, that they can grow up without doing the stupid things I did.

We don't have to learn through doing stupid things. We can learn by seeing the stupid things other people did. You know, you don't have to have a gas stove or a gas cylinder blowing up in your house to discover that you shouldn't play the fool with gas.

You read about such examples in the paper and you become very careful with the use of gas in your home. Do you have to wait till it blows up in your face? We say, ah, finally I learned, with my face all burnt. No.

I read about, I saw some pictures in the papers of somebody whose face was burnt. That was enough for me. I'm very, very careful with the use of gas cylinders at home.

Make sure it's closed and don't leave the stove open. And so many rules we follow, you know. How did you learn it? Through other cases.

Why can't we follow the same example in the church? I see what happened there and I see what happened to the other person. I want to just be careful. I want to see what happened to that elder brother and I will see what happened to that elder brother.

I don't want the same thing to happen to me. These reports are enough for me. So, we've made mistakes.

I've made mistakes. I don't want other preachers and other young brothers who are elders in churches to make the same mistakes I've made. But I've learned as I've grown older and come closer to the Lord that the most wonderful thing you can do in any meeting and the most difficult is to lift up Jesus.

You try doing that. I challenge all of you brothers who are elders of churches who are going to preach next Sunday in some church in your hometown. I challenge you to try and lift up Jesus in that meeting and not just preach a message.

And you'll see how difficult it is. We choose the easy path of just sharing some clever thoughts. We are lazy.

We don't seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. You can share your clever thoughts without the Holy Spirit's power. You can share your clever thoughts without any prayer, without any preparation, without anything.

Just get up and bore people to death. You can do that without any problem. But you try lifting up Jesus, which is what we are supposed to do in our meetings.

And you'll see how difficult it is. I'll tell you from my own testimony, it's so difficult. I say, Lord, ask me to give a teaching on water baptism any day.

Or ask them, let me give a teaching on Ephesians chapter 1. No problem. But if the Lord says one day to me, lift me up before that congregation. God, what have you asked me to do? Lift you up? How do I do that? I tell people, please don't disturb me.

I've got to lift up Jesus in the meeting today. No time for breakfast. Because I've got to lift up Jesus today in the meeting.

I don't have time. No time for these long telephone conversations with people and all that. No time for many, many things.

I'm sorry. I know there's an interesting program on television today. But I'm no time for that.

Because tomorrow morning, I've got to lift up Jesus in the meeting. Where is the time? But if I only have to preach a doctrine, which I've already preached 100 times, we can do 101 things with our time. And we imagine that we are anointed just because in some date in the ancient past, the Holy Spirit came upon us.

So what? Don't go by dates. Dates are, you know where you find the maximum number of dates written? Symmetry, graveyards, right? You want to make your church another graveyard? Quoting dates, dates, so and so date, I was born again. So and so date, I was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Brother, when were you filled with the Holy Spirit? Which date that we get all the dates on the tombstones in the church? Ah, we got everybody's dates now. Bunch of dead people sitting there. I'm not interested in dates.

I'd like somebody to come out of that graveyard alive and bring a little resurrection into that system. Yeah? The Holy Spirit shows us the glory of Jesus, the beauty of Jesus, how he lived, how he spoke, how he treated other people, how he loved, how he served, how he was pure, how he was tempted like us. Not a doctrine, not a doctrine.

You know, I'll give you a very simple example. 1 Timothy 3.16, which is the worst we have preached from 25 years now, I preached it. The great is the secret of godliness, Christ was manifest in the flesh.

Now I'll give you my testimony. My testimony and my confession. This is from scripture.

Great is the mystery of godliness, Christ was manifest in the flesh. I read that verse and I thought I understood it 25 years ago. You know how I understood it? Multitudes of Christians don't believe that Jesus came in my flesh.

I have to do everything possible to convince all these blind fellows that Jesus came in my flesh, was tempted like me and did not sin. Isn't that a good goal? And I tried and I tried and I quoted scripture and quoted scripture and you know I quoted verses like it says in 1 Corinthians 15, there's one type of, one flesh of fish and one flesh of birds. Which flesh did Jesus have? I said our flesh.

And all these clever thoughts, you get a lot of cleverness when you are interested in doctrine. And all this I used to convince people, end result, everybody was still defeated by sin. Something is wrong.

And then I looked at some other people who were preaching this doctrine in other countries and that was even worse. They were taking people to court with Christ coming in the flesh. I said there's something wrong in all this.

There's something fundamentally wrong till I went back to that scripture again and I discovered a truth I was blind to right in that verse. Great is the mystery of godliness. What is it? Not the doctrine of Christ coming in the flesh, but Christ himself coming in the flesh.

It's there. The Bible doesn't say great is the secret of godliness, the doctrine of Christ coming in the flesh. That's how I understood it.

That's, I'm just giving you a confession of how blind we can be when we read the scriptures. And then I realized the secret of godliness is not in any doctrine. The secret of godliness is in Jesus, who came in the flesh.

In the person of Jesus and not the doctrine of Jesus. There's a lot of difference between the person of Jesus and the doctrine of Jesus. When Jesus is there and I'm taken up with his doctrine, it's like if my wife is there and I sit in a corner with a photograph, I say, darling I love you so much.

Oh, you're so pretty. And she's waiting there wondering what's wrong with me sitting in the corner looking at a photograph. That's how a lot of Christians are.

It's not the photograph of some heathen God. No, it's a doctrine of Jesus, but it's not Jesus himself. And I'm sorry to say, we've got a bunch of people growing up in our churches who got the photograph of Jesus.

And they're even drawing that picture. Some are good artists. And Jesus is waiting there wondering, when will this fellow love me? It's absolutely true.

There's a difference between the doctrine of Jesus and the person of Jesus. Enlightenment means not the doctrine, the person. One of the greatest longings in my heart is to see among our young people, people who are taken up with the person of Jesus Christ, not the doctrine in the church.

We talk about the doctrine in the church as if that's a very holy, sacred cow. You know, like some religions have a sacred cow, we've got a sacred doctrine. Jesus, your sacred cows and doctrines can be an idol.

Jesus himself, and I'm looking for people who have a passionate devotion to Jesus Christ, who will say from their heart, Lord, show me thy face, one transient gleam of loveliness divine. And I shall never think or dream of other love, save thine. I have seen the vision, and for self I cannot live.

Life is less than worthless, till my all I give. Who can say, whom have I in heaven but thee, Lord? There's nothing on earth I desire beside thee. Even when I get to heaven, I'm not interested in the golden streets or some throne to sit on.

Ah, forget the throne, crown on my head, I'll throw it down. I say, Jesus, you are. Like we sing in the song, the bride eyes not her garment.

The bride does not look at her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze at glory. I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace.

Today we have brides who are more interested in their garments than in their bridegroom's face. Well, I thank God when I married, I was more interested in my wife than in my clothes. And I know she was more interested in me than in her dress.

We loved one another, not our clothes. The bride, if you really love your wife, really love your husband, you're not interested primarily in how, whatever dress you're wearing. You're interested in that person.

I believe we must have marriages where husband and wife love one another deeply. Like in the song of Solomon. They love one another deeply.

That's a Christian marriage. Appreciation and admiration for one another. I'm sorry to say we don't have such marriages.

Oh, that's all cinema. It's not cinema. The cinema has corrupted it.

You read Song of Solomon, is that cinema? It's not cinema. You say that refers to Jesus. Yeah, just wait, wait a minute, brother.

Don't become super spiritual. When Song of Solomon was written, were they thinking about Jesus Christ? Tell me, was Solomon thinking about Jesus Christ when he wrote that song? You ought to be off your head. He was thinking about someone he had married.

He was in love with. And the Holy Spirit inspired him to write. And I really believe that we really need to have marriages like that, where husbands and wives are deeply in love with each other, and admire and appreciate one another.

I'm not telling cinema stories here. I'm talking from scripture. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

How does he love me? How does he love me? Is it like I said in the other day with the newspaper? Thank God, he doesn't speak to me like that. He doesn't speak to me with eh, mm-mm. He rejoices over me with singing.

Have you ever sung to your wife? I remember in my unconverted days, I heard a song, don't get offended, I was also unconverted once, where a man sings, have I told you lately that I love you? Well, darling, I'm telling you now. I want to tell you, sing that to your wife. It doesn't matter if you don't know the tune.

I really believe we need to say to one another, we love one another. A Christian marriage is supposed to be very happy. Why did I change my subject? I didn't change my subject.

I'm saying the reason why you're not like that towards your wife is because you don't feel Jesus is like that towards you. You feel Jesus is a serious person who says eh, mm-mm to you, so you also become like that towards your wife. That's what I'm saying.

The fundamental problem is your relationship with Jesus Christ. I say I don't have a Jesus like that. Jesus has never said eh, mm-mm to me.

Not once. He loves me. He rejoices over me with singing.

He calls me by intimate names. He doesn't call me by formal names. He doesn't say Brother Zach.

No. That's okay for you and me, you to call me like that, but Jesus never calls me Brother Zach. What is the most intimate name you have? That's the name Jesus wants to call you by.

Do you have such an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ? If not, you've got a veil over your face. You're not enlightened. We need enlightenment.

The Holy Spirit enlightens us and shows the beauty of Jesus. And you see, because the Lord relates to me like that, I relate to Him also like that. I would rather walk with Him than with any human being.

He's the most wonderful person in the world. That's why even if one day they take away a Bible from me and lock me up in a jail, it won't make any difference because they can't take away my beloved. My dear brothers and sisters, this is the whole secret of the Christian life.

If you want the whole secret of the Christian life in one word, love Jesus. Jesus loves you. You know what is the most wonderful truth in this whole Bible? Jesus loves me.

This I know. For the Bible tells me so. Those little children have got it absolutely right.

We think we know so many things more. If you don't know this, all your other knowledge is useless. This is what I mean by the Holy Spirit enlightening us.

Has He enlightened you to the tremendous love that God has for you? That He loved you. He sought you. It's like a love story, you know, better than any cinema love story of a man who loved this poor girl, this rich prince.

Now listen to this cinema story. Once upon a time there was a rich prince, very wealthy. There were so many pretty girls around but he saw one who was so poor in a village.

There were so many things wrong in her but somehow he loved her. He said, I've got to marry her. And he went through a lot of difficulties and came and told this girl, I really love you.

I want to marry you. She first thought, it can't be. This must be a lie.

No, he said, I love you. I want to share everything I have with you. I've longed after you for a long time and I want you.

I want you to say yes. And this stupid girl, flirtatious, ignored him, ignored him. He should have gone away.

He should have gone away, leaving her alone. But he didn't. He said, no, I want you, I want you.

He went through so many difficulties. People tried to kill him and so many things. He went and finally got her.

And he was so happy. Have you heard that love story? It's in the Gospels. It's in the New Testament.

Have you ever heard the Gospel like that? That's the Gospel that changed my life. It wasn't, you go to hell. Come on, repent.

People who come to Jesus like that, all their life they are like that. Have you heard the Gospel like you heard it just now? Someone who loved me, loved me when I was worthless, wretched, good for nothing. So many things wrong in me and pursued after me, pursued after me, pursued after me.

He got me 43 years ago. And I tell you, I love him just like I loved him then, even more. My Christianity is a love relationship with Jesus Christ.

All my messages that you ever heard me preach, unless I was not in the spirit sometime, sometimes I was not in the spirit in the last 25 years you heard me. But whenever I was in the spirit, the messages you heard me preach have come out of a love relationship with Jesus Christ. My beloved, my bridegroom, and that is the way I have wanted to be towards my wife because the Bible says you must love your wife like that.

How many of you believe in pursuing your wife with love like Jesus pursued after you? Am I teaching a strange doctrine? Ephesians 5, some of you husbands who know the other verse, wives submit to your husbands as Christ, church submits to Christ. You know that verse very well. Let me show you the verse which is your verse.

Love your wives as Christ loved the church. How many of you know that? If you loved her like Christ loved the church, you'd find that she loves you in return and you'd have a wonderful, beautiful relationship as husband and wife. That's the type of relationship I long to see in many of our homes.

But the devil fools us saying, oh that's cinema, that's western, we are Indian. Sorry brother, I don't want that wretched culture. I want a Christian culture.

Yeah, I hope things will be different in your marriage life. I hope your marriage life will become exciting from today. I really hope so and that your relationship with Jesus will be exciting.

Enlightenment. And you see the same thing happens when we are also in relation to one another, that we have that type of relationship with one another too. That we say, Lord I love that brother, I love that brother, I love him, just like Jesus loves me.

You know our relationship with one another is dependent on our relationship with Jesus Christ too. Why is it we find it so difficult to love someone who is unlovely? I'll tell you, it's not because that brother is such a stubborn, difficult brother. It's because of your relationship with Jesus Christ.

You thought that Jesus loved you because you were such a handsome, pretty, lovely girl. Rubbish. You were a good for nothing, useless person and Jesus loved you.

It's because everything flows out of that enlightenment of our relationship with Jesus Christ. It's very, very important for us to understand this. Everything must come out of our relationship with Jesus.

Enlightenment. So wherever we go, we are not here to preach doctrine to one another, we are not here to teach truths. But Christ, once manifest in the flesh, in Nazareth, manifest in the flesh again.

In Bangalore, in the villages and towns of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, Andhra, Maharashtra, hopefully more and more places, Christ manifest in your flesh. That is the purpose. What is the second thing I said? Enlightenment, then encouragement.

You know, I've often thought of this verse in Hebrews 3 and verse 13 where it says, the King James version says, Exhort one another day after day as long as it is still called today. Exhort one another day after day as long as it is still called today. Lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The NASB says, encourage one another day after day. Lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Do you know, I mean, if you know English, you know the difference between exhort one another and encourage one another.

Obviously, I don't know Greek from which this was translated, but when the King James version is translated that way and the NASB translates it this way, I suppose both meanings must be in that verse, in the Greek word. That means the Greek word is some amazing word that the Holy Spirit chose which had the meaning of exhortation and encouragement and encouragement was a little stronger. That's why the NASB, which is a 20th century translation, preferred encouragement.

Okay, now my question is, which translation do you prefer? Do you prefer to exhort people or encourage people on Sunday morning? When you stand up on Sunday morning, do you think of the King James version or the New American Standard Version? That depends on your personality. That depends on whether you got a veil over your face or not. Some people say, brother, exhort, otherwise they'll all get hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

It's your personality coming through there. It's not the Bible, it's your personality. It's your bias towards a certain thing you want to do and you want to find a scriptural support for that.

But I believe the real word is encourage. I believe that's the main meaning of that word. Think if from now on, you just stopped exhorting people and say, okay, I've used King James translation enough.

Now for 20 years, I've used that. From today onwards, let me start using this more modern translation on Sunday mornings. Encourage one another.

Encourage one another? What does that mean? I think it will give a completely different perspective to our whole Sunday ministry and all of our churches. If you just make this one change of one word. Do you know how much there's a saying in English that big doors turn on small hinges.

You know these big mighty doors turn on a small hinge. And the change of one word can make a tremendous difference to the spirit in your meeting. You'll see the people in your church being changed.

When you say, okay, I'm going to start encouraging people. I've learned that myself the hard way. I say I don't want my children to make the mistakes I've made.

I had only one translation for that verse for so many years. Exhort, otherwise they'll be hardened. What I now see, that's why they got more hardened.

And when I started encouraging, I discovered people don't get so hardened. So I realized that encouragement is what the Holy Spirit has come to the God who gives encouragement. He doesn't come here to exhort, he comes to encourage.

Teachers exhort, fathers encourage. There's a math problem in school. And person is trying to solve that problem, geometry or something like that.

And he's tried 2-3 times and the teacher says, nothing good will ever come of you. Yeah, you're going to fail. Don't waste your time studying.

That poor boy goes home discouraged. Dad asks him, what happened son? Teacher says, I'll never be able to understand geometry. I tried dad, I tried so hard, but I don't seem to understand how to solve that

theorem, that problem.

Dad says, come, let's sit down. Okay, try and solve it. He makes some mistake.

And dad puts his arm around him and says, no son, just try again, don't give up. See, just think of this particular thing at this point. And that boy is encouraged.

Hey, I didn't think of that, that's right. And he still hasn't got it right. Don't give up son, just try.

And he gets the sum right. Because the father says, you can do it, I'm sure you can do it. Come on, I'll give you a little help.

And he's so excited. And he says, dad, can we do another problem? Sure son, let's do that. Okay, tries another one, he gets it wrong.

And dad says, do you think you've made a mistake here, this particular line? Ah, yeah, that's right, thank you dad. Are you an elder like that in your church? Are you a father like that to your children? Are you a mother like that? Do you ever put your arms around your children and pray with them, kneel down and pray with them, particularly when they have failed, let you down, sinned in some terrible way, done wrong? Didn't you do wrong when you were small? Didn't Jesus put his arms around you and say, don't give up son, daughter, come on, we can do it, you and I can make it. Why don't you do that to your children? We hold them when they are small, when they grow up, we don't put our arms around them and pray with them.

Something is wrong. I thank God that Jesus puts his arm around me, even though I'm not a little child. I put my arms around my brothers when I pray with them sometimes, and certainly around my boys.

I don't care. If I'm 90 and they are 60, I'd still put my arms around them. Yeah.

See, the Christian life is one of encouragement, love. We are not teachers. We are supposed to be fathers.

We don't want to be like that elder brother towards his prodigal son, hey, this fellow has done so many wrong things. Look how the father was, how he just ran and embraced him. God who gives encouragement.

You must be like that to your wives. You don't realize, some of you husbands, how much pressure your wives work under at home. We men have never given birth to one baby in our life.

Anybody here has done that? No. Okay. You don't know what it is.

You just don't know what it is. Are you upset that your wife is fat and you are slim? That's because she gave birth to babies. You try giving birth to three babies.

I'd like to see how slim you are after that. Some foolish husbands. Oh, I liked you when you were slim.

Now you're so fat. You shouldn't have had any children then. We are so stupid.

You know what all pressure she works under? You know how easy it is, how difficult it is to cook a good meal? I heard a story once of a husband and wife. One was doing business. He was always complaining about food.

The wife was a wise wife. She said, listen, why don't we exchange jobs for one day? I'll go to your business office and I'll try and run that. You come to the kitchen and you cook.

Just one day. So they exchanged jobs. The fellow didn't know what to do.

In that kitchen, something caught fire. She didn't do it as well as him, but she did something in that business office. But came back, the whole house was a mess, things burnt and no food.

He said, okay, we'll change back again. I'll go back to your office. Wives, I gave you an idea, no? No, I believe that if we give a little thought to what another person is going through, we won't exhort so much as encourage.

Some people are going through pressures which you and I have never faced. I think of our children. I've thought of my four boys.

I have often felt that they face temptations that I never faced 45 years ago. In their teenage years, they faced pressures and temptations that I never faced because the world was different in our day. Today, you have pornographic pictures being distributed by seven-year-old boys in school.

I never, nobody ever distributed a pornographic picture in my school right up to the time I finished Cine Cambridge. I never even knew what it was. But what all people are saying today.

There was no internet pornography when I was a 17-year-old. What all pressures our young people are facing. Am I going to judge them? When I was 16 years old, I never did that type of stuff.

Be compassionate. And sometimes we are telling lies also. You heard that story I said about the four children sitting around a dog.

It's a lovely story. There were four children sitting around a dog and one preacher came along. I think he was probably an elder in one of our churches.

I don't remember which one. Anyway. And he said, what are you fellows doing? Little boys, what are you doing? You know, exhort one another daily.

Okay. And those boys said, brother, we are trying to find out who can tell the biggest lie. We are all trying to tell lies and whoever tells the biggest lie will get this dog.

We found this dog, this little pup and we all want it. So we decided how to find out who to get it. Whoever can tell the biggest lie will get this pup.

So the elder brother said, oh, you terrible boys telling lies. When I was a little boy, I never told any lies. So somebody said, give him the pup.

Is somebody going to give you the pup? Okay, boys, children, I gave you some ideas. All right. Fathers, don't get a pup from your children.

Humble yourself. Be honest. They are facing pressures today, which we didn't face.

And when I see some of them standing up even a little bit to those pressures, you know, they may not be perfect according to our CFC standards, but they are struggling. They are trying. We can judge them for a little bit of worldliness here, a little bit of worldliness there.

But when I think of our young girls here going to colleges where everybody wears gold chains and earrings and they go without any gold chains or earrings, they go like widows to the colleges. I say, okay, they are not perfect. I know our young girls are not perfect, but I admire them for that.

I say, they have taken a stand. Okay, it's only one small area. I know it's a very small area, but they have taken a stand.

They have seen something in scripture. They want to do that. But you know, we can look at all the wrong things that they do and not appreciate even one single good thing that they do.

That's the trouble. Oh, nothing good in them. That shows something of your character, not theirs.

Am I throwing stones at you? No, I was like that myself. I'm not ashamed to say I was like that. I'm ashamed of being like that.

But I'm not ashamed to say I was like that. Why? Because I've changed. How did I change? I got the veil off my heart.

I turned to the Lord, the Spirit, and he showed me Jesus, not doctrines. I saw the secret of godliness was not in any doctrine. You know, I have studied all the doctrines of holiness that are preached in Christendom in the last 2,000 years.

And I found there are unholy people in all those groups. And some of them are the most unholy people. Till I discovered that the real secret of godliness was not in any doctrine.

It was in Jesus, who came in my flesh with all the limitations of my flesh and manifested that beautiful life. Do you want that? Let's encourage one another. You know, there are people who are afraid of praising others publicly.

I was like that also in my younger days, when I didn't have light. Oh, we shouldn't praise people publicly. Only Jesus must be praised.

You know, we can get that idea when the Bible says we should. Okay, let's forget verses. Let's look at Jesus himself.

He's the perfect man. He didn't make a mistake. Did he ever praise people publicly? What do you think? Did he say, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah.

My father has revealed this to you. You didn't get it out of any other flesh and blood. Can you imagine how Peter felt after he heard that? Boy, I thought I was a nobody.

Or, he says to one Roman soldier, publicly, I have never seen faith like this man had in all of Israel. And this Roman soldier, he says, boy, I don't even know the Bible. And he says, I've got more faith than all the people in Israel.

Can you imagine? I don't think he slept that night. He must have been meditating on that one sentence. You know, I'm just speaking from experience.

If some elder brother said some fantastic thing about you one day, you know how you don't get sleep that night? You keep thinking about that sentence again and again and again. Can you imagine if Jesus came

and said that publicly? I'm human. I wouldn't sleep that night.

I'd be thinking about that. Boy, I, having the greatest faith in Israel. Amazing.

And one poor woman, Syro-Phoenician woman, woman, great is your faith. He used to keep saying that all the time. Some poor woman struggling, gone to umpteen doctors, wasted all her money, blood flowing out of her body.

Touched Jesus and was healed. Come here, woman. Your faith has saved you.

I tell you, you haven't seen the real Jesus. That's why you're not like him. We fathers have not seen the real Jesus.

That's why we're not like him. You want to love your wife like Christ loved the church? Which Christ are we following? Is it the Christ who was always encouraging people? Tell me the last time you encouraged your wife. Tell me the last time you appreciated a good meal she made for you.

Probably never in your life. And you say you're a new covenant Christian. What rubbish.

You're not even old covenant. You know why? I'm not talking about married life. I'm talking about our relationship with Jesus.

All our failures flow out of a wrong understanding of Jesus. We are following another Jesus who never praises people publicly. If we hear somebody being praised publicly, we say, ah, I didn't think this church would descend to that level.

But Jesus, are you following? You know, it's very rarely in my life, I'm trying to think now, when is the last time I heard a, when I visited a home and a man heard a man praise his wife? I can't remember. When was the last time you visited a home and you heard a man criticize his wife? I can tell you straight away. I'm not going to say it, but anyway, we are quicker to find fault.

Brother Zach, what to say? Here's my wife. He doesn't keep the home properly, first of all. Sometimes I have to ask them, does she do anything good at all in her life? He has to scratch his head.

Yeah, well, I mean, because I'm sitting there, he has to say something. We are miserable failures. Why? Because this imagined relationship you have with Jesus Christ is with some other Jesus.

It is not the Jesus of the Bible who encourages, who praises people publicly, who says, woman, great is your faith. I've never seen faith like this in Israel. Blessed are you, Simon Barjona.

Simon, I know you're going to go through a tough time, but I'm praying for you. Have you ever said that to somebody? Have you ever said that to your wife? I'm praying for you, darling. I'm going through a difficult time, but I'm praying for you.

Have you ever said that to a brother? Do you see how we have spent years following another Jesus without doctrine of godliness? No wonder our churches are in the condition they are. You think you can build church with doctrine? You cannot. We can have about finishing our course and growing up in all aspects of Christ and produce wonderful messages on it.

But if you have not seen Jesus, if you have not seen the real Jesus, you're not going to build your home. You're not going to build your church. A God who encourages, who comes and says, fear not.

Don't be afraid. I'm here. Let not your heart be troubled.

You trust in God. You know, women are weaker vessels. They get easily into a panic.

What should you do when your wife is worried, anxious about something? Put your arm around her, kneel down and say, let's commit it to the Lord. Problem, serious sickness in the home, difficulty with one of the children, unconverted children, whatever it is, let's not be afraid. God can solve everything.

God can bring our wandering son or daughter back to us. God can heal this child. God can solve every problem.

I really believe we have followed another Jesus. And the sad thing is we don't even know it. We've been following this imaginary Jesus for so long and we think the greatest tragedy is that we think we are so spiritual at the end of it all.

That's the worst part of it. I mean, following itself, another Jesus is bad enough. But on top of that, to imagine that I'm so spiritual and all the problem is with my wife and all the problem is with my children, it's wrong.

It could be sisters too. Oh, all the problem is with my husband and he's not spiritual and he doesn't take the leadership in the home. I'm the holy woman here who's sitting here in church.

You're just a religious nut. That's what you are. We need humble brothers and sisters who see Jesus.

When was the last time your sisters encouraged your husbands? Do you know what all pressures he faces at work? Do you know how many times he gets yelled at by his boss at work for something that went wrong? You don't have anybody to yell at you during the whole day. You just yell at all your children. You mothers who have children at home, who yells at you in your home? Tell me.

Do your children yell at you? Maybe when they're grown up, but not when they're small. Do your servants yell at you? Nobody yells at you. Your husband comes back after being yelled at 10 times every day and then when he comes home he gets the 11th yelling from you.

He says, I better stay in the office. That's why sometimes your husbands come back with overtime, you know. Because they say that yelling is better than this yelling when we get home.

Let's change our homes. Let's stop following this other Jesus. Let's follow the Jesus who is not afraid of praising people publicly, appreciating, saying good things, saying I'm praying for you.

Don't worry. People who are going to forsake him within 12 hours at the last supper, he said, you are those who have stood by me in my trials. If we were there, we said, I know you fellows.

In 12 hours you're all going to run away from me. You cowards. You know what he says to them in Luke 22? You are those who have stood by me in my trials and don't worry.

One day I will make you sit with my father in his kingdom and all these fantastic things. Yeah, in between you're going to leave me for a few hours. Never mind.

But you're going to sit with me in the kingdom. We're going to eat and drink together there. It's going to be wonderful there in future.

Even though he knows that within 12 hours all these fellows will forsake him and run for their lives. This is the Jesus I follow. I want to follow more and more.

He's the most wonderful person in the universe. This is God manifest in the flesh. This is what God is like.

And this is the God we have to present in our churches. Not a doctrine. No doctrine.

Jesus. This is the one we need to see. This is the one we need to have in our homes.

This is the one our children and our young people must see as they grow up. They must see this Jesus and get passionately in love with him and say Lord I want to follow him. This is the Jesus I saw when I was 19 and a half.

I was a young Christian with all my ambitions to be the chief of naval staff and admiral and to enjoy the world and make money and I saw Jesus. I lost my ambitions. It wasn't a song.

I didn't know that song those days but it happened. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory of grace.

I didn't know that song but it happened. All my ambitions disappeared. They just melted away.

I said Lord wonderful, wonderful. And I've just grown more and more in love with Jesus through these years. My Christian life is that.

I have no desire to preach. To tell you honestly you may think I'm just trying to be spiritual. It's true.

Many, many times I've said to the Lord, Lord I'm not interested in preaching. I just want to go around encouraging people. I've been in churches.

I remember we used to have a church in Singapore that we started till some of these other people from Europe went and said all types of things against me and turned them against me. And I used to go there every year to build it up right. I mean I was the one who brought these people out of some other church and started a little fellowship there and every year these other people came and gave them free trips to Europe and all that and turned them all against me.

And then one day I went for their conference. They invited me. These brothers there in Singapore.

And after inviting me they didn't let me speak. They made me sit at the back. This is not when I was 30 years old.

This is when I was past 50. I'd experienced that when I was in my 20s when the Lord said you got to be tested again. So I sat at the back.

And they got all these other young fellows half my age from Europe getting up and speaking in the meeting. I said fine. I listened to them.

I said what am I here for? I told the Lord many times I'm not interested in preaching. I said Lord here is my opportunity to prove it. I sat there along with the other people giving a testimony.

I'd get up and give a testimony for two minutes. This church which I could say the Lord helped me to start and where I'd gone every year to build them up. I'd get up two minutes and speak and sit down.

And then in between I would meet people and encourage them. I never lost my peace. I was happy when I came back.

What's there? Is your calling in life only to preach? I proved to God that day when he tested me during that entire conference I'm not interested in being a speaker or a preacher. I want to just manifest Jesus by my life and my conduct. That is my Christianity.

And God gave me and tested me on my words and gave me an opportunity to prove it just a few years ago. Just a few years ago. Maybe five or six years ago that happened.

Okay. What about you my dear brothers? What's your great longing? To be a great preacher? Be honored? I want to encourage you to make Jesus the passion of your life. Be one who can encourage people.

You don't need to be a preacher to encourage people. Some of you, many of you, maybe all of you don't have the gift God's given me. Don't worry.

What about the gift of encouragement? Can't you encourage some discouraged sister who comes to your house with one word, one sentence? Seek to be an encourager. Seek to be like Jesus who said, fear not. Don't be afraid.

We can handle this. Okay. The last thing is empowerment.

Empowerment. Jesus said to his disciples, the last words he spoke, Jesus was, you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. To the ends of the earth were the last words that he spoke.

The uttermost parts of the earth. It is God's will for us that we should have a burden for the uttermost parts of the earth, not just our little group that meets in our local place. Sometimes we can make that mistake of, I've made it also.

You know, me and my 10, 15, 20 people, we sit together. For the next hundred years, we'll sit together, exhort one another, encourage one another. What about the last words that our Savior spoke? You know, when a man is dying, we listen, a lot of family members listen, what are his last words? And a man says, I want to give you some very important words before I die.

And we listen carefully. Some people write it down, some people tape it. What were Jesus' last words? Take this gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Those were his last words and he went up. That's gripped my heart. Not just the gospel of forgiveness, a lot of people are doing that.

What about the gospel of encouraging one another, of having a good family relationship, of an overcoming life, of being free from sin, of getting the veil out of our heart and becoming like Jesus? What about that gospel? That's the best gospel. Where should we take it? Just to a few churches in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and in our little church here, one or two places in Andhra, Maharashtra. Lord, it's so good.

It's so good to be on this mountaintop. Let's make some tabernacles here and come and have conferences regularly and have a good time with each other. It's so good, Lord.

We like to just be here forever. Yeah, I know, people tell us sometimes there are people in the valley who are demon-possessed and struggling and all that, but it's so good for us to be here. The Lord says, no, destroy those tabernacles.

Let's go down to the valley. We can't sit on the Mount of Transfiguration forever. Let's go down to the valley and as soon as he reaches the valley, there's this man with a demon-possessed son.

He says, you know, that's immediately after he came out from the Mount of Transfiguration, there's a demon-possessed son. He says, Master, I brought him to your disciples. They couldn't cure him.

Thank God Jesus came down from that mountain. If Jesus had listened to Peter and lived on top of that mountain forever, what would have happened to this poor boy who was demon-possessed? None of the disciples could deliver him. Jesus came down.

Thank God Jesus came down. Thank God he came down from heaven. Thank God he came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and thank God that we don't sit in this conference forever.

We're going to go away from here. We're going down to the valley with people oppressed by the devil. He says, Jesus went about doing good, delivering people who are oppressed by the devil.

That's our calling. Maybe you can't cast out demons, never mind. What about that neighbor of yours, that friend of yours who's so discouraged? The devil has oppressed that person also.

Can't you give a word of encouragement to lift her spirit and say, Jesus can help you. Jesus can help you. You know, when I share the gospel with non-Christians, I say, no, I don't believe all that.

I say, okay. And before I go, I say, one more thing I want to say. I say, if ever you get into trouble someday and you're in difficulty, the Bible says, whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

You please, okay, you ignored him today. That day, maybe one year from now, you're in some trouble. I want to tell you what to do.

Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. Say, Lord Jesus saved me. And you'll find that he saves you.

I've said that to many, many non-Christians when they wouldn't listen to me anymore. And I know, I hope that some of them may have called upon the Lord. Maybe I hope I'll see some of them in heaven.

So, let's seek God for the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's seek to spend our life, the rest of our life in service for the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 58 says, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

And I tell you, when it comes to the work of the Lord, I feel like a very young man. I have no problem traveling even today by overnight buses through roads filled with potholes. If I can get to some place where I can take five meetings a day and share God's truth to encourage a whole lot of people who are gloomy and depressed and discouraged, I'd do it any day.

If God gives me health, I'll do it when I'm 90. Always abounding in the work of the Lord. There are people whom God brings to your house.

I remember once when somebody came to my house and I didn't know. I rang the bell and opened the door. I said, I'm sorry, I don't know you.

He said, Prasad, you don't know me, but I've read your books and I just wanted to have a little time with you. I was very busy upstairs in my room, I think writing an article or something. We were publishing a magazine those days and it was very urgent.

And here this fellow comes along. And so I said, okay. I said, please come in.

Sit down. And he begins his story and I'm just itching inside, when is this fellow going to go? I've got to get on with my work. And he doesn't seem to be in a hurry to go.

Because he's got his tale of woe and I listen and I listen and gradually my heart comes to rest and the Lord says, forget your article, help this person. That's wonderful, no? A person is more important than an article? Can you imagine that I was so blind to think that an article was more important than a person? Sometimes we can be blind like that. I was blind and I realized that person is more important than an article.

Sometimes you've got wrong priorities. So I sat. Didn't matter.

Lunch time came, went, okay, never mind, lunch is not important for me. I'll talk to him, help him. And he was helped and blessed, prayed together, then he went away.

And after he left, the Lord said to me, I told you to go to the outermost parts of the earth to preach the gospel. Here, instead of doing that, I send somebody from the outermost parts of the earth to your house and you get disturbed. I said, Lord, forgive me.

Never again will it happen. My job in life is not to write articles or books. My job in life is to be a blessing to human beings.

And you can do that. You may not be able to write articles or books. That's not what God's called us for.

To be a blessing to one other human being. Can you do that? When you see one other human being, you sit in your office or a place where you work or in a college you go to and you see one girl depressed or a boy depressed, you say, hey, what's wrong? Smiling face and maybe they'll share with you their problem. You say, okay, I'll pray for you.

That person will never forget it. That a total stranger, just somebody I met in the office or college says, he is going to pray for me. What did that cost you? Do you have to be a great preacher to say that? That's all it takes to encourage somebody.

Who is going to reach the outermost parts of the earth? No one human being can do it. But all of us together. You meet people I never meet.

I meet people you never meet. We are from different parts of India. I want to say, my brothers and sisters, let's reach this land.

Wherever you go, if you are working in some other place, gulf or some other country, say, Lord, make me a blessing here. There are needy people. There are people in bondage.

I want to do good and deliver people from bondage. I want the power of the Holy Spirit.

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