

Finishing the Course - 08 Being a Nobody

by Zac Poonen

The secret to a spiritual life is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to give Him all the place in your heart.

Duration: 1:08:35

Scripture: Job 29:15, Job 31:24-25, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:36

Topics: "Finishing Well"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Job and how God allowed him to go through trials and humiliations because there was one fundamental thing wrong with him. Despite being a wealthy and successful man, Job lacked a deep relationship with God. Four preachers came to Job and wrongly assumed that his suffering was a result of secret sin in his life. However, God spoke to Job and showed him that He does not scold or judge people based on their circumstances. The speaker emphasizes the importance of loving God with all our mind and heart, rather than being consumed by worldly distractions.

Transcript

In many areas of life, we know that there are people who become specialists who, you know, whether it's repairing a scooter or a car or fixing a computer, and when they know so much about their field, sometimes they can solve a problem very easily which may take us many hours because we don't know how the thing works. A person who knows how to fix a car that's not working or a scooter, you take it to him and all he may do is ten seconds tighten some screw or something and the whole thing is working and you didn't know that. In many things on earth, it's a question of knowing the secret of what is it that makes this whole thing work.

And I've thought of that also in relation to the Christian life because to tell you quite honestly, as I've looked around through all these years of being a Christian, in so many different groups, we have more than a thousand denominations in Christianity and each thinks it's better than the other and people who go to one group must naturally be thinking that that's the best church in the world because that's why they go there. If it was not the best church in the world, they'd go to some other one. And yet, most of their differences are in relation to doctrine and I've discovered one thing because I know I separated from different churches on the basis of doctrine too.

And in my younger days, I used to think that if we get our doctrine right, we'll become spiritual and that's how we started here 27 years ago trying to get out of all other churches, not only for doctrine but for rituals

and things which are not in the Word of God. And so, we thought if we get it all right according to God's Word, we'll have a bunch of spiritual people. But I've discovered through 27 years that we don't have a bunch of spiritual people instead of, in spite of getting our doctrines right.

And I've tried to see, Lord, what is the secret? There's something missing somewhere. And then when I look around and I see some really spiritual people in some other church who's got their doctrines all wrong, I say, there's something we missed here. You know, if you're honest, you'll have to acknowledge that, that there are people who really love the Lord and are more effective in some churches than non-believers.

We do. And the more I have thought about that, I, you know, you have to find the answer in Jesus. Whenever you get stuck somewhere in the scriptures to understand something or a doctrine or some truth, I say, go to the dictionary.

The dictionary is Jesus. The Word made flesh. Like in an English dictionary, you have the Word explained in other words.

In the Christian life, you have the Word made flesh in the life of Jesus. And I say, what was the, I mean, there were many wonderful things about Jesus, but what was the main thing? What was the reason why he lived the most blessed, the happiest, the most wonderful life any human being ever lived on the earth? In fact, when God sent Jesus to earth, have you noticed in 1 Corinthians in chapter 15, it says here in verse 47, 1 Corinthians 15, 47, the first man is from the earth, earthy. The second man is from heaven.

Who is the second man? If you ask a worldly person, he'll say Cain. I say, no. When he talks to the first man, we know that's Adam.

Who's the second man? It's Jesus. It's not Cain. As far as God is concerned, why does he say only about two men? Because on this earth, perfection was seen only in two cases.

One was when God created Adam. There was absolutely no sin in him. And after that, there was never any other man.

And the moment sin comes in, the fellow is not counted. You know, it's like a vessel that's got one hole or a thousand holes. You set it all aside.

You wait for the next vessel, which has got no hole. And that was Jesus. So the Bible speaks only about two men.

Don't forget that. First man, second man, that's all. And every human being in the world is following one of these two men.

No doubt about it. Every human being in the world is following one of these two men. The one who went astray and the one who was absolutely perfect.

The first one did his own will. The second one never did his own will. There's something there which made him different from the first one.

And if you can see that, I would encourage you to study the difference between Adam and Christ. Because he's the first man, he's the second man. If you don't see that, you will unconsciously follow the first man.

And when you follow the first man, the result is always death. Whatever doctrine you hold, I'm sure Adam had all his doctrines right. There was one man who had all his doctrines right.

It was Adam. There were no false teachers those days. And there was no false doctrine.

There was nothing. But he went wrong. In spite of all his correct doctrines, he actually met God face to face and he went wrong.

You can have visions. You can have experiences. You can meet God face to face and go wrong.

Adam is the proof of that. So there was something about the second man. That's why I say through the years, for myself anyway, my Bible study has been the life of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit has come to show us the glory of Christ. Jesus said, when he has come, he will glorify me. He will take of the things of mine and show it to you.

And for me, this has been the most wonderful part of my Christian life in more than 40 years, to see the glory of Jesus in the scriptures, to see what the Holy Spirit wants to show me more and more and more. And I'll tell you this, even after 43 years, I'm still learning. I feel I've seen so little.

And I believe that many are not making that the main pursuit of their life. And that's why they have so many problems in their life, in their home. Supposing, for example, you make it just one simple rule in your life, that I'll never do anything in my life, which I can't do in fellowship with Jesus.

Everything in life, I want to do in fellowship with him. When it says, do everything in the name of Jesus, that's what it means. And it says in Ephesians chapter 5, whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

That's repeated in different ways in Colossians 3 and things like that. It means do everything in fellowship with Jesus. Don't sign a document unless you can have Jesus as a witness, where the Lord can say, I can witness that.

That means you're signing the truth. Don't say something which you can't say if Jesus is not sitting there in your sitting room, listening to what you're saying. I often think when I preach that Jesus is sitting there, right there in the chair and listening to every word I'm saying.

I must never do anything which I can't do in fellowship with Jesus. And as I look at Jesus' life, I find that there was the greatest secret of his life. And I believe this is the most important secret.

If you want, you know, we hear hundreds of things in the church and hundreds of things from the scriptures. But if you want to sum it all up in one thing, Jesus lived on earth as a nobody. He always wanted to be a nobody.

And that is the reason. Why many Christians are not spiritual. They don't want to be a nobody.

They don't want to be a nobody in the world. They don't want to be a nobody in the church. They want to be somebody.

And all those who want to be somebody and do various things and say various things and to be somebody, it never becomes spiritual. Have you learned the secret? The theory you've learned? Now we

can practice it. You have to spend your lifetime practicing it.

I'll tell you this. After all my study of the scriptures, study the life of Jesus, I've come to see that this is a secret of his life. He never, never, never wanted to be anything or anybody on this earth.

And in the measure in which I also long, not just say, okay, okay, I'm willing to say, okay, I'm willing is not the same as saying I long for that. And in the measure in which I long with all of my heart to be a nobody in the earth and in the church, in that measure, I'm becoming like Jesus. Now what's the reason for this? The reason is so that God might be everything in our life.

It's not just, we drive out all the demons and keep the heart empty. No, the whole purpose of becoming a nobody is so that God might be everything. I become a nothing so that God might be everything.

And that I want to say is perhaps the best definition of humility. You won't find that in any dictionary in the world. You go to any dictionary in the world and look for humility.

You'll never find the definition of humility as becoming nothing so that God might be everything. But if you want a definition of humility from the life of Jesus, here it is. Never forget it all your life.

Becoming nothing so that God might be everything. And we can say we have become like Jesus when we have become nothing that God might be everything. See, let me show you this verse in Matthew 22.

You know, when you see the secret, it's like a master key that unlocks all of scripture. It's the thing that changes our life, our family life, our ministry. Why is it so many homes, our Christian homes, are such a pathetic testimony to Christianity? Why is it so many husbands and wives are constantly complaining about each other? I'll tell you, neither of them is willing to be a nobody.

That's it. See, when you become a nobody, you don't have any complaint against anyone. No.

It's only people who are somebody. You know, you walk into a government office and the top managing director yells at you and you come out humbly, but if the peon yells at you, oh, you get a bit upset. Why is that? Because you are below the managing director, but you're not below the peon.

You're somewhere in between. And the managing director yelling at you is okay, but how dare this peon who's a nobody yell at me? I'm not a nobody. When you become a nobody, it doesn't matter even if the peon yells at you.

And you think that doesn't affect your Christian life? It affects every area of your Christian life. No matter how loudly we praise the Lord in the meeting, no matter how much of scripture we know, we'll never become spiritual till we get here. Matthew 22, it says, you know, people came to Jesus and asked him a question.

They said, what, verse 36, is the great commandment in the law? Matthew 22, verse 36. Lord, there's so many commandments. And we can ask that question too, because we hear so many things in the church about getting rid of jealousy and getting rid of lust and getting rid of the love of money and a hundred and one things like that, or a thousand and one things.

And we say, Lord, can you just put it all in a nutshell? Give us one word so that we can remember that. We can't remember all these thousand things. Can you tell us one thing? Jesus said, I'll tell you.

It is to love the Lord, your God with all your heart. That means in your heart, when you came to the Lord, you had place in your heart for your parents and their opinions. And the tears of your mother was enough to make you disobey God.

Do you know how many millions of Christians disobey God? Because they see the tears of their mother or the father is upset. So they disobey God. And then you had place for your wife and your children and your husband and your property and your job.

And then one day you come to Christ and you don't come here, where it says, love the Lord, your God with all your heart. You put God also there in your heart, along with all these other people and things. And God also has got a place.

I believe this is how 99.99999 Christians live. Have you accepted Christ? Yes. He's also got a place in my heart, along with a thousand other things and people.

And we wonder why such people don't grow spiritually. What is the first commandment? You should love the Lord, your God with all your heart. There's no place there anymore for father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, job.

You say, you mean not supposed to love your wife? I say, I think I love my wife far better because I love God with all my heart. I think I've done better for my children because I didn't have a place for my children in my heart. You actually do better when you give God every, every place in your heart.

You love your wife better. You'll bring up your children better. When you don't love money, you'll know how to handle money.

If you love money and you don't put God fully in your heart, even got a little corner for money, you know what'll happen? You'll get into debt. Very likely. It doesn't matter.

What does it matter? God says, don't get into debt, but who bothers about God? We'll give him a corner in our heart. And you think such people become spiritual? Not in a million years because they don't care for what God says. But do you think if a person loves God with all his heart, he's going to suffer? He's going to suffer lack.

I've been a Christian for 43 years. I've never gotten into debt. Even when I got 150 rupees a month salary, I never was in debt.

No, I used to receive gifts in those days. After I left my job, I decided I wouldn't get into debt because God was going to fill my heart. I didn't starve.

Okay. I didn't have all the things that other people had, but I didn't starve. I was a happy man.

I'm a happy man today. I want to say to you, these are little, little things. I wouldn't do something unrighteous in my job.

Okay. It's suffered a little consequences because of that, because God was filling my heart, not my job. I would have to say sometimes to my senior officers, I'm sorry, sir.

I can't do that. I'm a Christian. It's against my conscience.

And they would write bad reports about me because of that or shunt me off to some other place or transfer me. I say, okay, fine. That's okay.

In all those situations, I learned something because I decided a job is not going to have a place in my heart. Money is not going to have a place in my heart. Nobody's going to have a place in my heart.

Only God. I'll tell you this. You will never lose out.

In one year, you will become more spiritual than you've been in all your life till now. If you follow this simple rule, be a nobody so that God can be everything. Love God with all your heart.

I know you don't understand the theory of it. I'll tell you honestly, after having preached this for so many years, I have to say, I don't know how many of you brothers will follow it. You'll hear it.

You may even get up after I speak and share something. Maybe next Wednesday, you'll get up and share something about loving God with all your heart, but you don't. You know that you don't.

If you did, your life would be different. Your life would have been very different by now. You'd have been a very happy person.

You may not have had all the possessions you have today, but you'd be much happier. I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, respect God. Give Him the place He deserves.

It's not first place. No, I don't give God first place in my life. I give God all the place.

The Lord didn't say, love the Lord your God and put Him first in your heart. He said, all your heart. There's no place for anybody else.

No place for anything else. God is everything. That was the secret of Jesus' life.

God was everything to Him. Even a simple thing like, you know, His mother once comes to Him and says, they don't have any wine. Can you do something about it? I've often thought, why did Mary come to Jesus with that problem? He had never done a miracle until then, but she had watched Him for 30 years and seen He was one of the most resourceful.

He was the most resourceful person she'd ever seen in her life. She knew that if there's anything to be fixed in the house or anything to be done, Jesus had a resourcefulness to go and do it. I don't think Mary was expecting a miracle because Jesus had never done a miracle for 30 years.

But she knew that this son of mine has got a resourcefulness I've never seen. He can do something about it. And he turned around and said to her, woman, what have I got to do with you? She had never in her life heard a reply like that.

He said, God is everything to me. Even though I have the power to produce wine, I won't do it. My father tells me.

And a little later, the father said, yeah, go ahead. Then he did it. You know how he lived.

His life was like that. Even his mother didn't matter. There was a need.

No, it didn't matter. As the father said, we think that if there's a need and I go and meet it immediately, we're spiritual. No, you're not.

Jesus didn't live like that. He didn't live on the basis of need. That's why he doesn't answer our prayers immediately.

Have you ever wondered why you pray for something that's great need God doesn't answer immediately? You pray to Jesus. And Jesus says, my time is not yet come. How many times on earth he said that? Mine hour is not yet come.

He's the same yesterday, today and forever. You pray to him and he says, my hour is not yet come. Can you understand that? He's bringing us to the place where that thing you're praying for is not the most important thing in life.

God is most important. And he's trying to get that thing, which has occupied a place in your heart, which you're praying. Oh God, give it to me.

Give it to me. Give it to me. God waits.

He's waiting till that thing gets out of your heart. And you come one day and say, God, I don't even care whether I have it or not. I want you.

And then you get it. I found that in so many situations. You got to come to the place where you say, God, I don't care whether I get that thing I prayed for or not, because you are everything for me.

I love you with all my heart. And it says here, with all your soul, that means your whole personality. Your soul is your personality, your emotions, your will, your mind.

And it says with all your mind, think of a mind, which is totally taken up with God. It doesn't mean that we don't do our earthly jobs properly. I think we'll do it much better.

I think a man whose mind is filled with God will do any job better. He'll be a better sweeper. He'll be a better teacher.

He'll be a better nurse. He'll be a better computer engineer. He'll be a better preacher.

He'll be better in everything. His mind is filled with God. I know I proved it in my life.

In the years when I was in the Navy, I used to spend all my time studying the scriptures and also studying my earthly profession. And not a single senior officer of mine could ever complain in all those years about any wrong thing I did on those ships. Never.

The only thing they could complain was I didn't come for the dances and the drinks and the card playing. That's about all. One of them even told me that.

He says, I can't find anything wrong with you, young man, but you're a very unsociable man. You don't mix with others. Okay, what to do? I'm not interested in all your gambling and drinking and all that.

But I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, those are the years I studied the scriptures. I find among so many young people today, a tremendous lack of the knowledge of the scriptures. Why is it? They don't love God with all their mind.

That's it. That's the only reason. Their mind is occupied with the newspapers and television.

I'm not against all that. You please see the news and television and read the newspapers. You must know what's going on in the world, but don't let your mind get filled with that.

Let it come and let it go. Okay, you know it. But what should our mind be filled with? With all my mind, I must love God.

Think of the businessman. With all his mind, he's thinking how to make money and he makes it. Think of what can happen in my life.

With all my mind, I love God. I believe the other things will be added to me. Sure.

You don't have to go looking for the other things. If you love God with all your heart, the other things will be just added to you. Remember this, brothers and sisters.

They'll be just added. Well, those who are serious about wanting to find the secret of the Christian life, there it is. Let me show you Psalm 73.

I believe this is the statement of a man who is a true disciple of Jesus Christ. No one can ever say he's a disciple of Jesus Christ if he can't say these words in Psalm 73 verse 25. And honestly say it to God.

What is that? Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? And besides thee, I desire nothing on earth. Can you honestly say that to God? I don't desire pleasure. I don't desire comfort.

I don't desire money. I don't desire any person. No, you're the only one I want.

You're the only one I cannot, I can't live without you. If I have you, I have everything. I can live without everybody else.

See, the world has taken that and corrupted it with all these love songs. Boys and girls sing to one another, I can't live without you and all that type of rubbish. The only one you can't live without is God.

If you have God, you can live without everybody else. But you don't have Him. Even these people who croon love songs to one another, I can't live without you.

Three months later, they're fighting with each other. But with God, if you really put Him in the first place, you'll love your wife better than any husband ever loved his wife. You'll love your husband and submit to him better than any wife ever did in the whole world.

You'll bring up your children better than any other father or parent in the whole world. If you love God with all your heart, don't put your wife first, don't put your husband first, don't put your children first. And you'll do your job better than anybody else.

When you don't put your job first, when your aim in life is not to make more money or to get a promotion, you'll be a very... And the thing is, you'll have all these things which are necessary. You won't be the richest person in the world, thank God for that. But you'll have everything necessary for your earthly life.

And at the end of it, you'll be a very happy man too. Maybe the other covetous man will get his house 10 years before you did. But you won't be as happy as you are, because you did it God's way.

He did it the world's way. A lot of Christians... I'm not doing anything wrong. Yeah, I agree.

But they're doing a lot of things in their life where God is not everything. And they say there's nothing wrong. That's because their understanding of wrong is so low.

Their understanding of wrong is, I don't cheat anybody. You know, anything you do where God is not everything in your life is wrong. Why is it wrong? Because Jesus said, you must love God with all your heart.

And if you don't do it, isn't it wrong? Supposing you go against what Jesus said, wouldn't you say that's wrong? In other words, if you have something in your life where God is not everything in your heart, you are wrong. But if your understanding of wrong is so low... You know, in the Christian school, pass marks is 100%. I don't know whether you know that.

But some people have made 40% pass marks and they say, I passed. You passed according to your own pass marks. Jesus says pass marks is 100%.

How many of you have passed? That means you love God with all your heart. It's not 40%. It's not 60%.

It's not 90%. It's 100%. This is Old Testament.

Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy when he said, you must love God with all your heart. This is not New Covenant teaching. You know, we've just learned so much about New Covenant and better than the Old Covenant.

We are New Covenant Christians. We are New Covenant Church Let's go back to the Old Covenant. Let's start in kindergarten.

What did the Old Testament say? Jesus quoted, love God with all your heart. That's from Deuteronomy. That was what the Lord was trying to teach his people.

Everything will go well in your life, in your family life, your business, everything, if you love me with all your heart. You won't become the richest person. Your business won't prosper like other people's, but you won't starve.

You won't be in debt. You won't have to do anything unrighteous. You won't have to be always giving bribes like everybody in the world does, but you'll be a very happy man.

Do you want that? You say, no, Lord, I don't want all that. Just let me have a comfortable life and as soon as possible, let me become rich. Go ahead, brother.

Live your way, but don't ever think you're a New Testament Christian. Far from it. You got to love God with all your heart.

Where you congratulate yourself because you've got something on the earth which somebody else doesn't have. You know, I've thought of that. We know that the wealthiest person in the universe is God.

You all agree there? You have to agree with me. The wealthiest person in the world is God. God doesn't have a bank account.

He doesn't have a wallet. He's the wealthiest person in the world. He doesn't have any land in his name.

He doesn't have a house that he's built. He's the wealthiest person in the world. Can somebody be the wealthiest person and have no bank account, no wallet, no house? No.

And Jesus came on earth and he lived like that. And I believe, you know what's the question of what do you mean by the wealthiest person? I believe my definition of the wealthiest person is the man who has no needs. And Jesus was the wealthiest man that walked on the earth because he had no need.

He never starved, you know, because he was so wholehearted and he didn't have money once to pay the tax. God gave him money from a fish's mouth. Have you ever heard of anybody getting money by catching a fish and taking a gold coin from his mouth? And I mean, there are millions of fish in the ocean, sea.

How do you go and pick the one who's got a gold coin? Somebody dropped a gold coin some years earlier in this or some weeks earlier and this fish swallowed it and you go and catch that right one because you've got to pay your taxes. This is what God will do for one who is wholehearted. Amazing.

I say, I want to be like that. I want to be like that that if I have a need, God can do amazing things to meet that need. That's how Jesus lived.

He had no need. He didn't have to carry gold coins in his pocket. God would provide for it from somewhere, from the middle of the sea, from the most unlikely place.

And the wonderful thing there is, I don't know whether you noticed it. The Lord told Peter, you take that money and pay my tax and yours also. Have you noticed that? See, that's how that's how a godly man is.

He said, listen, I'll take care of your need as well. And that's a wonderful thing that a man who loves God with all his heart will find that he has enough not only for himself, but to pay somebody else's taxes. Have you ever heard of a man who's paid somebody else's taxes? Tell me if you find somebody who's paid.

I mean, giving gifts to another person is one thing, but to pay somebody's taxes. Jesus did it. Don't you think he's a rich man? And he never had a wallet.

And here he was with all, you know, a lot of people are giving money to Jesus because he healed so many sick people. And the wonderful thing I see about Jesus was he wouldn't touch that money. He'd give it to somebody to keep.

I believe that's how a servant of the Lord must be. I feel sorry for all the preachers who collect the money from the offerings themselves. It's one thing I've avoided all these 27 years, all my life.

I said, that's not for me. My calling is to preach God's word. That's how Jesus was.

He was a very happy man. He didn't need those offerings. And Judas Iscariot was probably swiping 75% of it.

And Jesus knew it. And he was not disturbed. Have you met a Christian who's not disturbed if somebody swiped 75% of his money? Many of you, I'm sure you consider yourself quite spiritual, right? Because you're sitting in CFC.

How many of you would be perfectly at rest if somebody swiped 75% of your money? Then you know whether you love God with all your heart. In the little business that I do, I've had different times when I've lost large sums of money. And I asked the Lord why.

You know, he's just testing me, just testing me to see whether I loved him with all my heart or not. And I said, Lord, you can test me a hundred times. I'll always pass the test.

Money will have no place in my heart. You give me, take it away. It's just the same.

I've been a very happy man. I've not starved. I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, happiness does not come through driving a car.

I still drive a scooter, even yesterday. Happiness doesn't come only through driving cars. Don't think that.

Happiness doesn't come through comforts. If you have it, use it. I'm not saying you shouldn't.

But if you think that that makes you somebody, you got something wrong. You know, it's like these young people, first time they get a motorbike, you know, speed they go. They don't go slow like me.

Okay. Mine's habit learned in my younger, unconverted days. Difficult to give up anyway.

But there's a sure, you see, I, you know, one of the things the Lord's convicted me about on driving in the roads, the lust to overtake other people. Have you ever, have you ever discovered that lust in your flesh? And especially if that fellow overtakes you, you got it. Same.

Your vehicle is faster than his. And the Lord said, put it to death. Let everybody overtake you.

Yeah. I want to say this brothers and sisters, a lot of things we got to get light on. God must be everything in our life when nothing else is important.

Then only we can handle everything on earth properly. That's how Jesus was. You know that Jesus had an inner dress, which was so expensive that when the soldiers were tearing up all his other clothes, I don't know why they tore up his clothes.

You know, it says in the cross, they tore up his clothes. What, why did they tear up clothes? I mean, we tear up clothes when we use, want to use it to wipe the floor or something. They didn't even distribute it.

They tore it up. What can you do with a torn piece of cloth? But when they saw his inner garment, they said, boy, this is really expensive stuff. We're going to use this to wipe the floor.

And they cost lots as to which of you will get it. You know, what that teaches me is that Jesus was not an ascetic. You say, no, no, no, I won't wear that.

I got to wear something which costs 10% of that. No, I don't think he wasted any money on that. Probably his mother gave it to him.

I always feel that his mother must have given something really good for this son of hers who became a poor preacher. Let me give him a good dress. And he didn't throw it away.

He didn't say, oh, I'm so spiritual, I won't wear that. See, that to me is true spirituality. True spirituality is not this ascetic, you know, because we're not followers of John the Baptist who wear camel skin and all that type of stuff.

Jesus was so normal. He could enjoy a good meal so much that people called him a gluttonous man. And he could fast for 40 days.

No problem enjoying a good meal if you can also know how to fast. The problem is when people enjoy a good meal who don't know how to fast. So for Jesus, food was not an important thing.

Not at all. He got it, he enjoyed it. I'm sure Jesus would lick his lips after eating an ice cream.

And he wouldn't leave a little bit of behind in the plate to act spiritually. You know, some people say, oh, if I take everything, I enjoy it, but I can't take everything because it won't look spiritual. He wasn't like that.

If he enjoyed it, he ate it. If he enjoyed it, he asked for a second helping. He didn't care for the honor of men.

He was not, he was normal. He lived before God, not before people. You know, the number of things we do to act spiritual, even at the dining table, all the garbage of human honor.

Jesus wasn't like that, but the same man could spend 40 days in the wilderness, fasting, seeking God. That's the man who can eat at a dining table problem for whom God is everything. Food is nothing.

If he gets good food, he enjoys it. If he gets a good dress, he wears it. If he doesn't get a good dress, he's happy.

You know, if he has money, he's happy. He doesn't have it, he's happy. He's not coveting, coveting, coveting because he's a nobody.

He didn't have to compare himself with anybody else because he was a nobody. God was everything in his life. The father was everything.

He wouldn't do a thing. Even when he was hungry and the devil said, why don't you, you got power now. You were anointed, right? 40 days ago, you were anointed.

You got power. You have power to turn the stones into bread. Yes.

Why don't you do that? I mean, you're not asking for ice cream or something, just a little bread because you're hungry. She said, the father hasn't told me. The father hasn't told me to eat yet.

38 days gone. I didn't eat 39 days. Father hasn't told me to eat 40 days gone.

Father hasn't told me to eat yet, so I'm not going to do it. How he lived is amazing. The more I look at the life of Jesus, I say, Lord, I see the secret of your life.

You always wanted to do what pleased your father, even in a simple thing like eating bread after fasting for 40 days because he said, man shall not live by bread. I want to say to you, man shall not live by bread, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth because God was everything in his life. Man shall not live by comfort.

Man shall not live by having a house or a wife or property or bread or money or a job or anything. Man shall live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. That's the spiritual man.

Man shall not live by correct doctrine also. You think we're spiritual because we don't call anybody reverend or we don't call anybody father and we don't have pastors and we... No. You're spiritual when God is everything in your life.

Otherwise, some of those reverends and pastors may be 10 times more spiritual than you are, despite their having titles like that. I discovered that. You know, sometimes we despise people because we think that, oh, they've got it all wrong.

What would you think of someone... Let me read you something I wrote. Not I wrote, which I read. I just want to read this to you.

Temptation is like fire. It can burn you, even if you're 100 years old. Fire doesn't make it... Some people think we've become so spiritual now, we need not be tempted.

Temptation is like fire. The knowledge of God will produce love. The knowledge of self will produce humility.

Jesus told us to aim high, not to become like Moses or like Elijah, but like our heavenly father. Faithfulness in small things will lead us to Christ. Unfaithfulness in small things will lead us to sin.

Let us allow Jesus to use us without consulting us. Cheerfulness should be one of the main characteristics of the Christian life. To be humble is to be truthful about the fact that everything we have we receive freely from God.

We must... Let us draw people to God and never to ourselves. To be like little children is to be small and helpless. The Holy Spirit did not force Mary to accept God's plan for her.

Neither will the Holy Spirit force us. We must eagerly strive to learn from Jesus how to be meek and humble. Cheerfulness should be one of the main characteristics of our Christian life.

And joy is one of the best safeguards against temptation. We must practice silence of the eyes by seeing the beauty and goodness of God and closing our eyes to the failures of others, to all that is sinful and disturbing to the soul. We must practice silence of the ears, listening to the voice of God and to the cry of poor people and closing our ears to other voices that come from the evil one, from our fallen human nature like gossip, tail bearing, uncharitable words, etc.

We must practice silence of the tongue by praising God, speaking the life-giving word of God which enlightens people and brings peace and refraining from self-defense and every word that causes darkness, turmoil, pain, and death. We must practice silence of the mind by opening it to the truth and knowledge of God in prayer, meditation, and closing it to all untruths, distractions, destructive thoughts, rash judgments, false suspicion of others, revengeful thoughts and desires. We must practice silence of the heart by loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and desiring God alone, loving one another as God loves us and by avoiding all selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy, greed.

Our silence in all these areas is a joyful and God-centered silence that demands constant self-denial but plunges us into the deep silence of God where aloneness with God becomes a reality. Holiness is not a luxury, it is a necessity. The first step to become like God is to will it.

God who owes us nothing gave himself completely to us. Shall we who owe him everything then give only a fraction of ourselves to him? Husbands, smile at your wives. Wives, smile at your husbands.

Lovely exhortation. This person was really, don't you think this person knew God who wrote this? Jesus spoke with authority because he spent time in silence listening to his father. We learn humility only by

accepting humiliation and we meet with humiliation all through our lives and the greatest humiliation is to know that we are nothing and this we can know if you come before God in prayer.

Christ instituted the breaking of bread because we should always remember the cross and in this he symbolized his giving us his body to eat. We must also be willing to give ourselves to others for them to eat us. You understand that spiritually.

I have only one seat in my heart and it is for God alone and finally if God could have found somebody more helpless than me, more stupid than me, more hopeless than me, he would have, he will do, when he finds someone he will do a greater work through that person than he's done through me. Mother Teresa, I just wanted to surprise you. Can you believe that? Roman Catholic? How many of us would have the revelation she has in these areas? We who got New Testament teaching, new new and living way and love money so much and do so many wrong things.

I've discovered one thing through all these years. Spirituality does not come by doctrine. It does not come by praise and worship meetings.

It comes by what she said. I have only one seat in my heart that's for God. Nobody else.

Many of us are proud of our knowledge and so many things to say and so many things to teach but we don't know God. Jesus said eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. I want to encourage you my dear brothers and sisters, all of you who are here.

I believe many of you are wonderful brothers and sisters. Make this the pursuit of your life to know God, to know him better. It'll make your life richer, happier.

You may not have as much money and you may not have as many grand things in your house as other people but you'll be a happier person and your life will be far more useful to others and you can come to the end of your life with a tremendous joy that your life has accomplished something before you leave this earth and those of you young are lucky because you can start now. Some of you who are going to get being gripped by this when you're old, okay you can do something with the rest of your life but think if you are young. I always say young people are the luckiest people.

They can hear these things when they're young. To be gripped with, I'm not asking you to follow Mother Teresa's doctrines. I believe they were all wrong, not all, many of them about particularly all those teachings about Mary and the rosary and I don't agree with that but there are things which are head mistakes and there are things which are heart mistakes.

There's a lot of difference. To pray with the rosary is a head mistake. It's wrong but to have a bitterness in your heart against somebody is a heart mistake.

That's more serious. You know that a woman who cuts her hair short and wears lipstick, you may despise her. What about one who doesn't cut her hair and wears white clothes and who's got, who gossips and backbites.

I say give me a sister who has got lipstick and wears jeans and short hair any day who doesn't gossip or backbite. You know there's a difference. The other is wrong but it's a head error.

They think that there's nothing wrong in it but a heart error, one who nags her husband day and night and doesn't wear any gold and wears simple clothes and nags her husband, boy she's like the devil and the other woman who wears jeans and lipstick and who submits to her husband is like God. You know we've got sometimes a wrong sense of values. The most important thing we try to impress people by the way we dress and the way we talk and when the only thing that matters is does God have full place in your heart and I believe that's the place to which God seeks to bring all of us in all of our dealings.

When you think of Job in the Old Testament, see Job was the best man in the whole world. There's never a time on earth when God said about somebody that is the number one man in the whole world. There was nobody like him, the best man in the whole world.

God said about him, you know he was a person about whom God could boast to Satan. You don't read in the Bible about anyone that God boasted to Satan. Have you seen a man like him on the face of the earth? Nobody like him on the face of the earth.

Imagine God saying like that to someone in Job 1 verse 8. He's the finest man in all the earth. There's no one like him on the earth. What a word.

A man who turns away from evil, who fears God. Do you know some of the things that Job did? Let me just show you. Job decided, Job 31 verse 1, that he would never lust with his eyes.

Now remember, Job had seven grown-up sons and daughters who lived in their own houses. So he must have been like a grandfather, or old enough to be a grandfather. And old enough to be a grandfather, he says, I'm just careful with my eyes.

I've been careful with my eyes for many years, and even now I'm careful. I just made a covenant with my eyes. Eyes, you're not to look at pretty women.

And do you know that Job never had a Bible? He never heard of Jesus. He didn't have the Holy Spirit. He didn't have fellowship.

He didn't have a church. He didn't have any preacher to preach to him. It was just Job and God.

That's all. He was one of those people like Enoch. No Bible, no church, no fellowship.

Just him and God. I've sometimes felt that people who are in lonely places, where they have no fellowship, sometimes develop spiritually more than people who live in Bangalore. You know why? Because here we can lean so much on people and the church that we don't need God.

If you come regularly to the meetings, you get at least two sound exhortations a week. It can keep you going. You don't need God.

You just need the church. You just need some good brothers. And people say, oh brothers, you're so lucky to be in Bangalore.

What all you must be hearing twice a week. You're lucky to be out there where you don't hear anyone but God. That's how Job was.

That is the reason why some people who are in lonely places end up more spiritual. Now I happened to get the opportunity to travel these places and I discovered these things. Job, he knew God and God knew

him.

He said there's no one like him on the earth. He wouldn't lust with his eyes and so many amazing things. You read that in chapters 29 to 31.

He was a man. He says, if I have made gold my God. That's one of those places he says, yeah then I can.

I have been eyes to the blind. Chapter 29 verse 15. I was feet to the lame.

That means he used to help lame people cross the road and take them where they wanted and and he guided blind people. Chapter 31 verse 24. If I have put my confidence in gold, if I've gloated, verse 25, because of my wealth was great, boy then I need judgment.

Imagine a man having light on all this and yet there was one thing fundamentally wrong with him and that's why God took him through so many trials, so many humiliations, made him lose his children, made him lose his property. I mean he was a multi-millionaire. He had, those days people had you know their wealth was not in industries but in camels and sheep and oxen and servants and he was the richest cattleman in the whole area but he had one thing lacking.

One thing. He was not a nobody. He was somebody and you read chapter 29 to 31.

He says that you know when after I spoke nobody would open their mouth because I was such a fine preacher. I brought up my children properly. I had 10 children.

They grew up well. I didn't lust with my eyes. I used to help lame people.

I used to help the blind people. I cared for the widows and the orphans. I made the widow's heart sing for joy.

What did he lack? This wonderful, righteous man. Humility and God loved him so much. He said, he's such a wonderful man.

I've got to give him the most important thing which he lacks. How to give it? God found there was only one way to give it to him. Crush him.

Why doesn't God crush some of you? He sees that you don't value humility but Job, God loved him so much. He said, I've got to make him the finest man not only on earth but in heaven and that can only come through crushing, loss, people misunderstanding him, preachers coming and saying it's all because of your sin, accusing him falsely. Your children must have sinned.

That's why they've been judged. Okay. Crush, crush, crush, crush, crush, crush.

Finally, you know what he finally says? All these preachers could not succeed in doing it. Finally, God spoke to him. You know the wonderful thing I see about these four preachers who preached to Job and God was this one difference.

You remember this when you read the book of Job. Four preachers came to Job and said, there must be some secret sin in your life. You know how when somebody has some calamity, you immediately, clever prophet that you are, you immediately think that, oh, there must be some sin in his life.

All these four clever prophets came and said, oh, that's the Lord. You got some sin in your life. That's why you're suffering calamity.

Good people don't suffer calamity. Only bad people suffer calamity. Your God judged your children.

They died. Oh, there must have been some secret sin in their life and God comes and speaks and God is so different. James says in James chapter one, God never scolds anybody.

Wouldn't you like to live with somebody who never scolds you? I love to live with God because it says he never scolds anybody. I can do it the same wrong a thousand times and he wouldn't scold me. He'll say, son, let's do it right next time.

He never scolds me. That's why I love to be with him. I'd rather walk with God than with anybody on this earth.

You husbands who scold your wives, you're not like God. You wives who scold your husbands, you're not like God. You parents who not correct your children, but scold your children.

You're not like God. God corrects his children, but he never scolds his children. Scolds, yeah, you good for nothing, big donkey and all types of names.

Where did you come from? I tell children, tell I came from you. Who give you your brains? You give me your brains. Yeah, yeah.

God is not like that. And God, he came to Joe and he never said one word to him about his sin. No, he said, Joe, you're not one word about no preaching.

I like people who don't preach to me, who love me and bless me. That's how God is. He's the most wonderful person in the world.

He's not like the preachers you've met. And God said, you know how great I am, Joe. I made the universe.

Where were you when I created the universe? You know, I made the alligators. Have you ever tried fooling around with an alligator? I made the birds. I made the snow.

I make the waves that stop by the beach with little grains of sand. I stopped the mighty waves from coming any further. It's not a big wall that I kept there, little grains of sand that stop the waves and say, you can't come anymore.

This is me with little grains of sand. I stopped the mighty waves, which other people have to build huge walls to stop. That's all he says.

Nothing about sin or holiness or anything about alligators and birds and snow and things like that. At the end of it, Job says, God, chapter 40, verse 4, I am nobody. And God said, wonderful.

At last I brought him to the place I wanted him to come to. All the preachers couldn't bring him there. The more the preachers preached to him, the more he said, no, I'm not a nobody.

I'm a somebody. Till he met God. Then he said, I'm nobody.

And you know, one mark of a nobody is he stopped speaking. He stops arguing. He said, lay my hand on my mouth.

I've spoken too much already. Lord, I'm not going to say anything more. You know, those who are nobodies, they don't want to win the argument.

Do you want to win an argument? Do you want to win an argument with your husband or your wife or your children? No, I don't want to win an argument with anybody. Because I'm a nobody. We have responsibilities.

But let's not have the spirit of winning an argument or overtaking a vehicle or no, no, no, no, no. I'm nobody. I am a nobody.

And I repent. Verse chapter 42, verse 5, he says, till now, I only heard about you, God. Now I see you.

And I just put my mouth in the dust. Because I'm a nobody. I've always said to people, put your mouth in the dust, humble yourself, always repent, always be ready to ask forgiveness.

Always be ready to take the low place. And at the end of your life, what shall I wish for you at the end of your life? The last day of your life, that you be a director or a millionaire? No, I wish at the end of your life, you'll be like Jesus. Washing the feet of others.

On the last day of your life, just a nobody, a servant sent by God to earth to wash other people's feet, to wash the feet of your children, to wash the feet of your wife and your husband and your neighbors and brothers and sisters, who are also terribly ungrateful to you for all that you've done for them in the past. You continue to wash their feet and the next day you die. That's how Jesus was.

I say, Lord, I'm not interested in all this wealth and honor and comfort and pleasure. I want to be like you at the end of my life. And if I'm like you, there's nothing greater on earth than I can be than that.

I hope you've seen something of the glory of Jesus today. That was the secret of his life. You know what Paul said? Let me show you one last verse.

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 verse 11. You know what he says? I am a nobody. The last part of verse 11.

That was the secret of his life. The man who raised the dead, established churches, even handkerchiefs that touched his body healed the sick. The man who was the greatest preacher of the first century.

You know what his opinion about himself was? I am a nobody. This has been the secret of the greatest men in the history of the world. They were nobodies.

They never made you feel small. You know, when you go to a nobody, you don't feel small. And when you can make people feel that they are better than you.

When I can make a 20-year-old talk to me like a 20-year-old, then I know. When I can talk to a five-year-old and make him talk to me as though I'm five years old, I've succeeded. That's how Jesus was.

Some of us, I want to ask you, some of you older people, can you talk to a five-year-old and make him believe that you're also a five-year-old in your spirit? Otherwise you haven't become like Jesus. Can you talk to a young teenager and talk to him at his level instead of an old grandfather? We must be like Jesus.

Be at the level of everybody.

I am so blessed when I mingle with these brothers from Tamil Nadu. Poor people. Some of them eat one meal a day.

Some of them come for our conference. Do you ever fellowship with them? You say, I don't know the language. I didn't know one word of Tamil.

I make all the stupid mistakes in Tamil, but I communicate with them. I say, what is language for? Communication. If we are nobody, we'll value the smallest, poorest, weakest brother in the church everywhere, and you'll become a rich man.

These people have made me rich spiritually. That's how Jesus taught us to live. And if you can be a nobody, you'll be a spiritual man.

Love God with all your heart. Okay, let's bow our heads before God. God never scolds us.

And he certainly didn't scold you. If there was an element of scolding you heard today, that's my personality. Forget that.

God didn't scold you. I haven't become like God yet. God does not scold.

He loves you too much for that. He gave his son for you. How much more he'll give you everything else.

My brothers and sisters, all you senior brothers and sisters, long to be like Jesus. Long to be like Jesus. Be like a teenager to the teenagers, and be like a child to the children.

And get rid of all your seniority, and your age, and all the high thoughts you have because of your age, or because you've been a believer so long. And meet a new believer, and let him feel you're also a new believer. Don't make people feel small.

If you can make the weakest, youngest, smallest person in this church feel comfortable with you, then you're okay. You older sisters, don't go with all your heavy advice to the younger ones. You're carnal.

Listen to them a little bit. Humble yourself. Listen to your children sometimes.

It's good for us to go down. I feel that many of us have not become what we should have become, because we have not followed Jesus. We've followed our culture in India, which places value on seniority, and age, and gray hair, and all that garbage.

Get rid of that. Seek to be like Jesus. Get rid of this Indian culture, heathen culture, or western culture, heathen culture.

Follow the culture of Jesus Christ, that spiritual culture. There's nothing, no one superior to him. Make him your example.

It's wonderful he doesn't scold us. He comes to cleanse us, forgive us. Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, we're so conscious that we're unlike Jesus in so many areas, and that's because we pursued the wrong things.

We have run after the wrong things. No wonder we never got where we should be going. We're on the wrong road, and we are running so fast, but on the wrong road.

Forgive us. Help us to turn back, not just to increase in knowledge, but Lord, to see, to run the race in Jesus, in your footsteps, Lord Jesus. Help us, each one, to see those footsteps more clearly, to walk in humility, because we're so much unlike you still.

Have mercy on us, that we shall soon get to that place that Job came to, that Paul came to, where they recognized, even on earth, they recognized that they were nobodies. Help us, Lord. None of us are anywhere compared to that Old Testament man, Job, or the New Testament man, Paul, and yet with such, so little to speak for our lives, we have got such conceited opinions about ourselves.

I pray you'll have mercy upon us. Have mercy on all of us. Where are we compared to Job and Paul, and yet those fellows thought that they were nobodies.

Yeah, we have learned something, Lord. Help us, we pray. Father, we just praise you that you seek to lead us on to something more glorious than we've ever experienced in our life.

Bless us, we pray. Lead us. We thank you that you never scolded us, and you haven't come to scold us today.

You've just come to help us, lift us up, and help us to run better. We believe you're going to do that for all of us. We want to have faith for that, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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