

Following Jesus Who Died to Self Every Day

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of taking up the cross daily and following Jesus, focusing on the joy set before us in the Father's presence. It highlights the need for humility, gentleness, and seeking grace to overcome sin, drawing inspiration from Jesus' life of denying self and entering the Father's presence through the rent veil. The message encourages living in the atmosphere of heaven daily, transforming our homes and lives.

Scripture: Luke 9:23, Matthew 11:29, Hebrews 10:20, Psalm 16:11, Hebrews 12:2, Hebrews 13:9, 1 Peter 5:5, Hebrews 11:40, Isaiah 55:1

Topics: "Daily Discipleship", "Living in God's Presence"

Description

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Transcript

In the church, in all our CFC churches, there's something we emphasize which is hardly emphasized in other churches and you know what that is, the way of the cross. So very often most people's understanding, the way of the cross is something gloomy and something not very pleasant and yet let's look at a few verses in Scripture to help us to have a clearer understanding. First of all we must turn to Luke 9 and 23, Luke's Gospel chapter 9 and verse 23, where we must read this very slowly so we understand it clearly.

If anyone, that applies to everybody, every Christian, if anyone wants to come after me, now you know Jesus, it's interesting, if you read the Gospel, Jesus never spoke about going to heaven. He did speak a number of times about hell, the danger of hell. In the Sermon on the Mount, he speaks about the danger of going to hell, but he never said that he came on earth to take people to heaven.

The Gospel is very often preached like that. You want to go to heaven or you want to go to hell? But Jesus didn't preach it out like that. He spoke about anyone who wants to not to go to heaven, but anyone who wants to come after me.

So not just to have your sins forgiven, it's like coming to the starting line of a race. Let's think of the Christian life like a marathon race. Okay, you're born again, you repented of your sin to the best of your knowledge, and you believe that Christ died for your sins and you received them into your life.

Great, you have come to the starting line. The finishing line is the return of Christ or when we leave the earth to death, one of the two. And between the starting line and the finish line is what we call the Christian race.

Now if you only rejoice in the fact that you've accepted Christ and you're born again, then you're standing at the starting line forever. The Christian life is called a race in a number of places in the New Testament. It's not an escalator.

You know what an escalator is? You go to some of these stores, there's an escalator where you don't have to climb the stairs. You just stand on the escalator and you keep moving up. Now some people have that idea.

You accept Christ and you stand on this escalator and somehow you'll gradually end up in heaven. That is a deception. Christian life is not an escalator, not standing on an escalator.

It's a race. And if you're not moving forward, then your idea is that you just stand on the escalator and somehow the Lord will take you into his kingdom one day. But here he speaks about coming after him and if we want to come after him, then the first thing I have to say is to say no to myself.

That's the meaning of deny himself. There's a big person sitting on the throne of our hearts from the time we are born into this earth and that's called self. We are born loving ourself, standing up for our rights.

You see, even children. Why do you think children are so stubborn, disobedient from the time they are born? It's the flesh of Adam that is in them and it just develops and develops and develops as they grow up and they become teenagers and they fight with their parents and become rebels against parents and against God. So it's that self which is the problem and that's why Jesus said unless you deal with that, you cannot follow him.

So your attitude to your self-life determines whether you're following Jesus or not and many Christians have discovered that even after many years they haven't made much progress in their Christian life and the reason is that they have never dealt with this self. So let's look at this verse. He must deny himself and take up the cross.

The cross is that which puts self to death and follow him. So it's impossible to follow Jesus if we don't deny ourselves and take up the cross. Please remember this.

Many people sing follow follow I will follow anywhere everywhere I'll follow him but here it says it is impossible to follow Jesus if we don't first deny ourselves and take up the cross. Please keep this in mind my dear brothers and sisters all your life. If you are not denying yourself any day and you're not taking up the cross that day you are not following Jesus and if you let many days go by like this you won't make much progress in this race and that is why so many Christians even after so many years in their life are still defeated by things they should have conquered long long ago.

Think of something like getting offended. I've often said that there is a kindergarten lesson in the Christian life to overcome getting offended to overcome for men to overcome dirty thoughts and getting angry for all

men and women. Those are beyond first second third grade stuff but getting offended that's a kindergarten class.

If you don't get past that if you don't get past the kindergarten you're not going to overcome any of the other things. So one of the first things every one of us should seek to overcome is getting offended. Getting offended with what somebody said to you or somebody did to you or some respect that you thought you deserved that somebody didn't give you all this type of what I call rubbish.

It is rubbish to think that a wretched sinner I mean on one side we can say oh Lord I'm a wretched sinner saved by grace on the other side I'm expecting people to respect me. The only person who gets offended is the one who expects somebody to respect him. So I want to encourage you to earnestly seek to get over that that sin I call it a sin.

Feeling offended with somebody and some people keep that offense for such a long time. They are unable to talk to them and they say that guy offended me and these are people who call themselves believers and think they are following Jesus. So that's one of the things I would encourage you to finish with as soon as possible and so if you find it difficult say Lord please help me to see how this feeling offended is because I have such high thoughts about myself.

I feel I'm such an important person that nobody should ever hurt me. Nobody should ever offend me. Who do you think you are brother or sister? It's all a question of our opinion about ourselves.

If I think of myself as just a wretched sinner like we often sing whom Christ came and redeemed. If I have any value today at all it is because I'm in Christ. I must recognize that.

I was an Adam all these years and Jesus in his great mercy took me out of that and put me in Christ. That's the only value I have and that's why long long ago I decided one thing in my life that I just refused to get offended. Whether people say something to me or don't give me the respect that I think I deserve or write an insulting letter because I'm serving the Lord.

Jesus was hurt the most but a lot of people have tried to hurt me. I don't say hurt me. They've tried to hurt me in many many ways.

You know Jesus once said and this is something that challenging for very early in my life when I was serving the Lord. So in Matthew chapter 10 verse 24. A disciple.

What's the definition of a disciple? A disciple is one who's following his master and the disciple is one who follows Jesus. And here he says in Matthew 10 24. A disciple is not above his teacher and that's simple logic.

Some of the things Jesus said are just plain simple logic. A disciple is not greater than his teacher. And we say we are slaves of Christ.

Well a slave is not greater than his master. You understand that very clearly. Okay.

If you could at least become come to the level of your teacher boy that would be great. I mean you should be satisfied if one day you can be like your teacher and that's how long that one day as a disciple I shall be like my teacher Jesus Christ. And one day as a slave I shall be like my master in character not in authority and power.

Okay once you've understood that now this is what Jesus is saying. Listen to this carefully. If they have called the master and the teacher Prince of Devils Beelzebul.

Beelzebul means the ruler of demons. So listen to this. This is the logic of Jesus.

You are not greater than Jesus right? All of us will acknowledge that. And if they have called the head Jesus the ruler of demons how much more will they speak evil of the members of his family? So what Jesus is saying if they've called him such bastard the worst possible name saying he's the head of demons. What sort of name do you expect to get? So then we can ask ourselves.

Okay I check myself with this verse 25. Read it slowly. I read it like this.

If the head of the house was called the Prince of Devils and I am a member of his family they should speak evil of me also at least to the same extent. So from that verse I came and I can ask even a little boy in school. Can you tell me how do you know whether a person is a member of Jesus family according to Matthew 10 25? I'll tell him just I'll tell that little 12 year old boy please read Matthew 10 25 and tell me how do you know whether a person is a member of Jesus family just from that one word.

Don't say you've accepted Christ you heard that in church but from this verse what do you say? How do you know you're a member of Jesus family? Well you say you'll be called bad names like devil and things like that. Anyway that's the way I read it. So I asked myself has anybody ever called me the devil? Oh many times.

I say Lord that proves I'm a member of your family. I want to ask your brothers and sisters. Has anybody ever called you the devil or are you so careful not to offend anybody because you're so careful to try and maintain what you call a Christian testimony that you never tell people the truth and everybody loves you because you're such a nice person.

Nobody ever called you the devil. But if you stand up for Jesus I'll tell you why people call me the devil because I preach the truth and they don't like the truth. The truth convicts them of sin and Jesus went on to say anyway I don't and you feel condemned don't go around looking for people to call you the devil but all I say is be bold in your witness for Christ.

Ask yourself whether people appreciate you and praise you so much because you're not bold in witnessing the truth. For example you go to one of these dead churches and you never speak about taking up the cross and say you just accept Christ and you go to heaven there they'll praise you. But if you tell them the words like what we just read that you cannot follow Jesus unless you take up the cross every day well they'll call you all types of bad names.

So Jesus said don't fear them. But coming back to this Jesus said what did we see in Luke 9 23 take up your cross every day and follow me. That's the important part of it.

Take up your cross every day and follow me. In other words what do I learn from that? What I learned from that is that he must have taken up the cross too. Otherwise how can he ask me to follow him? He says take up Luke 9 23 take up your cross daily and follow me.

So that means I learned from that verse one truth that every day of Jesus life on earth he took up the cross. Every single day he took up the cross otherwise he cannot tell me to follow him. He consciously chose to die to himself every day and if I want to follow him I must consciously choose to die to myself

every day.

So you know many people say that the Bible only talks about the last three and a half years of Jesus life. You know where he did miracles and preached and did so many things. But yet there was a 30 years of life in Nazareth that came before those three and a half years.

And the Bible the New Testament Gospels only revealed 10% of Jesus life. 10%. But let me show you a verse which tells us about the other 90%.

It's the last verse of the last Gospel. John's Gospel. You know there are four Gospels.

Have you read the last verse of the last Gospel? The four Gospels describe the life of Jesus during three and a half years. During the three and a half years of his ministry. And at the end of all these four Gospels the Holy Spirit writes at the last sentence having described Jesus ministry in three and a half years.

He says if there are many other things sorry not if but there are many other things which Jesus did which are not written here. That's in those first 30 years. And if I suppose if they were all written in detail that means if all that Jesus did in those 30 years in Nazareth were written in detail.

Listen to this. The world itself would not be able to. I suppose John is saying he's using a bit of an exaggeration.

He says I think John is using his own thought. I think the world would not be able to contain the books that are written. He's not making a mathematical statement of the world would not be able to contain.

What he's saying is you understand the spirit of it. There's so much that Jesus did that so many books could be written about what he did in those 30 years. So when I read a word like that in my younger days I said Lord I want to know what you did in those 30 years.

Can you tell me? How did you take up the cross every day in those 30 years? Because I'm not here in the last three and a half years of Jesus ministry. First of all I'm not going to die for the sins of the world. And secondly I don't have any gift to do miracles or to raise the dead or heal the lepers and all.

None of us have these gifts. So okay I can't do all that and I can't preach as powerfully as he did. But let me see if I can follow him in the first 30 years.

The first 30 years he was not doing miracles or raising the dead or he lived a very ordinary life in those first 30 years. So when I look at Jesus life in those first 30 years I say Lord what did you do in those 30 years? How did you deny yourself and take up the cross every day? I tell you if you're eager to know to run this race that's what you'll ask. And I asked the Lord as a young man please show me because that's the way I want to go.

I don't want to stand at the starting line of this race and wait till Jesus comes and find I'm still the starting line. I want to run this race. And I can't do the things that Jesus did in the Gospels.

As I said preach those powerful sermons and raise the dead and cleanse the lepers and you and I can't do that. But at least we can find out what he did in those 30 years. And will the Lord show us that? Here's a promise.

I took this promise of myself and you can take it for yourself. Take this seriously what I'm saying. Turn with me to John chapter 16.

Here's a promise for you from the Lord Jesus himself. John chapter 16. Please note this verse in your Bible and turn to it so you won't forget it.

John chapter 16. He's talking about the coming of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes there are many things he's going to do.

And we see all the wonderful miracles that he did through the ministry of the Apostles. But we're not Apostles. So we need we're just simple disciples of Jesus.

So what is the Holy Spirit going to do through for us? Here it is. John 16 verse 13 to 15. When the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth.

That means there is all means 100%. There is no part of the truth that Christ proclaimed which the Holy Spirit will hide from you. My dear brothers and sisters please don't say oh these things will only be revealed to people like brother Zach.

No. I've claimed that verse that is why it's revealed to me. You go to that verse that is for you.

It's in your Bible. John 16 13. But if you don't claim it I said the promises in the Bible I've often said this I like checks.

Somebody sends you a check in your name and says give so-and-so pay so-and-so so many hundreds of dollars. And if you just keep it there on your table you'll get nothing. And so if you keep that promise in the Bible there if you get nothing you take that check and present it in the bank and it comes into your account.

Very often the same day or the next day. So you take a promise here and say Lord I take this to the bank of heaven in the name of Jesus Christ I want it for myself. It'll be credited to your account.

I'm telling you from my own experience that is how I've gradually over a period of time accumulated some spiritual riches. Little by little by little by little these checks that I found in the Bible I took it and say in the name of Jesus I claim this for myself. Please do this.

I exhort every one of you to do it. Here's a promise. The Holy Spirit will guide you into all the truth.

Okay. What is this truth? Not first of all don't think of the truth that you're going to get up in church and preach next Sunday some fantastic thing that the people admire you. Get rid of this desire to preach to get admiration of people or to share some clever thing that will make people admire you.

You've got to really hate it because that's the devil that wanting people to admire me. Got to finish with that. What is it he will show you? Okay.

Here is what the Holy Spirit will show you and this is what you and I need to claim for ourselves. Verse 14. The Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus Christ.

That's number one. He's not going to glorify you my brother sister. He's not going to glorify me.

He's gonna glorify Jesus Christ. So if you submit yourself to the Holy Spirit and say Lord I want to only glorify Jesus Christ in my life. That's all.

Make that determined rule. I will not do anything or seek any glory for myself. I've had to do that.

I Lord I will not seek any glory for myself. I will not do something and expect somebody to admire it and say oh what a great guy brother Zach is. Lord please save me from that satanic pride.

It is satanic that I want people to say something good about me or admire me. No. I finished with that.

Lord I want to like it says the Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus Christ. Fill me with the Holy Spirit so that I can glorify Jesus Christ. Will you pray that prayer? It says here the Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus Christ.

Will you say to the Lord right now or sometime today seriously Lord I'm sorry that I have sought my own honor and want people to appreciate me here and there for something I do or something I say. Please forgive me for that sin. It is a terrible sin to take the glory that should go to Christ and to draw attention to myself.

It's a terrible terrible sin and it's a sin that a lot of believers have to confess. Lord please forgive me that I do something and I expect someone to appreciate me. I want to finish with that because the Holy Spirit has come to glorify Jesus Christ.

Lord I want to repent of all that and I want from now on try my best to shift that focus and I want Christ to be glorified through my life. That's the number one thing that you need to pray. The Holy Spirit has come to do that and then go next John 16 14.

We're trying to discover remember what Jesus did in the 30 years of his life because that's what I can follow. The last three and a half years of his life I tell you very few people can follow. Maybe like Paul or some apostle like that who can preach powerful sermons and heal the sick and even raise the dead.

Paul and Peter did it but there are very few people in the world in the history of Christianity who could have that gift. The rest of us you and me are ordinary people. We can follow Jesus in the first 30 years of his life.

That's what I seek to do. I say Lord I don't want all those things you did in the three and a half years of your ministry. I want to follow you in the first 30 years of your life.

I have a passion for that. I want to ask you my brother sister do you have a passion to discover what Jesus did in the first 30 years of his life. He never preached a sermon.

Imagine if you have a passion for that. He lived a life. Okay the Holy Spirit verse 14 will take the things of mine and will reveal them to you.

What a fantastic promise that is. That means he will take little little things from the life of Jesus in those 30 years and he'll show me this is how he did it. This is how he did here.

This is how he did there. This is how he did it. I say thank you Lord.

I can follow that till you know otherwise most people just read the Gospels and see all these fantastic things. I can't preach like him. I can't do these things like him.

But here's a wonderful promise the Holy Spirit take of those things which John and you read that last verse of John's Gospel. The whole world cannot contain the number of those. That means there's such a lot of things that Jesus did in those 30 years and the Holy Spirit will take of that and show it to me which are not written in the whole Gospel.

How he took up his cross and followed him. The Father is meeting every day and he says you take up you follow me there. Now you can hear me say some things and get some idea but the Holy Spirit will tell you in daily life what Jesus did in that situation when he was on earth.

I've asked that in some tough situations that I faced in different places. I said Lord what did you do when you were in a situation like this? And that's where this verse helped me a lot. The verse that changed my life nearly 50 years ago.

Hebrews chapter 4. It is in my Bible all along but somehow I didn't take it seriously. Hebrews chapter 4 when I read it to you, you know yeah I know it. But I don't know whether you really believe it.

Hebrews 4 verse 15. We don't have a high priest who cannot sympathize with us. That's a great comfort to know that.

I don't know what you're going through my brother, sister. I don't care if you have no human being to sympathize with you. We all need people to sympathize with us in our struggles.

Especially those of you who are lonely. Maybe you're not married. Maybe you don't have a husband or a wife or in other words you're other ways you're lonely.

You don't have a church perhaps. You don't have good fellowship. Okay and here's someone who can sympathize with you.

Don't look for human sympathy. Jesus Christ will sympathize with you through the Holy Spirit. It says in verse 15.

We can read it like this. We have a high priest who can sympathize with us. That means God knows that we need somebody to sympathize with us in our struggles.

Particularly in our struggle with temptation. He says the reason is because he was tempted in exactly the same way as we are but never committed sin. It is that one verse that changed my life about 50 years ago.

It is written in my Bible all along but for so many years and I read the Bible I never took that verse seriously. And because I didn't take that one verse of Scripture seriously I was defeated for 14 years of my Christian life. The thing that put me on the path of victory nearly 50 years ago was this one verse.

That Jesus can sympathize with my struggle. Not my struggle to make money. Not my struggle to be respected by others rubbish.

I was not looking out of those. My struggle against temptation. That I'm defeated and defeated and defeated and defeated.

I say Lord it seems too impossible for me to overcome this. Is there somebody who will sympathize with my constant failure my constant failure. I want to live a holy life and I can't live it.

Will they sympathize some. It's not sympathizing because we don't have a higher standard of living or I can't get a better house to live in. That's all garbage.

I never wanted to have bigger house to live in. My wife and I lived in one room for four years of our life. We were very happy.

That's not what I was interested in. I was interested in a life that pleases God. A life that accomplishes all of God's will before I leave this earth.

A life that is completing that gives satisfaction to Jesus. That's what I was interested in. And I was failing.

And that's what I wanted to help him. I wasn't looking for a better salary or a better job. I said Lord please show me how I can overcome sin in my life.

The only thing. I don't want more money. I don't want a bigger house.

I don't want any comfort. I never long to have a car. No never.

And I said that's not what I want. I don't want these comforts. I want to overcome sin in my life.

I'll tell you something dear brothers and sisters. You make that the number one passion in your life. Not to get a promotion in your job.

Okay. All that is okay. Put them all secondly, third, fourth, tenth in the list.

But make this the number one passion in your life. That I want to overcome sin in my life Lord. More than anything else.

And I'll tell you, you get some amazing revelations that will bring you closer and closer to Jesus. It has brought me much closer to the Lord. As the Lord has opened my eyes to see what it means to be an overcomer in this area.

He was tempted in every point as we are. And yet he did not sin. And I say Lord is that possible for me? The Holy Spirit will show you it is possible.

And the devil will immediately come up and say no it cannot be. Oh the devil is very quick to come and tell you impossible. Look back over your life and see how often you made a good resolution and you could never keep it.

How often you said you're going to overcome and you never overcame. You'll never change. And I tell the devil to his face you're a liar.

I believe God's word. He's going to help you overcome. And he said what should I do? Because Jesus overcame like this.

Let us draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. So that we can first of all receive mercy for all our past failures. As you have often heard me say mercy is for our past failures.

And then it says you gain grace. Grace is to help us in the future to overcome sin. Mercy is to forgive our past failures.

And grace is to help us in the future to overcome sin. So I get both when I come to the throne of grace and I am reminded of all the wretched things I did in the past. I say Lord be merciful to me.

It's blotted out in the blood of Christ. And now I say Lord I don't want to continue like that. I don't want to keep on doing next week next one the same old sins that I did all my life.

I want to finish with it. And I want to look at Jesus who was tempted like me and who never sinned. And see him and say Lord how did you do it? And I seek the Holy Spirit and he shows me how he did it.

Then I have received mercy for the past and he gives me grace to help me in my time of need. What is my time of need? What is your greatest need? Some people who have health problems will say my greatest need is healing from this particular sickness I've had for so many years. I say brother sister that is not your greatest need.

You may be sick with cancer and I would say that is not your greatest need. I say your greatest need is that you dishonored God so much by the sins you allow in your life. The wrong attitudes you have in your life towards other human beings when you should be loving them with all your heart.

Those are the things that that is your greatest need. Not that you lost a promotion or you didn't get a better house. It's all garbage.

Call that garbage. That's what I call it. It's my favorite word garbage.

Everything outside of Christ. The only thing valuable is to partake of the nature of Jesus Christ. That's the only thing valuable.

Everything outside of that for me is garbage. If I get a little bit of that garbage to survive on earth, fine. If I don't get it, I'm not disappointed.

I'm not competing with people that are around the garbage bin who's going to collect more. No. I say you can pile in, jump in and take as much as you like.

I'm not competing with anybody for more garbage. I want to partake more of the life of Jesus Christ. I know because in all eternity I've got I've got millions of millions of years to live.

I'm not going to live just a hundred years on this earth. I'm going to live millions and millions and millions of years where dollars and cents won't count for anything. Honor and fame won't count for anything.

But if I partake of Jesus nature, that will count for everything in those millions of years I'm going to spend in eternity. I've got a future of millions and millions of years and I want to have something that I can rejoice in all that time. That in the short ninety hundred years I lived on earth, I lived for that.

I lived for eternity and not for the garbage things of time. So to receive grace, to overcome, that's our great need. And I want to show you another thing that helped Jesus to take.

You know we're thinking of Jesus who took up the cross to be my example and walked along this way and now he asks me to follow him. So I say, Lord how did you do it? And one verse I just showed you that in the time of temptation he asked for grace. Did Jesus ask for grace? How did Jesus overcome? But we know though you know it says here in Hebrews we just read that in our time of need Hebrews 4 16, our time of need is when we are tempted.

We come to the throne of grace and ask for grace to help us. And we read in Luke chapter 2. Those who heard of me before, you heard me mention this. I never preach anything new.

I always preach the same old things because that's what our need is to overcome sin. I've seen that that is the most important truth that I want to spend all my life proclaiming and people who get tired of listening to it I say go and listen to something else. But I've got nothing else to proclaim because I know this is the thing that will matter for all eternity.

And this is the thing I concentrate on every day of my life. And as a byproduct I serve the Lord out for you. But it comes out of, my service for the Lord is an overflow of my inward walk with the Lord.

It's not something by itself. My outward service will be valueless, worth nothing if it doesn't come out of an inward walk with the Lord. So that's why I keep on speaking about that inward walk.

Luke chapter 2 verse 40 says the grace of God was upon Jesus Christ. Think of grace being over Jesus all the time. Now that word grace is not found in the Old Testament.

The New Testament and the first human being who had grace over him all the time was Jesus Christ. Not John the Baptist, not Moses, not nobody. Now what happens when grace is over you? Turn to Romans 6 14 our favorite verse in CFC Romans chapter 6 and verse 14.

When grace is over you or when you're under grace sin cannot rule over you. It's like I'm under this roof. Let there be pouring rain outside.

Not one drop comes on me. I don't get wet because I'm under a roof. Grace is like that.

Temptation can come pouring like torrents of rain. I won't sin because I'm under grace. But if sometime I move out of the roof and go outside immediately I'm drenched and I fall into sin.

So think of grace as something that God wants to put over you all the time. But you have to ask for it. What did we read in Hebrews 4 16? Let us come to the throne of grace so that we can find grace to help us in our time of temptation.

That's the greatest thing I ask God for. Many of you may be asking God for promotion in your job or better house, better salary and more money and a hundred money and healing. It's a good thing to ask for.

I have nothing against praying for healing. It's good. We need healing.

We need healing for our children. Definitely. But top of the list is grace for me.

Even healing is number two. I need help to serve the Lord. Sure.

If I'm sick I'll always pray for healing. Definitely. But when Paul was sick, you know, the Lord told him, I'll give you grace.

I won't heal your sickness. It's an amazing thing what the Lord told Paul in 2 Corinthians 12. I won't heal your sickness but I'll give you grace.

Which means the grace was better than this healing. How many of you believe that grace can be better than healing? That's what the Lord told Paul. In your case.

Not in every case. In some cases healing is better. So that's the principle I follow.

Lord, when I'm sick I have an option. Grace or healing. You decide which is better for me.

You find grace is better for me. I don't want healing. Let me give me grace.

That's enough. But if you say healing is better than giving healing, I leave the choice to you. In Paul's case, the Lord said grace is enough.

So what I'm trying to say here is, when you're under grace, sin shall not rule over you. Sin, like the rain, cannot fall on me when I'm under this rule. It is impossible.

Not even one drop. Sin cannot overcome me when I'm under grace. And when it says Jesus was under grace, that's why he never sinned.

That's what the Holy Spirit showed me. The reason why Jesus never sinned was because he always sought to live under the grace of God. Luke 2.40, as a young child, he was under the grace of God.

And I said, Lord, I want the grace of God to be like a covering over me. All the time. All the time.

And sin will not be able to rule over me. That's a promise. Sin cannot rule you when you're under grace.

So I remember in past years, whenever I slipped up somewhere and some bad thought came or I lost my temper somewhere, I remember in the early years, long past, and I said, Lord, why did that happen? And he said, you were not under grace. That's all. That's why you slipped up there.

And then every time that happened, I'd repent. I'd say, Lord, I slipped up there. Why did that thought come to my mind? Why did that wrong attitude come in my heart towards that person? I was not under grace at that time.

Forgive me. I want to live under grace all the time. All the time.

And it's possible. Let me show you another verse. It says in Hebrews in chapter 13 and verse 9. Hebrews 13, verse 9. Don't be carried away by varied and strange teachings.

That's quite a verse. Don't be carried away by varied and strange teachings. So I want to try and read that verse to you in another translation.

Hebrews and chapter 13 and verse 9. Don't be attracted by strange new ideas. The Christian world is full of strange new ideas. Your spiritual strength comes from the grace of God.

And people have tried all these strange new ideas. It has not helped them one bit. Those who have tried it.

That's the meaning of the latter part of verse 9. Those who have tried those other methods, it has not helped them. All other methods to overcome sin, it has not helped them. The only way is the heart to be strengthened by grace.

In the time of temptation, if my heart is strengthened by grace, I'll overcome any other method. It did not benefit others. It will not benefit me.

So that's it. So when I discovered this, I said, Lord, I want to live under grace all the time. How do I do that? Then this is the other favorite verse we have in CFC 1 Peter 5 and verse 5. God gives grace to the humble.

So from the earliest time that I understood it, I put these two verses together. I can live under this roof called grace all the time in my life. If I remain in humility, that's why I often said the three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility, because then sin cannot rule over me.

And so if ever I slipped up in my thoughts or attitude or spoke a word that was unkind, I'd say, Lord, why did that happen? The Lord said, you were proud. That's all. No other reason.

There's no number two reason. There's only number one reason. You were proud.

I said, Lord, show me where I was proud. And the Lord showed me some situation, some situation where I compared myself with somebody else and thought I'm superior to them. Something or something I did and I felt very proud that I could do that.

Grace departed. Grace departed. Then next thing is I sin.

No, not in a visible way. People still think I'm overcoming because it's a sin in the thought or the attitude. You know, thoughts and attitudes are sins which other people don't see.

So I can still have a good testimony before people on the motive with which I did something. People don't see the motive. I can still have a good testimony before people.

You know, you can sin every day in your thoughts, in your attitudes towards other people and in the motive in which you do good things and yet have a wonderful testimony as such a saintly person. Rubbish. You're not saintly when you've got sinful thoughts or a sinful attitude towards another human being or when you are seeking your own honor and when you're doing something good.

No. That's not living before the face of men. And I said, Lord, how can I have that purity there? Humble yourself.

Humility is the great secret of the Christian life. So therefore, I learned that the way Jesus lived overcoming was by constantly taking the low route, humbling himself all the time. You know, that's the only thing he told us to learn from him.

Go into Matthew chapter 11. Matthew 11. Remember Matthew 11 verse 29.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. Lord, what should I learn from you? Learn two things, gentleness and humility. Thank you, Lord.

I'm not naturally gentle and I'm not naturally humble. I want to learn it. Can you imagine my dear brothers and sisters, some of you who are married? Imagine you, brother, husband, if you're always gentle and humble towards your wife.

And you, sister, if you're always gentle and humble towards your husband, can you imagine? Your home will be like heaven. Your home will be, forget all the other qualities. Just take these two.

Learn from me, gentleness and humility. God's not telling us to learn 25 things. There's too much in our mind to remember.

Gentleness and humility in every situation. Lord, I want to be gentle here. I want to be humble here.

And not a human understanding of gentleness and humility. Looking at Jesus, the gentleness and humility he had, he said, I am gentle and humble in my heart. I say, Lord, show me that.

When Jesus was a young boy, I spoke on this in the last RLCF conference. You were all there. When he was a young boy, he'd go to the rabbi in the synagogue and say, please read the scriptures for me.

Those of you who heard me at that conference, how you go every day to the rabbi and say, okay, can we start where we left off yesterday and read the next few verses? And he'd say, stop. That's enough. Let me meditate on that.

Yeah, I'm sure you were gripped when you heard it. In one week since the conference is over, have you practiced it? Or have you forgotten about it completely after the conference is over? How many of you have taken seriously what I said there, what Jesus did as a young boy to go to the scriptures every day? I think he started at the age of five or six. So that by the time he was 12, he knew the entire Old Testament so well that he could ask people questions.

So when we think of following Jesus and living an overcoming life, do you think he didn't have to deny himself, take up the cross to go every day to the rabbi and read the Bible when all the other children were playing something outside, some interesting game. He had to deny himself something and go. You ask a child who's, when everybody's playing some game outside and you ask your child to stop that and go somewhere and read the Bible.

Boy, he really had to deny himself. That's what Jesus did. I'm not saying playing games is, I'm sure Jesus played a lot of games, but he took time to deny himself some of that pleasure to go and spend a little time with the Bible.

And it's wonderful if our young children develop that habit. Let them play games as much as you like. Let them also spend a little time reading the Bible every day, a little bit, even if it's very little, one verse.

Sometimes I read just one verse. Even if they read one verse before they go to bed and while they're lying, the sleep doesn't come immediately. They can lie down and think about that verse before they go to sleep.

Think of that. If you can just read just one or two verses before you go to bed at night or meditate on something, that's how Jesus lived. And these are simple things.

Learn from me. For I am humble and gentle in heart. The other verse I want to show you is Hebrews chapter 12.

We're thinking of what Jesus said about taking up the cross every day and following Jesus. Okay. In Hebrews chapter 12, we read here, this is one of my favorite verses that I connected with Hebrews 11.

And this is how I introduced Hebrews 12. You've heard me, I think I probably mentioned it in the conference as well. Hebrews 11 is about all this wonderful miracles people did, pulling down the walls of Jericho, splitting the Red Sea and raising the dead and shutting the mouths of lions, all that.

After that, it says God has given us something better. Hebrews 11 40. I never get tired of repeating this because I found that people need to listen to something 10 times before it gets into their head.

Something better than pulling down the walls of Jericho, something better than splitting the Red Sea and something better than shutting the mouths of lions. What is it? It is following, looking unto Jesus, verse 2, Hebrews 12 2, and taking up the cross like he did for the joy set before him. The reason why Jesus took up the cross, one of the reasons was there was a joy set before him.

We'd be willing to struggle and go through many difficulties if at the end of it, there's a prize. These people who run the marathon and win the marathon in the Olympics, most of them are from Kenya. There's something about the constitution of people who grew up there, who live in that continent.

Those guys, I heard that for four years, they'd be preparing for the Olympics. Every morning, they'll get up and run that long distance, 26 miles or whatever it is, 40 kilometers. Imagine 26 miles running every morning and then they go to the Olympics and they win the prize.

They're very careful about what they eat, careful to get enough rest and keep fit. They run this race and they get the prize. There's a discipline in it.

It says here, and the joy set before them to get that gold medal in the Olympics. Jesus also had a joy set before him. There was a prize at the end of the race and that's why he kept on taking up the cross, taking up the cross like those guys run 26 miles every morning.

It was, what was the joy set before Jesus? Have you ever thought of that verse, Hebrews 12 verse 2? I'm sure all of you have read Hebrews 12 verse 2, sometime or the other in your life, many times. When you came to that verse that there was a joy set before him, did you stop and ask yourself, what was the joy that was set before him? You got to show me from scripture. I'll tell you.

In Hebrews 10 and verse 16, it says one of the things that happened on the cross was the veil was rent. You remember when it says, it says I think it's in John's gospel that when Jesus died the veil in the temple was rent, torn into two. There was a curtain called the veil between the holy place and the most holy place.

The most holy place was where God the father, his presence was there. But between the holy place where the priests could come and the most holy place where nobody could go, where God was, there was a thick curtain called the veil. And when Jesus died that veil was rent.

So the cross resulted in the renting of the veil so that Jesus said the way to the father's presence is open. Nobody could go and speak to the father in the Old Testament. Nobody could call him father.

They would have to be, oh, Jehovah, oh, holy God. I never called him Jehovah. I call him our father who art in heaven.

But you know where that way was opened up for me when Jesus died and the veil was rent. So the joy set before Jesus, he took up the cross because if I go through the veil every day of my life, I can be in the father's presence every day of my life. So that was the joy set before him because he turned to the psalms, turn with me to the psalms, the father's presence, psalm 16 verse 11.

In the father's presence is fullness of joy. That was the joy set before Jesus. If I take up the cross, that is rent the veil, I'll come into the father's presence.

Just like that Olympic runner, if I discipline myself every day, one day I'll get the gold medal. What is the price set before Jesus? The joy of being in the father's presence every single day. Now apply that to our life.

If I take up the cross every day, because we are told in Hebrews 10 and 16, there's a way that Jesus opened up for us through the veil. Through the veil, Hebrews 10 and verse 16, no, sorry, verse 20. He opened a way for us into the father's presence through the veil.

And if I walk that way, I will also come into the father's presence where I have joy all the time. In his presence, psalm 16, 11, there is fullness of joy. How do I get there? By renting the veil.

By the way of the rent way, let's put it like that. Not renting the Jesus already rented. The way of the rent way, which is the way of the cross.

And that's how Jesus lived every day of his life. When his four brothers and two sisters irritated him at home, he decided to go the way of the rent veil for the joy of the father's presence. It's a wonderful life.

I encourage all of you, my brothers, sisters to pursue this, seek it. I don't mind repeating this message again and again until Jesus comes. I have no new message.

I have only one message. Pick up the cross every day, enter into the father's presence, enjoy his presence every day of your life. And let that presence characterize your family life and your home.

It will bring heaven down into your home. Now, if that is already happening in your life, then I say you don't need this message. But I've discovered through the years that no matter how many times I preach it, people need to hear it again because heaven has not come down.

They're singing their song, heaven came down and glory fill my soul, but heaven has not come down. The atmosphere in many homes is not heavenly. There's still a little bit of that anger and bitterness and complaining and whatnot.

Is it possible to have an atmosphere of heaven in our home every day of our life? Is it possible for me to live myself in the presence of Jesus, the atmosphere of heaven inwardly every day? I say yes. I say yes. And if that means more to you than a million dollars, you will pursue it.

So the reason why I keep on repeating the same message again and again is because I tell you, my brother, sister, you will not regret it if you take this seriously in eternity. You will turn around and thank me in heaven for preaching this message again and again and again to you. So you'll never forget it.

Look at all the advertisements that are around us. They're telling us how to make a little more money and how to make a little more money and how you can get this cheap and get that other thing cheap and how this thing will help you. And the world is surrounded with such advertising.

Well, here's what I'm advertising, how you can live in the Father's presence every day. And if those guys can advertise all those perfumes and other things every day, why can't I advertise this every day? The joy of the Father's presence can be yours every day. I'm going to do it.

Till Jesus comes, I'll do it. Dear brothers and sisters, enter in and enjoy the Father's presence every day of your life. Let's bow our heads and pray.

So please think about what you heard today. And you probably heard that 15, 20, 30 times from me before. But maybe the Lord is reminding you of it again today because you need it.

And so the Lord is inviting you lovingly, saying, my dear son, my dear daughter, my dear child, I want you to come up higher. I don't want you to live with that low level of your life anymore. I want you to come up higher.

I want you to come into a life of constant rejoicing in me, the Lord says. It's possible for you, even though you may be defeated, and even though your home may not be like that, it can be different from now. Say, it doesn't matter if other members in your home are not believers.

Some of you may be living in homes where other members are not even born again. Boy, what an opportunity to manifest the life of Christ. Say, Lord, I want to draw people in my home to you, not by preaching, but by manifesting the life of Christ.

That they'll see something in me and come to me and say, how can I have this life? Heavenly Father, please help every one of us. We are needy people. We thank you, Holy Spirit of God, for your presence in our midst during this last one hour.

You have spoken to many hearts, Natalie. Please let everyone respond to your call, everyone who heard. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/je2fvNll5g.mp4>

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