

Freedom From Insecurity And Legalism

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding security in God's love to overcome sins rooted in insecurity, such as competition and comparison with others. It highlights the need to avoid seeking validation from others and instead find security in being a unique part of the body of Christ. The speaker warns against insecurity and the dangers of trying to prove oneself to others, urging listeners to find their identity and security in God alone.

Scripture: Jeremiah 15:19, Luke 16:12, Matthew 15:19, Psalm 25:14, Hebrews 8:11

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "Overcoming Insecurity"

Description

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Transcript

Brothers, let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we pray your name will be glorified as we sit in fellowship with you and with one another around your word. Give us a word according to the need of our hearts.

Please help us, help us to hear what you want us to know. Give us grace, in Jesus' name, Amen. One big secret of Jesus' life was he was perfectly secure in the love of his Heavenly Father.

And it's very important that all of us find our security there, because I realize that a lot of sins are because of insecurity. For example, competition with other believers, competition with other preachers, trying to show that you can preach better or your church is better or superior or any of these things are always due to feeling that I have to prove myself to others that I'm somebody. I've heard of psychiatrists speaking about a second child who is the younger brother or sister of a very smart, capable older brother or sister.

Supposing the eldest child, whether boy or girl, is very capable and smart and accomplishing things and the second person feels everybody admires my elder brother or elder sister. So he's insecure and he's tempted to prove himself and he can do some stupid things just to try and show that he's superior or just as good. That's what I mean by insecurity.

Now a child of God must never be insecure. You must never ever compare yourself with another brother, because God has made him a different part of the body and you a different part of the body. The eye is not superior to the nail.

Nail is also important. The nail can do things which an eye can never do. Each is a different function and once I find my security in the body of Christ, but every member has a function and my heavenly father decided which part of the body of Christ I should be.

Don't struggle to be like somebody else. In the early days I remember of CFC we had to tell people, I had to tell people, don't try to preach like me. First of all, you will not be able to do it.

You'll be a total failure and secondly, you will not fulfill what God wants you to be. If the ear is always trying to see and straining to see and see, it'll never see, but it won't even function as a ear and that is happening to many many believers. You remember the story of the man who had one talent, the others had ten and five, they did something with it, but no, the others produced ten, produced five, but this one man with one talent, he just buried it.

Why did he bury it? Or take the other place where one had five, another had two, another had one, I think it was pounds. So he compared himself with the person who had two and the person who had five. This is in Matthew 25.

He said, that guy's got two, that guy's got five. I've got only one. Well, I can't compete with them.

They are way ahead of me, so I bury it. No, if he was faithful, you remember the other parable where one man produced ten out of one. He could have produced ten.

So the moment you compare yourself with somebody, you're going to destroy your own ministry. You'll never be like him, but you'll destroy your own ministry. When Jesus said, follow me, he was not telling us to follow his ministry.

Nobody can follow Jesus' ministry. Nobody. First of all, he died for the sins of the world.

Who can do that? He rose from the dead. Who can do that? He healed everybody who could come to him, whom he wanted to heal. You can't do that.

There's some place where it says, great multitudes came and he healed all of them. That's not our calling. When he said, follow me, he said, follow me in my life.

When the apostle Paul said, follow me, he's not saying all of you must be apostles. No, it's in his life that we are to follow. So when you look at a man, a godly man or another brother, see if there's something in their life you can follow.

Don't worry about ministry. Ministry yours is special and each person's is special. You must understand this.

If all of you understand this, there'll be no competition. There'll be no jealousy. There'll be no trying to prove that I'm better than you or any such thing.

Our churches will be more peaceful. Nobody will be competing to show that I'm better than that elder or any such thing. And you will not feel insecure for trying to do anything to impress others.

I feel it's important to know that because if you have jealousy in your heart, you ask yourself why. It's you're trying to prove that you are equal to or better than those other people or you want to find acceptance with some senior, older, elder brother. You say you want to prove to him that you're also capable and you want him to give you some responsibility perhaps.

It's all absolute foolishness. So how shall we get rid of all insecurity? I think of an example. Supposing there are a family with three or four children, happy children, and the father and mother adopt one child, say a five-year-old child, adopt a child from an orphanage or something, and he joins these.

He'll always feel a bit insecure. And sometime in the middle of the night, you may find him sitting up in his bed. And if his father goes to him, it's what's wrong, son.

I'm afraid if I misbehave again, you'll throw me out of the house. I broke a plate yesterday and I was scared you'd throw me out of the house. Now those other four boys break bigger things, they're not scared.

Why is this person scared? Because he says, I'm not a real son. He knows that I was in an orphanage and God brought me here. This nice man brought me here.

He does everything for me that he does for the others. But I know I am not his son. So if I do something wrong, he'll throw me out or he'll say, I don't want any money and send me back to the orphanage.

That's what I mean by living in constant insecurity. That poor boy, if only he could know that the father has decided you are going to be exactly like my other sons, no difference. I will treat you like that.

I love you like that. But it's very difficult for him to believe that. How many of you can believe that if you have surrendered everything to the Lord, that is a big if.

If you have surrendered everything to the Lord and you have no desire to do anything on earth except the will of God. You have no desire or ambition on earth to make money or honor or anything. You just want to do God's will for you, whatever it is.

If that is true, it may not be true of all of you, but if it is true, then do you believe that God loves you exactly like he loved Jesus Christ and will do for you everything that he did for Jesus Christ when Jesus was on earth? I understood this truth about 16, 17 years after I was born again. It delivered me from insecurity. It delivered me from competition with other believers.

I remember listening to an audio message of mine, which was spoken before CFC's days. The truth was all correct. Everything I said, there was nothing wrong in what I taught or said.

But when I listened to it, I was saying, is this really me? It was so obvious when I heard, this is at least three, four years before CFC started. I listened to it and I said, boy, this guy is trying to impress everybody. I can say that.

Who is that? Me. I could make out from the what I was saying and how I was saying it. I was trying to impress.

It was in some message in some foreign country. I was trying to impress them. The message was clear, but I was insecure.

It was a big conference and I was invited as a special speaker. It was a great honor. I wanted to impress them.

I was only 32 years old at that time. In those days, I did not know that God loves me as he loved Jesus and he wants me to be myself. He doesn't want me to act like I'm more spiritual or more anointed.

It's all rubbish. Just be myself. Today, I can be myself and so it's easy.

But I want to tell you brothers, because many of you are young and you have a great desire. It's a great desire in man to impress people. You see little children trying to impress their father and mother.

You have to break free from that. Lord, I don't want to impress anybody in my church. I don't want to impress anybody with my message or some illustration that will excite them or you get excited that people quoted what you said somewhere.

Wow, they quoted me or you want to say something that people will quote. It all comes out of insecurity. So this is one thing we have to overcome.

I found in my life, the only way to overcome it is when God revealed to me one day, I love you as much as I love Jesus Christ, from John 17, 23. I call that the most important verse in the Bible for me, that God loves me exactly as he loved Jesus. The world should know that, he said, the last part of that verse.

But I'll tell you honestly, I cannot quote that verse to every believer. I used to do it. I used to tell believers, you must know that God loves you as he loved Jesus.

But it is not true because he spoke this to his disciples. He spoke this to 12 people who had given up job, given up everything to follow him. And here are some believers who will never forsake all those things to follow Jesus.

How can I tell them God loves you as he loved Jesus? To whom did God say it? For example, you always want to look at, when I say, when you see a promise, see if the check is written in your name. You got a check for 100,000 rupees. Ah, great, but it's not in your name.

Then what can you do with it? God loves you as he loved Jesus. Ah, but it's not for you, it's for somebody else. Are you a disciple? Then everything is yours.

Disciple means you have made it clear to Jesus that your father and mother will never come between you and him. You will never allow your father and mother to come between you and your wife. Why? Because God says a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.

Do you know how many Indian husbands listen to their parents more than they listen to their wives? I'm not saying listening, they make plans according to what daddy and mommy say. How in the world can you expect God to love you as he loved Jesus when you don't obey this simple command of scripture that you must leave your father and mother and cleave to your wife? Your wife is, your father and mother are more important to you than your wife. Well, then forget about it.

Don't imagine that God will do for you what he did for Jesus. He'll never do it because this is for disciples. And the first command in the Bible given for human beings is in Genesis 2, therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.

And you're not even doing the first command in the Bible. Like you say, my father and mother loved me so much, this wife of mine, I don't even know whether she loves me. That may be true, but the Bible still says you've got to leave your father and mother, cleave to your wife, otherwise you should not have got married.

If you don't want to leave your father and mother, my advice to you is don't get married. You have to emotionally be detached from your father and mother. And if you as an elder or a leader or even a youth leader among God's people cannot do that, what in the world are you going to teach other people about marriage? Because the number one problem of marriage in India is from parents.

The parents of the bride or the parents of the husband. And it's very important that your wife knows that she is first. But you may say, my wife is such a cunning person, she doesn't put me first.

She puts her father and mother above me. So what type of believer are you? If my wife disobeys God, I'll also disobey God. If your wife slaps you, you slap her back because she's disobeying God.

It's your principle of obedience. If my wife obeys, then I'll obey God. Then forget it.

Don't be a disciple. My obedience to God is not at all dependent on whether my wife obeys God or not. I don't care if she values her parents more than me.

She will suffer. I will not do that. See, when we got married, I told you, as I told you, we were so poor that we could not even rent a house.

And we were compelled out of poverty because I was serving the Lord and still working among very poor believers. We were compelled to stay with my parents and off and on, go in and out. But even though I lived in that house, not for a single day did I allow my parents to come between me and my wife.

There was no decision that my parents took. My wife and I took our decisions. I know other people who live 500 miles, kilometers away from their parents in a separate house, but still it's the parents who long distance control them.

And if you're like that, I want to say to you in Jesus name, this promise is not for you. God will not do for you what he did for Jesus. I have to tell you the truth.

It is for disciples. If you love your parents more than you love Jesus Christ, if you love your wife more than you love Jesus Christ, if you love your children more than you love Jesus Christ, you are not a disciple. If you love the opinion of your fellow believers more than you love Jesus Christ, you are not a disciple.

Then this promise is not for you. Just forget it. Forget about everything I'm saying.

It doesn't apply to you. The check is not in your name and you will always remain insecure. You're bound to remain insecure.

You can be the leader of your church for the next 20 years. You'll be an insecure elder and the anointing of God cannot be in your life as it can be. You will continue because you are an elder.

You'll continue. You can get up and say like some CFC elders say, nobody can remove me. I've heard CFC elders say that.

Sometimes I hear the messages that CFC elders are preaching in their churches. Sometimes somebody records it on a phone and sends it to me. I'm happy to listen to it because I want to know what are these people saying.

First of all, I hear them going on and on and on and on and on and on and on. I say, boy, when is this guy going to stop? Can you imagine how all these bored people are sitting there? And I say, what has this man heard for so many years in CFC? He must be brief. He must be to the point.

Don't put people to sleep and encourage others and build up others and challenge them. No. It's very, very sad, the standard of ministry and CFC elders.

And the reason is they're not disciples or they value some brother in the church more than somebody else. Partiality. If you love one person in the church more than another, I mean, if you're closer to that, that is understandable.

But if you're partial towards someone because he's your brother or your nephew or your brother-in-law or your son or brother, forget it. The check is not in your name. You will not.

God will not do for you what you love, what he did for Jesus. There must be no partiality. We must not be partial towards anyone in the church, whoever it is.

But we will be close to certain people. I will tell you honestly, in 45 years in Bangalore, I'm close to a few brothers. I'm close to three or four brothers, very close.

Even though there may be 500 people sitting there, I'm not close to them. I may visit some homes much more than I visit others. And my example is Jesus Christ, who was very close to Peter, James and John.

I may share things with two or three brothers that I don't share with others. That's not partiality. Why did Peter, why did Jesus, when he went up to the Mount of Transfiguration to meet Moses and Elijah, what a fantastic experience.

Don't you think all the disciples would have enjoyed to meet Moses and Elijah? Sure. But Jesus told the nine of them, you stay here. I can't take you.

He took three of them. And they would have come back and said, boy, Andrew, you know who we saw? Philip, we saw Moses and Elijah. Those other guys getting jealous, saying, why did Jesus take only these three? I'll tell you why.

They were closer to him in spirit. The others were not so close. Even today, Jesus is closer to some people here than he is to some others.

He's not equally close to all of us. I have to tell you the truth. That doesn't depend, he's not partial.

It's not because of your face or the color of your skin or language or education, nothing. It depends on the more you have sacrificed to be his and cut off other things, the more he is attached to you. And that's got nothing to do with the language or anything.

God knows everything in your hidden life, how serious you are about sin or how much you are willing to break away from everything or how much you never want to seek your own honor. He sees all that, he gets close to you. And the same way when they went to the, this is another passage I'm always impressed

by.

They go to the house of Jairus where there's this dead girl, Jairus' daughter, lying. It's a very interesting verse where the Bible says, Jesus pushed out people from the room. Andrew, Philip, please go.

Lord, we'd like to be here when you pray. No, no, no, you go. Go.

Thomas, go. Everyone? No, not everyone. I'll keep Peter, James, and John here to pray with me.

Lord, what about us? No, you go. And only Peter, James, and John are in the, how would you feel if you were like that and Jesus told you to go out of the room? He's going to be with Peter, James, and John. And he prays with them and they raise the dead and Peter comes out and James says, wow, you should have seen it.

Before our eyes this dead person came alive. Those guys full of jealousy. What's the use of being jealous? There's no partiality with the Lord.

He is closer to some people than others. There's a verse in the Old Testament which says in Psalm 25, 14, the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him and he will show them his purposes. Turn to that beautiful verse, Psalm 25, the secret or in the margin of my Bible the intimacy.

Intimacy means the closeness of the Lord. Closeness of the Lord is for those who fear him to them and he will make them know his covenant. He will reveal the new covenant, not that you heard Brother Zach preach on it and I know all the 14 points of the difference between old covenant and new covenant and you can give a big message on it.

I'm not talking about that. Even Satan can give a message on a new covenant. I'm talking about experiencing it.

He will show them his covenant. Those who fear him, those who reverence him, those who have a tremendous reverence. You know there are people who say we must show reverence for the Bible.

That means they say if you put the Bible along with other books on your shelf, the Bible must always be on top. Don't put other books on top of the Bible. Is that how you show your reverence for the Bible? No.

I show it by obeying it, not by making sure other books are not on top of it. Don't push it with your leg. That's not how you show reverence to the Bible.

It's by obedience to what is written in it. These are all substitutes. Put a nice Bible cover, show reverence for it.

Obey it man. I'd rather see a man with a torn Bible because he's used it so much than got a brand new cover. That's not how you show reverence.

Obedience, obedience, obedience. Studying it, studying it, studying it. You find God giving an anointing to another person.

Don't be jealous. There's a reason why. There's a reason why he took Peter, James and John and Gethsemane.

He again calls Peter, James and John. All of you stay there. I'm going to pray with these three.

All the time the same three. It was not sort of rotation. No three next time, you three next year.

No, no, no. Always the same three. You have to remember Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Today also he's got an intimate relationship with some people that he does not have with others. And it must be your longing to be in that inner circle. Today it is not limited to three.

Many, but the price you have to pay is the same. Christ must be everything to you. And he will reveal things to you.

He will show them his covenant. The secret of the Lord. The secrets.

He whispers his secrets in the ears. There are certain things you say publicly, but your secrets you will tell only to those you are very intimate with. I believe the Lord wants to reveal his secrets to us.

It's quite a different thing listening to Brother Zach explaining what he understood from the Lord. It's very different from knowing that yourself. When you get to personal touch with the Lord, it's an altogether different experience from hearing the same thing through somebody else.

It's when you get it from the Lord, you say, now I know. So many times I've said in a meeting, please remember my dear brothers that what you have heard from me is second hand. You did not get it from the Lord.

It's truth. It's accurate truth, but you got it from me. You must take that truth before the Lord and say, Lord, please convert this to first hand truth.

Where I now got it from him, but now I want to get it from you. I also got everything second hand. I'll tell you honestly, I got it from Paul.

I did not get it directly from the Lord. I got it from Peter. I got it from the New Testament, from different writers, but then I took that before the Lord.

What I learned from Paul and Peter and all in the New Testament, I took it before the Lord and said, Lord, make it personal now. So that I don't say, this is what Paul said or Peter said. No, this is what the Lord has told me.

It's clear. You must take all truth that you hear and ask the Lord to make it personal, direct contact with him, because the Lord wants us to have that type of relationship. Turn to Hebrews in chapter eight.

In Hebrews eight, it says in the new covenant, verse 11, this is the new covenant. Verse 10, this is the covenant I'll make. Verse 11, they shall not teach his fellow citizen and his brother saying, know the Lord.

No, Old Testament, it was like that. They will teach, you must know the Lord, but they will all know me personally. Who? The least, the one who was converted yesterday.

The person who was born again yesterday. That is the least. To the greatest, the person who was born again 70 years ago and the least person who was born again yesterday can know me personally.

All will know me. So you can have the privilege that Peter, James, and John had to be in that inner circle. You should long to be there.

Say, Lord, I want to be in that inner circle. You know, even in the Old Testament, if you've seen a picture of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of God in the Old Testament described in Exodus 25 to 40, you don't need to see a diagram. It's very simple.

It's a big compound. Something like the compound here, big compound wall that was covered with curtains. That was a tabernacle.

Inside that was a tent which had two sections, covered tent. The compound was called the outer court. So this is the outer court and then this is the tent.

This tent was divided into two with a curtain here. This is called Most Holy Place. That is called Holy Place.

So those are the three parts of the tabernacle, the outer court, Holy Place, and the curtain, and the Most Holy Place. And those are three levels of intimacy with God. There's only one gate.

You come in from there. You're born again. You've entered the company of God's people.

And what is there? There's an altar signifying Calvary, forgiveness of sins, and there's a washbasin signifying water baptism, water and blood. That's all. And some people are happy with that.

I'm born again. I'm inside the compound. I'm part of God's people.

I'm going to heaven when I die. My sins are all forgiven. I'm on my way to heaven.

There are people who sing that all their life. Many of them don't get there, but they keep singing it. But that is the first level of intimacy with God, where my sins are forgiven.

It's a very selfish way of living, because I'm only interested in going to heaven when I die. I want to make sure that I go to heaven when I die, and so I better confess all my sins and take baptism, and I'm ready to meet the Lord. But then there are some people who want more than that.

They're saying that there's more in the New Testament. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

And that is that Holy Place, that first section inside the In the Outer Court, there are thousands of people, all believers, having a wonderful time together in what they call fellowship, and singing, and praising, and listening to messages, and all that. Thousands and thousands of people. But in the Holy Place, this second section, are only those who got a desire to serve the Lord.

Do something for the Lord. I want to witness for the Lord. I want to do this.

I want to do that. I want to do something for the Lord, and thank God for such people. And they are seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's the sphere of service. In the Outer Court, it is only a sphere of what benefit can I get from God for myself. But then some people go beyond that to the spirit of service.

You know, there's a table of bread. There's incense, a prayer, and a lamp, all signifying being a witness, serving, serving, serving, serving, which is much better than just being on the outside and thinking of what I can get from God. So there are people who move from that first stage to the second stage of the Christian life.

But the third stage, the Most Holy Place, they could not go there in the Old Covenant. When Jesus died, this curtain was torn, and the way into the Most Holy Place was open. But through this way, it is called the way of the torn curtain.

That is the way of death to self. When the torn curtain was torn, Jesus was saying, all my life I died to myself. Now the way is open into the Father's presence, and I finally died for the sins of the world on Calvary.

Now in the Outer Court, there are thousands of believers of all types, and it's great to mingle with all of them. There are all types of Christians. In the Holy Place, this first section, are people who are zealous to serve the Lord.

That's another group of people. It's good to be with them. They are always talking about the Lord's work and what they're doing here.

But in the Most Holy Place, there's nobody. Only God. Only God.

And every person has to go alone. And if you get bored with being with God, you won't want to be there. If you say it's boring to just be with God, I want to be with the people.

I want to be with those who are always talking about the Lord's work and doing this, that, and the other. If I want to be out there, then you can't be in the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place is for those who want to be alone with God, for whom the presence of God is the most important thing in their life.

And they're quite happy if nobody else is there. Can you be alone with God, with nobody else, no fellowship with other believers, just alone with God? I've often thought of this. Supposing I am persecuted for my Christian faith and one day locked into a prison, solitary confinement in one room, no Bible, locked up because I'm preaching the gospel.

I sit there, not allowed to meet anybody. I will convert that into the Most Holy Place. I will be the most blessed.

All the jail guards will wonder, how is this guy so happy? Because God is there. Can you have that experience? Can you be alone, only with God? Or are you always wanting to be with some believer all the time? Do you think that's very spiritual to always be with some believer? You can be with believers if you have been with God first. Then you'll be a blessing to others.

The trouble with so many people who are always spending time with other believers is they never spend time with God. Then they are living from their soul. They can say a lot of clever things, they know the Bible so much, or they are clever, they've got nice thoughts.

The most effective sermons that you can preach are those that are born in the Most Holy Place with God. You get something from there. You may not preach it tomorrow.

You may preach it only after six months. It's okay. But it's coming out of a fellowship with God.

Are your sermons coming from there? I'm not against study. I've studied a lot in my younger days, more than all of you. I'm not against it.

I've read Christian books. If there was a book like this through the Bible commentary we have when I was young, I would have read it through many times because I was passionate to know the Bible. But I'm surprised that so many people who are in CFC churches haven't read it yet.

Are you really interested in knowing what is in the scriptures? So many people outside CFC have read it more than once. They go for a walk with the earphones and listen to it all the time. All that Jesus taught.

The churches in America for example, a couple of them anyway, where Santosh and Sandeep are leading, their weekly Bible study is through the Bible, all that Jesus taught, basic Christian teachings. They start with basic Christian teachings, those 72 messages of 15 minutes each. And then go to foundational truths, 28 half an hour messages.

And then all that Jesus taught, 80 half an hour messages. And then finally they finish all that through the Bible. And they listen to it during the week and then come together and share together.

And from what I hear it's really helping them to grow spiritually all the people in the church. These are not elders, these are ordinary brothers in the church. So what shall we say of CFC elders themselves who have never gone through all these studies? Is it because you know all of it? Is it because you know more than that? You'd be so eager if it was a professional thing, you'd take extra classes, tuition in order to complete those courses and get your degree.

Because you know if you get a degree you can get a higher salary. But here you don't get a higher salary by studying all these studies. No.

You can be a third rate elder preaching your boring messages and nobody will remove you. You don't have to study these books. It shows that you have no concern.

First of all for your walk with God and secondly for your flock. You have a burden. You know those churches they had a burden that they're young.

Not only the leaders must know these things, all the people must know these truths. That's why they went systematically through it. And there's a little book called Hero My Sons, which is there are people studying it with the young people in their church.

One page at a time or something like that. I'm not recommending my books. I always say brothers, I don't sell my books for profit.

You can read them online for zero price. And if you print it here you have to charge for it because then only we can print another edition. That's all.

And I say if you like I say if you find a better church than a CFC church in a town you must go to that church. Don't waste your time in that CFC church which is the second best in that town. Go to the best church in that town and if you find a better book than mine on any subject put my book aside and take that one.

Read it and tell me about it. I'd like to read it too. I'm always ready to read some anointed book written by somebody that will give me some revelation which I haven't got yet.

I haven't got all the revelation from heaven yet but when I read most Christian books I find nothing there. It's also shallow. When I listen to all these preachers on YouTube it's just excitement and American

emotionalism.

I'm not interested in that. So I'm not just promoting my books. I say find the best that you can and read it.

Study it and if you got a audio recorder or something listen to it when you're taking a walk somewhere or doing some physical exercise or something. I put a earphone and keep on listening to the Gospels again and again and again and again and the whole New Testament audio again and again and again while I do say 20-30 minutes of exercise every day. It's tremendous.

Use your time to get to know the Word of God. I've read the Bible many times but I still need to listen to it and I always get something new. You must be devoted to Jesus.

If you want if you're not willing to hear him you cannot lead other people there. When I was seeking the Lord as to Lord how can I be how can I have a word from you for the people all the time and you know I'm called frequently to share God's Word in different places. I'm not saying every message must be a new message.

Jesus preached the same message many times. You read some stories repeated in all four Gospels. It's okay and sometimes people have to listen to a truth 10 times before they understand it but I want to be able to hear God.

To me it's the most important thing in life. What is God saying and I hope you have a passion for that and I was seeking God for that and the Lord told me two things. Be careful with money and be careful with your mouth.

Only two things. If you want my word be careful with money and be careful with your mouth. The first was based on Luke chapter 16 and verse 12.

No verse 11. If you have not been faithful in the use of money who will give you the riches of God and his Word? You won't get it. Why don't you get the riches of God's Word? Because you're not faithful with money.

Why don't you get the riches of the anointing of the Holy Spirit? You're not faithful with money. Faithful with money is more than being righteous with money. Righteous is the minimum level.

We cannot be unrighteous with money. You don't cheat. No righteous with money means I don't owe anybody anything.

I paid all my taxes and if I borrowed I've returned or I told them as soon as possible I'll return it and I never earn any money unrighteously. That is righteousness with money. The next level is faithfulness with money.

Faithfulness means Lord even the money I have it's not mine. I can't use it as I like to go where I like spend it all because I have this I can go here go there buy this buy that all these types of unnecessary things just because they have it and they have it so I must also have it. Rubbish.

That is being unrighteous with money. It is your own money. You can do what you like with it but you're being not unrighteous you're being unfaithful with money.

You're absolutely righteous. You never borrow. You never steal.

You never do you earn everything is yours but you have the feeling that because I earned it this is mine. It's not yours. That's where you got it wrong.

You earned it but God helped you to earn it. It's God's. So it's not enough to be righteous with money that you clear your debts don't cheat anyone all that is good.

Being faithful means I recognize that everything I have is God's and I must be wise in the way I use it. I'm not saying you shouldn't buy should not buy an ice cream or have a nice curtain in your house. I'm not saying all that rubbish.

That is all legalism and all that type of stuff but I say we must be wise in the use of it. See for example you know we we don't preach that if you wear an ornament you cannot be in the church. If you wear a gold jewelry you can't be a part of the church.

We never teach that but we do teach yes sisters don't decorate yourself to show other people. Let your decoration be spiritual but in some cultures it is necessary for a woman to wear something to show that she's not a widow and so I say then follow that culture. There's nothing wrong in that.

I remember in one place in Maharashtra somewhere in the middle of India all the ladies there wear five or six gold bangles not gold sorry glass bangles. They cost about two rupees each. So the brother there once wrote to me brother can I baptize these people who are wearing these glass bangles total 12 rupees on each hand.

I said can you baptize a man who's got a watch which costs 300 rupees on one hand alone. What is this? If something is cultural there it is not the letter of the law. Don't disturb that culture.

I mean if they take off the bangles what will they those glass bangles 12 rupees on each hand what will those other people think? Are you trying to show that you're a widow or you don't care for your husband? No don't give the wrong impression to people. Go ahead and baptize them. It's the heart that God sees.

So in these things we have to be careful. So I don't mean that being faithful with money means you don't buy anything unnecessary or you get rid of all the curtains in your house and you don't get the newspaper or I'm not talking about stupid things like that. The second thing I mean being faithful and the other thing the Lord showed me was you cannot decide what another person needs.

One brother may be happy with a two bedroom, no with a two room house. One room where he sleeps and maybe a kitchen and another sitting room that's all. Even though he's got children they all stay in the same room.

Another person says God has given me more money I can have a two bedroom house or a three bedroom house. That's up to him to decide. You have to decide.

You know when you go to a place like America some houses will have four cars. You know why? The husband has to go to work with one car. If the wife has to go shopping there are no buses.

You'll have to buy get a taxi which would be very expensive. Cheaper to have your own car so that the wife can go to the grocery store or anything to buy vegetables. And if one of the children is working how can you go? There's no bus service coming to the house.

There's another car. So when you see four cars in your house you say boy what a luxurious living. It's not luxurious living.

Necessary. In a town like here where we have a lot of buses and autos and so many other things we don't need that. What the Lord showed me is don't decide for another person what he needs.

You decide for yourself what you need. Don't compare. I mean if you can manage with a scooter fine but he may need a car let him have one.

Don't judge other people. Very important. Don't get up and preach messages to make everybody come to your standard of living.

No. Your standard may be low and say no you guys why you want all this come to my level. I don't get newspapers in my house.

I don't have a car. Why do you need one? I'll tell you why he needs one because he's got a lot of things to do which you don't do. So sometimes we can be so legalistic in all these things and legalism will kill a church anywhere and I want to tell you the honest truth.

I have seen a lot of legalism in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and other places. Sisters who've been in the church for a long time will come and tell my wife sister this blouse does not fit with this saree. My wife tells me this is what they said.

I said if somebody told if I was a woman and they told me that I will wear that type of thing every day to irritate them every day. I love to irritate people who are legalists. Have you ever wondered why Jesus healed most people on the Sabbath day? Why do you read that every now and then? Why couldn't he do it on a Friday? There are seven days a week.

I used to think that he must be going to some sick man and say come to the synagogue on the Sabbath day I'll heal you. It's called the Ministry of Irritating Pharisees. Now don't try it if God doesn't call you to do it.

He has called me to do it. I have a great, it's almost like a lust to irritate Pharisees and I learned it from Jesus because that's the only way to expose them. Their legalism.

Look at these churches which say the sisters must come with white saree. I say you must come with a white heart not with a white saree. I don't care if you wear a colored saree.

I also had that period in my life. I remember the early days I used to always wear a white bush shirt and a white pant but you can't keep a white bush shirt white pant clean for too long. So it became very expensive.

So I switched to colored clothes. It was cheaper. But there's an idea in India particularly white is holy.

That is in heaven brother. They wear white clothes here. You can wear colored clothes.

Perfectly all right. And you say where does it say it in scripture? I'll show it to you in scripture. Jesus said see are you worried about dress? See how God has clothed the flowers.

What are the colors of the flowers? All white. It's rare to find a white flower. There's red, green and blue.

What all colors can you wear? All of them. Like the flowers. God clothes the flowers.

He clothes you. The amount of legalism there is in Christianity. There's a lot of it in different different it may not be the areas I'm talking about in other areas.

There's some crazy things. The Jews also had things like this. You shall not do any work on the sabbath day.

Can you eat an egg that the hen laid on the sabbath day? We had to argue about this. The hen laid an egg on the sabbath day. You mustn't touch it because that's the work the hen did and you cannot benefit from the somebody else.

You know you don't work. You can't get a gentile to come and work in your home on the sabbath day. He also must not work.

I've actually known of Jewish people in the United States. They'll get someone else to come and put on the switch in their house on the sabbath day. And they go into the house brother can you please come and put on the switch.

I'm not supposed to put on the switch. That's a work. You can laugh at that because that is not your legalism.

Your legalism may be in some other area. Ask God to show you light on your legalism. I'm giving you these examples to show you how they themselves don't have light on it.

We can look at it and laugh. But it's exactly how it is. I remember one saying in CFC Bangalore, this holy sister always wears white and comes to the meeting.

White sari, white blouse and at home she's yelling and shouting at her husband and gossiping about all the others in the church. Please, I don't want sisters like that. Give me a sister who wears jeans.

You know what jeans are? These pants that American women wear and with lipstick and with hair cut short. A sister like that with mascara, the black on the eyes and lipstick and rouge. Give me 10 sisters like that who never gossip against others, never fight with their husbands at home, who are always gracious in their speech, who are generous to help the poor people, who are always ready to help the needy.

Give me 10 sisters like that. Any day. More than these holy white dress sisters who gossip and backbite and don't submit to their husbands at home.

What is true Christianity? Is it all these external things? It is not. Be free from all these brothers, otherwise you will destroy your church. You can criticize those poor people who are dressed a little different from you or dressed a little different from the way you think a woman.

Modesty I fully believe in. A woman must dress modestly because that is tempting men. That is sin.

You must not dress in such a way that you tempt men. When a sister asked me, what should I dress? I said, dress in the way that you would dress if you're going for a walk with Jesus in the marketplace. If Jesus and you are going for a walk in the marketplace, how will you dress? That's the way you must dress every single time.

I don't have any other laws beyond that. So I'm talking about because there's so much of this legalism in dress in India in many churches and you must not get taken up with that. Very important.

So the first thing the Lord told me was be faithful with money and I was just explaining these are some extreme cases. I'm not saying you cannot eat an ice cream or something. I think if you offered Jesus an ice cream, he would eat it.

And he would probably buy one for you as well. So that's not legal. Not legal to avoid these things.

The other thing the Lord told me was be careful with your mouth. Money and your mouth. And that was from Jeremiah 15.

Jeremiah 15 and verse 19 where the Lord told me, this is the way you can become my mouth. In the English, in my margin, it says my mouth. I don't know how it is in your Tamil and Telugu translations.

But Jeremiah 15, 19 says you can become my mouth, God says, if you will separate the precious from the worthless in your conversation. That means when many thoughts come from your mind to speak, sift out what and speak only what is precious. You know, in the olden days when we could not afford to buy rice and wheat from the market, my wife and I got a ration card.

But sometimes we had to stand one hour in the queue in the ration shop because the rice was cheaper there, the wheat was cheaper there. So we would stand there for one hour and get the rationed wheat. But the rationed wheat is different from the wheat you buy in the market.

The wheat you buy in the market is all cleaned and you can straight away use it, you know. But the rationed wheat is cheap. There's a lot of stones and all types of things in it.

I mean, you know if you get it from the ration shop. So we had to get it and then we had to spend a lot of time sifting out. Well, we did it because it saved us money and we didn't have that much money to buy it from the general store.

So that is a picture in my mind. You don't eat that, there's stones in it, it'll break your teeth. So you throw away all the stones and make sure it's only wheat and then you make the chapati with it.

That's what it says here. Throw away the worthless things in your conversation. All the stones and the chaff and have the pure wheat.

We do that in cooking. And in India many times when you buy many things, vegetables, anything, you have to throw out things which are mixed with all that. Even in rice, you know, sometimes people deliberately put stones in it to increase the weight.

You learn some amazing things in India, what people do. It's becoming less now but there. So it's the same way in our conversation.

We must throw away all the things which are not godly. Certainly we must rebuke and correct because that's part of our ministry. But it must never be with evil intention and never because I want to hit that man over there whom I don't like.

So I preach against him. I've sometimes felt the devil can go to god and say I can make your servant preach a different message on Sunday. You speak to him lord, tell him to but the devil says I'll make him

change that message.

And what will the devil do? He will send some decorated lady into the church that day with a lot of gold and all that. And the preacher will suddenly start talking about ornaments. That's not what the lord told him to speak about.

The lord told him to speak something else. But he saw this lady coming in with all these ornaments and he changed the subject. The devil says to god, see I told you how I can make him change the subject.

You gave a message, you won't preach that. Or the devil sends somebody there whom he knows this chap does not like. Subject changes immediately.

God has told him to say something else. But the devil puts that fellow there and he sees that and now after that his sermon is directed at him. And the devil says that to god, you think it's difficult for me to make your preacher change the subject? Are you one of those people like that who change the subject because somebody is sitting there whom you don't like or somebody walks in and you're preaching at him? If Jesus was like that, every sermon of his would be, there's somebody here who's trying to betray me, I know that.

Every message will be like that. And he's always looking at Judas Iscariot and somebody here, I know I won't mention the name, but there's somebody here. How many messages did he preach like that? Not even one.

Learn from Jesus. Don't let the devil give you a sermon. That's what I'm saying.

I've heard sermons preached by CFC elders. They are trying to defend themselves. Again, that fellow who's been accusing me.

You go around accusing God's servants and they'll quote all the verses they've studied about accusing. Be careful with your mouth. The devil's given him that sermon, not God.

He's defending himself. Have you done it? Don't let the devil give you a message next time. Seek God and don't let the presence of certain people make you change the message.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to be wise. We have a great responsibility as your servants.

Please help us to have wisdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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