

Freedom From Selfishness

by Zac Poonen

True sanctification requires a selfless love for others, demonstrated by a willingness to sacrifice and give up everything for the sake of the gospel.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, John 1:18, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Sacrificial Living", "Selflessness"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the call for selfless individuals who prioritize God's work over personal needs, illustrating that true sanctification reflects God's nature of selflessness as demonstrated by Jesus. He points out that Jesus came to serve others, sacrificing His comforts and life for the salvation of humanity, and challenges believers to examine their own willingness to deny themselves for the benefit of others. Poonen critiques the tendency to criticize full-time workers without considering personal sacrifices and highlights that genuine holiness involves a commitment to sacrificial living, free from self-love. He urges the church to reflect on the lives of missionaries who exemplified this selfless love and warns against the deception of a holiness that does not lead to sacrifice.

Transcript

God is looking for men and women even today in our land, who will stand in the gap for the church - selfless people, who are not taken up with just their own needs, but who are concerned about God's work. Many believers think that sanctification means just the refinement of their personal conduct and behaviour. But true sanctification makes a person selfless like God is - or in other words, like Jesus.

No-one knew what God was like until Jesus came to earth, and explained Him (Jn.1:18). And what do we learn of the nature of God, when we look at Jesus? We see that the Divine nature is one that is willing to give up everything, and to be inconvenienced to any extent, if as a result, sinners can be saved from their sin and brought back to God.

Jesus did not come down from heaven because He wanted to gain something for Himself. No. He came to earth totally for the benefit of others. He lived for others. He fasted and prayed and gave Himself - all so that others might partake of God's salvation. It is this spirit that is so rare to find even among the leaders in the church today. Although many speak of partaking of God's nature, very few actually partake of this selfless love for others.

Many are willing to deny themselves and take up the cross if that will bring them some benefit - perhaps some spiritual benefit such as a place in the Bride of Christ finally - but still something for themselves. But if we were to ask ourselves, what we have denied ourselves solely for the benefit of others, we may discover that the answer is, 'Almost nothing'.

It is easy to criticise full-time Christian workers, when we see them fail somewhere. But before you criticise them, it may be good to ask yourself whether YOU would be willing, like them, to resign your job in order to preach the gospel to the heathen. If not, you are not qualified to criticise them. It is easy to despise others who don't have as much light as we have. But despite all the light that we have received, we may still be loving our comforts and unwilling to give up anything valuable for the Lord's sake.

Jesus gave up His place in heaven in order to come and live on this earth for 33-1/2 years, without any of the comforts of modern civilization - only so that others might hear the gospel and be saved. He also resigned His job as a carpenter, so that He might devote all His time to be a 'full-time worker' to preach the gospel to others.

It is this Spirit of Christ that has urged missionaries through the years, to suffer hardship and loss, so as to take the gospel to heathen lands, where the Name of Jesus had never been heard, to bring others to Christ. Those on the other hand, who travel and stay in 5-star comfort these days, and preach the gospel, are all tourists, by comparison.

It is good for us to read the biographies of saintly missionaries who gave up everything for the Lord, so that we too can be challenged by their sacrifice and their devotion to the Lord. A holiness that does not lead to a sacrificial life is a deception - for true holiness is not just being free from sin, but being free from Self-love too.

The fire of God does not fall on many today, because they have not placed everything on the altar. They are willing to give up everything for the Lord, except their jobs and their comforts. If anything on this earth is still valuable and precious to you, then you are not a disciple of Jesus.

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