

Gathering in Jesus Name (Tamil)

by Zac Poonen

Our destination is to become totally like Jesus Christ, and we must stir up the Holy Spirit's fire in us to become more like Him.

Duration: 1:00:27

Scripture: Proverbs 4:18, Daniel 4:33, Luke 12:13-15, Romans 8:29, Galatians 5:17, Philippians 3:13, 2 Timothy 1:6, Hebrews 12:1, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual progress and becoming more like Jesus Christ each year. It highlights the need to forget past accomplishments and focus on continuous growth in humility, service, and freedom from worldly desires. The key is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, allowing His fire to burn up all fleshly desires and to make our lives brighter and brighter like the light of dawn.

Transcript

Yesterday evening we were looking at the flaming sword in front of the tree of life and we saw that the sword is something that has to fall on us if we are to partake of this tree of life. The bible says in Proverbs 4 verse 18, this is how we know whether we are on the right track. Every sensible person who is on a journey will want to find out, am I going in the right direction.

God has given us a destination. I want to tell you, as I have said many times, that destination is not heaven. Why does God raise up another church when there are thousands of churches? To teach the things that are not being taught by others.

How many churches have you found in India that teach you that your destination is not heaven? That your destination is to become like Jesus Christ. And here it says how we can find out whether we are getting closer to that destination. Verse 18 of Proverbs 4, the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, the sun rising that becomes brighter and brighter until the full day.

For me, that is the clearest test. When we are born again, it is like the sun rising, we were in darkness till then. One day when Christ comes back, it will be like the sun in the noon day position with full brightness.

And if I am walking on the path of the righteous, not the path that people preach, the path that God has ordained for the righteous, my life will become like the sun, getting brighter and brighter until Jesus comes. That means next year, I will be humbler than I am today. Next year, I will be more willing to serve God's

people than I am today.

Next year, I will be more free from the love of money than I am today. Next year, my eyes will be purer than it is today. More and more like Jesus.

And then when we look back over our life and we have been believers for many years, we need to ask ourselves, have we become more and more like Christ every year? You are not going to become more like Christ next year, if you have not already become more like Christ compared to last year. You may be going in the wrong direction. And if you are less Christ like today, the chances are next year, you will be still less Christ like.

See Romans chapter 8 verse 29. Romans 8 verse 28 is very well known. All things work together for good to those who love God.

But many people don't understand what that good is. If they don't get a job, they say okay, God will make all things work together for good. Maybe next week, I will get a better job.

No, that's not the meaning of good. In the eyes of the world, good is a better job. You wanted to marry some pretty girl and she married somebody else.

Okay, all things will work together for good. Then God will help you to marry a more pretty girl. No.

He may let you marry an ugly girl. But who is a more spiritual girl. So we need to understand what good is in God's eyes.

It may not be a job with a better salary, it may be a job with a lesser salary, but where you will have more time to live for God. Where you don't have to compromise and tell lies. So when it says God is going to make everything work for our good, we must understand good not as the world understands it, but as God understands it.

When they say something better happened to me, it is something better from a worldly standpoint. In that case, you are a worldly person. But to understand that good, you must read the next verse.

The next verse tells us, the good is that we can be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That is the good. So what is the good towards which God is making everything work in my life? Not that I make more money or live in a better house, but that I will become more Christ like.

God is working all the circumstances to make my life brighter. So when it says in verse 31, if God is for me, who is against me? What does that mean? Does that mean God will help me win some court case? Or God will help me to crush my boss and become the boss in his place? No, no, no. God is not interested in all that.

When it says God is for me, who can be against me? It doesn't mean God will kill all my enemies. He may allow my enemies to kill me. That is what happened to the apostles.

The enemies of the apostles killed the apostles. The enemies of Jesus Christ killed Jesus Christ. We are not better than Jesus and the apostles.

So don't think that if God is for me, who can be against me? It means God will kill all my enemies. Then our mind is like an old testament mind. That is what Israel said.

God is for me, he will kill the Philistines. David said, if God is for me, he will kill Goliath. If God is for me, he will kill the Amorites.

Some people came to capture the prophet Elijah and God killed all of them. Some young men cursed Elijah because he was a bald man. Some bears came and ate them up.

But that doesn't happen today. When people called Jesus Beelzebub, no bears came and ate them up. There is a lot of difference between the new covenant and the old covenant.

In the new covenant, our enemies are Satan, demons and the lust in our flesh. Not all these Amorites and Philistines and all the people around us. That is what Jesus showed us.

He had no earthly enemies because he said, my kingdom is not of this world. If you have earthly enemies, if there are people on earth whom you don't like, your kingdom is of this world. When your kingdom becomes heavenly like Jesus Christ, you have zero earthly enemies.

Your enemies are all the demons of hell. Your enemies are all the lust in your flesh. You will never fight with a brother and you will never fight with an unbeliever.

You will never fight with your wife and you will never fight with your husband because you are in the new covenant. Jesus said in John 18.36, If my kingdom were of this world, my servants will fight. All people who fight against earthly people and for earthly things, they are not in the kingdom of God, they are in the kingdom of Israel.

They are not in the kingdom of God, they are in the kingdom of Israel. They are in the kingdom of this world. Jesus said, those whose kingdom is of this world, they fight.

And then they say, God come and help me. There are so many letters I get. Brother Zach, please pray that God will help me to win this court case.

Remember in Luke chapter 12, one man came to Jesus and said, my brother is not dividing the family property with me. He will be afraid of you Jesus, you go and speak to him. Jesus said, don't come to me with all this earthly property.

If you tell me that the devil has taken away something from your life and you want to get it back, I will help you. Not earthly property. If the devil has taken away your humility, I will fight for you.

But this earthly property, Jesus said, don't come to me. Go to Moses. So many believers go to Jesus for earthly things.

Lord, help me in my fight against my neighbor. My brother-in-law, my mother-in-law, my brother. Lord, smite them.

That is the clearest proof your kingdom is of this earth. And that is why your light is not getting brighter and brighter and brighter. Then the light becomes dimmer and dimmer and dimmer.

If you will decide today that I will never again fight with flesh and blood. I will never again fight for earthly things. God will give me what I need.

I will not fight for property. I will not fight with my parents or my wife's parents for earthly property. Let them take it.

God will give me what I need. I am preaching what I have practiced. Then you will find that though you may have less of this earth's goods, your light will become brighter and brighter.

So, when you think, if God is for me, who can be against me? Don't think of human enemies. Think of the devil and the demons. Think of the lusts in your flesh.

Which lust in my flesh can stand against me if God is for me? Anger may have ruled me for fifty years. But if God is for me, how can that anger stand against me? Many of you cannot overcome your anger because your enemies are human beings. You are fighting with human beings, you will never overcome these lusts in your flesh.

So many believers are afraid of the devil. I was also afraid of the devil once. As long as I fight with human beings, I will be afraid of the devil.

But when you stop fighting with human beings and say, I will never again fight with human beings, I will never again fight for earthly things, then you will have power to fight against the lusts in your flesh. You know this word in Joshua 1. It is an amazing word that God spoke to Joshua. Joshua 1 verse 5. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

In the Old Testament, it was man. Now it is sin. No sin will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.

I take it as a word for myself. I say, Lord you know my heart. I will never in my life fight against a human being.

I have no conflict with any brother, or sister, or wife, or brother-in-law, or mother-in-law, nobody. I have no interest in earthly property. Fulfill this promise in my life.

That no sin will be able to stand against me. No demon will be able to stand before me. Like the demons fled in front of Jesus, they will flee from me.

Do you want to live like that? Darkness will flee from front of me. And the light will become brighter and brighter and brighter. That is our inheritance.

That is the meaning of God is for me. So, in the context in Romans 8, God is for me means He is working everything for my good. If God is for me to make me like Jesus Christ through everything that happens, How can anything prevent me from becoming more Christ like every year? That is the meaning of Romans 8.31. I want to repeat that.

Because so many times people use that word in a wrong way. They think that God is for them to fight in their earthly enemies. First of all, Romans 8.29. There is a word there called predestination.

And in English it is very clear. That means the destination is determined beforehand. Pre means beforehand.

Destination means where you have to reach. So, it is like when you buy a ticket to go to Delhi. It is written on the ticket Delhi.

Then you get into a train to go to Delhi. And every hour your train is getting closer to Delhi. If you are finding you are going further away from Delhi, then you are in the wrong train.

So, in the same way, there is a destination as soon as we are born again, God gives us a ticket. I praise God for that. He gave me a ticket when I was born again.

This person has to reach this destination. It is free. Becoming totally like Jesus Christ.

You tell me, is there a better destination than that? That is better than going to heaven. Tell me, supposing you go to heaven and you still behave like you are behaving now, fighting and quarreling, what will heaven be like? Supposing your husband and wife reach heaven and there also you are fighting. Even if there are streets of gold and big houses, what is the use? That won't be heaven.

That will be hell. I don't want to go to heaven if everybody is fighting there. And if I go to heaven and I see one brother saying, I won't talk to that brother.

This sister says, I won't talk to that sister. You have these little groups in heaven, they won't talk to each other. I say, Lord, am I sleeping? Is this heaven or what? What sort of heaven is this where people don't talk to each other? Somebody has got a grudge and because of that grudge he has got sickness.

I say, Lord, is this earth or is it heaven? My destination is not heaven. My destination is becoming like Jesus Christ. I told the Lord once, Lord, if you make me like you and I can be with you, I am ready to be with you in hell with the burning fire for eternity.

Because if you are there, it will become heaven. Do you believe that heaven is the person of Jesus Christ? If I go to my house and my wife is not there, what is the use of living there? It is empty. See, the house becomes a home if your wife is there, your husband is there.

If I go to heaven and Jesus is not there, then I don't want to be there. To me, heaven is where Jesus is, that is heaven. If he can make me like Jesus and other people become like Jesus, that is heaven.

And that journey begins now. It is not that I stand still here and suddenly I become like Christ. The Bible says, we are in a race.

When you are born again, you come to the starting line of the race. Haven't you seen the race in the schools and all? All the children stand in a line and they blow the whistle and they start running. They don't stand there.

They have got a finishing line and they are running towards that full speed. Hebrews 12 verse 1 says, let us run this race looking unto Jesus, who also ran a race in front of us and he reached the throne of God, that is the finishing line. If I run the same race behind him, I will also reach the throne of God.

I will become like him. So, you know, these people who run the race, all the time they are getting closer and closer to the finishing line. That is how we know we are on the right track.

So, you need to check up every year. You don't have to check every day, but check at least once a year. Have I become more like Jesus Christ in the last one year? Now, if you were to decide that yourself, you may say yes.

Don't check it yourself. Ask your wife, tell me, am I behaving little more like Jesus Christ this year than last year? Then you will get the correct answer. You ask your children.

What do you think, daddy is behaving more like Jesus Christ this year? Mummy is behaving more like Jesus Christ this year, more patient, more kind? And then go to the church. Go and ask those brothers who don't like you. Don't ask the brothers who say Amma Swamy to you.

They won't give you the right answer. Go and ask somebody who doesn't like you. I am sure you all have somebody in your church who doesn't like you.

You know that. Go to that person. Brother, sister, I have one question.

Give me an honest answer. You saw me last year. Do you feel that I am little humbler this year? That I have shown a little more love to you this year than last year? He will give you a free scan of your true condition.

You know the hospital and all, you have to pay so much money to get a scan. This enemy gives you a free scan of your condition. Now you take that scan before God.

Say, Lord, there are some spots here and there. Something is wrong. If you do that, you will not fool yourself.

I am telling you seriously. I find so many believers and elders are living in a tremendous deception. You say, how do you know? I have been a believer for 50 years and I have got little bit of discernment.

I can look at a person's face and his eyes and I get a pretty good indication of their spiritual condition even without talking to them. If I talk to them for 5 minutes, I can know definitely their spiritual condition. I need that discernment because God has given me some responsibility.

I need it. Otherwise I will make a mess of God's work. That is why I say, the other person you can ask is, go to some really godly brother and ask him to tell you the truth.

That will be the most accurate scan. I say this for your own salvation. The best is to go to Jesus himself.

But sometimes we imagine we are going to Jesus and like the pharisee, we pray to ourselves. Do you know that even elder brothers in the new covenant may be ignorant of their true condition? See what it says in Revelation chapter 3. It is written to an elder in Laodicea. Verse 14.

To the leader, messenger, elder of the church in Laodicea. Doodhan means the messenger or elder. What does he say? The faithful and true witness is telling you this.

What is he saying? Verse 17 middle. You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Is it possible for an elder brother not to know his true condition? And much more for other people.

So God's will is that our life becomes brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter. So the first thing is to get an accurate understanding of our condition. The only way is to come into the light of God and say, God one way or the other show me my condition.

I will tell you honestly my testimony. There are many times I weep before God at night. I say Lord please do not let me be deceived.

I see so many elders deceived. I can also deceive myself. I am not better than them.

I have got a flesh just like them. Please do not let me be deceived. And do not let me be deceived because I have success in my ministry.

Do not let me be deceived because I see blessing in my ministry. Blessing in the ministry is not a test of purity in my life. Do I have victory over all sin? Do I have victory over complaining? Do I have victory over anger? Do I have victory over bitterness? Do I have victory over jealousy? Am I free from the love of money? Show me.

That is how I discover. Is my heart open to all the brothers and sisters? Not those who appreciate me, but everyone. That is the test.

Then I get light and I say Lord please do not tell me at the judgment seat of Christ. Tell me now. I cry out to God, do not tell me anything at the judgment seat of Christ which he will not tell me now.

I tell you when God sees I am serious and he does not answer me immediately. He waits till I cry out that prayer sometimes for months. Then he will know that I am really serious.

I say it once or twice, nothing happens. Because God wants to know if I am really serious. When he sees I am really serious, I want to know my true condition.

He will show me. He will show me by some circumstance. He will show me in a dream.

He will speak to me through some words. Always God will show me. Then I can repent.

I say Lord I do not want to end up like all these elders who did not know their true condition. Lord please pray this prayer wholeheartedly. And how shall I become more like Christ? I want to tell you there is only one way.

How shall my life become brighter and brighter and brighter? See every human fire dies down after sometime. You light a fire with wood and paper or whatever you put there. After sometime it goes down and down and down.

Human fire is like that. But if God baptizes us in the Holy Spirit's fire, that fire will become brighter and brighter and brighter. That is why this baptism in the Holy Spirit is very very important.

And not just once. But all the time. You know Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1. He says you must stir up this gift that is in you.

2 Timothy 1 verse 6. That gift is the Holy Spirit which you got through the laying on of my hands. Those apostles had a special grace given by God to lay hands on people that people will receive the Holy Spirit. Those apostles had a special grace given by God to lay hands on people that people will receive the Holy Spirit.

And Paul told Timothy I want you to keep kindling that afresh. Don't think it will be there automatically forever. You have to keep on stirring up that fire.

Put more fuel inside and fan it. Put more fuel inside and fan it. After 25 years of being a believer, Paul is telling Timothy keep on fanning that fire.

So it becomes brighter and brighter and brighter. And then it says in 1 Timothy 4.15. Take pains with these things so that your progress is evident to everybody. You got to be absorbed in these things.

So that other people see. Oh he is becoming more Christ like. Your progress must be evident to everybody around you.

Then we won't be deceived. So we should not be satisfied with our past accomplishments. So many times we look back and say ah God has used me to do so many things.

I want to say this word to all elder brothers here. Ok God has done something through you in your church or in some ministry you have done. Can you say what Paul said? Forgetting the things that are behind.

That means I imagine that I have done nothing for the Lord till today. What is the meaning of forgetting the things that are behind? I am reaching forth into the things that are before. I do that many times.

I say Lord I imagine that till today I have done zero for the Lord. Zero. I look back.

Zero. I have done nothing for the Lord till today. I am 70 years old and I have done nothing for the Lord.

I have got to do something. That is the meaning of forgetting the things that are behind. I would recommend that to all of you elder brothers.

Look back and see that you have done zero for the Lord. Look back and see you have not progressed in the spiritual life as much as you should have. Then you will make more progress in the next one year.

How many times the devil tries to remind us that you have done this for the Lord. You think the devil does not remind me? You have written books. You have done this.

I say get behind me Satan. Can you say get behind me Satan when he reminds you of what all you have done in your church for the Lord? He likes you to lie down on your bed and meditate on what you have accomplished for the Lord. That is the surest way to backslide.

That is the surest way not to make any progress in your life. If you want to press on be like Paul. Forgetting the things that are behind.

I stand up here today and I say Lord I do not even want to think of what I preached yesterday or the day before yesterday. No. I did not do anything.

Today is a new day. Forgetting the things that are behind even yesterday. That means if yesterday God used you to bring a tremendous revival, you have forgotten about it.

That is the main reason why many believers backslide. They do not forget the things that are behind. They are occupied.

So many years ago I got baptized in the Holy Spirit and I spoke in tongues and I prayed for some sick person and he got healed. I did this for the Lord and that for the Lord and the other thing for the Lord. You know what that leads to? Babylon.

Let me show you a verse in Daniel chapter 4. In Daniel chapter 4 we read of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. He got a warning from Daniel. You read that in Daniel 4.19-27. Daniel spoke to him and he told him in verse 27.

Oh king please listen to my advice. Break away from your sin. Humble yourself.

Do righteousness. Be merciful to poor people. Then there will be a prolonging of your prosperity.

Do you think Nebuchadnezzar listened? How many exhortations I have preached in many conferences, people do not listen. Twelve months later, verse 29, Nebuchadnezzar is walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. He has forgotten all about Daniel's warning and he looks around at this great city and he is not saying anything.

He is thinking. There is nobody with him there. He is alone.

He says the king reflected and he said this to himself. Is this not Babylon the great which I have built? By the might of my power and by the glory of my majesty. Do you know how many preachers and elder brothers say exactly the same thing in their mind? Do you know how many preachers and elder brothers say exactly the same thing in their mind? They look back over their ministry and they think what I have done for the Lord.

This and that. This brother appreciates me and that person appreciates me. They know that I am the man of God.

People in my church respect me. Babylon through and through Babylon. You are like Nebuchadnezzar.

Listen to the warning of Daniel. Break out from your sin and humble yourself. But because he did not listen, see what God did.

In that very moment, God took away his senses. In verse 33, he was driven from mankind and began to eat grass like cattle. Like the eagles, his feathers began to grow.

He became like an animal. I have seen in my lifetime, elder brothers instead of becoming like Jesus Christ, they have become like animals. Fighting.

There is a bone there and the dog will fight with the other dog. This is my bone. I have seen elders fighting like that.

They become like animals. Why did they become like animals? Because they began to think like Nebuchadnezzar. See what I have done for the Lord.

That can happen to any of you, my brothers and sisters. I have seen it happen to people who have brought up their children well. See how godly my children are.

Look at that brother. See how he has brought up his children. Then I see what happens to that family.

Struggle, strife. Parents against their children after a few years. God has allowed it.

Because like Nebuchadnezzar, such a man became proud. Instead of putting his face in the dust and giving glory to God, he took the glory to himself. I always tell people, dear brothers and sisters, if you see somebody else's children going astray, don't judge them.

Pray for them please. Especially if your children are doing well. You despise them.

Look at my children. Look at that person. You will be like Nebuchadnezzar.

You will end up like the animals. God is against the proud. If your children are God fearing, give the glory to God.

If God has blessed your ministry, give the glory to God. Say like Paul, I am nothing. I am nothing.

He who waters is nothing. He who plants is nothing. God is everything.

As God blessed you with prosperity in your job and you got a good house now, you started off as a poor person. I have seen that happen also. Poor poor brothers come and God blesses them and they do well.

They get a good job. They earn money. Build a nice house.

And they look, look what I have built. Of course, they put little bit of God's name also, God has blessed me. But when they say God has blessed me, God is in small letters and me is in big letters.

God has blessed me. The emphasis is on me. This is why the light does not become brighter and brighter and brighter.

Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Say Lord make it like a fire in my life. The fire that keeps on burning as soon as little pride comes, burns it up immediately.

Have you seen a burning fire? You put one paper inside. In 5 seconds there is no paper left. Ask God to put a fire like that in your life.

That little bit of pride comes into you because of something you did and in 5 seconds it is burnt up. It is gone. Little dirty thought comes into your mind and in 5 seconds it is burnt up.

But if you find pride remaining in your mind for a long time and you lust and it remains there for a number of minutes, it is like putting a paper into what you think is a fire. 5 minutes the paper is like that only. Then it was not a real fire, it was only a painted fire.

How can paper remain even 5 seconds in a real fire? How can lust keep on moving around in your mind if you are filled with the Holy Spirit? It will keep on burning up. It is not you trying to resist it. The Holy Spirit it says fights against the flesh.

Supposing a huge giant is coming against me and somebody bigger than him is on my side and I am not afraid. If 25 dogs are coming to fight against me and I have got a lion with me, I am not afraid of them. That is how it is.

It says in Galatians 5. It is a wonderful verse. Verse 17. The flesh sets its desire against the spirit and the spirit sets its desire against the flesh.

And these are in opposition to one another. It is like saying this lion is against these dogs. I have got to just get out of the way and tell the lion, go ahead and fight these dogs.

Because the spirit is against the flesh and these are in opposition to one another. And what is the result? It is very clear in the English. I cannot do what I want to do.

Isn't that wonderful? I want to lust but I cannot do it. Because the spirit comes and fights against the flesh. I want to love money but I cannot love money.

Or have you become deeper in it? That you are more free from the lusts of the eyes than you were one year ago. That other people can see you are a humbler servant of them this year than you were last year. That this year you are thinking less of all that you accomplished in the past.

That as time goes on you are trying to come to the place where your past you will think of zero. Be careful brothers and sisters. It's one of the great secrets of spiritual progress.

Philippians 3 and verse 13. Forgetting what lies behind. Now many times when we read that we like to think of forgetting all the sins that we have committed.

Yeah that also we must forget. But here Paul is talking about all that I accomplished I forget. Did I raise Eutychus from the dead? Eutychus who died.

I have forgotten about it. What is the proof that Paul forgot about it? He doesn't write about it in any of his letters. Can you imagine if you raised a dead man and you never write about it? All preachers will be talking about it everywhere they go.

Paul was caught up to the third heaven. How do I know it was true? Today also people say I went to heaven. I don't believe it's true.

How do I know Paul is true and today's people are not true? Because Paul said God has not permitted me to speak about what all happened there. Today people say I saw this person and that person and I talked to this person and that person. It's all nonsense.

No I don't believe they are telling lies. But they had a dream and in that dream they saw somebody and they talked about it. My father died about 27 years ago.

But even a few weeks ago I had a dream. I saw him. That happens to you also.

He was a born again Christian. Supposing I tell you about my dream like this. I went to heaven and I talked to my father.

That is another way of saying I had a dream. The honest way to say is I had a dream where I saw my father. But the spiritual way of saying is I had a vision.

God took me to heaven. I saw my father there and I spoke to him. Don't be deceived by all this.

Paul had such fantastic experiences but he never spoke about it. Because always he would forget. Look back.

I have done nothing for the Lord. I have got to do something. My life is finishing.

Another two years he does fantastic things. He looks back. I have done nothing for the Lord.

My brothers and sisters live like that. Forgetting the things that are behind. Lord fill me with the Holy Spirit.

Let the fire burn in me. Every year I must become brighter and brighter more like Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, it is so easy to forget what we hear. We are such forgetful creatures. Please keep on reminding us of what we hear.

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