

Giving Our Mind to Christ

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of surrendering our minds to Christ amidst the spiritual battle against worldly influences.

Duration: 59:24

Scripture: Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:23, Philippians 2:5, Colossians 3:2

Topics: "Mind"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not letting worldly desires and material possessions rule our lives. He encourages listeners to keep their focus on their ultimate destination, which is to become like Christ. The preacher highlights the need to surrender our bodies to God and not just go through the motions of prayer without genuine love and devotion. He also warns about the battle for our minds, as the devil seeks to control our thoughts through various means such as media and lies. The preacher calls for true worship and reverence towards God, rather than just seeking personal enjoyment in church gatherings.

Transcript

As we approach the end of time, the coming of the Lord draws near, we're going to see that the battle is going to be more and more for who is going to control your mind. The battle is for the mind and everything that we see around, you know, there's tremendous powers at work today to control our thinking. The Bible says, the devil is the ruler of this world.

So, he controls all the things in the world which can make you think in a certain way. He controls television, newspapers, cinemas, all the things by which he can put something into your mind, usually through the eyes and through the ears. Music that we hear gets into our mind, things that we read, things that we see.

So, as a Christian, if you're not going to be wise, you will unconsciously allow things to slip into your mind that over a period of time change your way of thinking. Maybe many years ago, you had really turned away from sin and the world and turned around. You know, repentance really means a change of mind.

That's the real meaning. In all our Indian language translations, that's translated more correctly. In English, we don't understand repent sufficiently.

A lot of people think repentance means you feel sorry. That's part of it. But the main part of repentance is not feeling sorry.

It's a change of mind. That means I was facing the world and sin and a different way of mind and then I turned around 180 degrees and my way of thinking changed. And if our turning around from sin and world and all is not 180 degrees, sort of 90 degrees or 130 degrees, we're not going to reach our destination.

It's going to take a long time to reach that destination if I'm going off at an angle. Of course, the devil's aim is to get most people to look in the other direction towards him and the world and the devil and sin and be anxious and fearful about a whole lot of things that are coming in the world. But where he finds that he has not succeeded in preventing a person from turning to Christ, then he will try his best to make sure that that turning is not 180 degrees away from sin and the world a little bit.

Or if a person was 180 degrees, once upon a time, he'll try and get him to shift back and say, we can't be so legalistic. It's a great word the devil uses. The Holy Spirit uses it too.

But you got to make sure who's telling you that. Is it the Holy Spirit or the devil? You think the Holy Spirit won't, you think the devil won't like you to be legalistic? The people who killed Jesus, who are not the sinners, but the legalists. And I believe that the people who killed the church today are the legalists.

The body of Christ, way back on Calvary, was crucified by legalists. And the body of Christ today is crucified by legalists. The worldly people like Pilate and Herod and all, they're not much bothered whether Jesus is killed or not.

So, the devil can try and say, don't be so legalistic. We've got to be a little more liberal and a little more broad-minded. And he uses nice words.

He won't use words like, we must be more worldly, because then you'll sort of wake up. No, no, no. He won't use such words.

He'll make you do something worldly by calling it broad-minded, large-hearted. If he says large-hearted, boy, he's got you. Because we all want to be large-hearted.

A lot of people in who, many Christians who say, we got to be large-hearted towards other people, and then you're not so careful about doctrines. So, remember the battle is for the mind. In 2nd Corinthians chapter 10, we read like this.

He speaks, you know, we emphasize often in the church, give your heart to Christ. We ask people, have you given your heart to Jesus? We ask children, ask Jesus to come into your heart. That is the easiest part of all.

I'll tell you what's more difficult. To give your thoughts to Christ, and to give your tongue to Christ, and your eyes, and your ears to Christ, that's much more difficult. Well, we don't hear much about that.

Have you ever heard anybody say, give your tongue to Christ? Or give your eyes to Christ? Or give your thoughts to Christ? No, it's always give your heart to Christ. What does that mean? You say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, that's it. But see what he says here.

He says, like everybody else in the world, verse 3, we walk in the flesh. That means I've still got a flesh, just like everybody else in the world, but we've got a war going on inside this flesh, which other people in

the world don't have. If you want your mind to belong to Christ, you must fight a war.

I'll tell you this, I've been a Christian 47, nearly 48 years now. I'm still fighting a war in my mind. Otherwise, I'll be a backslider.

If I stop fighting that war for one day, I'll be a backslider. He says, we war. But we don't war according to the flesh.

The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly weapons. He says, I don't go fighting with people for something earthly. No, I'm not interested in that.

Worldly people can do that. He says, our warfare is with spiritual weapons, powerful by God's power, for destroying fortresses. You know, like the walls of Jericho, in the olden days, cities were surrounded by a wall, and you had to destroy that.

You know, in India, you see some places, forts. And those fortresses must be destroyed before you can occupy all those soldiers and defeat them. Otherwise, they are inside the fortresses.

And where are these fortresses? These fortresses are in our mind. He says, therefore, we are destroying speculations. Speculations means all types of crooked philosophies that worldly people have.

You know, God must be like this, and this is like that, like that. People who don't go by clear teaching of Christ and the Apostles speculate. It could have been like this.

Worldly philosophies, we are tearing down everything that's lifted up against the knowledge of God. Jesus said, to know God is eternal life. And anything that comes between me and knowing God and Jesus Christ is a fortress, I've got to tear down.

And when we do this, we reject all these worldly philosophies, and we tear down everything that comes in the way of my knowing God and Jesus Christ personally, intimately. Then we can bring every thought, listen to this, every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. So think of your mind like a fortress, which has been constructed from your childhood, with all types of thoughts inside there.

And those thoughts that you got from childhood and that you grew up with from your childhood days and your youth, these are not good thoughts. They're not thoughts to glorify God and to live for Christ. They are basically, I would say, two types of thoughts.

You can say there are two generals, let's say, both fighting for the same devil, but occupying two different battalions inside our mind. One is called selfishness and the other is called pride. And all the thoughts that come into our mind from childhood, as we grow up, these soldiers keep multiplying in our fortress inside our mind.

Soldiers of selfishness. What is good for me? And keep on thinking the soldiers multiply. What is good for me? What's good for my family? I'm going to seek that.

I'm going to seek that. Is that good for me? Is religion good for me? Fine, I'll take that also. Is going to this particular church good for me? I'll take that also.

I mean, you think that fellow has come to your church because he's spiritually minded? No. It's the basic selfishness that brought him there, perhaps. We don't know.

I'm sure there are a lot of people who join a church for selfish reasons. Is good for me. Or, I think this is a good place we can bring up our children, because there are good children in this church.

So this is a good church to join. You think they're coming for the glory of God? A million miles away from the glory of God. It's a good place for our children to grow up.

I mean, which godless, atheistic parent doesn't want his children to grow up in a good way? Does anybody? We had examples of unconverted people who'd send their children to our Sunday school. But when they discovered that we were preaching discipleship, oh, they took them away. We don't want our children to become disciples of Jesus.

We want them to obey their parents and be well-behaved. All that. You think that's Christianity? That's culture.

That's civilization. The world of difference between being cultured and civilized and being a Christian. So, all these thoughts that we have, you know, we read newspapers and they're telling us, you can't live without buying this and you've got to buy that, you've got to buy the other thing, otherwise you can't live, and all that.

I always say, how did man live for 5,000 years without all this? It's a deception. The whole advertising world is controlled by the devil. And you see how much it has influenced your thinking, that so many Christians buy so many unnecessary things for their home, which they could have given for God's work and have got some treasure in heaven for eternity.

But the devil's robbed them of that by saying, no, no, no, don't give for God's work. No. God's got enough.

You just buy something for yourself. You can't live without this. You can't live without that.

You can't live without the other thing. It's selfishness that controls the way we buy things. And if you don't believe me, ask yourself honestly, on what principle do you buy clothes or... I'm talking about necessities.

I mean, most of us have got, I think about five or ten times the number of clothes we need, and we still keep accumulating them, because that's the latest style. And this is the latest style of shoes nowadays. And that's the latest style.

It's endless. And the devil will change the style next year, so that you spend some more money getting that, so that what suffers, God's work suffers. You don't think of giving to God, no.

And when you're in need, of course, we expect the good brothers and sisters to come and help us. It is utter selfishness. Because we've grown up with these selfish... these are fortresses.

We can come here and sing the most wonderful songs that Jesus is wonderful and magnificent and... it's all garbage. It's true. But for us, it's garbage, because it doesn't change our way of thinking.

If Jesus was really so wonderful, I'd probably be more devoted to Him. But if He's as wonderful as you say, you sing, you'd do a lot more for Him. You'd sacrifice a lot more for Him, and not just think of yourself all the time.

You see how the devil deceives us in our mind. He makes us religious and thinks we are spiritual. Now you've heard me speak on religiosity and spirituality for years.

I'll never stop speaking about it. Because I find that's the biggest problem with Christendom today. So here he says about bringing our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ.

That means we're going to get rid of these generals called selfishness and pride and we're going to have one general in our mind controlling all the soldiers. Christ. Every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

That's the meaning of conversion. They got converted from serving these old generals called selfishness and pride, and now they're listening to another general. Every fortress that has been built, they're going to be destroyed, so that every thought can be brought captive to the obedience of Christ.

You see, this is how we will become more like Christ. The whole purpose of our salvation. You know, there's a word called predestination in the Bible.

You know what destination is. There's no way you want to go. Predestination means you determine beforehand where you want to go.

I mean, we do it all the time when we travel. You don't get into a train wondering where to go. You bought the ticket 60 days earlier, or nowadays 90 days earlier.

You determine beforehand where you want to go. You get into a plane, you know where, you got a predestination. You got a ticket saying I'm going to go here.

And the Bible also speaks about predestination. Now a lot of Christians through the centuries have got into great arguments about this predestination. You have the Calvinists and the Armenians, you don't need to know about them.

It's all theological people who get degrees in Bible schools, you need to know about it. But they argue about did God predestine you to go to heaven? Or did you choose God? I say both are true. Because both are in the Bible.

But generally speaking you find Christians divided. One saying no this is true, the other saying that is true. To me it's like the left hand or right hand.

You know by the way the left hand and right hand are complete opposites. But I want both of them. So there's some truths in the Bible which look opposite like the left hand and right hand, but we need both of them to do our work.

We need both of them to be proper Christians. I'm not a favorite of the right hand or the left hand. I need both.

A lot of things I can't hold with just one hand. A lot of truths in Christianity you can't hold if you reject the sovereign election of God and also the free will of man. But predestination is not for heaven or hell.

God did predestine his children, but for what? I want you to turn to Romans 8 verse 29. Romans 8 29. Many people know this well-known verse Romans 8 28 that God makes everything work together for good to those who love him, to those who are called according to his purpose.

And in some translations it says God makes it work for the best. Now when God says something is best, we better agree. The best is not to have a better house or a better car or a better clothes or better anything

on this earth.

What is the best? The best is not even to go to heaven. The best is not forgiveness of sins. All these things are good.

I'm not saying they're bad. Forgiveness of sins, being baptized in the Holy Spirit, going to heaven, all excellent. But the best, God makes everything to work together for the best if we love him and we are called according to his purpose.

And what is his purpose? All that is described in the next verse. So if you know verse 28 without knowing verse 29, you're going to have all types of crazy ideas of what Romans 8:28 means. You'll think that God didn't allow you to get this job because he wants you to get a better job with double the salary.

No. Perhaps with half the salary. And he didn't allow you to marry this girl because he's going to allow you to marry a prettier girl.

No. A more spiritual girl. You may not be so pretty.

God's ways are not our ways. Most Christians think like worldly people. And that's why they never become spiritual.

Thoughts. To bring our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ in every area. How many people, when they consider marriage, think like God wants them to think? I want a spiritual girl.

Whether she's pretty or not is unimportant. A lot of believers who don't think like that. That's why they never become spiritual.

They won't become spiritual in a hundred years. They're not thinking in terms of the way God wants them to think. They're thinking just according to the worldly people with a little bit of Christian whitewash and Christian language.

But their basic thinking is like an enemy soldier who's putting on Christ's soldier's uniform. It's the most dangerous person. He's a spy in your army.

Religious language with worldly ways of thinking. Christendom is full of it. And if you look into your mind, you'll see a lot of these soldiers running around in your mind.

Wearing Christ's uniform. But they're enemy soldiers. They are thinking.

Those thoughts are exactly like a worldly person. They rejoice when they get a lot of money and not when they become more spiritual. Whose thoughts are that? Do you have such enemy soldiers lurking in your mind? But they put on Christ's uniform.

God has blessed me. What is the mark of God's blessing? That you got a little more money? Or that you became a little more like Jesus? Don't be fooled by these enemy soldiers who wear Christ's uniform. Religious language.

They are the biggest traitors in your mind. And they'll destroy you. It says here in Romans 8:29, whom he foreknew.

Did you know that God knew about you before the world was created? Ephesians 1.3 and 4 says He chose us in Christ before the world was created. Before Genesis 1.1, in the beginning God created heaven and earth. Go back before that.

And He knew about you and me. And He knew that someday in our life we would give our life to Christ. He knew that.

He said, okay, I'm going to put His name in the book of life. He chose us, 1 Peter 1 says, according to His foreknowledge. He didn't just pick names out of a hat and say, okay, this guy's going to heaven, this guy's going to hell.

God is not arbitrary. He doesn't draw lots. He's not running a lottery.

He's given man a free will and He knows beforehand how you're going to exercise that free will. And He decides, okay, you exercised your free will to choose Christ. Great.

I'll put your name in the book of life. When did you do that? He did that ages ago, before the worlds were created. But those whom He foreknew, He gave them a predestination.

That's the next word. So you understood foreknowledge. The next word there in Romans 8.29 is predestination.

That means when He put your name in the book of life, because He knew that you would accept Christ in 1995 or whatever, or 1959 or whatever it is, He decided, okay, I'm going to put His name in the book of life and I'm going to put a destination for Him. And for all of us, the destination is the same. And I want to surprise you that destination is not heaven.

Are you shocked? A lot of preachers have told you that destination is heaven. It is not heaven. Heaven is a sort of by-product.

You know, it's not the main meal. It's like the pickle or something like that. A small part of it.

What is the main meal? He's predestined you to become like Jesus. Now you tell me, once you understand the value of this, would you rather go to heaven or become like Jesus? If God gave you a choice, which would you choose? God says, I'll make you like Jesus, but you've got to go to hell. Or you can be like the devil himself and live in heaven comfortably.

Which would you choose? I know what I'd choose. I've even said that to the Lord. I said, Lord, I'm ready to go to hell if you're there and you'd make me like yourself.

Heat won't bother me. I'll tell you that the worms won't bother me if I become like Jesus. There are many Christians who have been burnt at the stake.

They've tasted hell there, the fires of hell. They were faithful to Jesus. There are many Christians who have been thrown into dungeons like Paul and they were bitten by worms and didn't bother them.

They were becoming like Jesus. The physical things don't bother us. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, if you want to allow your mind to be changed, then decide that the main goal of your life, destination, is the same as God's destination.

If you've got some other destination other than God's destination, or you want to get off somewhere earlier, it's like the train's going from here to Delhi and you get off at Hindupur or somewhere like that because there are exciting things there on the platform. Maybe people are falling down, being pushed down and all that. It's exciting and you get off there.

You'll never reach your destination. Or some other place, there's giving out free property and all that near that station. You'll get off.

You'll never reach God's destination. You've got to make sure, I'm not going to get off this train till I reach my destination. My ticket is to become like Christ.

There are a lot of interesting stops along the way, I know. I watch them and I move on. I'm going to get to my destination.

And if your destination is the same as God's, then there's some hope for you. Then you'll become like Christ more and more as each year goes by. So, let's get our destination right, to become like Christ.

Whether I'm rich or poor makes no difference. All of Jesus' apostles were all poor. Jesus himself was poor.

A lot of Old Testament people were rich, but in the New Testament there were a few guys like Philemon who were rich. There were some believers who were rich and they had a lot of problems. But generally speaking, most of the believers in the New Testament were poor.

So, it didn't bother them. The important thing was to become like Jesus. If God gives you money, take it.

Make it your servant. Keep it under your feet. Don't let it rule you.

But don't let it change your destination. Don't get excited so much by the station called money and get off there. Remember your destination.

Become like Christ. Pass by that station. Pick up whatever you can.

Keep your destination. I want to become like Christ. I want to get closer and closer to my destination.

I haven't reached there yet, but I want to get closer and closer every day. Once I get my destination right, then the Lord can do something with my mind. Now we turn to Romans 12.

Paul is very logical in his presentation of the Gospel. He says, first I'll tell you what the destination is, and then let me tell you how we can get there. Romans 12, he says, verse 2. First of all, he says, give your body to God.

That's important. Give your eyes, your tongue, everything to God. Then he says, give your mind to the Lord.

Don't be conformed to this world. In other words, if you read the whole verse, he says, don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Means, don't become like the world in your thinking, but become like Christ in your thinking.

Or as J.B. Phillips paraphrased it, don't let the world squeeze you into its mold. You know, we are pretty fluid type of people, and the mold you choose is the shape you're going to come out finally. You know, like they make plastics.

They pour molten plastic into a mold, and they let it dry, and it comes out that shape. And the world is always trying to, it's got a mold. If you get into that mold, you'll come out that shape.

You can sit in any church you like, but your shape will be the shape of the world in your mind. But if you make Christ the mold you want to be like, can you imagine if every preacher in the world made Jesus Christ his model, and his example, and said, that's the mold I want to preach like him. I want to have an attitude to money like he had.

I want to have an attitude to poor people like he had. I want to have an attitude to the world and to everything like he had. And that mold, can you imagine what would have happened to Christianity? But the devils fooled people by giving them words.

Religious words, spiritual words, but shaped in the mold of the world. So that's the meaning here. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold.

Just steer clear of that. But be transformed. Now how can I be transformed? By the renewing of our mind.

Notice the emphasis there also on the mind. How can I become more like Christ? It has to start in my mind. I have to change my way of thinking.

Where is worldliness? Worldliness is in the mind. Remember that my brothers and sisters. Throughout the centuries, Christians have put worldliness in the clothes you wear.

There are some churches that feel that Christians should not wear certain color clothes. Because in Revelation 17, the harlot Babylon is dressed in purple and red. Anybody who dresses with purple and red blouses or purple and red saris, Babylon, harlot.

I wish it were so easy to escape from Babylon. Just change the color of your clothes. It's not so easy.

I'm sorry to say it's not so easy. There's something in the mind. It's not in the clothes.

Because for a verse like that, where somebody quotes Revelation 17, I can quote another verse. Jesus said, God will clothe you because He clothes the flowers in the field. How many colors are there in the flowers? Only black and white? Only white? So I tell people, you can wear any color that you find in a flower.

Okay? Because God made the flowers and He said He'll clothe you like that. Don't get enslaved to worldly ideas. What would you think if I wear a golden colored shirt or a red shirt or a purple one when I come here? You think you suddenly become worldly? I wish it were so easy to be free from worldliness by just wearing a white shirt or something like that.

It's not. It's the mind. Religion has always put worldliness in the clothes.

Now I believe that worldliness can affect our clothes. There's no doubt about it. Have you noticed how you watch girls particularly, young girls watch the way television models dress, cinema stars dress? See, I want to dress like that.

The world has squeezed them into that mold. Who is their model? It's not young Mary. How do you think young Mary dressed when she was the mother of Jesus? I don't think God would have chosen her if she had made some worldly model.

I don't know whether they had models in those days, but whatever, some worldly person. If she was dressing, wanting to dress like that, I don't think God would ever have chosen her. Young 17, 18 year old girl, God looked all over Israel for someone who was godly, to be the mother of his son.

I remember one sister once came to me and said, how should I dress, Brother Zach? I said, I'm not going to make you rules. But I say, think of this. Supposing you were going, supposing Jesus was living on the next street and you were going to, he invited you to his home and said, we want to go for a walk.

We're going to walk down Commercial Street. I want to walk with him. And you go to meet Jesus in his house and you're going to walk with him down Commercial Street.

How will you dress? Dress like that all the time. Except when you don't want Jesus to come with you somewhere, say, Lord, please don't come here. I'm going somewhere for a party, so allow me to dress as I like.

Is there a party you want to go where Jesus is not going to be invited? But he's not, I mean, he may not be invited, but that you don't want him to come with you? You know how the world has squeezed the minds of Christians who got all the religious language, who are hypocrites. So I don't believe that, you know, for example, immodest dressing, the way all these worldly people dress, immodestly tight-fitting clothes and all. I can't imagine that you'd go to walk with Jesus with those type of clothes.

That's why Jesus is not with you. Because he's ashamed to walk with you when he sees the way you dress. Don't let Jesus be ashamed saying, I won't walk with you.

Change your clothes and come and I'll walk with you. I really believe that's what the Lord is saying to many Christian girls, change the way you dress and I'll walk with you. Unless you go alone, I won't give you leprosy or cancer or anything.

You'll be blessed, you'll make money, you'll become great, but I won't walk with you. And the moment the Lord says, I won't walk with you, I tell you, that is the biggest loss you can ever have on earth. I don't want to go to a place where Jesus won't come with me.

I don't want to ever live one single day of my life when Jesus won't come with me. I never get into this pulpit without Jesus coming with me. I would have nothing to say.

I know a lot of preachers get into the pulpit, not bothered whether Christ comes with them or not. Don't ever go to a place where you don't want Jesus to come with you. So worldliness can be in the dress, but it's not primarily in the dress, it's in the mind.

It's the mind that makes somebody copy that model or that film star. The mind is there. So you can, you know, in some churches they've seen, no, no, no, you can't wear this dress, just wear white or something like that and remove all your ornaments and be like this.

Okay, you got them to dress in some uniform, but you haven't changed their mind. The mind is still worldly. What's the use? Some of the most worldly people I met are people who wear white clothes and don't wear any ornaments.

They haven't got rid of the world. The world is in their mind. The devils fool them with the religion that's on the outside.

You know, a religion that some other people think religion is in our singing. You know, they go to some church, they sing so in a dull way. We've got to sing with great zeal and happiness, but you think worldliness goes away just because we sing some fantastic songs? All to Jesus I surrender.

A person can sing that and not surrender anything. He just told a whole lot of lies to God on Sunday morning. He went home and he's thoroughly worldly.

We've got to be very careful about the words we sing. I'll tell you why. Because if Jesus said the devil is the father of lies, I take that word very seriously, John 8, 44.

The devil is the father of lies. If I stand before God and say, All to Jesus I surrender my time, my money, my everything, and I don't mean it, I've told a lie. Who was the father of that lie? I said it in church.

The father of that lie was the devil and the mother was me. Or if I stand before God and say, Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. Take my voice and let me sing, always, only for my King.

Take my time, take my lips, and take my life, and take my heart. I don't mean it. Every word is a lie and the devil has produced so many children through me in a worship meeting, in a praise meeting.

Do you know the number of children the devil produces in praise meetings across the world on Sunday mornings? I think he produces more children through Christians on Sunday mornings than on any other day. Lies, lies, lies. But what do the people say? The people in the church who sing this 45 minutes of what they call praise and worship, it's not worship at all.

It's just a lot of happy, I mean, you could be singing rock music or whatever it is, they have a good time. It's just like those people who went to a rock concert and said, Boy, didn't we have a good time? The fellows who came from the rock concert say, and the people who came out of this so-called praise and worship time say, Didn't we have a good time of praise and worship? Didn't we? We, we, we. Notice the emphasis? Capital W-E.

Didn't we have a good time? They're not bothered whether, Oh, wasn't God worshipped today? Wasn't there a sense of reverence and awe? That's not what they think. The best song leader is the one who doesn't give people a good time, but who gives God a good time. Where God's presence, it's very difficult, I'll tell you, you can't do it if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

You can't do it if you don't fast and pray. You can't do it just because you've got a good singing voice. You've got to fear God.

You've got to be a worshipper in secret. You've got to bring the presence of God into a meeting where people have a sense of reverence and awe of God. And then they don't go away from the meeting thinking, We had a good time.

Boy, God was there. That's the best meeting, whether it's a sermon or the time of singing. God was there.

Jesus was there. He sensed his presence. I'll tell you, I've been in a lot of praise and singing meetings where Jesus wasn't there.

They had a good time. Wonderful. The beat was good.

Music was good. They swayed our bodies and clapped our hands. They had a good time.

Just like the rock music concert, they had a good time there too. Only ours was a little more religious. See, the devil has fooled people with what is spirituality.

Clothes, the type of singing, even good preaching. You know, some of you may come here and say, We get good sermons here. We like to listen to good sermons.

You think that makes you spiritual? The Bible says that Herod loved to listen to John the Baptist. That's written in Mark chapter 6. You can read it. Herod liked to listen to John the Baptist.

Do you know what it says two verses later? Herod liked to see Salome dancing in that bikinis or whatever she was wearing. He liked that also. He went straight from John the Baptist to this bikini-dressed Salome and he enjoyed both.

A lot of Christians like that. They'll come and listen to a powerful sermon and then go and watch some serial on television and enjoy both. They are exactly like Herod.

Are they spiritual? As spiritual as King Herod was. But the devil has fooled them. Songs make you spiritual.

You have a good time in the meeting. You listen to a good powerful preaching of John the Baptist. Why did Herod like to listen to John the Baptist? Because the Pharisees were all boring.

Herod would go to sleep listening to the Pharisees, but John the Baptist, you couldn't go to sleep when John the Baptist was preaching. He was fiery. Herod liked that.

This fellow was great. This Herod who looks so spiritual, then a few minutes later he's watching Salome dancing and he's excited. This girl is great too.

This is deception. To appreciate good preaching doesn't make you spiritual. To sing for 45 minutes and proudly praise God doesn't make you spiritual.

Changing your clothes and removing your ornaments doesn't make you spiritual. Then there are people who say we must fast. I believe in modest clothing.

I believe in good singing. I believe in good preaching. And I believe in fasting too.

But it won't make you spiritual. I tell you that. You can spend all night in prayer.

It won't make you spiritual. It's good. I remember when I was in the Navy I read that Jesus spent all night in prayer and I said okay I'm going to spend all night in prayer.

I was on a ship. So I decided I'm not going to sleep tonight. And 10 o'clock.

Pray, pray, pray, pray, pray. It's only 10.30. I was like running a marathon. I wasn't praying.

I wanted to accomplish a feat. And pray, pray, pray, pray. Okay, 11 o'clock.

When is morning coming? Finally I reached morning. I was on my knees the whole time. I never tried it again.

It is a feat you know. You can afterwards talk about it. I prayed all night.

I didn't pray. I stayed on all night looking at my watch every now and then. It wasn't prayer.

It wasn't love for Jesus. I mean when a boy and a girl say they love each other and sitting in a corner talking to each other and one is always looking at the watch. You know they don't love each other.

They love each other. They don't look at the watch. Is it time to go? No it's not time to go.

Six hours gone by. I thought it was five minutes. And you know they are in love with each other.

That's how it is. You know that's how it is when we really pray. That's why you never heard me talk about pray for long hours and all that.

It's like telling two people you love you must spend a lot of time talking to each other. You need to tell them. You don't need to tell them.

And if you're really in love with Jesus you don't need to tell someone you got to spend so many hours in prayer. No there's so much of religiosity which has fooled Christians what is true spirituality. You know why Jesus I mean I've said this before.

If you were planning as the father planned the earthly life of Jesus right from Bethlehem to Calvary and the resurrection. If you were planning the earthly life of Jesus. After 30 years which would be the first miracle you would make him do? Have you ever thought of that? I know if I were doing it I would have said the first miracle should be which one? The raising of Lazarus from the dead after three days.

Start with a really fantastic. Let's get a good start like a booster rocket. Jesus starts with producing extra wine for fellows who are already half drunk with wine.

It's not that they didn't have enough food. They had enough. They wanted a second round.

Is that the kind of miracle? You're a spiritual man. Son of God has come from heaven. Is that the kind of miracle you begin with? And to make how many it says there were six water pots and each of them contained many hundreds of liters of wine.

Many hundreds of liters of wine and how many people do you think there were at that wedding? It was in a house. You couldn't have more than 50 to 100 people. Imagine giving six liters of wine to somebody.

Is that a type of spiritual miracle? Why did Jesus start with that miracle? God says my ways are not your ways. You know why? He wanted to get rid of this religion that consisted of don't touch, don't taste, don't this, don't do this. That's Christianity is not there.

And I personally try to avoid drinking alcohol altogether because it's not good for me. And not only that, if I set a bad example for somebody else, it can make him a drunkard. And if he goes to hell, I'll be to blame.

Because I was the first person he saw me drinking a glass of beer or whiskey and I knew how to control myself and he didn't. And he went to hell. So I say, okay, I avoided that.

But I don't preach that if you drink a glass of wine, you've sinned. Somebody gives it to me in a house, I take it. He says, don't get drunk.

Jesus came to eliminate this religion that comes in appearing holy. You know how spiritual people are not supposed to eat too much. Somebody offers you a second helping, you say, no, thank you.

You're craving it like anything, but you want to appear spiritual. Because spiritual people don't take a second helping. But Jesus wasn't bothered.

They called him what? A gluttonous man. Lord, you have a second helping, would you like a third one? Sure, I like that. Give me that extra if nobody else wants it.

I like Jesus. I'm not a follower of John the Baptist eating locusts. I don't have a fancy for that type of food, really.

I'm a follower of Jesus Christ, I'll tell you that. A wine-bibber and a gluttonous man. But he wasn't fat because he fasted also for 40 days.

Follow the real Jesus, not just one side of it. The man who was called a gluttonous man knew how to fast for 40 days also. I believe he was very trim in his figure.

Of course, he was young. You can't expect older people to have that. But when he was young, I feel sorry for young people who are indisciplined in their eating.

But that's not religion, that's not Christianity. So all these, Jesus came to demolish that. Christianity is not all these externals.

You know, in the Old Testament there were certain laws about these things, but this is not. The important thing is your mind. You know, you're becoming like Christ.

You know, we can appreciate a person who's cultured, civilized, but who's utterly selfish. I think the cities are full of cultured, civilized people who know how to say, thank you, sorry, good morning, good evening, in all the right words, and selfish, utterly selfish, utterly proud. It's not Christianity.

Christianity is in the mind. Selfishness and pride. Now let me turn to Philippians in chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2. Notice what he says here.

Two things. First of all, I want you to see verse 5 and then we'll go back. Philippians 2.5. Have this attitude, or the King James Version says, have this mind in you which is in Christ Jesus.

Here's a word which says we must have exactly the same mind that Christ had. Exactly the same attitude. You know, you can take that one verse and live all your life with it.

You don't even need a Bible after that. If you want, if there's one verse you want to live by, I say here it is, if you're born again already. Have this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus.

You don't need anything else. You look at a woman and you're tempted to lust and you have the verse. Have this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus.

Look at her the way Jesus would look at her. You look at the opportunity to keep on making money and you have a verse. Have this attitude in you towards money which Jesus had.

You have somebody who hates the sight of you and is speaking evil about you, how should you look at him? Have this attitude in you towards him which was in Christ Jesus. You see somebody making money in the name of religion in the church? Have this attitude towards him which Jesus had towards him and he chased him out of the temple saying, get out of your palace, making my house a house of making money,

business. So, have this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus is the verse by which you can live your whole life.

And it's got to do with the mind. Attitude is in the mind. Have this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus.

Towards everything. That means I've got to change my way of thinking. And that is what the Holy Spirit has come to do.

Holy Spirit has come to change my whole way of thinking so that I become really spiritual. And we saw in Romans 12, that's how we become transformed into the likeness of Christ. See, I've heard now, we've been working in India and many churches for 30 years and it's given me the opportunity to observe the results of 30 years of listening to this preaching.

Why are the results not the same in all people? Why are all the patients not recovering as quickly as some recover quickly and some are still sick? Some are more sick than they were 30 years ago. How's that? There must be a reason. Why is it some listening to the same message become spiritual and the others don't become spiritual but just religious? And I've come to see because these people who are religious value certain things which are not most important.

I mean it's good to learn to say thank you and sorry and be cultured and etc. But to have the mind of Christ and the mind of Christ is here. The opposite of the mind of Christ is mentioned in verse 3. Selfishness and pride.

Don't do anything out of selfishness or pride. Don't do anything in your life which comes out of selfishness or comes out of pride. You know you talk to a person a certain way out of pride.

No. You do something in a certain situation out of selfishness. No.

Then how should we do it? In everything with humility of mind. Verse 3 sorry. With humility of mind towards other people.

Always be humble and verse 4 always look on the other person's interest also and not only your own interest. Don't look out for your own interest but also the interest of others. That is like Jesus.

When he was in heaven he didn't think of his own interest alone. Now I'm living here comfortably. All the angels are worshiping me.

This is a wonderful place, nice place to be in. I'd like to be here forever. No.

He said look at all those people who are suffering there, who are going to hell. Let me go down and think of their interests. That is spirituality.

There are people who are in good jobs, who could have lived comfortably with those good jobs but they thought of people who needed to hear the gospel in some place and say Lord do you want me to go there? I'm willing to give this up. I'm willing to go there. I won't make so much money.

I won't live so comfortably. I'll do whatever you want me to do. That's the thing that motivated many people who gave up their jobs to serve the Lord.

And they've done a tremendous job. Forget the hypocrites, forget the counterfeit pastors but there are many others, missionaries and others through the years. I want to ask you, have you ever thought of that yourself? Lord you've given me so much.

I mean even if you don't give up your job, forget giving up your job. That's a much higher level. But think of other people and say Lord they don't have what I have.

They haven't heard what I've heard. Instead of spending 10 rupees on an ice cream I could perhaps buy a book for 10 rupees and give it to them. Deny myself a little bit.

Do we think of that? That is to be free from selfishness. The way we speak to others. Do you ever make another person feel small? Jesus never did it.

It's humility of mind it says here. With humility in our mind. Where is humility? Humility is not stooping our shoulders and walking with crumpled clothes.

It's rubbish. It's in the mind. Where is unselfish love for others? In the mind.

Where does hospitality and generosity come from? In the mind. You know I have seen in India, the people in the villages, I mean your experience is too if you've been down to the remote villages. The people in the villages are extremely generous and unselfish people.

The more people live in the cities they become very selfish, very cultured but very selfish. Tight-fisted. The people in the villages give more for God's work than the people in the cities.

People in the cities are tight-fisted. They get money they keep it to themselves. They never become spiritual.

And I've seen in India in our churches that some of the most spiritual anointed people are coming up in the villages. Why not in the cities? Because of selfishness. You know people in the villages they've got some crude habits.

They will belch. You don't belch, right? Because you know the culture. They'll pick their nose.

You don't do that. But they are ten times more unselfish than you. They won't lose any marks in heaven for picking their nose or belching.

You lose a lot of marks for your tight-fistedness, miserliness and selfishness. And those people in the villages I've seen are so grateful whenever somebody does something to them. I mean even in our churches they're so grateful for medical help or spiritual help.

Extremely thankful. People in the cities have got a sort of arrogance and of course they expect that. They know how to nod their head to say thank you and sir and sorry and all that.

But pride and selfishness. My dear brothers and sisters, don't confuse culture and civilization with Christianity. We can be very cultured and very polished and go to hell.

Or be utterly unspiritual. If you're serious about your Christian life and I want to conclude with this speaking to those who are really serious about their Christian life at least from now on. Say Lord, I don't want to be a cultured, civilized person primarily.

I want to be a devoted Christian. I want to eliminate selfishness and pride from my way of thinking completely. Will you pray that prayer with me? Lord, I want to get rid of every little soldier there that has grown up for years from childhood which thinks of me first, my family first.

Which makes me a miser, which makes me not generous towards God, which doesn't make me rich towards God, makes me rich towards myself. And makes me haughty and think that I'm somebody. My dear brothers and sisters, you don't change, you're going to get a big surprise when Christ comes.

You may be left behind or if you get to heaven, you'll have regrets for eternity. I don't want. I've seen the root of what I got from Adam.

Adam infected me with the disease called selfishness and pride. Christ has come to remove them so that I can have the mind of Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2, the last verse, we have the mind of Christ.

I want to have that. I want to be able to say like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 and verse 16, we have the mind of Christ. Do you want that? You'll be the happiest person on the face of the earth.

You may not have so much money, you may not have so many friends, but you'll be the happiest person on the face of the earth and you'll really accomplish something with your life. This is flower heads for a moment before God. God has spoken to your heart.

I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, make some transactions with God today. Say, Lord, I want to take my Christian life seriously. I want to take the battle for my mind seriously.

I want to destroy these fortresses that have been built up from childhood. I want to have the attitude that Jesus had. Lord, deliver me from religiosity.

Deliver me from religious activities, religious words and culture and civilization. That's not what I seek. I want to be like Christ, like Jesus.

Help me, Lord. I don't want to let the world squeeze me into its mold. I confess it's happened, but it's not going to happen anymore.

I'm going to be different. I'm going to be different from the brothers and sisters around me. I'm not going to behave or dress like the other young brothers and sisters around me.

I don't judge them, but I don't want to be like them either. I want to be like Jesus. Lord, take me at my word.

I'm going to change from today. Help me. Dear brothers and sisters, I believe there are some who really prayed that prayer today.

I want to say to you in Jesus' name, the Lord has heard your prayer. He'll help you. Heavenly Father, set your seal on those who have cried out from their heart with earnestness, who are sick and tired of the way they've been living, who got light on themselves today and judged themselves.

Help them, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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