

God Is Full Of Compassion Towards Us

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of drawing closer to God, focusing on the need to see Jesus in every page of scripture, experience the fullness of joy in God's presence, and have a heart that burns for Him. It highlights the significance of decreasing self to let Christ increase, seeking the welfare and spiritual growth of others, and having compassion without compromising convictions.

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Scripture: John 3:30, Luke 24:32, Psalms 16:11, Philippians 2:20, Hebrews 12:2, Philippians 2:3, John 3:30, Psalms 16:9, Philippians 2:20

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Description

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Transcript

When we come to the Lord, are you able to hear me? Yes. Okay. When we come to the Lord, there are certain things that we have to bear in mind.

One is that, you know, even though Jesus spent so much time with the, with his disciples and assured them of his love, yet they seem to have a doubt as to whether the father loved them in the same way. And he had to tell them a number of times in the, in John chapter 14, 15, and 16, a number of places, he says how my father will love the one who loves me. Verse 23, John 14, 23, anyone loves me, he'll keep my word and my father will love him.

And we will come to him and make our abode with him. And a number of times there, if you read it, you'll find that he's emphasizing how much the father loves his disciples. And I know that concludes with that great verse in John 17, 23, that the world may know that you sent me, Jesus said, and love them even as you have loved me.

That's not easy to believe. And we can know it theoretically. Yes, the father loves me like he loved Jesus.

But if you meditate a little bit on that, it's, it's an amazing truth. I consider it to be the greatest truth that I've discovered in the Bible. There's one truth I believe is the most important truth that changed my life.

It was to discover one day, more than 40 years ago, that my heavenly father loves me exactly like he loved Jesus. I mean, I knew that when I was first converted, God so loved the world that he gave his only son and everyone knows that. But to see it personally, each one of you, my dear brothers, if you can see it personally and as if there's nobody else in the world, you're the only one to believe that my heavenly father loves me just like he loved Jesus.

And then when you think of the father's love for us, we are immediately aware of, I mean, if any one of us are sensitive to following the Lord, they're immediately aware of all our limitations and how we are so imperfect. And then I think of that verse in Psalm 103, there's another verse that you must remember. Psalm 103, this is even in the old covenant.

Just as a father, John, Psalm 103 and verse 13, just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on all those who fear or reverence him. And I believe all of you do reverence him. That my heavenly father has compassion.

Compassion is something more than love. It's the love for someone who is very weak. For example, if you have a child that is challenged physically and can't do much for itself or in any other way limited, how will you have a compassion on that child more than all your other children? Because that child is so helpless and I have to help him, I have to help him.

The others can take care of themselves. And I love to think that my heavenly father looks at me like that. One who is more limited and has many handicaps compared to others of his children.

Therefore, he has a special compassion on me. I don't believe it's wrong to feel like that. Every one of us should feel like that.

That's how he cares for us. It's important to remember that because otherwise the devil will harass us, saying, look at this weakness in you and look at that weakness in you and how in the world can God love you? Then think of a father in a family where one child is severely mentally, physically challenged and is unable to even sense that he's doing anything wrong. Stumbling and knocking things over and breaking plates and glasses.

And how does a father look at that child? And it's wonderful to think of that. That's the word compassion. Compassion.

It's a special word, especially for people like us who have failed so much in our life, in the past and even now in our struggles to walk as Jesus walked and to please him or even to build this church. We find such tremendous limitation and feel that we have not done it perfectly. I mean, I feel like that after more than 50 years of serving the Lord.

I feel it's, if I were to live my life again, Lord, I could have done it so much better. So there's a regret that I haven't done it as well as I could have. Really, I feel like a retarded child.

And so I'm very thankful that I have a father who has compassion on me, and if all the others of his children are doing well and I'm sort of the one who's a little more limited and struggling, he cares for me. And that's very important to recognize that. I don't see that the Bible ever says that the father had compassion on Jesus.

He loved Jesus, but compassion on Jesus, what does it mean for that? He was so perfect. Compassion is for people like me. And the father has compassion on me because I reverence him.

Psalms 103, verse 13, my dear brothers, please don't forget this verse. Just like John 17, 23, the father loves you as you love Jesus. Please remember this also that the father has compassion on his children.

It's a great word. In Isaiah 49 also, we read this, that is as a father, but God is also like a mother. And here it speaks in Isaiah 49 that God is like a mother.

People don't sometimes realize that, you know, because there's a special care that mothers have for their children. You know how when a little baby cries, usually the dad doesn't have a clue what it is for, but a mother is so sensitive to that child's need. And here it says in Isaiah 49 and verse 15, can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion? Again, it's that same word, compassion on the son of her womb.

Even they may forget, but I will not forget you. I cannot imagine a loving mother, think of the best mother in the whole world, and has got a newborn child. Can you imagine that mother not having compassion and being willing to suffer anything, sacrifice anything for the sake of that child, even risk her life to help that child.

And God says, our father says, even that mother may forget. Imagine such a loving, the most loving mother in the world, completely forgetting about her newborn baby. That's impossible.

And our father says, even she may forget, but I will not forget you. I will not forget you. My dear brothers, please take that personally.

Sometimes, you know, the devil tries to tell us, oh, who do you think you are? That your father is going to think about you. Think of all the blunders you've made, the stupid things you do, and you're still struggling in so many areas. I say, that's okay.

I'm a newborn child. I stumble, I dirty my diapers, and I don't know, I can't feed myself. I can't do anything.

But I have a heavenly father who's like a father and mother combined. Compassion as a father and compassion as a mother on me, a poor child who's not doing evil, but wanting to please him, but never really succeeding perfectly. I always feel like that.

And I really want to please the Lord, but I don't feel I'm perfect. I feel like the apostle Paul says, I'm not perfect, but I'm pressing on to perfection. And I don't condemn myself about the past.

I forget the things that are behind. I forget any progress I've made, and I press toward the mark to become more like Jesus. And in doing this, it's also important to remember that we're not accepted by God because he sees us struggling to please him.

No. I will always remember that I'm accepted by my father because I'm in Christ. That's it.

Christ has been made to me righteousness. That's another very important verse, 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 30, that Jesus himself has become my righteousness. It's not that I'm clothed with a dress called the righteousness of Christ.

It's good to think of it like that, but this is even more. It's Christ himself. It's not some virtue of Christ like righteousness that becomes mine.

It's Jesus himself. Jesus himself in me, he is my righteousness. And as I approach the father, he looks at me as he looks at Jesus.

It's almost unbelievable to believe that. People can think we are arrogant to think like that. And I know that in worldly Christians, they believe that in a wrong way in the sense that they're so careless in their life, they live in sin, and they say, oh, I'm accepted in Christ.

So they've got one truth. They're accepting Christ. Actually, they're not.

They're living in sin. And I can have fellowship with the father only if I walk in the light. But I don't believe it's like that with you brothers.

I believe all of you are seeking, really seeking to walk in the light. To walk in the light does not mean perfection. That's another thing which I want to clarify.

I mentioned it many times, but I never stopped mentioning it, that to walk in the light does not mean that we are perfect. It means we are honest. 1 John chapter 1 and verse 7. If we walk in the light as God himself is in the light, speaking about the father here, remember, as the father, God the father is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, with God first, and then with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his son.

That makes it obvious. The verse is referring to the father. If we walk in the light as a father is in the light, we have fellowship with one another vertically and horizontally.

And I'm walking in the light, and you think that walking in the light means I'm perfect. Far from it. While I'm walking in the light, I have sin that needs to be cleansed in verse 7, it says.

So if walking in the light means total freedom from sin, where is the need for the blood of Jesus? It's the one who walks in the light who needs the blood of Jesus. So the first requirement for forgiveness of sins is not confessing it. That comes in verse 9. It's walking in the light.

It's being absolutely honest. And when I'm absolutely honest, I realize that there are imperfections in me that I'm not even aware of. And I thank God that the blood of Jesus cleanses me from unconscious sin, and to the best I'm honest, I'm walking in the light, to the best of my knowledge, I'm seeking to please the Lord, but yet there's unconscious sin in me.

There's a recognition that I've not become like Jesus. I believe every one of you brothers will acknowledge that. But you know, when there's unconscious sin in us, it makes us imperfect.

We cannot approach our Father, but the blood of Jesus takes care of that. If you're honest and walk in the light, the blood of Jesus takes care of the fact that your unconscious sin is wiped out. And then 1 John 1.9 speaks of conscious sin.

We confess our sins. Things that I know that I've done wrong, that I have to confess, the things that I don't know, but I'm seeking to walk with the Lord honestly, that's taken care of in 1 John 1.7. So there's a cleansing of conscious and unconscious sin, and that's what makes us bold before our Heavenly Father and makes us realize the truth of these amazing words in 1 John 4.17. This is an amazing word. It gripped

my heart so much, we wrote it on a big wooden board and put it up in our church in Bangalore, 1 John 4.17. For all those who've come there to see, if you're really committed yourself to the Lord, and if Christ is Lord of your life, and you're honest and walking to the best of your knowledge, free from conscious sin, this last part of verse 17 says, as Jesus is, so also are we in this world.

Do you believe that, my brothers? It gives us great boldness in prayer. You know that if ever Jesus went to the Father in prayer, the doors were open. The Father picked up the phone immediately.

Jesus is speaking. He was there. He'd go to prayer in the wilderness, and the Father would say, yes, I want to hear you.

I want to believe that, that when I come to the Father in prayer, he says, yes, my son, I want to hear you. Because why? Because as Jesus is today and acts as to the Father, so am I in this world. I'm spiritually, as the Bible says, I've been raised up with Christ and seated in the heavenly places.

And so as he is, so am I in this world. This is the word that gave me tremendous boldness towards Satan, so that the fear of Satan was completely removed from my heart. Absolutely no fear of Satan.

You know, the Lord gave me some amazing dreams of scorpions and snakes crawling over my body and wouldn't disturb me. It didn't disturb my sleep, didn't make me wake up. It just was amazing.

It couldn't do anything to me. Jesus speaks about serpents and scorpions as pictures of Satan. And because the devil was scared of Jesus.

And I remember the Lord telling me at that time, and I got understood by this, as you were afraid of Satan at one time, now Satan will be afraid of you. But is that a very bold statement to make? No, it's based on this verse. Was Jesus afraid of the devil or was the devil afraid of Jesus? We know what it was.

Satan was afraid of Jesus. And as he is, so am I in the world. Say that my brothers, boldly.

That will give us tremendous boldness when we come before the Father in prayer. I don't have to feel condemned. I remember the years I lived in condemnation because I didn't have any teaching in the church I was in that told me that condemnation is as bad as sin is.

Self-condemnation is as bad as committing adultery. If I'd gone and committed adultery, I would have felt convicted. But when I condemned myself, I didn't feel so convicted.

But I didn't feel that was such a bad thing. I thought it was a mark of garbage. To condemn yourself is not humility.

It's committing adultery. It's dishonoring God. It's telling God you're a liar.

I condemn myself. I'm telling God to his face, God, you're an absolute liar. I can't believe you.

It's worse than adultery. There is no condemnation, Romans 8.1, to those who are in Christ Jesus. You say, well, you know, people would say, Brother Zach, if you preach such things, that people are going to take advantage of that and go and live in sin, saying, I have no condemnation.

There are lots of people doing that. There are millions of people doing that, taking that verse and living in sin. I say, let them do that.

Let Christendom be full of hypocrites, but I'm not one. I'm walking in the light with God. So what if there are a lot of people abusing that verse? There are many people abusing the Father's love.

In a family, for example, supposing there are 10 children and nine of them are abusing the Father's love. Is that going to prevent that one boy who really respects his father? No. So we're not afraid to proclaim that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, those who are honest enough to come into the light and say, Lord, you know what I am.

And I don't pretend to be anything, but I know that in Jesus Christ, I'm fully accepted. You know, these are things that we tell to new believers. You're accepted in the Father.

But I find that even if after we had believers for many, many years, we need to hear that. There is no condemnation. Your Father has compassion on you.

He's accepted you. And he continues to rejoice in hearing your voice. You know, that's why I sometimes love to turn to the Song of Solomon.

I mentioned this before, how when I got converted and I got baptized in 1961, I did not know anything about the Bible. I had not read the Bible. I mean, I used to read it every day, mostly some New Testament stories and pray every day.

But after I was born again, it took me a year and a half before I was convinced that I should be baptized. But once I got baptized, suddenly it's like a rocket took off. My spiritual life began to grow after I took baptism, just that simple step.

That's why I realized water baptism is not something to be treated lightly. In my case, my spiritual growth really began when I obeyed the Lord in baptism. It should have been as soon as I was converted, but somehow it got delayed a year and a half because people told me the child baptism I had was good enough and I wanted to be a witness to the denomination church I was in.

But finally, when I took baptism, I found the Lord began to work in me. And then I was on a ship and everybody in the Navy wants to be in a warship. That's the exciting part, you know, go out for exercises and battle exercises and all.

And I got transferred to the ship which no Naval officer ever wants to join. And that's a survey ship. The Naval Navy had a couple of survey ships.

And the job of survey ships is to go and survey the uncharted waters on the coast of India. So the uncharted waters in the coast are always in those villages and areas of the coast where nobody lives. Because in the towns and cities, the waters have been charted very well by many, many survey ships.

But we had to go to the uncharted waters so that we could have a complete picture of the seas around India. And what is the result? We would be weeks on end in places where there's no fellowship and no human beings even. There's no question of going ashore and we were on the ship the whole time.

And it was boring. And the Lord allowed me to be transferred to a ship like that. And what did I do? I had a Bible.

I was born again. I'd been baptized and I had a room to myself and because I was an officer, I had a cabin all to myself in that ship. And I had only one book other than the Bible with me.

It was a commentary I picked up from my dad's home on the Song of Solomon. I didn't know anything about Bible study. So I said, okay, this is the only book I have other than the Bible.

I think it was a sovereign of God that allowed me to have that one small little book and the commentary on the Song of Solomon. And I began to read it and I wrote all types of notes. In fact, my original Bible is full of notes in the Song of Solomon.

So many, every page is covered with it. And I believe the Lord allowed me to come to that part because he was trying to show me that this is the way he wanted to live with me in my entire Christian life as a bridegroom with a bride, waiting for the wedding day, excited that I'm engaged in the most wonderful person in the universe. And I see words in the Song of Solomon, if you can see it in a spiritual way, where a number of places where the Lord says, where the bridegroom says to the bride, say one example, Song of Solomon chapter four and verse one, how beautiful you are, how beautiful you are.

And many words like, let me hear your voice. Let me hear, I want to hear your voice. Boy, I'm so amazed when I read through that whole thing and the many places he says to how beautiful you are, how beautiful you are.

I want to hear your voice. Let me hear you. Like, I'm waiting to hear you.

And I never want to forget that. I want to believe that Jesus looks at me. And those words came to me in 1961, which is 60 years ago, nearly 59 years ago.

And I never, I don't want to forget it even now. I want to remember that the Lord looks at me and says, how beautiful you are. I don't feel like that myself.

I feel like the bride says in Song of Solomon chapter one, verse five, I'm black, but I'm lovely in God's eyes. Black means there is still some sin in me, but I'm lovely in God's eyes. And so I find my delight in that.

And I find that this is so important when we come before the Lord. It's something which bears repetition again and again and again, no matter how spiritual you are and how old you are in the Lord. Because one of the dangers we have, particularly those of us who are pursuing perfection and seeking to be like more like Jesus, and they've understood the new covenant and coming to a church, which is like a new covenant church, which has the right attitude to money and right attitude to sin and so many other wonderful things that the Lord has done in a CFC church.

The great danger is of comparing ourselves with others, with other churches and thinking, Lord, I thank you. I'm not like them. That we understand all these things and we'll see other believers who don't have the light we have, and we can look down on them.

That's very, very dangerous. I think of this verse in second Corinthians and chapter 10 says that those who compare themselves with each other, second Corinthians 10 verse 12, they're without understanding. They're without understanding.

They're spiritual idiots who compare themselves with each other. Beware of that. I don't want to compare myself with any other brother in the church, and I don't want to compare myself with anyone else in the world.

No, I only want to compare myself with Jesus. This is a discipline we have to practice. Whenever I'm tempted to look down on some other person, maybe some believer in the church who's carnal, or I don't have to pretend he's spiritual.

If he's carnal, he's carnal. Paul said to the Corinthians, you guys are carnal. And Paul said, we are spiritual.

You guys are not. He recognizes that, but it's not that we are blind to carnality, but we don't compare ourselves with them. We're always aware.

I am what I am by the grace of God. Never, never forget that statement of Paul's. I am what I am by the grace of God.

He says that in one Corinthians in chapter 15. I am what I am by the grace of God, and I will not compare myself with others because then I'll prove myself to be a spiritual idiot. Even though I know everything about the new covenant and understand everything, I refuse to compare myself with others, and I discipline myself to compare myself only with Jesus Christ.

You heard me use this example before, and let me use it again. Here's a student in a school who gets 10% in mathematics, and he comes home excited and says, mom, I came first in the class. And how much did you get? I got 10%.

All the others got four and three and zero. Nobody beat me. I got 10%.

Would you be happy if your son got 10% and came first in the class? I would not. I say it's probably a useless school. Don't be proud of the fact that you're better than others who got three, four, and five.

He's very proud. Now you take that same boy and put him in another top class school full of brilliant students that everybody's getting 99, lots of people getting 100. Suddenly this proud boy becomes humble.

How did this pride change to humility so quickly? See, every Christian has a battle with pride. If you don't recognize that, I've got to show you. You have a battle with pride.

I have a battle with pride. There are two things we fight with all our life, pride and selfishness, and you'll never be finished with those battles. Don't ever think in your entire life you'll finish battling pride and selfishness.

You may finish battling the love of money and sexual temptation and anger and all those things, but pride and selfishness, you'll never finish with it. You'll be battling it. I'm not saying you'll become proud or become selfish.

I'm saying you got to battle it, battle it, battle it to the end of your life, face up to it. And so how did this boy who was so proud suddenly become humble? How did he first of all become proud? He became proud by comparing himself with others. He got 10 and the others only got three, four or zero.

And how did he suddenly become humble? Again, by comparing himself with others who are getting 99 and 100. So that illustration is to prove one thing that if you compare yourself with other believers, you'll always feel you're better than them, even though you got only 10% in God's eyes. But if you compare yourself with Jesus, 100%, oh, then you can never be proud.

Impossible, because you say you're so way behind them. And that is the meaning of let us run this race, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. We're never to stop looking at Jesus as we run this race.

He's the author and finisher of our faith. And if I keep looking at him, I'll make progress. If I keep looking back to see how much I've run, how much progress I've made in this marathon race, I'll slow down.

So I must never turn my eyes away from Jesus. Hebrews chapter 12, verse one and two are very, very important. Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who for the joy set before him.

See, he always had this joy set before him. And that's why he ran this race. It says enduring the cross.

Why did he endure the cross? It never says he enjoyed the cross. And we should never try to enjoy the cross. I don't think we can.

I don't think anybody can enjoy the cross. If Jesus himself had to endure the cross, where are we going to enjoy it? But he endured the cross because he knew at the end of it, there's going to be a joy. It's like a mother willing to go through the pains of childbirth.

And I've heard mothers say the pains of childbirth are so bad, you feel like dying. Going through that and willing to go through that and willing to go through that a second time and a third time. Why? Because of the joy of having a baby, a child that married women look forward to.

It's the same here. Jesus endured the cross because there was a joy set before him. And we must never forget this.

There is a joy set before Jesus. And that is the only joy that I must have in front of me. If you want to run this race with endurance.

What is that joy? Is the joy of, to use the illustration of the tabernacle, the joy of going through the veil going through the veil is enduring the cross. The Bible says the veil is a picture of the flesh of Jesus, Hebrews 10, 20. And when it says Jesus endured the cross, it's not the cross of Calvary.

It's the daily cross, which he told us to follow him in that path. It was the rending of that veil every day of his life. And finally, when he died on the cross, it was torn completely.

But as Jesus rent that veil every day of his life, he moved into the father's presence. That's the symbolism of the tabernacle. The joy set before him, because it says in Psalm 16 in verse nine, one of my favorite verses.

In the father's presence, there is fullness of joy. Psalm 16, verse 11. In your presence is fullness of joy.

There's only one place in the universe where there is fullness of joy. There are a lot of joys in different places. There are joy in eating ice cream or joy in many other things.

Some people find joy in sex or getting money. But there's fullness of joy only in one place in the universe, and that is in the presence of the father. Every other joy is pathetic compared to this.

Fullness of joy. And in the tabernacle, that was in the most holy place. And the way to get to the most holy place was beyond the outer court.

The outer court speaks of forgiveness of sins, water baptism. The holy place speaks about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and prayer and serving God and reading the Bible. All that is exciting, but you're beyond that through the veil, the outer court and the holy place.

There are many people you can fellowship with. Outer court, you have all the believers in the holy place. You have those who are serving the Lord, the more zealous ones among the believers.

But when you go into the most holy place, it's only God. It's only God. And Jesus longed to be there.

He had experienced the joy of the father's presence for all eternity in heaven, and he wanted it on earth. And when he came in our flesh, the only way he could have that was if he denied himself every day, endured the cross for the joy set before him. And that is why we don't enjoy the cross, but we endure it because when we go that way, we're going to be in fellowship with the father continuously.

We're going to have fellowship with him. And we look forward to that. That must be where we live all the time.

Now we have the joy of living in the father's presence every day. It's not a decision I can take once and finished because this veil is a way, not a door. In Hebrews 10, 19, it says it's a new and living, not new and living door, but a new living way that I have to choose to enter through the veil every day to come into the father's presence.

Every day. I want to take this way, Lord. I want to be in the father's presence.

I want to sit there knowing that you rejoice in me. My heart is full of joy. When joy goes out of our life, you know that wonderful verse, the strength goes out of our life.

You're not familiar with in the book of Nehemiah, this verse says the joy of the Lord is your strength. I seem to have forgotten where it is somewhere in there. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

It says go and share what you have received with others and the joy of the Lord as you give it to the joy of the Lord is your strength. But that's so important. I mean, it's even more true in the new covenant.

The joy of the Lord gives me strength in my life. Joy. It's amazing what we can do when we're living in the father's presence and fullness of joy.

I have freedom when I pray to him. So keep these things in mind, dear brothers, that we do not compare ourselves with others, that we do not even look back to see how much progress we have made. And we're not going to rejoice in the work of our hands.

Now, it's another thing, you know, people can rejoice in what they've accomplished. The Bible warns us about those who rejoice in the work of their hands. No, we're not rejoicing in the work of our hands.

Rejoice only in Jesus himself. Rejoice in the Lord, it says. I must remove from my life everything else that I find joy in.

Yeah, there are temporary joys in having a good meal or fellowship with others, and it's all great. But the Bible says rejoice in the Lord always. So my joy must ultimately be in Jesus himself, my bridegroom and my heavenly father, in whose presence there is fullness of joy.

And there I can be strong because the joy of the Lord is my strength. And there I can have assurance when I come before him in the prayer and zero condemnation and zero discouragement. There are two things I've often said are no entry roads, discouragement and self-condemnation.

You may have heard that a hundred times from me. You're going to hear it a hundred times more. I never stopped saying it because I find the devil is so strong in repeatedly taking believers into discouragement or self-condemnation.

They need to hear it again and again and again. Especially a lot of young people who, when they first come into the church and hear the message, they're struggling. I wish somebody had told me this when I was a young man.

My early days of my Christian life were filled with discouragement and self-condemnation. And it's because nobody taught me these things I'm saying. And it's not enough to hear it once.

You need to hear it again and again and again and again. And I say, Lord, I don't want to get the reputation of preaching a new message every time I preach. No.

I want to be like those Old Testament prophets who would repeat the same message again and again to Israel. And I believe this is something that needs repetition. The Father rejoices in you.

There's no place for self-condemnation. There's no place for discouragement. So be encouraged, brothers, as you seek to press on.

And never compare yourself with anyone other than Jesus himself. And as you read the scriptures, I love that passage which says that when Jesus was walking with the disciples to Emmaus, those two disciples, he took the entire Old Testament and he didn't teach them doctrine. Oh, how he could have taught doctrine.

How he could have explained how this verse connects with that verse and connects with that verse and thrilled their intellects. But it is not their intellects that were stimulated when they finished that long three-hour walk. It was a seven-mile walk, it says in Luke 24 and verse 13.

And that must have taken three hours. It takes three hours to walk seven miles leisurely. And in those three hours, it says in Luke 24, 32, they said their hearts were burning.

Not their minds were stimulated, no. When Jesus talks to me, I know that Jesus is talking to me if my heart burns, if my mind is excited. Oh, that's a lovely thought.

That's something wonderful I can share next Sunday in a meeting. Uh-huh. You may not be walking with Jesus.

You may be just studying the Bible like you study any other book and you get a clever thought from the Bible. No. If you're walking with Jesus, Luke 24, 32, and if he's speaking to you from scripture, your heart will burn.

You're not thinking of some clever thought. Oh, Lord, this is wonderful. You love me so much and I'm so full of joy in your presence and the peace in my heart.

The heart must burn. I want my heart to burn. I've been a believer 61 years and I say, Lord, I want to love you more today than I ever loved you in my whole life.

I don't care if I never am able to serve you. I sometimes lie down in bed and say, Lord, I don't care if my whole body is paralyzed and I can never speak again and never do anything and I'm lying in bed for the rest of my life. I hope it won't happen because I don't want to be a burden for anybody.

I don't believe it'll happen. But I say, Lord, I'm willing for that because to me, the important thing is not serving you. It's just loving you and fellowshiping with you.

Even if I'm not able to do any service for you, even if I'm never able to preach again, it makes no difference to me at all. I will not get discouraged or despondent because to me, the most important thing is fellowship with Jesus, to hear him, his heart, my heart burning as he speaks to me. But what was he discussing in those three hours? It says in Luke 24, sorry, yeah, Luke 24, he spoke from the entire 39 books of the Old Testament.

Luke 24, verse 27, beginning with Moses, that is the five books of Moses and then all the other 34 books, total 39 books. He explained to them, not doctrine. No, he explained to them about himself.

So I see that even when I read any of this, Jesus in the 39 books in the Old Testament, like it says here, I want to see that. How many of you have found Jesus in the 39 books of the Old Testament? I want to see it more and more. I've seen him in many, many places.

I wonder if some of you feel, oh, everything, important things are all in the New Testament and not in the Old Testament. But think of this, that Jesus could show himself in the Old Testament, in every book of the Old Testament to those folks. Why won't he do that to me, through the Holy Spirit? I want to see Jesus in much more in the New Testament.

I want to see Jesus everywhere, not a doctrine. And that's part of what it means to run this race, looking into Jesus. Many of you who are young, you're so fortunate to be able to hear all these things at a young age, so that you can press on right from the beginning in this wonderful way.

I learned it very late in life. I was 35 years old before I was gripped by the importance of seeing Jesus in every page of scripture. That's a wonderful race to run, looking unto Jesus, as we read the Bible, looking unto Jesus, all the time looking unto Jesus, completely free from condemnation, completely free from discouragement, and recognizing a father who has compassion on me, a retarded child.

Yeah, a mother, a God-like a mother who cares for me. I'm a nursing baby. I always want to look at myself like that.

I'm a nursing baby whom my Heavenly Father cares for. I don't want to have any high thoughts about myself that I become so spiritual or so mature. It's very easy, my dear brothers, you know, especially those of you who have been in the church a little longer.

You can think you're a little better than some of those newcomers. I hope such thoughts will never come into your mind. You know, it's easy, particularly if you're elders or something, to think, oh, I'm someone, or

I have to act spiritual now.

I've got to get them other people to think I'm some spiritual. I've got to always, whenever sharing the word, I have to really impress them with my knowledge and some revelation from heaven. It's all seeking your own.

Paul said that all his co-workers were like that, except Timothy. They all sought their own, he said in Philippians 2.19. It's so easy, even in your preaching, to seek your own. How's that? When you want to impress people, what a wonderful preacher you are, what new revelations you have.

But Timothy was different. We read in Philippians 2, it says in verse 21, all seek their own, Philippians 2.21. Not those of Christ Jesus, but Timothy was different. He was not concerned about getting a reputation for, you know, some new revelation from scripture.

He was concerned, it says in Philippians 2.20, genuinely concerned for the welfare of the Philippians, that they must grow spiritually. Not that they must think, oh, Timothy gave a wonderful message today, or Timothy gave a new revelation today that I've never got before. He wasn't interested in that.

Those are the folks who sought their own. Timothy was only interested that they must grow spiritually. They must grow spiritually, just like a mother.

She's willing to give the same food every day to the child. She's not trying to impress the child. Which mother is trying to impress the child? See how I made this food today or that food today? No.

What's good for the child? I want to give what's good for the child. I want the child to be strong. Oh, we need elders like that.

Spiritual fathers are only concerned for the good of the children. I'm not talking only about the elders. All of you brothers who've been in the church even a few years, you have people younger than you in the church.

How are you going to be a blessing to them? Seek for their welfare. How can they grow spiritually? Not your own reputation. Be willing to be a zero all your life in the church.

In the eyes of others, I want to be a zero to the end of my life so that they can grow spiritually. One of the words that the Lord often brings to my mind is the words of John the Baptist. John the Baptist has been a hero of mine from my earliest Christian life.

He was a fiery prophet who couldn't care less for anybody. Right from the beginning of my Christian life, I knew that was a man. One of the great statements he made, you all know, in John 3 verse 30, he must increase and I must decrease.

When some of his disciples said, John, these people who are your disciples are now stopped following you and they're following after this other person called Jesus. He said, that's wonderful. I don't want to distract from him.

I want people to follow him. I don't want people to follow me. I think that John the Baptist is saying that and I say, dear brothers, that's how we must be.

I want people to follow Jesus. I don't want them to follow me. Yeah, I want to be an example in my life.

That's true. But I don't have a great desire that people should look at me. They can look at Jesus and follow him.

I don't care. They don't look at me. I only want to be a help to help them to look at Jesus.

I want to be a signpost towards Jesus. He must increase in their eyes and I must decrease. Yeah, I believe all of us have a passion that Christ must increase in the lives of others.

But I don't know whether we have equal passion that I must decrease in their eyes. And I cannot expect Christ to increase if I'm not decreasing. I want to decrease more and more.

I want to have a passion that I will decrease in the eyes of others so that Christ will increase, that they will be more connected to Jesus. And it's all right, they can forget about me. I want to disappear in their eyes that they can see Jesus.

You know, Jesus would say that about the father. He says, he has seen me and seen the father. So dear brothers, I've put together a few random thoughts that have come to my mind, but I believe the purpose is that our fellowship with the father will become closer and we'll have great boldness when we come to him in prayer every single time.

And we'll be 100% free from condemnation and we'll rejoice in the fact that our father longs to fellowship with us, that the Lord Jesus is saying, you're so beautiful. I want to hear your voice and I want to talk to him every day. And I believe that as we come into this intimate fellowship with Jesus, I'll tell you it'll be very, very easy to love the unlovely people around us in the church or outside.

We'll find it very easy to have compassion on others, not compromising our convictions. I never want to compromise my convictions in my whole life, but I never want to be a person who is without compassion. I want to have compassion on others always.

And that must increase. May God bless you. And we bow our heads in prayer.

Our heavenly father, as we bow before you, I pray that we shall have such an intimate fellowship with you that becomes better and better as each day goes by, that we draw closer to you. That is your plan and purpose for us. That's why you redeemed us in Christ.

And that's why you gave us the Holy Spirit. Thank you. Thank you, father, for giving us the Holy Spirit to draw us closer to you all the time.

We want to live in your presence and enjoy the fullness of joy there is in your presence. Make this real, Lord, for any who are not experiencing it right now, who are listening to this message. Please help them to know that you love them, help them to know that you really care for them, especially some who are discouraged this morning or feeling downcast in some way.

Please encourage them. Thank you, father, in Jesus name. Amen.

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