

God Waits for Us to Come to a Zero Point

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being over doing, focusing on our character and inner transformation rather than accomplishments. It highlights the need to be like little children, innocent and dependent on God, and to be mature in understanding God's ways. The message stresses the significance of being broken and humble, allowing God to work in us when we come to a zero point of self-sufficiency.

Duration: 27:18

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:20, Genesis 1:26, Hebrews 13:7, John 5:7, Acts 1:8, Matthew 1:20

Topics: "Inner Transformation", "Humility and Dependence on God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being over doing, focusing on our character and inner transformation rather than accomplishments. It highlights the need to be like little children, innocent and dependent on God, and to be mature in understanding God's ways. The message stresses the significance of being broken and humble, allowing God to work in us when we come to a zero point of self-sufficiency.

Transcript

In the world, the emphasis is more on what we do than what we are, more on doing than in being. And when Jesus picked up a child, he said, we must be converted, converted from this worldly attitude and be, not do, be like a little child. So it's not so much what we accomplish in life.

It's not so much what we're capable of doing. Even preaching is something we do. And so often in a church, we can be taken up with being accepted because we do something, maybe not preaching, but something else.

And we want to be known for what we do. But the Lord is far more interested in what we are. And our character is what we are when we are in the dark, when nobody's watching us.

That's what we really are. What we do is seen by others. And when the Bible speaks about being like little children, I want to show you a verse in 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 20.

It says, brothers, don't be like children in your thinking. In evil, be like infants. In your thinking, be mature.

So in our thinking, in our understanding of God's ways, we must be mature, godly men and women. And there's no virtue in saying, oh, well, I'm like a child. I don't know.

Well, then you're disobeying the scripture, which says every child of God must be mature in his thinking. But in evil, be not like a child. Notice the word there, infant.

So it's referring to a, I look at it like a one-month baby lying in a cradle. See, once you get a two-year-old, a two-year-old can be quite naughty and evil sometimes. But a one-month-old baby, if you want to think of a child, don't think of a two-year-old or even a one-year-old, think of a one-month-old child.

That's our example, not a one-year-old or a two-year-old. A one-month-old child is incapable of any evil. It's helpless, dependent on his parents for everything.

So many things. I've spent many hours almost, without exaggeration, on meditating on a child, you know, lying in a cradle. What are the thoughts passing through that child's mind? And say, Lord, are those my thoughts when I'm alone? And the child's not thinking, they're lying down, what a smart guy I am.

So many people come and admire this one-month-old child and he's not excited about it. He's just so, it's so innocent to be, there's evil in pride. And as I said, the world is full of people who want to accomplish something.

You want to spend our life and say we've accomplished something for the Lord, even in Christendom. A lot of people are known as great in Christendom. People have done something, accomplished.

They've gone here, they've gone there, they've written books and they've preached and they've done all types of things. No, those are not the people I've admired. I've admired the one whose character, whose attitude to money and whose fellowship with ordinary lowly people, those are the people I've admired.

Whether they accomplish something great or not is unimportant. It's being. And I think part of the reason is because like I always say, if you don't read the Bible carefully, the Bible is very exact.

I've come to, I've noticed that in 60 years of studying it. And he has one verse, which many people misunderstand. Acts of the Apostles, chapter one and verse eight.

Acts one, verse eight. It says, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. Now the average person, when he thinks of the Holy Spirit come upon me, if it's a Pentecostal, it's immediately, yeah, he'll speak in tongues.

Or if it's somebody else, it's, he says, he'd be like D.L. Moody or Charles Finney, a great preacher. The Holy Spirit has come upon, they will do something. Almost every Christian thinks of doing something when the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

Lord, I want to do something for you. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. But notice that Jesus spoke spoken about being.

Understand the difference in being and doing. When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall do something. No, you may do nothing.

You shall be. Very, very important. Careless reading of scripture.

You may never speak in tongues. You may never be a great preacher. You may never travel the world, but you will be something.

Your life will reflect Jesus Christ. When you're filled with the Spirit, you will be a witness for me. It's very important, dear brothers and sisters in NCCF, to restore this emphasis.

Otherwise, we're not going to raise up another generation of people who understand what it means to be Spirit-filled. I remember when I had one of the first experiences of being filled with the Spirit 46 years ago. And I was at rock bottom, failed in many areas of my life, my inner life, and even my ministry.

And at that, when I was at rock bottom, the Lord met with me and filled me with the Spirit to teach me one thing, that God doesn't favor the Spirit. Those who are in a very good position, but those who are utterly defeated and will fail and are a failure. And the word God spoke to me at that time was, because, you know, I decided that if this is a genuine fullness of the Spirit, the Bible should become a new book for me, because it is written by the Holy Spirit.

Let me see if I learn something now from Scripture, which I never saw in all these previous 16 years of my being a Christian up until then. So I decided to start reading from Matthew chapter 1 to get some confirmation that my experience was really of God. When God met with me that day, you know, how doubts can come in when God has met with you and the next day doubts come in.

So when I turned to Matthew chapter 1 and I was trying to look for confirmation of whether what God did in me was genuine or not, first of all, I went through that big list, that genealogy, and I didn't get anything out of that as to who begat who and whose son was who and all that. I thought I'd get nothing out of it. But by the time I came to the end of that chapter, it's amazing how God speaks.

I read that the angel came to Joseph and said, don't be afraid. This that has happened is of the Holy Spirit. I said, wow, that is exactly what I was asking God for.

This that has happened to me is from the Holy Spirit or not. And it was that I couldn't find a more exact verse to answer my doubt than that verse in the whole Bible. And that's the one that hit me.

This is from the Holy Spirit in Matthew 1.20. And from that, the Lord began to speak to me and said, as I was meditating that first day after I had this wonderful experience, God said, the Spirit came upon Mary to produce Jesus in her womb. And the Spirit has come upon you not to make you a great preacher, but to produce Jesus in you. I'm so thankful I heard that the very first day.

And then the Lord said to me, that baby did not come out the very next day. It took many, many months, a long period of time before that baby Jesus came out for the world to see. But there was a growth and Christ-likeness will come in you, not suddenly, but over a period of time.

And that's why the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And he went on from there. That was not, that wasn't the end of the message.

The Lord said, many people misunderstood Mary. They thought she was a prostitute. They thought she was immoral, that some Roman soldier had impregnated her.

But she kept quiet. She knew the truth, even if others misunderstood her. And the Lord said to me, you will also be misunderstood.

Many people will misunderstand you and make false allegations against you. You just got to keep quiet because you know what I did in your life. Christ will be formed in you.

And one day the world will recognize it. Like the world recognized finally who came out of Mary. That is a tremendous encouragement to me.

So being Christ-like. When you go back to the beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter one, you know, God's purpose in redemption is to bring us back to his original purpose. You remember when the Pharisees came to Jesus and said, can a man divorce and marry again? He said, hang on.

How was it in the beginning? God didn't make two women for Adam, only one. So always Jesus referred back to the beginning. How was it in the beginning? So when I turn back to the beginning in Genesis one, I find that God said, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, two words, Genesis 1.26. Not let us make man so that he can do great things for us and here and there.

No, it's got nothing to do with doing. It is our likeness, our image, two words, from multitudes of things God can do. God did not make man to do things.

He made man to be something, to reflect his image. So like Jesus said, how was it in the beginning? I would encourage you to think of that. I tell you, Christendom has completely forgotten about it.

Christendom has drifted away to doing, to doing something for the Lord, to bearing witness. That's good, bearing witness, but being a witness is what Jesus said. The world of difference between bearing witness and being a witness.

Your bearing witness becomes useless if you're not being a witness. Like people say, your life speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you're saying. I can't hear what you're saying because your life is speaking much louder than your words.

That's the tragedy of a lot of Christendom. But God created man in his own image. And again, it's repeating verse 27.

How many times in the image of God he created him? Four times it's speaking about his image and his likeness and created in his image and made in his image. That was God's original purpose. And then from there, he said, okay, now you can go be fruitful and multiply in verse 28.

Of course, he's got to work for him to do. He had to work for him to do in the garden. But before that, there's another thing I learned here.

After he made man in his image, he did not send him into the garden. He said, hang on, hang on. Work in the garden can wait.

I want you to spend 24 hours just with me. I want you to fellowship with me. I want you to worship me.

I want you and I to be together. And then I want you to go and work for me. Your work will be a lot better if you first spend one day with me.

That's how it was in the beginning. And all of you, all of us who get up in the morning and rush out to do things, go back to how it was in Genesis 1 and 2. Begin your day with God. Before you get out of bed, he read that verse, which is only quoted from Isaiah 50.

It's a very precious verse. He wakes me up morning by morning, Isaiah 50, verse 4, to listen. Here, as soon as you wake up, dear brothers and sisters, listen.

Lord, I want to hear you. And I want to talk to you. I want to be aware of you.

As I begin to say, before you get out of bed, it may be two minutes or five minutes, but do that before you get out of bed that the first person you talk to when you wake up is the Lord himself. The first person you think of. Be like a little child who wants to see its mother.

And that's how we must be. When we read, when Jeremy said about being broken, why does the Lord have to break us? Because we're so strong. We're so stubborn and so strong that he has to break us in order to make us like little children.

And if we have not yet become like little children, the reason is that we are not yet broken sufficiently. I think of the first miracle that Jesus did. Mary, let me paraphrase that whole section in John chapter 2, marriage of Canaan.

Mary comes to Jesus and says, they have no wine. And Jesus says, my time has not yet come. That's his answer.

And I thought about that. I never understood until recently why he said that. And here's my understanding of why he said it.

Now that's, this is not in scripture. You don't have to accept my interpretation, but it is. Well, Mary, I think there are five or six glasses of wine still left.

It hasn't come to zero. I'll wait until it is zero. My time does not come until there's not a single drop of wine left.

And when those last five or six glasses also run out, then I'll do something. I think that's the meaning of my time has not yet come. It's certainly true in our life.

The Lord begins to work in us. We want him to work. We want him to do a miracle in us.

We want him to multiply the wine. And that's a picture of the Holy Spirit in our life. And the Lord says, no, my time has not yet come.

Why hasn't it come, brother, in your life? Because there's still a little bit of that human strength which has not been broken yet. The Lord is waiting. I know certainly it was true in my life.

That's what the Lord was waiting for. He wasn't waiting for me to pray more or fast more. He was waiting for me to come to the end of myself.

And when I did come to the end of myself, the Lord met with me. When the wine ran out in Cana, finally when the last drop, there was not even one glass or one drop left, then the Lord says, okay, and what an abundance. He made each 180 gallons.

Can you imagine 180 gallons of wine? Or how many people would have been in that wedding in that house? When the Lord does something, it's always like rivers of living water. He always does it in abundance. It's not three, four glasses that he does.

But that's the one thing I see in every miracle of Jesus. That's the first miracle. Wait till you come to an end of yourself.

The last miracle in John 21, same lesson. Peter had failed as an apostle. And so he told the others, well, I'm useless as an apostle, but there's one thing I can do.

I can fish. And the Lord says, uh-huh, okay, go try. And that's one day when this expert fisherman couldn't catch a single fish.

What is the Lord trying to teach Peter? If you give up on my calling, I called you to be an apostle, and you turn away from that, you'll be a failure everywhere, even in the areas where you think you're a great expert. Dear brothers and sisters, God's got a life, and that is to be a witness for Christ. A lot of Christians are not gripped by that.

And if you don't make that primary in your life, I tell you, as far as God is concerned, you'll be a failure everywhere. You can go fishing if you want, thinking you're an expert fisherman. You will fail.

I hope you fail. If God allows you to succeed, it means he's given up on you. If God allows you to succeed in some area where he does not want you to be, he's given up on you.

Look at the multitude of worldly people who are succeeding, where in God's not with them at all. When God has got a purpose for a man, he'll allow him to fail everywhere until he comes back to what God has called him to. He has to be broken, brought to zero.

That's what happened in the first miracle. That's what happened in the last miracle. That is to make that person like a little infant.

What can an infant do in a cradle? Nothing. It can't even hold a milk bottle. It can't do anything.

Can't lift itself up. Can't wash itself. Can't clean itself.

Can't do a single thing. And that's the place the Lord seeks to bring us to. That's what it means to be a child.

That's what it means to be an infant. And that's it means to be really humble. So the delay is because of a lack of brokenness.

And sometimes it can take a long time. I'll just show you one more miracle, and that is John chapter 5. It's the same message in every miracle that Jesus did. Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, we read in John 5. And it says there in verse 3, a great multitude.

Now what is a multitude? It's not 10 people. 10 people is not a multitude. Multitude means I'd say maybe two, three hundred people.

Lame, blind, withered, waiting for the moving of the water because an angel of the Lord would come down at certain seasons, they didn't know which season, and stirred the water. And whoever stepped into that water first would be healed. And it was one of the mercies of God because the nation of Israel, that he sent an angel once in a while to stir the waters.

And all these three, four hundred people were waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. And Jesus comes along there. And you know the story.

There was a man, we read in verse 5 of John 5, who had been ill for 38 years. He was lame. He couldn't get up.

And he, and Jesus says, do you want to get well? He says, I've got nobody to help me. See, this is where he had come to. And this is the place we need to come to.

John 5, 7. I have no ability myself, and I have nobody to help me. I am at a zero point. Ah, really? Okay.

Get up, pick up your bed and walk. Have you come to a zero point? The Lord says, okay, you can go. And he left all the others there.

Who said that Jesus healed everybody who was sick? He had about 500, 400 people and he healed only one. And the lesson there is this guy had tried for 38 years to jump into the pool first. Every time somebody beat him to it.

He always thought, I'll do it next year. No. After 38 years, he said, no, I give up.

I just go to the corner and wait there. I'm not even going to sit near the pool. Every effort of his had failed.

He had come to zero. That's the message. Jesus came then, even the raising of Lazarus in John chapter 12.

Is Lazarus sick? Oh, I can't go yet. Wait till he can't even lift a little finger when he's dead. I'll go then.

The message in all these miracles is one thing. God wants to bring us to the point where we are zero. We're like a little infant, not like a two-year-old child, like an infant in a cradle that can do nothing.

And then he comes and does a miracle to us. And then he comes and fills us with the Holy Spirit. And if we remain like that, the trouble that I've seen this through the years with people who are filled with the Spirit, have a genuine experience of being filled with the Spirit.

You see them a few years later and they become self-sufficient and proud. God uses them a little bit and then they think no end of themselves. And you know how so many great preachers have fallen away just because of that.

They started out as nobodies, but in a few years they became somebody. They were no longer nobodies. My dear brothers and sisters, please take a warning from all that happens around us in the stories we hear.

Be a nobody all your life. Never seek to be a somebody in Christendom. That's what ruins people.

Don't try to be a somebody in NCCF. Be a nobody and you'll be safe. It says in Hebrews 13, who are the type of people we should follow? Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

And one of the wonderful things I see about the apostle Paul was he was a nobody in his own eyes right till the end of his life. He called himself less than the least of all the saints. Now that was not artificially humility.

It was inspired by the Holy Spirit that he writes, I'm less than the least of all the saints. That means he thought of all the believers he knew and he says, no, I'm not as good as any of them. I'm less than the least.

That's why he was such a godly man. That's why God could use him till the end of his life. That's why he finished his course.

That's why he ran faithfully till the end. Yeah. And he says, follow me as I follow Christ.

There are very few examples like that. I tell you, I've been around in Christendom for 60 years. I've seen numerous missionaries who came to India.

And I tell you, I've seen hundreds of them. I respected almost none of them. I can only think of one or two among all the hundreds I've met of missionaries who gave up their job and came to India to preach whom I could respect as godly men.

They were somebody. They were not like infants. They were capable and they were not an example for me.

I never wanted to follow any of them. But here it says here in Hebrews 13 and verse 7, remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you, and considering the result of their conduct, then imitate them. Or in the margin, it says, see how they ended their life.

Don't look at them when they're 30, 40 years old. See how they are 40, 50 years later. Not at the beginning.

See how they ended their life. Then imitate their faith. And there are very, very few like that, that we can follow.

Those are the ones who understood what it is to be like little children. See, if you're like a little child, I'll tell you something. You'll never make anyone feel inferior to you.

If when people meet you, they feel inferior. Or you make them. They feel inferior on their own.

We can't do anything about it. But if you make them feel inferior to you by your bearing or your speech or your conduct, you're not like a little child. A little child lying in a cradle does not make anyone who watches it feel inferior.

He's the most helpless person there. I'm less than the least of all the saints. That is what brokenness means.

And I believe we should work towards getting there. Get to that place where we're like a little child. Meditate much on a two-month-old infant in a cradle.

Not a two-year-old child, an infant. That is what it means to be a witness. Because when you come to that place, the Lord will be your power.

Without me, you can do nothing. But with me, you can do everything. And I believe that if we are like that, God can accomplish and fulfill many things in us.

Primarily, he'll make us Christ-like. And that is what will draw people to him. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/god-waits-for-us-to-come-to-a-zero-point/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net