

God's Promises For Those Who Love Him

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of honoring God in every aspect of our lives, seeking righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It highlights the need to rate ourselves as insignificant before God, pursue humility, and seek to please Him daily. The speaker encourages protection from evil influences, especially in a world filled with temptations and dangers.

Scripture: Ezekiel 16:49, Philippians 3:19, Luke 16:13, Matthew 10:29, Zechariah 2:5, Zechariah 2:8, John 17:22

Topics: "Honoring God", "Pursuing Humility"

Description

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Transcript

Our goal in life as Christians is what's written in that front of that pulpit, to press on to perfection, which means to become like Jesus Christ. And that is a promise God gives us in his word that he'll do it. But yet, many do not make much progress in that direction.

And so we have to ask ourselves why, and it is obvious the reason is God is not giving them grace. It's impossible to become like Christ if we don't get grace from God. As long as we don't receive grace, sin will have dominion over us.

There's no doubt about it. But if we do get grace, no sin will have dominion over us. So we need to begin with that.

And that's why when Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount, we turn to Matthew chapter 5 and verse 3, the very first thing he said was, the people who are really blessed, in fact that's the first step to the Sermon on the Mount, are those who are poor in spirit, or as you've heard me quote the Amplified Bible which says, those who consider themselves insignificant, or those who rate themselves as insignificant, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That means if you're poor in spirit, you keep on possessing more and more and more and more, you will definitely press on to perfection and become more Christ-like every year, and people will see it. And if we continue to rate ourselves as insignificant before God, so during the conference, you remember, I got all those brothers to stand with zeros in front of them, whatever their

abilities, earthly abilities or spiritual abilities, they are zero.

And if you remember, I also mentioned the story of what Jesus said in Luke chapter 19, if you turn there for a moment, Luke's Gospel and chapter 19, he said about a noble man, verse 12, who was going to a far country to receive a kingdom, that's Jesus Christ, and he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas each, sorry, ten minas, one mina to each person, and he told them, do some business with this. So, one mina is like about three months salary, whatever your three months salary is, that's one mina. So that's what they got.

And the Lord said, do business with this, until I come back. Invest this in some good way, and get some profit. So when he came back, he asked them, what did you do with what I gave you? And the way the Lord will ask us when he comes back, what did you do with the money I gave you, the time I gave you, the gifts I gave you, the facilities I gave you, the church I gave you, and so many things, what did you do with it? Now you know there's one man who did nothing.

He, verse 20, he just wrapped it up and kept it. He produced absolutely nothing. He just took advantage of all of God's goodness and gifts and fellowship in the church, and all that God gave him, and did absolutely nothing for the Lord.

There are believers like that. I hope there's nobody here like that, who just takes advantage of everything that God gives them, and does nothing in return for the Lord. And it says that the Lord cast him out.

But look at the other, there are two others mentioned there. One man, verse 16, said, Master, your mina has made 10 minas more. And another man came and said, verse 18, your mina has made 5 minas more.

And maybe there were others, because there were 10 of them, maybe somebody made 2, somebody made 3, somebody made 4. But the thought that came to me is, how is it this man with 5 didn't make 10? In the same country, in the same place, one man made 10, another man made 5. It's like the story that Jesus said about the six types of ground on which the seed is sown. There's the ground which is like a road. When nothing happens, the birds take it away.

Then there's another type of ground where it doesn't go deep. And then there's a third type of ground where the thorns come up and choke it, where the word doesn't produce fruit, because when the persecution comes, they give up. And then there are three types of good ground also.

One produced 30-fold, one produced 60-fold, one produced 100-fold. So, even among believers, not all are the same category. Some get 30%, some 60%, some 100%.

Jesus said that. Not all believers are the same. So here also, one got 5, another got 10.

In the same way, in that story, why did some produce 30, some produced 60, some produced 100? I believe it's got to do with whether you rate yourself as insignificant. Those who are poor in spirit produce more fruit. Those who are poor in spirit produce more from what God has given them.

From 10 minas. So, in other words, this man who got 5 minas, he rated himself as zero. Again, and again, and again.

And this one mina became 2, 3, 4, 5. And once it became 5, just like it happens to some of us, he begins to think, oh, I'm somebody. I'm somebody in the church now. I'm not an ordinary, insignificant person in

the church like I was when I first came.

I'm somebody a little important. I'm recognized by others. He's no longer a zero.

Maybe he becomes a 1, 2, 3, whatever he becomes. A little big in the head, and all production stops. That is the reason.

If he had remained a zero, he could have gone on and produced 10. The other guy, he produced 5. He said, well, it's all of God. I'm a zero.

He went on to produce 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. And if the master had come a little later, he'd have produced 100. So, it all depends on whether I rate myself as insignificant continuously, not just for a period.

Most people, when they come initially, do rate themselves as insignificant because there's nobody in the church. Nobody knows them. Nobody cares for them.

And they say, oh, I'm really a zero. But after a while, when you begin to be respected, or you've accomplished something, and maybe people recognize you, and people appreciate you and praise you, that's when we can get a little giddy with praise. And then we no longer consider ourselves as zero like we did in the beginning.

And then all progress stops. So, if you wonder why, in your early Christian life, from the time you were born again, you really made progress for a while, and then it suddenly stopped. It's like this five-miner guy.

It stopped when it could have gone on. It can go on endlessly till the Lord comes for every one of us. And I'll tell you why endlessly.

Because to become like Jesus Christ is a fantastic height. And we can keep on progressing endlessly if we will be poor in spirit, which is recognize ourselves always as zero, like you've heard me say many times. It's easy for God to bless you, but it's difficult for God to keep you humble after he has blessed you.

He may have blessed you in many ways. Maybe, I think many of you have been blessed materially. When you came to the church, you were probably a very poor person.

I know numerous people in CFC Bangalore who were very, very rock-bottom poor when they came to CFC. And they have prospered immensely in their work, their earnings, their business. And there are some, very few, who have remained humble even after God has prospered them.

But most of the others, it has gone to their head. They thought their smartness and their capability, or they thought, oh, I sought God's kingdom first. And that's why God has given me all these crazy ideas that the devil puts into their head.

Like you saw in that slide I showed of the demons whispering things, telling you what a wonderful guy you are, and it goes to their head. And they stop becoming zeros. That's the aim of the devil.

Puff you up so that he doesn't have to hinder you, God himself will hinder you. See, the devil knows that if he can get God to hinder you, that's the best way. Then he doesn't have to worry about you.

He doesn't have to hinder you anymore because God himself will hinder you. And the devil knows that all I've got to do is put a little high thoughts into this guy's head and then I can leave him alone and go and

work on some other people. Don't be ignorant of Satan's schemes.

I want to encourage you, my brothers, no matter how much you have progressed materially, or you're a clever person, maybe you've done well in your profession, or you've got fantastic degrees, which you didn't expect, or you've prospered amazingly in your business or your work and earned a lot of money, or built a house and you're living comfortably, which you never expected would happen, please remain as a zero. And recognize that, like the Bible says, are you all familiar with this very important verse? 1 Corinthians 4, verse 7. A verse that those who have this temptation to be puffed up should always ask themselves. I ask this to myself many times.

I'll tell you before God. I ask this question to myself many times. Who regards you as superior? Who considers you as a superior Christian? Maybe you yourself do.

And if you are like that, ask yourself, what have you got that you did not receive? I ask myself that question many times. What have I got that I did not receive? Health, or intelligence, or understanding, or any spiritual gift, or progress, or anything. What have I got which I produced myself? Even your intelligence, which enabled you to get a good job.

You didn't produce it, brother, sister. You were born with it. God gave it to you in your mother's womb.

Be humble and thank God for it. And don't ever look down on someone else who is not as clever as you. That's the thing that hinders spiritual progress.

What have you got that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, how can you boast as if you did not receive it? Like the illustration I've used, if somebody else made a cake, and you pass it around, and they say, oh brother, you made a fantastic cake. And you say, yeah. You shrug your shoulders and don't say straight away, that wasn't me.

I'm only distributing it. Somebody else produced it. That's the attitude we must have about everything you have.

And particularly if you do something good, and accomplish something, there are people who will come and appreciate it, and praise you. And then it goes to your head. I've seen people, it has gone to their head, and they've gone down after that.

I watch the spiritual progress of so many people around. Not just here, but in all our churches. And I've seen elders also.

They do really well up to a point, and then go down. And I can notice the point at which they go down. It has gone well, in their ministry, and in their labors as an elder.

And then the graph goes down. And they don't seem to come up again. Very few people repent and come back up.

Most of them keep going down, because they continue to be better than others. Be very, very careful. Especially if God has gifted you in some way, or used you in some way.

What I keep telling people, keep your face in the dust. And if somebody rebukes you, accept it. You know what it says in the Psalms, let the righteous man smite me.

That's like, that man anointing me with oil in my head. What a wonderful gift that is. Somebody slapped me.

Somebody rebuked me strongly. A righteous man, that is like, he is anointing you on your head, and laying hands on you and praying for you. That's what the Psalmist said.

Let him keep doing it. That will keep me in the place where I can keep on receiving God's blessing. So, it is to such people, that the promises in the Bible are made.

Very often we may try to claim a promise, which is not for us. That's like, trying to cash a check, which is not in your name. That's a dangerous thing, to try and put somebody else's check into your account.

You would never do that, in earthly matters. But if you try to claim a promise, which is not meant for you, it doesn't work. That's the main reason why a lot of people wonder, why isn't this working for me? Why isn't that promise working for me? For example, this verse that we just read a little while ago, which I've often quoted, We know that God causes everything to work for good.

Romans 8.28, favorite verse. But for whom? Whose name is that check written for? The check says, what is the amount to be paid? Everything to work for good. Ooh, what a fantastic promise that is.

Everything to work for good. But hang on. See who is paid to whom.

Maybe not your name. Those who love God more than everything else. Do you do that? Do you love God more than your job, and more than your relatives, and more than position, and honor, and the praise of men, and everything? Do you love God supremely? And, those who are called according to His purpose.

That means, those who only aim in life is to fulfill God's purpose. The check is written in that name. And you present it to the bank of heaven, and it is not cashed.

Something happened to you, it did not work for your good. Go back and read that check again. It was not in your name.

That's why it didn't work for your good. So, you may wonder, why that thing didn't work for my good? I'll tell you, because the check is not in your name. But, anyone can have that check, if they say, Lord, I'm going to love you more than everything else.

Those are the people who are really blessed. I'll tell you this. Those who say, Lord, I'm going to love you more than everything else.

They may not make a lot of money, but everything will work for their good. Every single thing, they will not have a complaint about one thing in their life. I want to say to you, in Jesus' name, if you have a complaint about one event in your life, or you have a complaint against one person in your life, one person anywhere in the world, who you say did this to me or did that to me, you have a complaint, that means something happened to you which was not for your good.

That's why you complained. Will you ever complain about something good that happens? If your boss is unrighteous and fires you from your job, you complain, but if he gives you a double promotion in your job, you won't complain. We never complain about something good that happens to us.

So whenever you have a complaint about anything or anyone, it's because something bad happens. Why did it happen? Go back and look at the check. It's not in your name.

You didn't love God. You didn't want to fulfill His purpose. Then why blame that brother? Why blame him for harming you? It's not him.

It's you. You didn't love God. You were not interested in fulfilling His purpose and things did not work for your good and you blame some other person, or you blame some circumstance, or you blame your unconverted boss in your office.

It's got nothing to do with anybody in the world. It's got to do with you. I thank God for the day in my life when I realized that that what happens to me in this world does not depend on a single other human being.

It does not depend on any person. It depends entirely on me. It's an amazing life.

Nobody else in the world can say that except those who love God. Can anybody in the world go around saying nobody can harm me. Nobody can do any evil to me.

Nobody can make anything happen to me that will work out bad for me. Do you think anybody in the world can say that? Jesus could say it. And those who love God and who say, Lord, I only want to fulfill your purpose in my life, they can say it.

I have no complaint against anyone in the world because whatever they do is working for my good. Now, just stop for a moment and ask yourself, these are things we have said a hundred times in this church, but why do we need to say it again? Because some of you haven't understood it. It's like in a kindergarten class, if they still don't know how to spell a word, you have to repeat it.

If they still don't know how to learn addition, you have to repeat it, repeat it, repeat it till you have understood addition. You would never have got out of those lower classes if you hadn't understood addition. You would be sitting there.

So there are some things that need to be repeated till we have understood it that nobody can harm you if you decide that you're going to love God and you're going to live according to His purpose and that your goal in life is Romans 8.29, to become like Jesus Christ. Not to become a millionaire, not to live in comfort, not even to have perfect health, but to become like Jesus Christ. That's my goal and everything will work for my good.

Turn with me to 1 Peter. It's wonderful to know these promises. 1 Peter 3.13 1 Peter 3.13 is somewhat like Romans 8.28. Many people know Romans 8.28, but they don't know 1 Peter 3.13. Very similar promise.

Turn with me to 1 Peter 3.13 Who can harm you if you're zealous for what is good? And the good thing is to love God and fulfill His purpose. If you're zealous for that, who in the world can harm you? Do you think your boss can fire you from your job if you are determined to love God and call according to His purpose? No! God will remove that boss before He fires you. Yes, God is on the side of His people.

It's amazing what He will do to support those who fear Him. He works strongly on behalf of those who reverence Him. As He supported Jesus, He will support us.

That is the message we get from Jesus came in a flesh like ours. And if you love Him and you want to follow Him, He will do that for you. Turn to John's Gospel chapter 12.

It's a verse we read during the conference in John 12 and verse 26. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. John 12, 26.

It's earlier there in verse 24. He speaks about a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies. If anyone serves Me, verse 26, he must follow Me.

And where I am, there My servant will be also. I told you that in the conference. If I'm on the cross, My servant will be on the cross.

If I'm in the grave, My servant will be in the grave. If I am slapped and insulted and called the devil, My servant will also face Me there. But what is the result? My Father will honor Him.

Verse 26. See the end of that. You may go all the way that Jesus went, but My Father will honor Him.

What a promise! You want God to honor you? I tell you I want God to honor me. Definitely. Well, the Lord says just be willing to be where I was and keep your mouth shut when people call you the devil.

I mean, if you can't keep your mouth shut just when your husband is angry with you or your wife is angry with you, where in the world are we going to keep our mouth shut when somebody calls us prince of devils? Where I am, there My servant will also be. Jesus kept His mouth shut when they slapped Him and they called Him the devil. He never wanted to take revenge on a single person.

He didn't say to the people when He was hanging on the cross, wait till I come back and I'll teach you fellows a lesson. No. And after His resurrection, this is the best part of it, after His resurrection you and I would have been tremendously tempted if we were there to stand before Annas and Caiaphas and say, hey you fellows tried to kill me.

See, what God did? You couldn't kill me. Annas, who do you think you are? And the devil could have said, okay, go and do that at least to bring some repentance in their life. No.

The Bible says Jesus did not appear before a single unbeliever after His resurrection. What an example. That means when people have treated you badly and it goes well with you, you don't go and stand before them and boast and say, see, you tried to harm me but see where I am now.

There's a great lust in our flesh to do that. That's what we got to mortify and put to death. No.

I don't even want to prove to those people that God has blessed me. You have a great desire to prove to people that God has blessed you? Especially those who hurt you, especially maybe to some of your unconverted relatives, you want to prove that God has blessed you? You're not like Jesus. Jesus had no desire to go before the Pharisees after His resurrection and say see, I'm alive.

Learn from that. There are many things we can learn. Why did the Father do that for Jesus? There's a promise in the Old Testament.

I'd like to give these promises to you because there are promises that we can claim. 1 Samuel 2 It's a well-known promise. You've heard me quote it many times but for some of you who don't know where it is, if you don't know where a verse is in the Bible, get into the habit of underlining it so that you can find it

easily.

1 Samuel 2, verse 30 in the middle of that verse, those who honor me towards the end of that verse, I will honor. Just that phrase. Those who honor me I will honor.

And if you don't honor God in your life and in your home and in your office and in your different situations, there's only one other thing you do. Then you're despising Him. There's no middle category.

There's no category of those who don't honor Him and don't despise Him. No. There are only two categories.

Those who honor God and those who despise Him and whether you like it or not, you're in one of those categories. In your home, you either honor God or despise Him. In your office, you either honor God or despise Him.

Only two categories and you can decide which category you're in. I always want to be in the category of those who honor God because God will honor me. I want God to honor me.

I don't want the empty honor of men. It's what? Garbage. The honor of men is fit for the trash can.

But God to honor me. It's amazing what God will do for those who honor Him like that. Amazing.

Look at the New Testament promise. Matthew 6 and verse 33. Seek first His kingdom.

All well-known promises we quoted many times. And His righteousness and all these things will be added to you. Now let's understand what does it mean? What does it mean to seek God's kingdom first? Because if I do that, it says everything I need on earth will be added to me.

That means what I need to eat. Verse 3. Eat, drink, clothe myself. The necessities of life.

He's not saying that He'll make you a millionaire or give you a fancy house. He's saying the necessities of life will be added to you no matter what happens in the world around you. People around you may be starving because of famine.

You will not starve. People around you may be jobless. You will not be without a job because you seek His kingdom first.

And His righteousness. So we need to ask ourselves, what does that mean? We have our own ideas. For many years, I also had my own ideas of what seeking God's kingdom meant.

I thought it was preaching the gospel or something like that. But most of us don't have much opportunity to preach the gospel. Okay, let's go to Romans 14.17. What is the kingdom of God which we have to seek first in our life? Here is the Bible's answer.

What should I seek first in my life if I want all my earthly necessities, food, clothing, shelter, job, education for my children, jobs for my children, everything to be added to me, what should I seek first? Here it is. Romans 14.17. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. Don't get taken up with eating and drinking.

Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. So what should I seek first in my life? Righteousness, peace and joy. The moment any unrighteousness comes into my life or into what I'm looking at, I turn

away from it because I'm seeking righteousness.

The moment I lose peace in my heart and peace in my heart can be lost because I have a wrong attitude towards somebody, very quickly, you keep a wrong attitude towards someone, even for 10 seconds, your heart is at if you've got a sensitive consciousness, you're in unrest, you're not at peace. Or if you're the type of people who are going around creating trouble for others, you can't be at peace with everybody. It says as much as lies in you, be at peace with all men.

In other words, if the other person doesn't want peace, you can't do anything about it. But in your heart, you must desire peace with all men. Peace does not mean fellowship.

Some people go to an extreme. We must have fellowship with all believers. I don't believe that.

I cannot have fellowship with an unrighteous believer. If there's unrighteousness life, what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? I'm sorry, I can't have fellowship with them. So, peace is different from fellowship.

There are very few people we can have fellowship with. Jesus had fellowship with very few people. But peace in our heart, we must have 24 hours a day.

In Colossians 3, you know, verse 15, it says peace is the referee that blows the whistle when you've committed a foul. It's a paraphrase. Peace is the referee.

The whistle is blown when you've committed a foul. Stop. Stop the game.

Set it right. In other words, search what did you do wrong. Confess it.

Cleanse it. Continue with the game. You've rectified the foul.

Always keep peace in my heart. I'm only speaking what I'm practicing. God is my witness that this is how I've sought to live for a long time.

Other people can't convict me of sin. I don't listen to them. But the Holy Spirit does.

And I listen to him. If he convicts me and I have unrest in my heart, I stop. I'll tell you honestly, every time I'm sick, I slide on in my bed and say, Lord, what are you trying to tell me? I know that sickness is not the perfect will of God.

Definitely not. He may allow us to have it so that we can sympathize with other people who are sick. But it is not God's perfect will.

Sometimes that may be the reason. I want you to sympathize with other people who are sick and you're not sympathetic enough. Okay, thank you Lord for helping me to be sick and to learn that lesson.

But sometimes it is a discipline because of some sin in my life. See John chapter 5. So I take it seriously. Small sickness, big sickness.

I go to God and say, Lord, what are you trying to tell me? Is it just to sympathize with others or are you trying to tell me something's wrong in my life? John chapter 5. We read that Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda where there were many sick people. Verse 3. And he healed one man. He told him, verse 8, pick up your bed and walk.

He was immediately healed. Later on, Jesus met him and told him, verse 14. Afterwards, Jesus met him in the temple and said, see, now you've been healed, now don't go and sin again.

Because your first sin happened because of sin. First sickness came because of sin. Your paralysis came because of sin.

How many people believe that a paralysis can come because of sin? Doctors will find some human cause for it, but Jesus said it was sin. Now, don't sin again, like you did previously, because something worse than paralysis can come to you next time. What do you learn from that? Some sicknesses are due to sin.

But not all sicknesses. As we read in John chapter 9, when Jesus met a blind man, the disciples asked him, John 9 verse 1 and 2, is this man's sin or is it his father's sin that he's born blind? And Jesus said, not this man, not his parents. He's not blind because of that.

So that's the balance in Scripture. Some sicknesses are due to sin, John chapter 5. Some sicknesses, John chapter 9, are not due to sin. That's why we should not judge other people.

When another person is sick, don't try to judge him unless you become like Job's friends who go and tell him, oh well, it's because of sickness. Your sickness is because of sin. Your sons died because of some sins they may have committed against God.

No, no, no, no. What? You know the sin of those three friends of Job? They were sitting on God's throne saying, this is why you are sick. This is why your children died.

I am not here to say that. People say, ask me. I say, I don't know why you are sick.

And where somebody goes after he dies, people ask me sometimes. I say, don't ask me. I'm not God.

God is the one who decides. I can only preach the laws of God on earth that those who live in sin will die and God will resist the proud till the end of their life. God will resist them.

But he gives grace to the humble. I can only proclaim the laws of God, but I'm not here to decide where somebody is gone when he dies. I don't know.

People ask me, where did Mahatma Gandhi go? I say, I'm not his judge. God is his judge. I don't know whether secretly on the last day of his life he repented and accepted Christ whom he always spoke about.

I don't know. For example, the thief on the cross. He accepted Christ at the last moment.

If anybody had not known that, they'd have said, that guy would have definitely gone to hell, but he didn't. He went to paradise that day, teaching us don't judge anybody as to where they are gone. As long as they are alive, warn them.

Once they are dead, leave it to God to decide and he will decide perfectly. If you go around giving your opinion, you're acting like God. Some people we know definitely because their life has been so outstanding that you can say definitely where they have gone we can say without a doubt.

Those who have gone into God's kingdom. But some people who are on the borderline, I don't know. And I don't even try to give an opinion.

Even if they claim to be believers, they don't give an opinion. One thing we know, God honors those who honor Him. God gives grace to the humble.

He resists the proud. Those are unchanging laws of God. Those who seek His kingdom first, that is righteousness, peace, and the third thing is joy in the Holy Spirit.

I must seek to have a life where I'm always righteous, and if I slip into unrighteousness, immediately confess it. And if I lose my peace, immediately ask God, why have I lost my peace, Lord? And believe me, the Lord will show you every single time the Lord has shown me why I lost my peace. And I said it right, and the peace comes back.

That's how I seek God's kingdom first. Or if I lose my joy sometime, I say, Lord, why have I lost my joy here? Something's happened. And the Lord will show me why I lost my joy.

When I confess it, joy comes back. One of the easiest ways to miss out on this is by having the habit of justifying yourself. You know what justifying yourself is? Whatever anybody tells you to correct you, you always have an excuse.

No, no, no. It was not like that. Like Adam.

Did you eat of the tree? No, no, no. My wife gave it. Always some excuse.

And Jesus said to the Pharisees, listen to this verse, Luke 16, and verse 15. Luke 16, verse 15. You are those who justify yourselves before men.

That means you prove that you are right. They tell you you are wrong and you argue against them. You prove that you are right.

You know, I told you during the conference how there are some people, you know, I took the example of the elder in Laodicea. The apostle John, who was a man of God, writes to him and says, you elder brother, you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked spiritually. And what is the reaction of that elder brother? He says, I heard that the opinions of men must be thrown into the trash can.

So the opinion of John, I throw in the trash can. Who is going to be the loser? You take the opinion of a man of God like John and put in the trash can. You will go into the trash can.

That's where God will put you. It's not like some worldly person or some unbeliever saying something. That is fit for the trash can.

But when a man of God says something and you justify yourself. No, I am not saying that if the information was wrong, you can correct it. Brother, that information is not correct.

Here is actually what happened. That's okay. But to justify yourself and say, no, no, no, this is why I did it and that's why I did it.

And you know all the time your heart is saying you are wrong, you are wrong, you are wrong. But you justify yourself. That is to be a Pharisee.

And Jesus said, such people are, verse 15, detestable in the sight of God. Detestable in the sight of God. You know, when I read a verse like that, it's like a unflushed toilet.

Like some of these toilets in bus stops in different villages when the bus stops, you go to the toilet and you don't even feel like entering it. That's what it means to be detestable in the sight of God. Picture it like that.

Detestable in the sight of God. What is the man who justifies himself? No, no, no. It's because of this, it's because of that.

You want to prove to a human being that you are right. Your conscience doesn't seem to convict you that you are wrong. Be very careful.

Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Pursue it. When you lose it, when you lose your joy or your peace, something is wrong.

And don't ever try to justify yourself. Husband and wife, preserve joy and peace in your heart at all times. If you lose it, don't say your wife is wrong, don't say your husband is wrong.

Say, I am wrong. Whatever that person may have said or done, that may be his fault. But you've lost your joy and peace.

The devil has killed two birds with one stone. What your husband or wife did or said was wrong. But he killed you also.

By making you lose your joy and peace, the two birds with one stone. The devil is a master at that. Be very careful, dear brothers and sisters.

God wants us to live a triumphant life. This phrase that we often quote in John 17. God loves us as he loved Jesus.

John 17 and verse 22. Beautiful verse. It changed my life.

John 17, 23. Jesus says in his prayer that you love them even as you love me. When you see a fantastic promise, this is a fantastic check.

What is the amount to be paid? Here's the amount to be paid to this person. To be loved just like Jesus was loved by the Father. Okay.

Immediately, please look at whose name the check is on. Don't just claim it. A lot of people are claiming it because they heard me quote it.

Oh, thank you, Father. You love me as you love Jesus. Hang on, brother.

Hang on, sister. See if the check is in your name. That's why you don't get it.

Maybe it's not in your name. You love them, not the whole world. You love these people.

Who are these people? Turn with me to an earlier verse in John 17. It says here, these are the ones who really, verse 8, who understood that you sent me and I came forth from you. And verse 9, I am not praying for the people of the world.

I am praying for those you have given me. Some people pray for the whole world. Oh, Lord, I pray for the whole world.

I pray for India. I pray for Karnataka. They sound very spiritual to people who don't know God.

That sounds very spiritual. I see sometimes newsletters like that. Pray for India and pray for Karnataka and pray for these states.

And what do these people do praying like that? Jesus said I don't pray for the world. Neither do I. I don't pray for India or Karnataka or any such thing. I say, Lord, lead me to those who want to walk the narrow way in India or anywhere in the world.

Lead me to those who want to deny themselves and follow you all their life. Lead me to them and help me to bring them into the church. Help me to find them.

And lead me to those who have not yet come there, but who will come there if they hear the word of God. Lead me to them, unconverted right now, but in whom you see a desire that will spring up if they hear the gospel, the full gospel. I want to go to them, to such unconverted people and preach the full gospel to them.

But I'm not praying for the whole world. No. I know the vast majority of the world is going to hell.

God wants everybody to repent. God doesn't want anybody to perish. I don't want anybody in India to perish.

Nobody. I don't want even the greatest terrorist to go to hell. No.

Jesus died for the terrorists and the suicide bombers and everybody. But I know that they're not, they have no desire to repent. I pray for these whom you have given me.

It is for them, the promises you have loved them as you loved me. These are people who decided, I am going to deny myself and follow Jesus. These eleven disciples.

He's praying for them. I'm going to put Christ first in my life. He's more important to me than my job.

He's more important to me than my family. He's more important to me than my money. He's more important to me than my property.

Christ is absolutely first in my life. I'm a zero, but Christ is one in front of me. He's the only one in my life.

Everything else to me is a zero. Wealth is zero. Honor is zero.

Job is zero. But Christ is one. Let me tell you.

All your earthly needs will be added and the Father will love you as he loved Jesus. He will care for you as he cared for Jesus. He will protect you like he protected Jesus.

Even when people tried to kill Jesus, they couldn't kill him till his time had come. And I believe that. It's a wonderful place to be in.

If you say, Lord, my only desire in life is to say no to myself every day and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, forgive everybody. That's a very important thing. Jesus was always forgiving people who said things against him, did things against him.

And I want to ask you all sitting here, which I'll never stop asking, have you forgiven everybody in the world? Is there a single human being in the world whom you have not forgiven? Whatever they may have done to you, maybe your father and mother treated you badly, forgive them. Maybe they are dead and gone, forgive them. And anybody in the world, anywhere who has harmed you, forgive them.

I tell you it'll go well with you. Because I believe those who honor God, God will honor them. And seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, then as the Father loved Jesus, he will love you.

As he cared for Jesus, he'll care for you. You see, we live in a world as we read in the newspapers these days, how many women, helpless women, are being exploited in the workplace. Many of you sisters who travel in crowded buses, you see how evil the men around you can be towards you.

That's one of the dangers that young girls especially face in the world in which we are living. Who is there to protect you? I'll tell you. God.

You know the psalmist said in Psalm 27, it's a great verse, Psalm 27, verse 10. Psalm 27, verse 10. My father and my mother have forsaken me.

They kicked me out of the house. Think of a young girl. 20 years old.

She stands up for Jesus Christ. Kicked out of the house. That's happened to many people.

But the Lord will take me up. Isn't it good to have the Lord as your protection? Let me give you sisters some promises from Scripture. Especially to you sisters.

Turn to Zechariah chapter 2 and two promises here. Remember these promises. Underline them if you want to go to them later.

Zechariah chapter 2, verse 5. I says the Lord will be a wall of fire around her. That's for a woman. I will be a wall of fire around her.

A wall of fire in your office, in the bus, wherever you go, in crowded places. Verse 8, the last part. If anybody touches you, God says, he's touching the apple of my eye.

That means the center of your eye. You try touching it. No, no.

Don't touch it. I'm just saying that if you do touch it, it's a very painful thing. It's the most painful part of your body.

You touch it, it pains. There's no part of your body that you can touch and it pains except the eye. And the Lord takes it as the most sensitive part of your body.

The Lord says, if anybody touches you, my child, he's touching the apple of my eye. The sensitive part of me. Say, Lord Jesus, I want to be your disciple all my life.

Please fulfill these promises in me. I claim them. You can claim them.

It's for you. It's in your Bible. Turn also to Matthew chapter 10.

Here are a couple of other promises that you must keep in mind. You young sisters, who live in a dangerous world. Matthew 10, verse 28.

Don't even be afraid of people who try to kill you. What they're trying to do is much less than that. What do you mean they're trying to kill you? Don't be afraid.

Because, promise. How much is a sparrow worth? Verse 29. Two sparrows are sold for one cent.

And that was the smallest coin available those days. One paisa or five paisa. Two sparrows.

But, that means, you know, it's like, buy one, take one free. That's what those fellows who were selling sparrows were saying. You buy one sparrow for one cent, I'll give you one free.

And the Lord says, even that one you get free will not fall to the ground without your father. That's the point here. This is one of those buy one get one free instances.

And the one you got free will not fall to the ground without your father knowing about it. That is worth nothing. The other sparrow is for one cent.

This one is just thrown in because it's so worthless. Even that your father cares for. So, don't be afraid.

And the hairs on your head are numbered. That's a fantastic promise. None of us can count the hair on my head.

Even I can't do it. So little that I have. It's impossible.

But it's numbered. God knows. I don't know whether you believe it.

I believe God knows exactly the number of hairs on my head. The reason he says that is because that is the most insignificant part of our body which we are not afraid of losing one hair. I don't think any of you are afraid of losing one hair.

We are not. But even that one hair that falls on your pillow at night God sees it and says, hey, this guy's hair is reduced by one. I don't know whether you believe in it.

I believe scripture exactly. And I can tell you it's nearly 60 years that I've been converted and these promises are true. These are not something I just experienced for two or three days.

60 years. Believe me. Live in this.

Live in the promises of God. Don't live in fear. God is there to protect us, preserve us.

I mean, he allows Jesus to be killed finally. He allowed all the apostles to be killed. He may allow me to be killed for the gospel or you to be killed for the gospel.

Okay. Fine. That'll be an honor.

It'll really be an honor. So I'm not saying God will not allow that but I say it will not happen before his time. See, for example, I'll give you some... He loves you as he loved Jesus.

Here is an example. In John's Gospel, chapter 7, we read that the Pharisees and scribes and Pharisees were so upset with him that they sent some officers to catch him. John chapter 7. You know, he said some strong words.

He correcting them for, you know, in verse 22, 23, 24. You people circumcise a person on the Sabbath day and if I heal somebody on the Sabbath day, you make a big fuss about it and they got exposed and they got so angry because the crowd, verse 31, believed in him. They said, hey, this is the Messiah and many people, the chiefs and Pharisees were angry because everybody is accepting him whom they rejected and verse 30, they tried to seize him but they could not hold him.

Why? Because Jesus was more muscular? You mean 25 people come to catch Jesus and they could not catch him? Why? One reason. The hour which the father had appointed for him to be caught had not yet come. That's all.

And then, verse 32, the Pharisees said, okay, those are ordinary people we'll send some police officers, verse 32, to catch him. Police officers to catch him and they could not catch him. They came back, verse 45, and the Pharisees said, why didn't you bring him? You've never heard anybody speak like him.

Do you see how even the police officers could not catch him? Because he was protected. I've experienced that. When you honor God, God will honor you.

Believe me, we must have experiences in our life that we can look back to. I've got a number of experiences in my life where I can look back to. The people who tried to harm me could not do it.

In the days when I had a car, some enemies of mine tried to blow it up. Most of you don't know about it. But they didn't succeed.

They did something to set that car on fire when I was driving it. And it did not work. That's just one example.

It's wonderful to have examples in our life where God's protection, not only when we drive cars and scooters on the road, but when your enemies try to harm you. I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, as we come towards the end of the age, we're going to find the world becoming more and more anti-Christian. And against Christians also.

And against Christ. And if you happen to stand up for Christ, you're going to be a target. And they have all the details of your life.

Especially if you are a frequent writer on Facebook, they know everything about your life. They even know what you eat and drink, or where you go. They have all the details which you are providing them.

That's why I don't write on Facebook. I've got nothing to do with it. You give information to the enemy, and then one day you suffer.

Even earthly armies know it's dangerous. Be careful. Be wise.

Honor God. Spend more time reading the Bible than reading and writing things on Facebook. Read God's Word.

Honor Him. And He'll honor you. Until your hour comes, people will not be able to touch you.

And it must not be just a verse in the Bible. You must be able to say, I've experienced that in my life. That my Father loves me just like He loved Jesus.

That people come to catch me and they could not do it because my time had not yet come. People tried to kill me and they couldn't do it because my time had not yet come. Isn't it wonderful for all of us to have a few experiences like that? To know the tremendous care that Jesus has for us.

Especially you sisters who live in a very insecure world and you know, evil bosses who want to exploit you. To have God as a wall of fire around about you. But you also have to honor God, I believe.

Don't go to your place of work dressed in provocative, sexy dresses and tempt people and then say they harmed you. Always be modest in the way you dress. Honor God.

You sisters dress in a way that Jesus will be proud of you. Say, that's my sister. I'm proud of the way she dresses.

She's not trying to attract any man. God will protect you amazingly till the end of your life. We think of our children, small children growing up in a world which is so evil.

So many of the children now getting 12, 13 years old and beginning to use phones. It's a scary world, I tell you. What all they can your teenagers can get on their smart phone.

They can fall in love with a stranger on a smart phone. Somebody who pretends to be a Christian. There's a lot of that going on.

And they see all types of filthy pictures there. And even if you don't have one, there are others who got them, they'll show it to you. I hope you turn your eyes away.

I hope we teach our children to turn their eyes away from such pictures they may see in school from others. They're not evil, but others are. We have to protect them.

We have to be very strict in explaining to our children don't think they'll automatically be protected. The world in which we live is much worse than the world in which I brought up my children 35 years ago. Or 40 years ago.

It was much easier then. It's a very evil world. We are heading towards the coming of the Lord.

The world is getting more and more evil, especially in the area of sex and hatred and murder. Just like the days of Noah. Violence and sex.

Everywhere you newspapers are full of it. There's hardly a single day that you don't read of something of that in the newspaper. Every single day.

Those are the days we are heading into. The only way we can protect our children is if we teach them to honor God, just like you say, Lord, the way I honored you I want my children to honor you. Teach your children to live simply.

Not to be extravagant and wasting money. One of the blessings that many of us had in the early days of CFC was we were poor. Think those who were here in the early days of CFC.

How much money could you spend? You couldn't go everyday to a restaurant. You could never go to a restaurant. Too expensive.

You were protected from wasting money. Your children were protected. But how is it today? Money to throw around.

Be careful. If God gives you more money, He's testing you. When you had little, there was no test.

Because you didn't have anything. The test came only when you had plenty. To say that when there was no test, I passed.

But when the test came, I failed. That's serious. It's when we have plenty that we are tested.

Be very, very careful, brothers and sisters. So many of our problems come because we are careless in other areas. For example, sexual sin.

Here's one way to overcome sexual sin. One way. It's not the only way.

One is, of course, run away from immorality. Run away from that computer that is tempting you. Get up and go.

Don't sit there. But here's another way. Another way I can show you.

Ezekiel 16. Ezekiel 16. It speaks about Sodom.

Sodom. In verse 48. And Sodom was known for terrible sexual sin.

Evil. Homosexual sin. Men with men.

How did they come to that low level? When you sink to adultery, that's one level. And when you go still lower, that's the level Sodom came to. Read verse 49.

How they got there. How, Sodom, how in the world did you sink so low? I'll tell you. First of all, arrogance.

How do you fall into sexual sin? Number one, pride. Arrogance. You see, what is the connection between arrogance and sexual sin? Plenty.

Believe God's word. Second, so much of food, which in the early days you could not afford because you were poor. Now you can throw around your money and go here and there and eat and not care about wasting the money God's given you.

You're not faithful with money. We need to be disciplined in food. You know the Bible says there are only two things that can be an alternative master to God.

Luke 16.13 says money can be an alternative master, can be an alternative God to the true God. And Philippians 3. Verse 15 to 19. It says your stomach can be your God.

These are the two Gods the Bible speaks about. Money and your stomach and money. They are the competitors to Jesus Christ.

So the Bible says, read Philippians 3, those last few verses. And Luke 16.13 Abundant food leads to sexual sin. Careless ease, laziness, nothing to do.

The idle mind is the devil's workshop. Don't let your mind be idle. Don't be lazy.

If you've got nothing to do, pick up the Bible and read it. And that also leads to sexual sin. And the fourth, when you don't help poor people, you think everything is for you to spend on yourself.

That's why so many pastors fall into sexual sin. They collect money from people and spend it on themselves. When it's meant for the poor.

The money that comes in the offering box is meant for poor people. It's not for rich pastors to keep taking themselves. That's why we have taught in all our churches, never take one cent from the offering box for yourself.

And that's how we protect our elders from sexual sin. Care for the poor. We have done that abundantly in CFC churches through the years.

Think of these things seriously, my brothers and sisters. God will honor you if you honor him. Say, Lord, I'm a weak person.

Easily I can fall into sin. Even if you're 100 years old, you can fall into sin. Lord, please help me to rate myself as insignificant, weak, helpless.

So I want to cling to you. I want to keep my face in the dust, honor you, pursue after righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And then I know no one will be able to touch one hair on my head and I will be protected more than all the sparrows.

God will always be a wall of fire round about me. He will preserve me as the apple of his eye and he will honor me and you. That's how God wants us to live in these last days.

Let's preserve ourselves like that as zeros whom God will protect till the end of our lives. What a word, if we can live by this, if about each of us it can be said. Nobody could touch her because her hour had not yet come.

Nobody could touch him because his time had not yet come. I want to live in that all my life. How did the Father say about Jesus on the baptism at the age of 30? This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

I'll tell you how. As Jesus grew up in his home every day his attitude was Father is this pleasing to you? Whenever the thought comes to his mind or some doubt is this pleasing to you? No, and I won't do it. Is this pleasing to you? Yes, I'll do it.

What is pleasing to you now, Father? How shall I spend this day? What is your will for me? Day after day. When he was living at home day after day after day is this pleasing to you? Is it pleasing to you? Now these people are treating me like this, what should I do? What is pleasing to you? And the Father tells him how to react. His brothers did not believe in him.

He had four brothers who irritated him day and night in his house. But he did not sin. Can you imagine if you have four brothers younger to you, irritating you, irritating you, irritating you and two sisters also join and gang up with them.

To live one day in such a house will be a feat without sinning. Jesus lived 30 years. You know how? He said, Father I never want to say a word that will displease you.

I don't even want to have a thought towards my brothers and sisters that will displease you. I want to honor you. I want to honor you every day.

Am I pleasing to you? Am I pleasing to you? And at the end, no voice from heaven. For 30 years, no voice from heaven. Just an inner witness yeah, I think I'm pleasing to the Father.

Then one day, publicly, this is my beloved son in whom I've been well pleased for 30 years. Do you want to hear that? One day when Christ comes, he'll say that about you publicly. If now in your home, in your place of work, when you're driving, when everybody else is angry on the road, you say, Father what's pleasing to you? I want to please you.

Let's pray. Please think for a moment about what you've heard. Tremendous promises in God's word that are all for us.

Let's continue to rate ourselves as zeros till the end of our life, no matter how much God uses us or blesses us. Let's immediately put a curtain behind us and forget the things that are behind. And only look at the things that are ahead.

And constantly ask, Lord is my life pleasing to you? Are my words pleasing to you? The way I spoke today to my husband or wife throughout the day, was it pleasing to you? The way I corrected my children, was it the right way? Lord Jesus, my passion in life is to please you 24 hours a day and to honor you. I want to pursue righteousness and joy and peace and joy in my life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father I believe with all my heart that there are a number of people here today who have said those words right now to you.

They are weak. Some of them may not know their weakness. But help them Lord, to realize that they need your help the help of your Holy Spirit every day.

To seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To discipline themselves in the way they use their money, even in their eating habits, in their attitude to other people. Lord Jesus help us all so that really we will please you and one day we will hear those words from you when you come back.

Well done, good and faithful servant. That's all we want to live for. Thank you Father and please protect all our sisters in this dangerous world we pray.

Please protect these young sisters as they go to work and travel. From evil men, we ask you specifically, be a wall of fire around about them and keep them as the apple of your eye because they are your children. Thank you Father, we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

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