

How Our Joy Can Be Full

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of pursuing eternal life and fellowship with God to experience true joy and avoid the distractions of earthly concerns.

Duration: 58:48

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 22:39, Luke 6:31, Romans 14:17, 1 John 2:1, 1 John 2:20

Topics: "Joy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the return of Christ. He highlights two types of people: those who are ready to stand before the Lord and have their sins forgiven, and those who are afraid of their true lives being exposed. The speaker warns against being consumed by worldly desires, as it can hinder one's love for God and Jesus. He also criticizes the influence of certain movies and TV preachers, suggesting that they distract Christians from reading the Bible and developing discernment. The sermon concludes with a reminder to treat others as we would like to be treated and to live a life that aligns with the teachings of the Bible, which can bring true joy and eternal life.

Transcript

I want to turn to first letter of John. There are many reasons why this letter is perhaps more important than many of the other letters in the New Testament. You know, all the parts of the New Testament are not of equal importance.

They are all the word of God. But some parts of the New Testament are historical. They just describe what happened.

But there are other parts like the teaching of Jesus. Very, very important. And the epistles.

I would say those are the most important sections of scripture. The teachings of Jesus in the Gospels. And in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 and other places.

And all the epistles. But among the epistles, one John has got a special place of importance because it was written by John at the age of 95, after he had observed various types of Christians, various types of churches, the ups and downs of many believers, the ups and downs of many churches. He saw the condition of the churches in the book of Revelation.

And he is writing just four or five pages with a great burden inspired by the Holy Spirit. And I believe that it has a special relevance for the time in which we live. Because, I don't know whether you know, today in Christendom there is a lot of confusion concerning many, many things.

And it is good to go to listen to the words of an apostle who has walked with God for 65 years. So when you read this book, imagine that a 95-year-old man who has walked with God for 65 years, planted churches, done miracles and fellowship with God, the only living apostle left, all the others are killed, is speaking. You know, we give more weight to words spoken by more godly people.

The same words are spoken by some young person. It may be true, but we don't give as much weight to it. So, I have always looked at this letter of John as something that has a very deep message, particularly when seeking to teach God's word as to what I should emphasize in the last days.

It's amazing to see the number of things John doesn't even mention in his letter, in one John, which are some of the most popular subjects for preaching today. John spoke in tongues for 65 years, but he doesn't mention it in his letter. He healed the sick and raised the dead, but he doesn't mention anything about healing in his letter.

He doesn't mention a word about material prosperity, which a lot of preachers today say is the mark of God's blessing. Many other things about political situations. The Roman Empire was a very wicked and cruel empire.

The emperor was a godless man. Christians were being persecuted. But he doesn't talk anything about discussing government or politics, or what we should do to stand up for our rights.

The foolish, stupid things that many Christians today, who are not filled with the Holy Spirit, talk about. There were a lot of problems in the world in John's time. There was slavery, for example.

There were many slaves in those days. And he's not talking about them. He's not talking about how to help all the poor people in the world.

There were more poor people then than today. It's very easy for Christians to be taken up with many good things. The good can be the enemy of the best.

I want to say to all of you in Jesus' name. If you want to preserve yourself till the day Jesus comes, without going astray, read the first letter of John and see what he majors on. He first of all speaks about life.

He says, we have heard when John won. And we have seen with our eyes. And we have touched this word of life.

He's writing to people who have never seen Jesus Christ. And he says, I saw him. And what I touched was that eternal life, verse 2, which was with the Father.

When I touched Christ, I saw his life. What I saw was that eternal life which was with the Father. And that's what we proclaim to you.

He is not talking about doctrine. He's not talking about physical healing and material prosperity. He's talking about a life which is with the Father from the beginning.

He says, that is our message. He speaks about eternal life. When you go to the end of his letter, You see what he says towards almost the last verse in chapter 5. He says in verse 20, We know the Son of God has come.

He's given us understanding. Chapter 5, 20. That we may know him who is true.

That is God. And we are in him who is true. And in his Son Jesus Christ.

This is the true God. And eternal life. Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

From anything other than this true God and eternal life. When you begin to worship something else. When you worship material prosperity.

When you worship physical healing. When you worship anything other than this true God and eternal life. It is idolatry.

Little children, guard yourselves from idols. And in the beginning he says, The purpose of our proclaiming this. Verse 3. Is so that we can have fellowship.

That you believers can have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father. The purpose of proclaiming this life is that we can have a two way fellowship.

Fellowship in the vertical direction. With God. Fellowship between us as believers.

If you are pursuing life. Eternal life. And not other idols.

One of the results will be. That your fellowship with God will become deeper. And your fellowship with other believers will also become deeper.

So the two subjects that John speaks about are life and fellowship. Because that's what existed from eternity. Way back in eternity before there was a world.

And before there was a universe. Before there were angels. Before there were demons and sin and Adam and Eve.

Long before that when only God existed. What was there? There were no doctrines. There was no baptism.

There was no tongues. There was no healing. There was no prosperity.

There were no material things. But there was something else. Eternal life.

That existed then. And fellowship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That existed.

And when we look into the future in heaven. All these other things that we have temporarily on this earth will also disappear. But eternal life and fellowship will continue for all eternity.

And in this short period. Between eternity past and eternity future. God is gathering together a people.

Who have understanding of this. And who come into that thing which existed in eternity. See eternal life we can say is like a long line.

Began in eternity past. Eternity future. And here we are down on this earth.

God says you can come into that line. And be a part of that. Instead of living down here.

Occupied with all types of problems. And trying to get on in this world. And then verse 4. We are writing to you these things.

So that our joy may be made full. And your joy will be full too. Jesus often spoke about our joy being full.

That is a mark of people. Who have come into this experience of eternal life. I will tell you this.

Because I am absolutely convinced about it. The only people on earth. Who can rejoice in the Lord 24 hours a day.

7 days a week. Like the Bible says. Are those who pursue this eternal life with the father.

Don't think all these people whom you watch preaching on television. Have got joy 24 hours a day 7 days a week. They look very joyful when they are on the platform.

If you look at their private life. Many of them lose their temper. They get upset.

They are depressed. Even though they have got money and millions. And talk about prosperity and houses and lands and cars etc.

John didn't have all that. But he had something else that would last for all eternity. Joy that was full.

And to me that is the test. In the Old Testament. They had righteousness without joy.

No, they had no joy in the Old Testament. They had righteousness. You look up a word like righteousness.

And it's found plenty of it in the Old Testament. Israel pursued righteousness it says in Romans. But what did they get? They got a legalistic righteousness.

And the mark of people who are legalistic. Is this. They can't rejoice all the time.

Because they are disturbed when somebody else doesn't fit in. With their understanding of righteousness. It doesn't matter what it is.

Some people want to keep the Sabbath. And some people have other rules about various things. The Pharisees had rules about washing their hands.

And today Christians have many many rules which they try to impose on others. You will see one mark of all these people. You will see them very often.

The long faces and gloomy. Because there is no joy in legalistic righteousness. And if your joy is not full.

Ask yourself. Whether you are a legalist. Or whether you are not pursuing eternal life.

But something else. The Lord wants our joy to be full. The kingdom of God is what Jesus brought.

Until then throughout the Old Testament. They had a kingdom of earth. Everything that God promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their children.

Was earthly. Please remember this. Everything from Genesis chapter 12.

What God chose Abraham. Right up to the end of Malachi. Was earthly.

He never promised them anything in heaven. Many earthly blessings. Long life.

Many children. Lot of prosperity. Your enemies will be defeated.

You will always be on top. You will never be in debt. You will have plenty of money.

So many things. But heavenly things. Zero.

And here was an earth that lived like that. Here was a nation of Israel that lived like that for 1500 years. Their whole mind was occupied with earthly things.

Oh God is going to bless me. And if sickness and drought came. You know God hadn't blessed them.

They were defeated by their enemies. They were killed. God hadn't blessed them.

If they could be thrown into a lion's den. And the lions wouldn't touch them. God would bless them.

If they were thrown into the fire. And the fire wouldn't touch them. God hadn't blessed them.

And then came the last prophet. The forerunner of Jesus Christ. He said, tell us in Israel, listen.

Turn around now. Turn around from what? They've been occupied not only with sin. But with earthly things.

When John the Baptist said repent. Repent means turn about. It's not just sin.

Repentance is not just turning from sin. That itself is a great thing. But Israel that is occupied with earthly blessings.

Turn around now. Because the kingdom of heaven is coming. That was the message of the new covenant.

The beginning. Turn around from this kingdom of earth. Those who want to turn around.

Those who want to be occupied with the kingdom of earth. Stick there. You know what is the message I would preach to today's Christians? Turn around from facing the kingdom of earth.

Because the kingdom of heaven is near. It's already come. But most Christians haven't experienced it.

Because their mind is set on earthly things. It's right to use earthly things. It's wrong to have our mind set on earthly things.

It's a question of where my mind is set. I may have to work with earthly things. I have to work in a job.

Look after my family. Go to the store. Buy so many things.

Etc, etc, etc. But it's a question of where my mind is set. That's the test.

And John the Baptist is the forerunner to prepare people for the first coming of Christ. And he said, if you want to be prepared, turn from being occupied with earthly things to heavenly things. Because the

kingdom of heaven is near.

The apostles preached that. Paul preached. Ephesians 1.3 Blessed be God our Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Which is different from every earthly blessing, every material blessing in the earthly places in Moses. So you have a contrast. Every material blessing, physical blessing in earthly places in Moses.

Or every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And the message of John the Baptist was turn from this to that. And I believe this.

That a person who is really turned and set his mind on the things that are above. One proof of it will be. Because it is very easy to deceive ourselves.

One proof of it will be our joy will be full. Turn to Romans 14 and verse 17 where it speaks about this new kingdom. Romans 14 and verse 17 it says.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. And we could add a lot of things to eating and drinking. It's not clothes.

It's not fun. It's not entertainment. Does it mean we shouldn't have fun and entertainment? Sure.

Is he saying that we shouldn't eat and drink? Is he saying that we shouldn't dress decently? Is he saying we shouldn't take care of our appearance? No. But he says that's not the main thing in God's kingdom. If your mind is set on eating and drinking.

And what shall we wear? And what shall we eat? And what shall we drink? And what shall we do and hear? And that and the other and the other and the other. And where shall I invest my money? And where shall I do this? And where shall I do that? You can do all these things. But when your mind is set on these things.

I'll tell you. Without knowing anything about your life. I can tell you.

You do not rejoice always. How do I know that? It is impossible. You rejoice some of the time.

But you are gloomy, depressed, angry many times. And we are trying to overcome these things. You hear messages about overcoming anger.

And overcoming anxiety. And overcoming depression. Overcoming discouragement.

I'd like to have that life. I'll tell you how you can have that life. Turn from being occupied with earthly things.

And set your mind on heavenly things. But many people. They want to be occupied with the earthly things.

And have joy and peace. And freedom from fear and anxiety. It is impossible.

If you want freedom. You have to give up something. You heard that story of that little girl.

Whose hand was caught in a flower vase. She couldn't pull it out. And so mummy came along and said.

She said my hand is stuck. The little girl said. Mummy said come on.

Straighten your fingers. And you can pull it out. She said I can't straighten my fingers.

Because I'm holding a coin there. I don't want to leave that. How will you be released then? You'll be stuck to the vase for the rest of your life.

That's how it is. There is something you hold on to. You say I want freedom from depression.

I want freedom from anger and anxiety. Straighten your hands. Release it.

The thing you are holding on to. It will come out very easily. I read a book once.

The title of which was. The happiest people on earth. Now.

I don't think the book described exactly. How we could be the happiest people on earth. But I certainly believe one thing.

That a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Whose repented of being occupied with earthly things. Like Israel.

Set his mind on the things that are above. That is life. Eternal life.

And fellowship. Will be such a person. Will be the happiest person on earth.

I believe that. With all my heart. I've experienced a little bit of it.

We want to build churches. Where people can testify that they have experienced something of it. That's the whole purpose of.

Preaching and teaching in our churches. The message of John the Baptist. Repent.

Turn around. For the kingdom of heaven. Today we don't say it's a tent.

It's here. The kingdom of heaven is here. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.

But what is it? It says here. It's righteousness. Well that's Old Testament.

No. But here's more. Righteousness with.

Peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Brings a righteousness.

Which makes us full of joy. And frees us from. Anxiety and fear.

That's peace. Peace is a freedom. From anxiety.

And from fear. We are to be totally free. From anxiety and fear.

Isn't that a good life to live? A life of complete freedom from. Anxiety and fear about the future. Concerning what's going to happen to me.

Whom will I get married to? What job can I get? What about a house to live in? What about my children? Etc. There are so many fears and anxieties. Which everybody in the world has.

But we can be free from that. We can have a concern. For our children.

But not anxiety about our children. We have to be completely free. Do you know my brothers and sisters.

If you call yourself a Christian. You're supposed to be totally free from fear. As much as you're supposed to be totally free from sin.

Jesus said. Do not be anxious even about tomorrow. Leave alone next year and the year after.

Do we take those commands seriously? Maybe you do. You say. I want to be.

I want to live that life. I want to be free from anxiety. I want to be free from fear.

And the other thing mentioned here is joy. Joy means total freedom from depression. Bad moods.

Gloom. Discouragement. Self-condemnation.

Everything. People say. I want that life.

But you can't have that life. Unless you seek the kingdom of God. Which is the kingdom of heaven.

If you're seeking a kingdom of earth. And we want those things. It is impossible.

So that's why John speaks about. He says. I don't want to talk about all these other things.

I want to speak about eternal life and fellowship. That your joy may be full. So I want to say to every one of you.

You could have been a believer. Just one or two years. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And if you're really filled with the Holy Spirit. You know that song we sing. Heaven came down and glory filled my soul.

It's one of the best ways to say what the Holy Spirit does. He brings the spirit of heaven. Down to our heart.

What I can't understand today is. A lot of preachers. Who say they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

But their whole mind is occupied with earthly things. And heaven hasn't come down. No.

Heaven is still there. Heaven is not in their hearts. You look into their hearts.

They are thinking of. How to become healthy and wealthy. Not even wise.

Just healthy and wealthy. This is the deception that's going on today. And so John in his letter.

Speaks about. This deception. See he says.

Why am I writing this? I am writing this. Verse. Chapter 2. Verse 26.

You ask John. John. Why are you writing this? These things.

I have written to you. Concerning those who are trying to deceive you. See how John is concerned about deception.

Sixty five years after walking with the Lord. And looking at the state of Christians in his day. He says.

I am writing to you about people who are trying to deceive you. That's why I have written this letter. To protect you from deception.

You have an anointing. The Holy Spirit within you. You don't need anybody to tell you.

When you listen to someone. That that is not the truth. It's wonderful.

I believe that even a new believer. If he is filled with the Holy Spirit. Can listen to a preacher.

And say. Hey. That doesn't sound like the Spirit of Christ.

The Holy Spirit. He doesn't need to have some read books. Or even have come to our church.

The Holy Spirit will tell him. But what happens is this new believer. When he goes to a church.

And he hears all that teaching on earthly things. And which everybody else is excited about. And he feels in his heart.

Hey. This is not what Jesus and the apostles speak about. And he continues to go to that church.

After some time. He will be brainwashed. He will believe that.

That is the way. And that perhaps he was wrong. And that is how thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of people.

Are being deceived today. So. He says.

This anointing will teach you all things. So little children. Verse 28 of chapter 2. Abide in him.

So that when he appears. There are going to be two types of people. When Christ appears.

Among believers. He is talking about children. Who are God's children.

Little children. He is not talking to the unbelievers. I want to tell you.

When Jesus comes again. Some of you children. Will shrink away.

From him. In shame. Recognizing the things you lived for in that day.

And others. Will have confidence. Yes Lord.

I am ready to meet you. I am ready to stand at your judgment seat. That you can examine every area of my life.

Expose it. So that people can see what I lived for. And there are other people who say.

Oh Lord. Don't expose my life. Don't let everybody around know what I lived for.

When I was on earth. They are the ones who shrink away from him in shame. In this congregation.

There will be two types of people. I am not here to judge. Because I don't know your private life.

I don't know what's going on in your mind. I don't know what you think in your heart. But I will tell you one thing without a doubt.

This verse teaches very clearly. There will be two types of people. If Christ were to come right now.

Some would say. Great Lord. I am ready.

Not just for heaven. But to stand before you. And for you to expose my whole life.

So that you can show people what I lived for. My sins have been forgiven. That's blotted out.

What did I live for after that? And there are others. Who will say. Great Lord.

I am glad to be in heaven. But please don't ever display what I lived for on earth. Don't put that video tape on the screen.

For all believers to see. Because I fooled everybody on earth. That I was very spiritual.

People didn't know how I lived at home. They only saw how I behaved in the church meetings on Sundays. Little children.

Abide in him. This is John the Apostle speaking. 95 year old man.

Forget for a moment who is standing here. Think of John the Apostle standing here. White haired.

95 year old man saying. Little children. Abide in Christ.

He is coming. Have confidence when he comes. Don't be among those who will shrink away in shame.

Because they did not live for the things he lived for. He also speaks about the Antichrist. In verse 18.

That is the spirit of deception. See what is the Antichrist? You know what Anti means. Anti means against or opposite.

If people do something which is the opposite of what Christ did. We could say that is the Antichrist. Now there could be a big measure of it or a small measure of it.

That is different. But anything that is opposite to the spirit of Christ. That is how I see the Antichrist.

In chapter 2 verse 18. He is speaking about saying children it is the last hour. Think of that.

In 95 AD. 1900 years ago. It was already the last hour.

Clock had already come to 11 PM. If it was 11 PM. In AD 95.

Where do you think we are today? I think we are past 11.59. We are pretty close. To the end. The seconds are ticking away.

It is like a person watching when midnight is going to come. It is past 11.59 now. Do you believe that? I believe it.

Jesus said behold I come quickly. Come Lord Jesus. It is the last hour.

And just as you heard. That one main Antichrist is going to come. In the last days.

Yeah that John believes. But. There are many little Antichrist that have already appeared.

From this we know that it is the last hour. That is what we saw in verse 26. Those who deceive you.

That means they teach the opposite of what Christ taught. Anyone who is teaching the opposite of what Christ taught is the Antichrist. Now you wouldn't think of Antichrist having a Bible would you? Well if he didn't have a Bible he wouldn't be able to deceive you.

If he came with some other holy book. Of some other religion. He wouldn't be able to deceive you as a Christian.

To deceive a Christian. The deceiver will need a Bible. And you need to believe what you believe.

You need to have a sheep's clothing. And. It says here that they were with us once upon a time.

That means these Antichrist were sitting in the church. Verse 19. And they went out from us.

After some time. Because they didn't really belong to us. How did they go out? They went out because the Apostle John preached so strongly.

That these guys could not survive in that church. They came. Thinking that they could get some power in that church.

But John the Apostle would thunder away. Jesus called him a son of thunder. And he would thunder away with his message.

And little by little these fellows who didn't want to repent. Dropped out and went away. Some people repented and probably became a part of that church.

But the others who didn't repent went away. And he says these Antichrist sat here. But they went away.

They tried to take over this church but they couldn't. That's why it's a great need in our day. For shepherds to watch the flock.

To be able to say like Paul. I watched over you that no wolf came in sight as long as I was here. So he says they went out from us.

Because if they had been of us. They would have remained with us. They would have accepted the message of eternal life.

And fellowship. But they wanted something else. Demas left Paul because he loved this present world.

And he says they went out so that it can be seen. That they did not belong to us. And he says when you look at them today.

I'm talking about first century. Think of these people who sat in churches where John was preaching. Imagine.

I would never want to leave a church where the apostle John was preaching. Why would I want to leave that? The greatest man of God living on earth. Preaching in that church.

Why would I want to leave that? With those powerful anointed messages to leave that for what? People would leave because their sin is being exposed by this man. This man does not allow them to be worldly. This man will not allow those women to dress immodestly and come to his church.

They want to do that. They want to dress up like the actresses on the theater. John says go.

And the men who wanted to pursue after money and make a name for themselves. John says go. You can't survive here.

And that's why they left. That was more. Those earthly things were more important to them than what John preached.

Eternal life. And fellowship. John spoke about loving one another.

He said if you can't love your brother. You sit here and you gossip and backbite against others. You're a liar.

You don't love God at all. Because you don't love your brother. Would you backbite against somebody you love? Do you backbite against your daughter or your son? No.

Because you love them. Why do you backbite and gossip about somebody else? Because you don't love them. And John says if you don't love them.

You don't love God. He says that in 1 John 4.19. You're a liar. You're not a believer.

You're a liar. Imagine sitting listening to this type of preaching. And people get offended.

And say, John, oh, he's such a hard preacher. I like those nice preachers like Demas and all. I'd like to go and listen to him.

John says, go. There are hundreds of Demases. Go and listen to them.

They've also planted churches. And their churches are much bigger than mine, John says. Go and join them.

But if you sit here, John would say. You're going to listen to eternal life and holiness. You've got to love one another.

You've got to forgive others. You've got to keep God's commandments. So those are the type of things people didn't want to hear.

And so they went out from us. And John says there, you have an anointing. Verse 20.

You've got the Holy Spirit and you know. What are some of the things that John preached about? I want to turn first of all to chapter 2 verse 1. You know, this is the whole purpose is that our joy may be full. Remember, that's a test of whether you've got the kingdom of God.

Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And if you've got the message that John is trying to preach, your joy will be full. And anybody here whose joy is not full, listen to what John is preaching.

Because your joy can be full. First of all, why is John writing? Chapter 2 verse 1. You know, I'm glad that he writes these little sentences. My children, this is why I'm writing this letter.

Okay, number 1. Chapter 2 verse 1. My little children. Everybody there was like a child compared to this 95 year old John. I'm writing these things to you first of all, so that you may not sin.

Where do you hear that message today? Do you hear a man getting up and saying, I'm preaching so that you fellows who listen to me don't sin in your life. That's not the message you hear. It's not the message you hear on television.

It's not the message that you hear in many pulpits. What you hear there is, Oh, you're so insecure. God loves you.

It's true God loves you. But He loves you so much that He hates those wretched sins in your life. I can't say I love my child if I don't do anything about all the sicknesses in his body.

What would you think of a mother who's got a child with so many sicknesses. Oh, I love my child. I love my child.

But I won't ever take him to a doctor. I won't ever give him any medicine. I say, you're a liar.

You don't love your child. Oh, I feed him, I clothe him. What's he was feeding him and clothing him? He's sick.

He needs treatment. That's what John is saying. Don't be fooled by all these people who say God loves you.

You're so insecure. I want to tell you that God loves you. That's psychology.

You're insecure because you're living in sin. You need to turn. God has a right over your life.

He purchased you. What would you think of a man who sold his house, got the money and still refuses to move out of his house? Would you do that? Would any of you do that? Somebody buys your house. He gives you a good payment for it.

Double the price in the market. And instead of being thankful, you sit there and say, I will not move out of my house. That's what a lot of Christians are doing.

The Bible says, Jesus purchased us, our body, our soul, our spirit on the cross of Calvary. Completely. With his blood.

How much is that? How many millions of rupees is that blood worth? He purchased it. And he said, I want to take possession. I want to take possession of your body, your eyes, your tongue, your hands, your money, your life, your ambitions, everything.

You say, no, I'm not going to move out. I'm going to read whatever I like. I'm going to look whatever I like.

I'm going to watch internet pornography. I'm going to speak what I like. I'm going to use my money as I like.

I don't want to move out. I'm owner here. Hey, it's been purchased, man.

You were bought with a price, the Bible says. Now, I can understand people who are ignorant of this. I mean, I'm not talking about non-Christians.

They don't even know that Jesus Christ purchased, that the sale deed was signed. Now, if a man doesn't know that his house was bought and paid for and sale deed signed, then of course you can't blame him. But what about us who are sitting here? We say we believe that Christ purchased us.

Have you moved out? Have you handed over the body to Him? Have you handed over your mind to Him? Have you handed over your ambitions to Him? That's Christianity. Don't sin. My little children, I'm writing to you this letter to teach you not to sin.

Take sin seriously. It's worse than any sickness you got. Think if you got a blood test and tomorrow the report comes out that you have got AIDS.

Would you sleep peacefully? You'd hide it from everybody, sure. That I can understand. But would you sleep peacefully? And supposing there was a total cure for it in some place in North India.

Would you travel there to get the cure? Or would you say, oh, that's too far. Who's going to go there? I tell you, you'll take a flight. You'll save all your money and go there because AIDS is so terrible.

Shall I tell you that sin is worse than AIDS? Shall I tell you that Jesus did not die for AIDS. He died for sin. People can have AIDS and go to heaven.

I know people like that. They got it in their unconverted days and after that they repented and they went to heaven. They never got cured, but they went to heaven.

So AIDS cannot send anybody to hell. But sin can send people to hell. Which is worse then? Little children, I'm writing to you that you may not sin.

And this is John towards the end of his life. 65 years he's been telling people, don't sin, don't sin, don't sin. You go to John and say, John, we've heard that for 65 years.

Don't you have any other message? No. Because everybody else, all these antichrists are not preaching it. Jesus preached it.

And he says, if I'm the only witness left on this earth in this first century, John says, I'll preach it till I die. That's what I say too. I will preach till the end of my life.

Even if I'm the only preacher left preaching it. My little children, don't sin. It was your sin that nailed Jesus to the cross.

Not the nails, your sin. Any, what is sin? Sin is anything that is unchrist-like in your life. If you want a definition.

You say, how do I know what's unchrist-like? Read the Bible. Your conscience will tell you. Do you do to other people what you don't want other people to do to you? That's sin.

Jesus said in Matthew 7.12, Do unto others as you want other people to do to you. Do you want other people to gossip about you? No. Then don't gossip about them.

Do you want other people to cheat you? No. Then don't cheat them. Do unto others as you want them to do to you.

When you violate that, you sin. You know what Jesus said in Matthew 7.12? If you don't know that verse, though some here may not know it, but I'd like to show it to you. It's not everything, but I think it's a good law to think of.

Matthew 7.12 In everything, in everything, in everything in your life, treat people the same way you want them to treat you. For this is the message of the whole Bible. Those are Jesus' words.

That expression, law and the prophets, is an expression for the Old Testament, which was the only Bible they had those days. The law and the prophets is an expression for the Old Testament Bible. So let me read it to you.

This is the message of the whole Bible. Can I say the same thing today? This is the message of the whole Bible. Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.

Or as the message of the Bible says, ask yourself what you want people to do for you. Ask yourself what you want people to do for you. Then, grab the initiative and do that for them.

Ask yourself, what do I want people to do for me? Sudden such a thing? Okay. You jump up and do that first for them. Boy! Can you imagine what your life will be like if you live by that one verse? There are 31,175 verses in the Bible.

Out of all that, if you live by just one. Can you imagine what will happen to your life? My little children, these things I am writing to you that you may not sin. That's why I am writing this letter.

Then he goes on in 1 John 2, 1 say, But, I realize that some of you are not wholehearted and even those who are wholehearted, sometimes they can be careless and they can sin. Then what do you do? Believers also fall into sin and they must immediately repent and go to their advocates. Because, as soon as you commit a sin, the prosecutor, and the prosecutor by the way is not the devil.

The devil has got no right to prosecute me. The prosecutor in the court is the law of God, which is perfect. The devil is a bigger sinner than me.

How can he prosecute me? He is an accuser. He is not a prosecutor. The prosecutor in the court is the law of God.

The law of God watches and says, There, he sinned. I must quickly go to the advocate. It's a court scene.

God, the father is the judge. Law of God is accusing, prosecuting me. And it's true.

I've done something wrong. I've got to go to the advocate. We have an advocate with the father.

This advocate is on my side. Do you know the advocate, Jesus, is on your side? Do you know that Jesus is not a prosecutor? How many of you know that? That God is not a prosecutor. That Jesus is not a prosecutor.

You don't have to be afraid of the judge. You don't have to be afraid of Jesus. It's the law of God that is prosecuting you.

Your conscience, in which a little bit of that law is written, is prosecuting you. Forget the devil. Your own conscience is telling you, what you said was rude.

What you did to that person was wrong. Jesus would not do that. Jesus would not speak like that, the way you spoke.

Who's telling you that? Not the devil. Your conscience. The prosecutor.

Run to the advocate. Say, Lord Jesus, please plead my cause. I've sinned.

Don't tell lies to the advocate, saying, I haven't sinned. Don't blame your wife, like Adam blamed his wife. No, just say, Lord, it's my fault.

Like the thief on the cross. Lord, it's my fault. I deserve it.

The advocate will plead your cause. He's a righteous advocate. He won't tell lies.

It says here, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he has paid the price. He solved the sin problem for good.

The whole world's sins, he took care of. So I can go to him and be cleansed. But if I don't confess it, I don't acknowledge my sin, I don't say that it was wrong, I don't go to that person whom I wronged and say, I'm sorry, brother, that was wrong on my part.

You don't do that. Then you're saying that, I've not sinned. Then Jesus Christ, the righteous advocate, cannot plead your cause.

He'll plead the cause of any man who's honest about his sin and says, I'm to blame. So John is very balanced. He doesn't just say, these things I write unto you that you don't sin.

Full stop. I mean, if he had said full stop after that, what about somebody who sins? He's led by the Holy Spirit. He says, I realize sometimes you may fall.

But when you fall, do this. Immediately he said it right. So that's the first thing.

He says, I'm writing these things to you that you may not sin. And he goes on to say, in that connection, keep his commandments, verse 3. Don't say, verse 4, I know God, and you don't keep his commandments. Then you're a liar.

You know there are two people whom John calls a liar. We saw already one earlier in the end of chapter 4. He who does not love his brother and says he loves God is a liar. Here's another liar.

The one who says, I know the Lord, but you don't keep his commandments. You're a liar. Do you know the number of liars there are among believers? Liars.

John says, I won't call you a believer. You're a liar. If you know the Lord, you'll keep his commandments.

Why? Why don't little children, why doesn't a little 5-year-old or even a 10-year-old and sometimes even an 18-year-old not obey their parents? Why do they think, oh, they know better than their parents. They think they know their parents. No, I'm not going to do that, mom.

I'm not going to do that, dad. I know better. They don't know their parents.

They disobey their parents' advice because they don't know their parents. They think they know better than their parents. I mean you start that even with a 1-year-old.

You take a knife out of the hand of a 1-year-old, the 1-year-old will scream. He thinks, mommy is being so hard taking away that knife from me. It's so shiny, I like it so much.

That little boy doesn't know that his mother loves him. And when mommy says, don't take that knife, don't go and stick your hand into that plug socket. He doesn't know.

Mommy is saying for your good. And when we don't obey God's commandments, we are like that 1-year-old who is saying, no, no, no, I can take care of myself. We get into all types of problems because we don't know God.

If you knew God, you would know Him as more loving than your mother and father and more eager to protect you from all types of dangers that your parents protected you from. Aren't you thankful for your parents who protected you from so many dangers when you were small by giving you certain rules? Why does a parent tell their teenage girl, I want you home by so and so time in the evening? You think that's so strict to be home by such and such a time. It's for your protection.

Think of all the young girls who never listen to their parents and their condition today. Every command your parents give concerning these earthly things, even unconverted parents concerning earthly things, they have a lot of wisdom for their children. And I say, those parents, unconverted parents, have wisdom concerning their children.

You think our Heavenly Father doesn't have wisdom concerning the things He commands me? When He commands me to forgive all those who have harmed me, it's because He wants me to sleep peacefully at night. Look at all those people who don't forgive others. Go and ask them what they think about when they are sleeping at night.

What will He do? What will I do? If He says this to me and I'll tell Him this and if He replies like this, I'll tell Him this. It's already 2.30 in the morning and I'm still thinking about how to deal with that fellow. You want to sleep like that? The Lord says, forgive him.

Every command He gives is for our good. Everything. When He says, turn your eyes away from lusting after women who are not your wife.

It's for your good. Why do you want to have dirty dreams at night when He tells you not to watch internet pornography? Why does He say that? It's for your good. Do you know you'll suffer with it for all your married life if you do it.

Go and ask married people who watch pornography if they are free from those thoughts in their mind. 30 years after they watch it they are still plagued. God wants to protect you.

Don't sin. Chapter 2, verse 15. Don't love the world.

Anyone who loves the world and loves the Father is not in Him. And I like it in the Message Bible. It says, love for the world squeezes out love for your Heavenly Father.

You know that's what happens? The more I love the world, the love for my Heavenly Father and for Jesus gets squeezed out. Love for the world occupies my heart. Be careful about the movies you watch.

I am absolutely convinced that the movies that Christians watch these days around the world are leading to two things. One, they don't have time to read the Bible. And they are ignorant of the Bible so all the deceivers can flourish.

How is it that so many Christians can watch these television preachers on television and not have discernment as to where they are leading them. Even though having watched them for years they still are depressed, they still get angry, they still lose their temper, they still get anxious and fearful. What have all these TV preachers helped you? They don't see it.

You know why? Oh, but he teaches what is in the word. She teaches what is in the word. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

You know why you don't have discernment? You don't have time to read the Bible. The second thing is you are watching movies. You don't have time to read the Bible.

Think of hours you spend watching television and the time you spend reading the Bible. Which are you going to know better? You know. I am not talking about the hours you spend at work.

That's necessary. I am talking about the hours you spend in relaxation. And the second thing that happens is our moral standards go down.

Sensitivity to sin becomes less and less and less and less and less. See if it's not true. I don't know your private life but see in your life if your conscience hasn't become less and less sensitive to sin, you know what the cause of it is? The movies you watch.

The type of soap operas you watch on television. The endless serials. I have only heard about them.

I think there are some endless serials. Some people have told me there are such things. Dear brothers and sisters, be careful.

For all that is in the world and I want to read this to you from the Message Bible. What is in the world? Three things. Wanting your own way.

Wanting everything for yourself. And wanting to appear important. That's how he describes lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Wanting your own way. I agree with that. That is the root of all sin.

The lust of the flesh is wanting your own way. I want this for myself. Your flesh says, I want it, I want it.

Lust of the eyes. Wanting everything for yourself. Everything that you see.

I want to get that, I want to get that. Covetousness. And that's why all these preachers who preach prosperity have a great time.

Because they know sitting in front of them are a bunch of covetous people who want a lot of earthly things. And they say, Jesus can give it to you. But come and sow your seed, they say.

Give some money in the box. Deceivers of the first rate. Wanting your own way, wanting everything and wanting to appear important before others.

Instead of wanting to do the will of God. And he who wants to do the will of God is all set for eternity. I like that.

If you want to be all set for eternity change your wants. I'm writing to you concerning those who deceive you. Those who deceive you will not tell you these things.

The Antichrist will not tell you these things. The Antichrist will only tell you what will take you away from Christ. I think of many brothers and sisters who have been in this church for many years.

I want you to ask yourself an honest question today. Many things may have changed. Maybe your style of dress has changed.

You've got a better job. All that is okay. But ask yourself.

I'm not worried about all that. I'm not here to give a person check up on that. Has your conscience become less sensitive to sin than it was when you first came to CFC? I'm not talking about legalism.

I'm talking about sin. That which is unlike Christ. Has your conscience become less sensitive to that? Then you're going in the wrong direction.

Let's wake up before it is too late. May God help us to turn to Him. Whoever we are.

I should tell you this before I close. You know, in 1 John chapter 2 it just struck me that He says, I'm writing to you. Verse 12.

I'm writing to you little children. Verse 13. I'm writing to you fathers.

I'm writing to you young men. You know, in the Christian life there are three stages. Your first little children.

Then you come to the level of, you know, like young men. And then you become fathers. To all three of you.

To all three of you. I say, verse 15. Don't love the world.

That's what I wanted to say. It's not just the little children. Maybe you're a spiritual father.

I know I am. Do you know what God's word is to me? Don't love money. Don't love the world.

Don't want your own way in everything. Yield. Let the other fellow have his way.

Don't want everything that you see. To me, a father, yes. John says to you.

Little children. Whatever stage you are in the Christian life. Be careful of the spirit of the world.

It's all around us. It's around us and the preachers and what we see. The Christian television as well.

Be careful. So that when Christ comes. You will not shrink.

But have confidence. And before he comes. We can live with a fullness of joy.

You know that will even add to your health. The Bible says a merry heart. Is just good like a medicine.

Imagine a man who's full of joy. He'll be very healthy. Compared to others who are sick.

So in every way. What our father tells us is for our good. Let's pray.

Bow our heads before God. Behold what manner of love God has bestowed on us. That we should be called the children of God.

And that he has given us so many commandments which are for our good. How we praise God. That we know his word and his truth.

In a world where so many are ignorant. You young people are so lucky. So blessed I would say.

Because. You've heard these things from youth. You can live your whole life for him.

Who died for you. Turn around. From the kingdom of earth.

And seek the things which are above. Where Christ sits at the right hand of the father. And you won't have any regret when Christ comes again.

Heavenly father. Help us each one. I believe there are people calling out to you right now in their hearts.

Give them a witness in their heart. That you will give them the power of your Holy Spirit. To live this life.

For we cannot live it on our own. In Jesus name. Amen.

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