

How Spiritual Decline Begins

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a deep love for Jesus Christ and staying connected to Him, highlighting the significance of reading the Old Testament for instruction and hope. It warns against drifting away from the Lord, using examples from the Old Testament like Adam and Eve, Moses, and Joshua to illustrate the consequences of losing focus. The speaker encourages believers to be like encouragers, bringing the presence of Christ into their churches through humility, love, and faithfulness.

Scripture: Romans 15:4, Matthew 22:37, 2 Corinthians 2:13, Acts 20:31, Revelation 2:1, Judges 2:8

Topics: "Love for Christ", "Staying Connected to God"

Description

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Transcript

Okay, I'd like to begin with the verse in Romans in chapter 15. Romans chapter 15 and verse 4. Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction so that through perseverance or patience and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope and when Paul wrote that what he's referring to of what was written in earlier times scripture is the Old Testament. So here is the Holy Spirit is saying that we should read the Old Testament which will give you hope and understanding of God's ways.

I've learned a lot of things we're not under the old covenant. We teach in all of our churches we are under a new covenant and the blessings of the new covenant are ours. But there are many lessons we can learn from the Old Testament scriptures of the mistakes people make because human nature is basically the same.

You read about Genesis 3 the way Adam and Eve went for knowledge more than life. They had an option to choose knowledge or life and they chose knowledge. What do I learn from that? I have learned that most believers go for knowledge more than life even today and that knowledge brought death to Adam and it brings death to believers today.

What do I mean by knowledge? You know studying the scriptures, watching a lot of YouTube messages, understanding them, understanding them so well that we can even preach it to others. That's real knowledge but it brought death to Adam and it's a knowledge of good and evil. So we discern our minds to know good and evil by studying the scriptures and the knowledge of good and evil brought death.

We must never forget that. And I've seen numerous people even in our CFC churches who have an accurate knowledge of what we teach about the new covenant so well that they can speak it themselves. Their own spiritual lives are dead and that becomes evident after some time.

You know when a person dies he doesn't begin to stink immediately but after a while it begins to stink and it's like that when a person is careless in his personal life. After a while maybe after a few years the stink comes for us spiritually and we can learn things from the Old Testament. What I gave you from Genesis 3 is just one example.

I want you to turn with me to another passage of scripture which is in Joshua, sorry Judges. The book of Judges chapter 2 which is after Joshua and we read there about Joshua chapter 2 verse 8. Joshua the son of man, the son of the Lord died and they buried him. Joshua 2 9, I'm sorry Judges 2 9 and that generation of Joshua's also died and then after them verse 10 arose another generation who did not know the Lord nor the work that the Lord had done and then the sons of Israel did evil.

So what do we read, what do we learn from there? That as long as there was a man of God leading that group they followed the Lord and when the man of God had died and some others took over there were leaders sure but they were not of the same caliber and the people drifted away. You see another example of that these are the things we have learned from the scriptures. You see another example of that in Exodus and chapter 32.

Here we read of a time when Moses had gone up to the mountain to meet with the Lord for 40 days. I mean he had already led the Israelites through the Red Sea. They'd seen miracles, manna coming from heaven and this wonderful man of God Moses who would split the Red Sea by lifting up his rod and pray and manna would come from heaven.

He would hit a rock and the water would come out of the rock. A man whom God had endorsed in such a wonderful way and the people respected him. He was a man of God.

Now he didn't die, he just went up to the mountain for 40 days. They didn't know it was going to be 40 days. They didn't know.

He had gone and he wasn't come back. They waited one month. One month is a long time to wait and Exodus 32 one says Moses delayed in coming down and the people said to Aaron.

Now there was another leader downstairs. I mean below, not downstairs but at the foot of the mountain. Aaron, he was the second in command and they came to Aaron and said make us a god for this one Moses.

We don't know what happened to him whether he's dead or not and Aaron he was such a seeker after popularity like many preachers and leaders and he said okay if that's what you want we'll do it. Give me all your gold rings and from that it says he made a molten calf in verse four and Aaron, this is the man who was with Moses and saw the miracles God had done. Now it says this is your God of Israel who brought you up from the land of Egypt and when Moses came down from the mountain and we read further down

in that chapter verse 19 as Moses came near the camp and he saw the calf and the dancing and he got so angry he threw the tablets which he had the 10 commandments he threw it down shattered them and he took that calf.

Remember there were 600,000 men and Moses defied all of Moses was an old man 80 years old and he said bring that calf here and he burnt it and ground it to powder verse 20 and threw it in the water and said you 600,000 men go and drink that water now and Aaron he said why have you done this Aaron? Why have you brought such a great sin? Verse 21 and Aaron was caught and he tells a lie this is a mark of weak leadership when they're caught in a difficult situation they tell some lie to get out of that because he's afraid of Moses and he says oh don't get angry with me Moses these people said make us a God and so I asked them for that gold and listen to this fantastic lie in verse 24. I don't know how Aaron thought anybody would believe that I threw all this all their gold into the fire and out of the fire came a golden calf wow even a child wouldn't believe that you know when a man of God because Aaron was a man of God at one time he was anointed to be the high priest but when he drifts away and he doesn't live before God's face he can tell lies without any conscience so we see in the history of the old testament that as long as there was a man of God leading them they followed the Lord it was one man that preserved 600,000 people and when they went into Canaan it was one man Joshua and he died that was the end of it he turned to the new testament you read in Acts of the Apostles and chapter 20 Paul had been in the city of Ephesus for three years he never stayed that long in any other place and at the end of this he's going away and he calls all the elders of Ephesus together I don't know maybe four or five to the pretty big church and it says in Acts chapter 20 verse 17 he called all the elders of Ephesus and he gives a long message to them all the way from verse 18 down to verse 35 and he says now I'm going away and then I'll see you again but remember this you see me how I live Acts 20 verse 31 be on the alert remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not stop preaching to you with tears three years night and day Paul preached 2,000 sermons in Ephesus to these people can you imagine listening to Paul for 2,000 sermons I would have loved to hear even one sermon by Paul I've been listening to Paul for 2,000 sermons for a period of three years but when he's leaving them in verse 18 earlier he does not say remember my 2,000 sermons look at that's his knowledge that's only information it's only doctrine many preachers say remember that sermon I preached to you on this subject or remember this sermon I preached you on that subject say glory in their sermons but not Paul he says you know verse 18 and 19 how I lived all these three years in your midst with humility with tears I proclaim to you the whole counsel of God even though I knew that once I go to Jerusalem I'll be persecuted and even in Ephesus they persecuted me but he says here did you see my humility verse 19 what does he draw attention to as a leader not his eloquent sermons I'm sure he must have been very powerful preacher not even the people he raised from the dead or healed no mention of all that the things that most preachers glory in today he says do you see how I lived with you for three years in humility I considered all of you as more important than myself and you saw my attitude to money verse 33 I never desired anyone's money I didn't even desire that you should buy me a set of clothes I bought my own clothes verse 33 I worked with my hands and took care of my needs verse 34 because I have learned from Jesus verse 35 and it is more blessed to give than to receive now when this man of God he'd spent three years there and he was going away he calls all these elders and he's I want to tell you something what's 29 after I leave you know this is remember how what happened when Moses left you remember what happened when Joshua left we saw that now Paul is saying what's going to happen when I leave Ephesus after I leave savage wolves will come in and destroy the church and not only people from outside compromisers and false teachers will come in and you guys will listen to me for three years will forget everything I said you'll forget my life and you'll be impressed by these eloquent people who have no life and not only that among you elders I don't

know whether three of them are five of them some of you will also twist some things that you heard speak perverse things and you'll draw away disciples after yourself you split this church into many groups different different followers even if you sit in the same building you'll have your own following and he wasn't prophesying this will happen he was warning them be careful and when you go to the second letter to the Ephesians you know where that is that's in Revelation chapter 2 Paul's letter what we know is Ephesians is the first letter from the Lord through Paul the second letter to the Ephesians was written by John from the Lord again in Revelation chapter 2 verse 1 to the elder in the church in Ephesus the word there is actually messenger can be translated messenger or angel it's messenger I know all your good works verse 2 your hard work your perseverance Revelation 2 verse 2 you don't tolerate evil people you expose false apostles you have perseverance you have endured for my name's sake you have not grown weary but I've got something against you you don't love me the Lord said as you did at the beginning that's a good question to all of us to ask ourselves you remember when you first came to the Lord look back to that time how you loved the Lord and you're willing to give up everything and you stopped watching the type of movies you were watching them but as time has gone on you begin to bring back into your life some of the things you gave up you have left your first love for the Lord and you've taken up with other things now and the end result is you don't love one another like you did before and is this a big thing when you're so zealous so many good things mentioned in verse 2 and 3 one small thing you don't love the Lord it's not a small thing verse 5 it's a height from which you have fallen now usually we say that somebody's fallen when they fall into adultery or stealing money from the church no no no here it is you love me fervently first maybe you didn't know so much of the Bible but you love me with all your heart and you're falling from there now all you know is the Bible you know the doctrines but you don't love me fervently like you did when you first came to me I want to ask those of you being believers for some years does the Lord have to say that to you if so respond to him because the Lord says repent because if you don't repent verse 5 I'll take away the anointing of the spirit the spirit will not be here anymore the Holy Spirit will leave you the lampstand is a picture of the oil there is a picture of the Holy Spirit and that light which he wants to manifest in our lives he's gonna take it away and you'll be left with an empty shell and a lampstand without the light there are millions of Christians and churches like that today they call themselves churches they've got a right doctrine but the fire of God is not there that fervency of spirit to follow the Lord is not there purity of heart is not there fervent love for the Lord is not there little little grudges have erupted towards each other they've fallen but they don't realize they've fallen they think these are all small things we still have our meetings we still have our conferences we still have our weekly get-togethers where we eat food together and yeah it's like a club I've discovered through the years one of the easiest things to happen for a cfc church is for it to become a club a nice club of people who love one another you know in the world there are clubs they go there to play tennis because everybody is interested in tennis or they go there to play cards and gamble because everybody's interested in cards or it could be a church a club where they go there to sing and produce choirs that sing music and or it could be a club where they come to study the bible which we call a church but people who belong to a club they are drawn together by some particular thing there which they are interested in maybe tennis it may be cards it may be gambling it may be music it may be studying the bible it may not be Jesus and you can come to a church and you're not really interested in meeting the lord you're not interested in increasing your fervent love for the lord it's a nice club and if you are in need all the other members of the club will rally to come and help you somebody's sick and the other members of the club will come bring food to your house some sister has just delivered a baby and the members of the club rally to bring food what a wonderful club and say huh i like to be in this club and you may not have any relationship with Jesus Christ at all it's happening i'm telling you the truth you examine your own life and see whether the lord is safe to say to you you've left your first love you're

occupied with all these activities and then maybe there is no man of god to remind you of what is most important in the christian life remember the first commandment Jesus said when uh when a man who was well versed in the law it's called a lawyer in those days not what we understand by a lawyer today came to Jesus once and asked him a question in Matthew 22 verse 35 Matthew 22 and verse 35 one of these bible scholars came to Jesus and tested him and the question was teacher what is the great commandment in the law and he was thinking of the 10 commandments and the fourth commandment was keep the sabbath the seventh day of the week you don't do any work there and that was the biggest commandment for these Jews and he was wondering whether Jesus would say that or what you're going to say and Jesus didn't mention any of the 10 commandments he mentioned the root that supported these 10 commandments he said here is the great commandment of the law verse 37 Matthew 22 37 love the Lord your God not first no but with all your heart it's not that given first place in your heart and you give the other 25 places to others no there are no 25 places love the Lord with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and the Lord said I can't leave that one commandment because this coin has got two sides and if nothing is printed on the other side it's a fake coin the other side of the coin it says love your neighbor as yourself on these two commandments verse 40 hangs all the 10 commandments and every other commandment that God gave it's summed up love the Lord with all your heart soul and mind and that's what the Lord is asking the elder in Ephesus in the church in Ephesus have you obeyed that commandment not just come to meetings and come for conferences and read the Bible etc etc many people read the Bible just to ease their conscience oh I didn't read the Bible today I better read it I might get an accident otherwise all superstition you won't get an accident if you don't read the Bible you know a number of people who don't read the Bible who don't have any accidents if you read the Bible only to avoid an accident forget it don't read it you read it because you love Jesus and you want to hear what he has to say to you I've been reading the Bible for 62 years and even today God spoke something to me from the scriptures something fresh according to my needs it happens all the time I want to hear one word from the Lord the word that Jesus said to the devil man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God that's not just reading the Bible but hearing what God is saying to me when you love the Lord with all your heart he becomes more precious to you it's not what you give to him let me use the example of a young man and a young woman who are deeply in love with each other it's a good picture of the Christian life because the Bible says that Jesus is our bridegroom and we are the bride and there's a picture of that in the song of Solomon so when I talk about a young man and a young woman who are deeply in love with each other and there are many people like that in the world as well and you've seen them maybe some of you got married like that as well but when two young couple are deeply in love with each other and you see them sitting somewhere by themselves in a park or somewhere you don't want anybody to see them they just want to hear each other they're not talking to each other to tell other people I spoke to her or I spoke to him don't read the Bible in order to have a testimony I read the Bible today you don't love the Lord imagine that girl saying well I spoke to my bridegroom today she doesn't even want people to know that it's private it's a mark of love and the other thing about if you see two young lovers sitting together somewhere and talking they're not always looking at the watch they never look at the watch if you see two young people sitting young boy and girl sitting together and one is always looking at the watch you know they don't love one another at all they're just trying to fill up their 10 minutes and go away how's your relationship with Jesus I'm not saying how long you read the Bible no no no no relationship with Jesus you love him with all your heart soul strength and mind was that a time earlier in your life where you did love him like that you know many people say how to get rid of this bad habit how to get rid of pornography how to get rid of watching him great desire to watch dirty movies I'm not against watching movies if they are playing movies okay you need some type of relaxation so I'm going for a picnic

or different people relax in different ways but if there is any sex in it or nudity or something like that that's evil it's from the head it's from hell even if there are 10 seconds of it and a lot of western movies are like that these days there was a time when you avoided it all as they have has it come back and you say oh brother sack how to get rid of it there's an illustration that I use which will illustrate the answer to this question how can I get rid of this bad habit which I know the Lord does not approve of in my life well here's the illustration here's a God-fearing man whose daughter is a bit wayward a little worldly he stays at home respects her father but she's very much in love with a very worldly boy and the father says my girl you should give up that friendship that'll harm you don't have anything to do with that boy he's not a good boy you know just like the Lord tells us to stay away from worldly habits that's the illustration stay away from that and she says okay dad I'll try but secretly and the dad without the dad knowing she sends messages to him and talks to him on the phone and meets him slightly here and there and then acts in front of her dad as if he's not meeting but if that is true that knows that she's meeting him and she's deeply in love with him and then she comes to the dad and says dad I love him so much I know there are things bad in it it's like people say I know pornography is bad but I do go to it I know that movie is dirty but I want to see it or I know that habit I have is bad but somehow I want to do it so the girl says I know he's a bad boy but I just love to be with him because he's so pleasant and so good and the father wants her and after years and years and years he's not able to give her she's not able to give up and one day that girl comes to her dad and says dad I've given him up and the dad said really how did that happen and she says I found somebody else far better that's the way an old affection is driven out when you find a new affection that expels and drives out the old affection how shall I drive out my love for the love for pornography or love for other things when you find a love for Jesus that is supreme that's the only way to drive out this it's not by fighting this and fighting this and fighting this you still love it and even when people are not watching you'll go for it but when you love Jesus supremely a girl who's deeply in love with a boy who is an upright godly young man who is devoted to her you'll find it very easy to give up all other friendships and when we are when we see how much Jesus loves us and we love him in response in reply we find it very easy to give up these other things that need our attention right so what I wanted to say is that church in Ephesus just like Paul warned them drifted away Paul warned them that's because they did not preserve their love for Christ and so what happened the Lord says there to the Ephesians but there are a few overcomers that's what he told him there were five churches in Revelation that were backslidden and to all of them he says but there are some overcomers there and the Lord threatened the church in Ephesus that you guys don't repent I will leave this church but there were a few overcomers they were not the elders but wholehearted brothers and they were concerned that the way the church was going and one day the Lord left that church in Ephesus maybe 30 years after Paul had died the Lord left that church just like Paul warned them okay the bridegroom has left what does the bride do now the bride does not sit in that building anymore when the bridegroom has left the bride also leaves so these few overcomers maybe 10 of them left the so-called big church in Ephesus backslidden church and started meeting separately and that big church in Ephesus called these fellows hypocrites and humbugs and church spiriters and all types of bad names but the Lord was with those 10 people and gradually over a period of time their godly leadership there this new second church in Ephesus much smaller than the first one the first big church called them all heretics and hypocrites and all that but the Lord was with them another 30-40 years goes by and this little group of 10 becomes 300 400 and the old leaders who started that the old overcomers have died and gone and the new generation just like in Joshua's time just like Aaron they could not leave and again the Lord has to say to this new church you guys came out 40 years ago but you've drifted and gone the same way as the first years now I'm going to take away the anointing from you unless you repent they don't repent again the Lord leaves the second church but again there are some overcomers maybe 5-10 people will come out

and start the third church now there are three churches in Ephesus the Lord is only with one of them I want to say to you this is what has happened in 2000 years of church history not only with the church in Ephesus but with numerous churches when they stopped loving the Lord permanently when they stopped walking in humility and purity the Lord left them and the empty shell was still there they still had their meetings and their singing and their music and their musical instruments and everything else but the Lord was not there and so through the years the next church backslides after a few years and so usually what happens after 40 to 70 years like the length of a man's life a new generation comes up and they don't know the Lord like it says about Joshua's time after he died the new generation arose that did not know the Lord same thing happened after Paul and the early apostles died and that's why out of the seven churches in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 all seven planted by the apostles only two were upright five of them were corrupt and then from there the Lord has to take some people out so when you look at church history the Lord has always got a group of overcomers all the time there's never been a time in these two thousand and more years of church of since Jesus went up to heaven when there were no strong witnesses for the Lord there have always been strong witnesses for the Lord the Lord raises up somebody here somebody there and there will be a generation that follows him but that the Lord needs godly men in every generation and that's what I want to say to my dear brothers and sisters you I'm not talking about just being elders elder is what I tell my fellow elders you guys are washers of the feet Jesus is the main washer of everybody's feet he's a servant who washes people's feet I am a servant who washes people's feet that's what I'm trying to do now clean the dirt away from your feet I've never considered myself to be a lord or a king or anything I've never taken money from anybody for serving the Lord not in all these 50 years I and I don't seek to lord it over anybody's life I don't need to control a single person in my life I'm here to serve so I'm not talking about just the elders every one of you brothers and sisters if you've given your life to Christ you're a member of the body of Christ and I want even my little finger to be healthy not just my eyes and ears and tongue that's important but if there's a problem with my little finger if there's infection and fuss in this little finger my whole body will suffer the pain so I don't want even one brother in our church to be spiritually sick and to love the world and not love Jesus fervently to be healthy means to love Jesus fervently and so there are important members in the body like in your churches like eyes ears mouth tongue and all but there are small members for example the nail I often think of somebody who says you know when I say to be like a little finger he says well brother I'm not even like a little finger okay are you like a nail very small member of the body fine you know that nail is also important have you found use for the nails in your body I find when I itch or feel scratchy somewhere my tongue and my eyes and all can't help me not even my fingers it's my nails imagine this wee tiny little thing which comes in handy to scratch so even if you're a small member of the body of Christ I want to say to you today in Jesus name if you keep healthy keep in your love for the Lord you can be a very useful member and what do I mean by scratching you know there's one part of our body it's very difficult to scratch you know what that is it's our back the lower part of our body it's very difficult to scratch so you need somebody else to do it for you so you can scratch my back that's what we can do for one another spiritually you know what scratching somebody's back means to encourage them you say I don't have a gift of preaching or teaching but brother sister I'm sure you have the gift of encouraging others scratching their back spiritually but that is so easy and I'll give you an example when I was a very young Christian struggling to find my way at 30 years old and you know when you're 30 years old you're struggling and you're defeated and you're discouraged and you don't know what your ministry is I remember a much older brother he was double my age probably 60 or more um he came to me and he couldn't even speak English probably but he put his hands on my shoulder and said brother God's got a great plan for your life I heard that 50 years ago I haven't forgotten it he scratched my back when I needed it he didn't preach a great sermon to me no in fact I don't

remember never preaching a sermon he was not a great preacher but he did something for me at that time encouragement you can do that when you're speaking on the phone to somebody before you conclude the conversation why don't you share a couple of sentences encouraging that person maybe with something which you got from scripture that day I'm not talking about a big sermon I'm talking about less than one minute less than one minute don't preach a big sermon on the on the phone less than one minute just to say something you you never know it'll make that person's day what you said it may be the very thing that lifts that person's spirit oh you write an email and you add one little sentence at the end that blesses that person who's probably going through a period of discouragement it doesn't take much to build the body of Christ if you have a heart say lord I want to do something for you you don't have to be gifted like me God has called me to be a teacher and that's why he's given me that gift if he did not give me the gift I could not do it many people don't believe that but when I was a young man I never took part in public speaking I was very shy I would never stand in front of a congregation and I the first time I got to share even a small testimony for two or three minutes I was shivering I couldn't do it but one day God filled me with the Holy Spirit and then everything changed but then he gifted me but you may not be gifted to be a teacher but an encourager every one of you can encourage somebody else and that's how we can build the of Christ so even if you're not like a Moses or a Joshua or a Paul you can be an encourager and 20 people sitting in a church if they're all encouragers it'll be a wonderful church even if you don't have a great preacher like Paul in your midst you don't have to you see in these days when there's so much of material on the internet I mean good material you go to the CFC India website or if you have the bible app on your phone the CFC bible app on your phone you have resources there that can keep you going for three years every day listening to God's word if you take it seriously I know people outside of CFC churches are listening to it more than people are inside CFC church we take so much for granted in a CFC church but they say oh yeah I know that no you don't I would encourage you if you have a phone install the CFC bible app go to the CFC website it's all free install it and listen to it spend as much time as you can a day you can spend only five minutes or 10 minutes spend that every day be a little disciplined I remember when our children were small my wife who always had the habit of reading the bible in the morning could not do it in the morning because one child would be crying and I would tell the food had to be made for the older children to go to school and there's no time in the morning but then when all the children were asleep at night she would take the bible and read it every day so where there's a will there's a way but if you want to find excuses so I have so many children I can't take care of everything yeah yeah if you want to find excuses you can keep finding excuses do you go to hell yeah there's a expression in English called it's a sort of a proverb the way to hell is paved with good intentions but you never do anything good intentions the whole way to hell is paved with good intentions but you never escape hell finally don't just have a good intention or a good desire don't plan something fantastic I'm going to read the bible for one hour from tomorrow no start with a few minutes if you can't do it in the morning do it anytime during the day but say lord I want to hear you preserve that first love for the lord many of you were in other churches I was in other churches I started as a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church baptized as a baby born again when I was 19 and a half and I took baptism when I was 21 with the Plymouth Brethren Assembly and I left that and like that I've gone from one church to another whenever I found something more something missing here I'd look for it somewhere else and that's how I finally ended up at CFC it wasn't a straight jump into CFC the day I was born again there was no CFC then and when I gave this testimony when somebody said to me brother Zach you're very unstable you leave one church and go to another and you go to that church and leave that one and go to another I said I've been unstable all my life I left first standard and went to second standard and I left second standard and went to the third standard and I left the third grade and went to the fourth grade I was not those solid people who stayed in kindergarten all my life that type of stability I don't

want I wanted to learn more why did you go from kindergarten to the first standard or first grade whatever you call it in your country in India we call it standard first to second standard third standard and then to college why do you keep moving why not sit in the same class because you've got a passion to learn more I know people who studied up to fourth standard and said that's enough for me I can read and write that's enough and there are Christians like that my sins are forgiven I'm on my way to heaven I don't want anything more how many of you would be happy with studying up at what standard I'm sure most of you would never have got to Australia if you had stopped there the passion that you have had to get an education because you want to get a job the passion that many of you have had to apply for a visa and repeatedly apply till you get into Australia many of you immigrants you have 50 percent of that passion to become more spiritual to be a wholehearted disciple of Jesus if you had you would have grown by leaps and bounds today you would not be where you are today spiritually you're going to be way ahead in your knowledge of the Lord I have a passion in my life even today at the age of 81 to grow into the likeness of Christ more than I've ever come so far I don't think it'll ever die I'm not I don't think I know it'll never die in my life I've seen my savior's face and I know I know him and nothing on the world nothing in this world is attractive you know when you're deeply in love with someone who loves you so much like Jesus you cannot be drawn to other things it's not a big struggle for me to stay away from the world I'll tell you not at all do you think a young girl who's deeply in love with a wonderful man who's sacrificial and kind and good and handsome and everything else she'll never be interested in another another man no it's like that when we love Jesus it's like that that's why I desire my brothers and sisters it will be like that for all of you because you also like me your history if you look back you came out of one church maybe you joined another one why did you join that some of you if you're Roman Catholics why did you leave the Roman Catholic Church and then you came to one church and then you left that finally you landed up in this one where you are now you were seeking for something more than what you got in the other place good I tell people you know what I've told people believe it or not my loyalty is not to CFC my loyalty is to Jesus Christ so I've told people in Bangalore when they leave Bangalore and go to another place and there is a CFC church there I say brother there's a CFC church there please go there but if you find that CFC church is worldly because the leader is not a really godly passionate man and you find another Baptist church there with a godly humble pastor and leading people to godliness I say leave the CFC church and go to the Baptist church you say brother Zach are you disloyal to CFC I say I have no loyalty to CFC my loyalty is to Jesus Christ and to those who passionately love him wherever they are found as of now the best church I have found where I live is CFC so I'll be there because I want to go to always been a place where Jesus Christ is honored the most where there are humble godly people I don't look for big crowds no Jesus had only 12 if you had gone to the Israel 2000 years ago you'd have seen there were many rabbis you know with big followings they had in their synagogues or in their homes got a lot of disciples 100 people coming to listen to this rabbi and then you'd see this poor carpenter who called himself a rabbi called Jesus and gathering around with 12 people sitting on the mountainside they didn't have big homes or halls on the system but you know God was there God was that little group and not these big big groups with rabbis sitting it's the same today I want to be where Jesus is supposing you heard that Jesus physically was in your hometown but he was gathering with five people in a hut would you go to some of these grand churches I know where I go I want to be where Jesus is and I tell you this don't blame your elders it's like blaming your father your failure is not because of your father your failure is because of yourself you can bring the presence of Christ into a meeting even if you're not a preacher I'll tell you what I have faith for um if I walk with the Lord every day with an absolutely clear conscience that means not that I never slip up but if I slip up I immediately confess it to the Lord and if I hurt somebody I ask forgiveness from that person immediately not tomorrow and not even five minutes later immediately I'm sorry I was a

bit rude in what I said please forgive me and take back that or to tell your wife or husband I'm sorry darling I got a bit upset there I'm sorry please forgive me immediately you live like that with a clear conscience the Lord will be with you and the Lord will make you a blessing and I believe that such a person I believe that about myself supposing I go to a church when nobody knows me other than going to a new place nobody's heard of me nobody knows me and I'm walking with the Lord and I go and sit in that church for that church service in the days when we're meeting together and I'm sitting at the back of the church nobody knows me I believe this is my faith that my presence there will make a difference to that day's service in that church I believe that with all my heart because I'm bringing the presence of Christ into that place because I'm walking with the Lord and I want to say and I'm not opening my mouth the whole service I don't open my mouth but I believe people go away and say hey you somehow felt the presence of the Lord in our midst today nobody knows me I walk away after the service is over nobody talked to me I'm walking away but I bless that churches by sitting there for one hour you don't have to speak walk with the Lord and you can be a blessing in your church and you can build your church you don't have to be a great preacher don't seek for honor so much of preaching is for honor I want to be known as a preacher or an elder or I tell people don't try to preach like brother Zach God needs only one brother Zach in the church he doesn't need to he needs one of you not one more of me I tell that to my own sons I said you don't have to imitate me you don't have to have my ministry you be yourself I tell that to my fellow elders in India don't be like me that may not be your calling it is not your calling you put to your calling be yourself don't compete with anybody don't try to be like somebody else follow Jesus and walk in humility in your life be a washer of people's feet be one who scratches people's back and you can build the body of Christ wherever you are so dear brothers and sisters I hope you're all wonderful people you've gathered together just for a few years the church is there in Melbourne and Brisbane and Perth and Sydney and thank God for these little groups that God has raised up and I pray that the presence of the Lord will be in your churches and I pray that each of you will contribute even if you never preach a word but the presence of Christ with you to give you another example sometimes you know I sitting in an airport in a seat I smell a perfume there and I say hey must have been some perfume lady who sat here before I came here she's left a little bit of that perfume in the chair I don't even know who it is but I get that scent of a perfume it's a very pleasant scent something like that you can bring back spiritually the aroma of Christ the last verses of second Corinthians 2 verse 13 14 15 it says about the aroma of Christ the fragrance of Christ beautiful expression you can bring that into your church and the Lord will never leave your church then like he told the church in Ephesus I leave you each one of you has a responsibility that it will never happen in your church like it happened in the days of Joshua after he died that was the end or like it happened in the days of Paul after he died that was the end may it never be in church that no matter who's there who's not there you however weak you are will bring the presence of the Lord into your meeting God bless you let's bow our heads in prayer please bow your heads dear brothers and sisters and think about what you have heard and ask the Lord to remind you later on during the day and perhaps when you go to bed at night you're lying awake in your bed at night before going to sleep think of what the Lord spoke to you today and say Lord I want to follow it I want to remember it not just in my mind I wanted to change my life and my attitude to different things thank you Lord help me father I thank you for these dear brothers and sisters in all these churches and I pray that your presence will be with them the fragrance of Christ the aroma of Christ will be in their churches and you'll be glorified in every one of those churches and commit them all to you Lord may you bless every brother and sister in every family especially the little ones but even they will be a blessing we pray in Jesus name amen

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