

# Idolatry Is to Love the World

by Zac Poonen

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*To experience a glorious life in Christ, we must make a radical break with the world and its values, and commit ourselves totally to Christ.*

**Duration:** 59:42

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:24, Psalm 45:10, Matthew 4:8, Matthew 6:33, John 16:32-33, Ephesians 5:30

**Topics:** "Idolatry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being free from the pressure to please others and conform to worldly patterns. They highlight how the world dictates certain patterns in various aspects of life, such as appearance and behavior. The speaker also discusses the proper use of money, comparing it to fire that can be either a servant or a master. They caution against becoming slaves to money or any other worldly desires. The sermon concludes with the reminder that our ultimate allegiance should be to God, and when we give Him the central place in our hearts, we can live a truly free and purposeful life.

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## Transcript

There are words that are found in the New Testament which are not found in the Old Testament and it's sometimes very good, it's very easy to find that out with a concordance because that's the way we find out what words distinguish New Covenant life from the Old Covenant life. One of those words is the word the world. If you take the trouble to study in a concordance and I often recommend that you do that, you will see that the use of the word the world in the Old Testament refers entirely to what we would call the earth and the people in it.

But when it is used in the New Testament, it is not just, sometimes it refers to the people of the world, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, but there is another use of it which is very important for us to remember and this is important for us to know because it is the Old Testament equivalent in the New Testament, the Old Testament equivalent of idolatry. Idolatry in the Old Testament, its equivalent in the New Testament is worshipping the world. So let me show you a verse first of all in 1 Kings chapter 18 and Elijah said in verse 21 to the people, How long will you hesitate between two opinions? Now that has a New Testament parallel in the book of James where he says, you double-minded.

It is very important to know what it means to be double-minded. And in the Old Testament also, these Israelites were double-minded. That means when they wanted something from Jehovah God, they would

come to him.

And then, I don't know why, I mean I cannot imagine why a person should bow down before an idol when God had done so many miracles for them, but sometimes I think it was because they were afraid of other people or to please people or superstition, I don't know. We know that Solomon when he got married to women who were children of foreigners, daughters of foreigners, he set up idols in order to please them. So it says here in 1 Kings 18:21, How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow him.

And if Baal, follow him. And the people just kept quiet. But Elijah said, make up your minds.

Don't just sit there and oscillate between two positions. And I thought much about why so many Christians, so many believers who have heard some of the most wonderful truths in scripture in these past so many years, never seem to make much progress. I mean they have probably imagined they are making a lot of progress, but I don't think so.

When I look at their lives and I see what is coming out of it, and what disturbs me is the lack of light, even after many years of listening to the truth. And I have come to this conclusion that it is the same problem that Elijah faced with Israel. They were hesitating between two opinions.

They are trying to get the best of both worlds. You want to go to heaven when you die, but want to get as much as possible out of this earth as long as we live here. And it doesn't work that way.

James says in chapter 1, it says in verse 8, A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. That means he is never going to have a very steady Christian life. The reason being, he is double-minded.

There is an expression in the world, which is used in the message translation, keeping all your options open. It is like getting admission in two colleges and I am keeping my options open. I haven't yet decided which college I am going to join.

This is a double-minded man. I want Christ, but there are things in the world also I want and I keep all my options open. I haven't committed myself totally and say, I have finished with that.

I don't want that college. I have decided to join this one. And I believe there are many Christians like that, who keep their options open almost throughout their life.

And if you just keep your options open and don't join a college, because you are still undecided whether you should commit yourself to this one or that one, well, then you shouldn't be surprised if you don't get an education. You shouldn't be surprised if other people, who decided to close one option and choose another, get a PhD while you are still just finished your 12th standard. And you are sitting for 10 years with your options open.

This is a perfect picture, as I see, of a lot of believers, who are hesitant to commit themselves totally. There are people who come to this church, who like to listen to the messages, who are not committed totally. It may be their own reasons, I don't know, and I am not here to judge anyone.

But commitment, total commitment to the Lord and to His people is very important, primarily to the Lord. And especially that I have closed my options as far as the world is concerned. I will tell you how James put it in chapter 4. James chapter 4, he continues to speak about this double-minded man.

And there he uses the illustration of a woman, who is undecided whether to marry this man or the other man. And so, decides to live with both of them. What would you think of such a woman, who is not sure whether this is the right person or that is the right person, and knows she has to live with somebody, and decides to live with both of them.

James chapter 4, verse 4. You adulteresses! That's a strong word. You know, James begins this letter with saying, I am writing to my beloved brethren, to people who are brothers in Christ. He says in chapter 2 particularly, My brethren, my brothers, don't hold your faith in Jesus Christ with partiality.

They have brothers who have faith in Jesus Christ, like all of us sitting here. And what would you think if some mighty apostle like James got up here and said, My brothers, you are a bunch of adulteresses. We'd get offended perhaps with such a person.

But that's what he says, you adulteresses, don't you know that anyone who wants to be a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God. Anyone who wants to be a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God. Now that's serious.

It's friendship and enmity. I mean, it was cut and dry. It's like a man telling this woman, listen, you better choose me or him, or don't try to live with both of us.

It's not possible. I'm sure any of you would tell your wives that if she behaved like that. But that's exactly what Jesus is saying.

You have an option. I'm not forcing you to live with me and be my wedded wife. But you can't choose me in the world.

It is just not possible. And I believe there are a lot of us sitting here, not just one or two, number of us sitting here who have not made that clear-cut choice, that you have chosen Christ and you have decided you don't want the world. It's exactly like a woman who has to make a choice between two men.

I want to ask you, when you decided to accept Christ, did you look at it like that? Probably the preachers who preached the gospel to you, never told you that you needed to look at it like that. And so I don't blame you. Maybe, you know, in some religions you are permitted to marry two people.

Maybe they presented a Christianity to you like that, where you are permitted to marry Christ and somebody else. I remember when Ian and I went to witness to a Hindu man many years ago and asked him to accept Christ. And he said, yeah.

I thought he was all ready to accept Christ, till we discovered later that he just wanted to accept Christ along with all his other gods. One more. One more husband.

And he had his favourite God or Goddess and he wanted one more. And I think a lot of people, which may not be in idol, you see, most of us who come from Christian backgrounds, we don't have other gods by names, but our God has been the world. And we need to see that Christians, before they are born again, also were idolaters.

They didn't worship gods with these many different names, but they worshipped a God called the world. And when they came to Christ, it was just like that Hindu man who wanted to accept Christ, but not give up his devotion to that other God or idol that he worshipped. And for many Christians, they have not given up

an idol and their idol was the world.

It's what they live for. Every child, from the time they come to an age of understanding and they go to school, and as they grow up in school, they know the world is very important. Everything in the world is very important for them.

And they grow up worshipping the world. And you probably don't realise it, that our children are growing up worshipping the world. Their values are in the world.

The world means a lot to them. The sports in the world, and the money of the world, and the position in the world, to be a great man in the world. These things mean a lot to them.

And the more educated they get, the more the world is something to them. And then they accept Christ. And just like that Hindu man wanted to accept Christ without giving up his other God, here also, Christians, it doesn't look like an idol.

It's the biggest idol that has hindered a lot of Christians from spiritual progress. And I believe that you need to resolve it sometime or the other. And the sooner you resolve it, the better.

It's good to resolve that issue. Who am I going to worship? Is it only going to be Jesus Christ? Is it only going to be God Almighty? The Father, Father, Lord Jesus Christ. Is it only going to be the one true God? Or is it other things? And you know, we can say that an idol is something that takes the place of God in your life.

It doesn't have to be an object. It doesn't have to be a thing made of metal or stone. Something that takes the place that Almighty God should have in our life.

The Bible begins with, In the beginning, God. And Jesus taught that the first commandment, you must love your Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. There must be no place in your heart for anyone other than God.

And when you give God that place, it's only after having given God that total place in our heart, that we do everything else in the world. Everything else must be in relation to, it's exactly like a woman when she gets married. See, I get the feeling that a lot of Christians have not understood that committing themselves to Christ is exactly like getting married.

Think of a girl who was single. Before she got married, maybe she lived in another town, lived her own life. If she was living, working somewhere and living in a rented house or a hostel or something, she lived her own life.

She could go to work when she wanted, she could come back when she wanted, she could spend her money as she wanted. You know, she could live exactly, I'm not talking about girls living at home. I'm saying some girl who was working in some other town where she was living in a hostel or something.

She can do exactly what she likes because she is a single girl. She can spend her money as she likes, her time as she likes and her life as she likes. She can fool around if she wants.

Or she can live in modest ways if she wants, it's entirely up to her. Then one day she gets married. What do you think happens to that girl? Everything changes.

Everything. She can't live where she wants now. She can't spend her time as she wants now.

She can't spend her money as she wants now. She can't go to bed with whom she likes as she wants. Like in the olden days, she can't do a single thing anymore like she wanted to.

Everything has changed. Now, every person, every normal person, understands that marriage means that. Now, all of you got married.

All of your sisters who got married accepted that. Look back at your life before you got married and after you got married. Wasn't there a radical change? Many things.

Maybe you wanted to do something. Maybe you wanted to go to work and your husband said, No, I don't think you should go to work. So there you are, not going to work.

Now, has your acceptance of Christ been like that? I would say no. For most people, it's not been like that. I mean, there's been such a small change when a person accepted Christ.

But many of you and particularly, I'm talking particularly about a lot of people who have grown up as children in this church and you gradually sort of oozed into God's kingdom. It was not a radical change. It was sort of oozing into God's kingdom.

Where, oh yeah, I still come to the church. Not much change in your life. And see the result.

See the result. Perhaps you don't see that you are not growing spiritually. But it's pretty obvious to everybody else.

And you are wasting your life. You might as well be a radical Christian or be radically out in the world. I'll tell you that.

You've got to choose who is your husband. And when you became a Christian, did the same thing happen to you that happens to a girl when she gets married? That you can't do what you like now. You can't spend your money as you like now.

You can't spend your time as you like now. You've got to consult your husband about every single thing you do. Can you go out? Can you come in? I mean, has your life become like that? Or you just continue to do your own thing? And you say, oh yeah, yeah.

Call up Jesus once in a while. You know, it's like a woman still continues to live her own single life and calls up her husband once in a while. Hi, I hope everything is okay.

Everything is okay, fine. Well, I'm okay too. See you sometime.

Can you imagine a marriage like that? How long will the husband tolerate such a wife? That's exactly why many, many so-called believers who think they are better than nominal Christians There is not much development in their life. There is not much joy and victory and triumph. And they always wonder why.

They think maybe one new message will change it. A hundred new messages won't change it. It's commitment.

You've got to commit yourself to Christ exactly like a woman does when she gets married. Go home and think about that. Think about that sometime.

I fear that many of us Christians, we live in such a world where everything is such a fast pace that we don't spend time meditating. We don't meditate on when the Bible says that the relationship with being Christ and His church is like a husband and wife. Ephesians chapter 5, the last few verses.

He says a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. What's that? Turn to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5, it says in verse 30. We are members of Christ's body.

For this reason. Now you wonder why in the world he brings in a subject of leaving your father and mother when you are talking about Christ and His body. For this reason a man should leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.

The two shall become one flesh. A man has to leave his father and mother. It's the first commandment in the Bible in the last verse of Genesis 2. And a woman must forget her father's house.

Psalm 45 verse 10. Forget your father's house. So shall your husband desire you.

It works both ways. Genesis 2 verse 24. For the man and Psalm 45 verse 10 for the woman.

That's an ideal marriage. Where they are joined together. And they break that old connection.

And then you think this is referring to marriage. But Ephesians 5 verse 32 says this is a great mystery. But I am not talking about husband and wife.

I am talking about Christ and the church. Our example is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was Almighty God from all eternity.

There was a particular moment in time. When He took on a human body. In order to be identified with us.

The Bible says He did not take on the bodies of angels. Even though angels sinned. He didn't do anything to redeem them.

But when man sinned. Now don't ask me to explain all that. Why He didn't do it for the angels.

But He did it for man. He took our human body. And here is the wonderful thing.

He never gave it up when He went to heaven. Now He could have very easily. When He ascended somewhere between heaven and earth.

Earth and heaven. He could have shed His earthly body. And say well I go back to my old.

What I was with the father from all eternity. Just a spirit. The father is a spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a spirit. But Jesus Christ is not only a spirit. He took a human body forever.

That's the meaning of He left His father. According to this verse. And joined with His wife.

And became one flesh. With you and me. Not for a short time.

But forever. He loves us so much. He has decided.

I am going to be like you forever. What about you? Has your break with your father and mother. And do you know who your father and mother were? The world.

The world. That was your father and mother. Have you forsaken that? To join your husband.

The shame of Christians. That Jesus. Forsook that position with the father.

And took on a human frame. Permanently. To be one with us.

And shame on us. That we want to be joined with Him. And we still cling on to our old father and mother.

The world. We love the world. We love money.

We love the things the world can offer. And we say Jesus. I want you too.

Adulterous is the right word. Double minded. Unstable in all your ways.

It's like they say. Putting your foot in two boats. Undecided.

Shall I marry this man? Shall I marry this man? Okay. I will try living with both of them. They do that now in western countries.

Trial. Period. Live with him little while.

Live with him little while. Okay. You have had this trial period.

Some of you for 15-20 years. Have you decided at least now? Which husband you want to live with? It's about time. Life.

We have a very short life. Only one life. And it will soon be passed.

It's total commitment that will ensure that you have no regret when you stand before the Lord in eternity. I believe many of us will be ashamed when we see Jesus face to face. And we see how much he forsook his father to become one with us.

And how we did not forsake our father the world completely. To be one with him. Father and mother.

We can say the father is the devil and the mother is the world. They are married to each other. The devil is the ruler of this world.

We can say the devil is the husband and the world is the wife. That was our father and mother. Jesus told to certain people, your father is the devil.

He said in John 8.44. He could have also said, your mother is the world. Have you forsaken your father and mother when you come to marry me? You don't come to marry me because you still cling to your father and mother. Maybe not to the father so much.

We hate the devil. But the mother, oh mama, who looked after me for so long. It's true.

And that's the reason why. You know there are women like that who get married. Who are clinging on to their mother's apron strings.

If they have any problem, they go to mama. Mama is always there. They talk about mama's boy, mama's girl.

I know a lot of Christians are mama's boy and mama's girl. They are not ready to be married. They really don't want to forsake their mama.

I want to encourage you to do that and consider whether this is the reason why. I believe a person who has made total commitment to Christ in two or three years. He is filled with the Holy Spirit.

He can come to a glorious life in Christ. A life of tremendous joy. And victory, triumph.

Why isn't it after so many years? Many people 15, 20 years. I want to say to you, consider this could be the reason. So let's turn to Galatians chapter 6 and see what Paul's attitude was.

Paul was one of those people who made a radical break with the world. Galatians 6, 14. He said, for my part, verse 14.

I'm not going to boast about anything. But the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through which I have been crucified to the world.

And the world has been crucified to me. I want to read that in the message bible and see what it says. I have been crucified in relation to the world.

I have been set free from that stifling atmosphere of trying to please other people. Stifling atmosphere of trying to please other people. And trying to fit into the little patterns that they dictate.

You know the world dictates certain patterns in your office. Your friends expect you to dress in a certain way. I think it applies more to ladies.

The film stars on television and the models who appear on television advertisements. Dress in a certain way. They dictate a certain pattern.

And you say, that's the only way I'll be accepted in the world. In my college. In my place of work.

Unless I follow the pattern dictated by those models on television. I will not be accepted. That's exactly what I mean by living with two husbands.

These are not crucified people. Maybe you can sing well. Lot of adulteresses can sing very well.

I'll tell you that. Some of the greatest singers among women in the world are adulteress women. Who divorce a few times and marry again.

Living immorality. It's got nothing to do with singing. It's got to do with devotion.

So I've been set free from the patterns that they dictate. Trying to fit into the little patterns they dictate. Then he says, can't you see that this is the central issue.

Do you know? He says further. In verse 15 about a new creation. What God is doing.

He is creating something totally new. A free life. Free from the patterns dictated by the models in television advertisements.

And by the film stars in the movies. Something totally new. And all who walk by this standard.

They are the true chosen people of God. And may God's peace and mercy be upon such people. Wonderful.

May God's peace and mercy be upon these chosen people of God. Who will not allow themselves to be governed by the patterns dictated by ungodly worldly people. People who want to promote provocative dress patterns.

And a different sense of values for our life. See as we grow up in the world whether we like it or not. We are absorbing certain values.

Our children as they grow up. When we were children we absorbed certain values. We felt that certain things were very important.

Certain things were not so important. Certain things were of relative less importance. Some things needed to be given a place in our life.

Like God. Going to the meetings. Reading the Bible.

But not as important as say making money. Coming first in the class. Yeah we need to show a little respect to parents and to older people.

But that's not as important as becoming popular with our friends. In college. Being acceptable.

That's a certain values that we have absorbed from childhood. And all of us have got it. I mean it's a rare young man or young woman who can in school itself in their young teenage years say I don't care what my friends think of me.

I don't care what they think of my dress. I am going to follow the principles of Jesus Christ. I wish we had a few young people like that in CFC.

What an outstanding example they would be. There are some. Thank God for them.

And you will see them. They grow spiritually. They don't allow other worldly young people in CFC to influence them.

You look at the way they dress the young ladies. And you will see a difference. You will see a difference.

Any man can see the difference with half open eyes. There is a difference. Some are following the patterns of the models on television.

And some are not bothered. They want to please their Lord. It's like one sister once asked me What shall I wear for my wedding? I said well imagine you are going to meet Jesus.

Whatever you think would be appropriate not just for the wedding but just generally. Your whole dress style must be something which Jesus will not be ashamed to hold your hand and walk down the street with you. Not that your friends will approve.

We are such slaves of the opinions of our friends. That we cannot follow Jesus Christ. We want to follow.

I believe some of us have got a tremendous desire to follow. But there is a big chain on our leg. The opinions of our friends.

What people in my place of work will say. What people in my college will say. And that holds you like a chain.

And with that chain we seek to follow the Lord. You will be just marching time. You know what? Marking time rather.

You know what mark time means in the military? A lot of exercise. You can mark time for one hour. And perspire.

And if you open your eyes you will see you are still in the same place. Marking time means standing in the same place and going left right left right left right. That's how it is with a lot of Christians.

There are Sunday meetings. They are reading the Bible. Everything they do is marking time.

A lot of exercise. A lot of activity. But no progress.

It's because they have never. It's like Elijah. We need another Elijah nowadays.

To come and say. How long will you wait and decide between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow Him.

If Bial is God, follow Him. And we read that and say. Well that doesn't apply to us.

It very much applies to us. If Jesus is the Lord. Commit yourself totally to Him.

And if this world value system that you get from your friends. Your unconverted ungodless friends. And from television and all that.

If that's your standard. Follow that. But don't choose between the two.

Don't say half here half there. You will never make it my brother, sister. You will never make it.

And I wonder how many of you parents love your children enough. Did you hear me? How many of you parents love your children enough. To tell them.

What you know is true. Or are you parents scared. To tell your children.

I know we can't. We can't grab them by the neck. And change them once they are in their teenage years.

And particularly if they start earning and all that. They are on their own a bit independent. But warning.

Sure. I don't try. I don't catch any of you by your necks.

But I am certainly going to warn you. Till the end of my life I will do it. I don't care how unpopular I become.

I was never interested in popularity in any case. If I wanted popularity I should have gone and become a businessman or a politician. Not a preacher.

It's a wrong profession for this one popularity. Are you parents trying to be popular with your children? I'd rather become the enemy of my children. And tell them the truth.

Than be their friend. And lead them along a path of deception. For which they will have years of regret in eternity.

And they turn around to me in eternity at the judgment seat of Christ. And say, Dad, you knew this and you never told me. What sort of love did you have for me? You knew I'd regret for all eternity.

And you never told me. I hope none of your children will turn to you in eternity. And say, Dad, Mom, you knew this and you never told us.

What sort of love did you have for us? You just wanted to please us. We were foolish, we were young. We followed the world and you knew that was wrong and you didn't tell us.

Think about it. Think about it. Think of the eternal good of your children.

Not the temporary gain they get by being popular or get some advantage in the world. So many things, you know. I mean, I hope you take a stand against children cheating in examinations.

I hope none of our children ever cheat in examinations. And even if you hear a rumor that the question paper is out before the examination day, I hope you'll tell your children not to have a look at it. I remember when one of my children was, I don't know which one it was, you know, their difficult subject was always Hindi.

And I was merciful to them because in this language you don't speak what to do. Anyway, do your best. If you can pass, that's good enough as far as I'm concerned.

I know how to bring your average down tremendously, but what to do? And once I heard during the ICSE examination that rumor was out that the Hindi paper is available. I said, even if somebody gives it to me free, I won't show it to you. I'd rather see you fail than show you the question paper.

I didn't pay for it. Maybe somebody loved me and gave it to me and said, here's the paper, it's coming tomorrow. I tell my sons, I will not show it to you.

I'd rather see you go and fail. I hope you tell your children that. That they have some values in life.

They don't go by the values of the world. Let the other fellow get high marks. And I remember that year, the next year rather when the prizes were giving out in parent school, the person who got the Hindi prize was someone who, nobody ever could dream that that person would even get anything like it.

It was obvious how she got the Hindi prize. But that's what's going on in the world. Did I have any regret? Oh no, not at all.

Because I know where that person is going to be years later. And I know where my son will be years later. I put certain value system.

Put a value system into the minds of your children. We should not cheat. We should not do what is wrong.

We should never take advantage of other people. Right from the time they are children, the world gets in. I believe you need to examine the bags of your kindergarten children to see whether they brought home somebody else's pencil or rubber.

You do that? I used to do that with all my children. Who's going to teach them? Now if one of your children says, well somebody stole my rubber, so I stole somebody else's and I brought it along. Oh, you are a smart boy.

I don't have to buy another rubber for you. Is that what you are going to tell him? No. You got to say, go and give it back.

And if you don't know whose it is, go and give it to the teacher and say somebody's eraser is here, please. That's a Christian. And it's good to teach our children that from kindergarten.

It's a value system which we have to instill. And many of us who grew up, our parents never instilled that value system in us. Then we got to acquire it.

That's the whole purpose of coming to the church. The whole purpose of coming to the church is not just to get some information, but to change our values and to see what the world is. There is a God of this world, who is the equivalent of Balaam in the Old Testament.

And if you read what the Prophet said in the Old Testament, I was reading Jeremiah, how the Lord told the nation of Judah, you are adulteresses. You know, adultery, spiritual adultery in the Old Testament was idolatry. That's why James picks up that word in the New Testament.

That is adultery. It is exactly like I said, having two husbands, or claiming that one is your husband and being unfaithful to stand true to your husband, to stand up for Christ in our schools and colleges and places of work, not to be ashamed, to be known that you are a Christian. Are you ashamed to be known as a Christian? Will that hinder your promotion? Some of you have got names that sound like Hindu names, or Indian names, so nobody knows you are a Christian.

Are you happy about that? Oh, thank God, my name is not an out-and-out Christian name, so I will still get my increment of promotion. Shame on you, that such a thought even crosses your mind. I think people like you who have got names by which you are not distinguished as Christians need to go out of the way to make it clear that you are a Christian.

Sure, you have a little more difficult task than somebody whose name is John or Stephen or David or something like that. To make it clear, I am not that. I am a Christian.

Sometimes there is this type of sneaky deception. And that's why such people remain where they are spiritually even after so many years. They don't see it, I can see it glaringly.

It's all this chain that's tied to our leg. We are marking time when we could have progressed miles. Think of that expression again.

I have been set free from this stifling atmosphere of pleasing other people and being forced to fit into the little patterns that they dictate to me. Nobody is going to dictate to me how I am going to live, what my values are. Everybody does it.

It's a common expression, right, in the world. Everybody does it. Let them do it.

I don't belong to the everybody. God has pulled me out of this everybody and put me in another category. And that's why the world hates us.

Because we don't do the things that the world does. Let me turn you to John's Gospel chapter 15. Just before Jesus went to the cross, he warned his disciples about this world system.

John chapter 15 and verse 18. I want to read that in the message translation. If you find the godless world is hating you, remember it got its start by hating me first.

The world got its start by hating Jesus Christ first. And if the godless world is hating you, remember it got its start by hating me. If you lived on the world's terms, the world would love you as one of its own.

And if worldly people love you, and if worldly Christians love you, you must be living on the world's terms, no doubt. But since I picked you out to live on God's terms, and no longer on the world's terms, then the world is going to hate you. God's terms are different from the world's terms.

And when that happens, when the world begins to hate you, remember this. Servants don't get better treatment than their masters. If they beat on me, they'll certainly beat on you.

If they call me Beelzebul, they'll call you by such names too. But, let's go further down to chapter 16. The last part of that chapter, verse 33.

You can read verse 32 to 33, John chapter 16. See, why does he say that you're all going to run away? Because the values of the world gripped those disciples. He said, I'm going to be caught, and you're all going to run away to your own home, and you're going to leave me alone.

Why did they leave Jesus alone at that time when the Roman soldiers captured them? They were all wanting to save their lives, like it says here. In fact, you're about to make a run for it. Verse 32, message translation.

Saving your own skin, saving your own skin, and abandoning me. But I'm not abandoned. The Father is with me.

And I've told you all this, so that, trusting me, you'll be unshakable, and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world, you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart, I've conquered this world system.

Do you believe that Jesus has conquered this world? That one of the reasons why he came to earth was not just to die for our sins, but to conquer this world. See, that's why he said in John chapter 14, and verse 30, that the god of this world, the ruler of this world is coming, the last part of verse 30, but he's got no claim on me. That's how Jesus lived on the earth.

He has no claim on me. I don't owe him anything. He's got no claim on me.

I want to ask you whether the devil's got a claim on you. If you follow his ways, and he runs the entire entertainment system of this world, I hope you believe that. The entire entertainment system of this world is run by the devil.

The entire fashion world is run by the devil. Has he got a claim on you? Will he say to you, Jesus I know, Paul I know. But you, you who are absorbing my entertainment values, my fashion values, what are you? You and I are on the same side.

That's what the devil tells some people. But not Jesus. Because, we read there, right at the beginning of his ministry, in Matthew's gospel and chapter 4, Matthew's gospel chapter 4, he said, at the time of the temptation in the wilderness, it says here in verse 8, that he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

One of the things he did was show him the glory of this world. And said, I'll give this to you, if you just bow down to me a little bit. You know that's what many Christians are doing.

They get something which the devil offers them, and they don't realize the price they have paid is bowing their knee to Satan just a little bit. They don't bow like all the others. They bow just a little bit, because they want to find acceptance with their friends.

Because they don't want their friends to turn around and say, hey, why are you dressed like all these 19th century women? Mummy, please get me another dress. My friend said, I'm dressed like a 19th century woman. That's enough.

All the years of teaching in the church disappears with one sentence. It's how powerful the devil is. To put fear into grip people.

Hey, you are not going to get out of my grip. And then in the time of need, he said, Oh, Jehovah God. I said, if Jehovah is God, follow him.

If Baal is God, follow him. Make your choice. Don't be double-minded and wonder why your prayers are not answered and why the effective prayer of a righteous man or a woman has tremendous power with God.

But these wishy-washy people, it says, that double-minded man, James says, you know what James says about these double-minded people? And I believe that's the reason why many of our prayers are not answered. He says in James chapter 1, about this double-minded man in verse 8, who has kept all his options open. In verse 7, don't think that that man is ever going to get anything from the Lord.

Boy, that's one of the most terrifying verses for a Christian. Don't expect to get anything from the Lord. Don't expect to get anything from the Lord.

What a promise for prayer. You want to pray, don't expect to get anything from the Lord. Because, verse 8, you are a double-minded person.

The reason is given there. He will not get anything from the Lord because he is double-minded. He is half on Jehovah's side and half on Baal's side.

Half on the side of Christ and half on the side of his old father and mother. I want to tell you the truth. And it doesn't matter if it hurts.

Because God's desire is to remove that cancer that's hindering us to break that chain that's been holding us back for so long, my dear brothers and sisters. God loves you immensely. That's why he gave his Son to deliver you from this world system which was meant to be used.

We are not to be slaves of this world. God created money to be used. Jesus used money.

And it's right for us to use money. But not to be a slave of it. It's like fire.

You know the difference between fire in a stove under control and fire that's burnt the whole house? It's the same fire. There are many, many cases of a little stove fire got out of control and the whole house was burnt down. The same fire.

What shall we do? Get rid of fire from our houses? We wouldn't be able to eat. Keep it under control. Like they say, fire is a wonderful servant but a terrible master.

Money is a wonderful servant but a terrible master. A lot of things that God created in the world that are meant to be our servants, not our masters. Food.

Food is a wonderful servant but a terrible master. If you're a slave of food, that you've got to gorge yourself and eat and eat and eat and eat and that's all you can live for. Well, don't pray to God when you're sick.

Go to a doctor and he'll probably tell you you've got to eat a little less. What's use praying to God if you violate all his laws? Food is good. Jesus ate.

And I'm sure Jesus would take a second helping when he's hungry. There's nothing wrong with that or a third helping. But, he wasn't a slave of food.

There's nothing wrong in taking a third helping if you also know how to fast once in a while. The trouble with a lot of people who take a third helping in the food is they never fast for a single day in their whole life. They're slaves.

Jesus could fast for 40 days and he could eat a third helping. Food was his servant. Everything on earth was his servant.

Clothes? He didn't live for clothes. He said, don't worry about what you're going to wear, what you're going to eat. These are not the things we should be worried about, he said in Matthew 6. If you want to worry about something, worry about whether the kingdom of God is progressing.

And worry about whether you've got more of his righteousness, whether you're becoming holy. I mean, if you're the worrying type, here are some good things to worry about. Is the kingdom of God progressing in India? Am I becoming more righteous like Jesus is? Spend your mind worrying about those things instead of worrying about, what shall I wear now? What shall I eat now? Those are all meant to be servants.

Clothes are meant to be our servants. Food is meant to be our servant. Money is meant to be our servant.

Fire is meant to be our servant. God created Adam and said, rule over everything on this earth. He never created Adam to be a slave to the fruit on the trees and to all the gold on the earth.

No, he said, be, rule over all these things. That's the position Jesus took. Everything God created was to be a servant of man.

Man, instead of that, gave himself to the devil and the devil began to control this world. You know what the devil told Jesus? It comes out more clearly in Luke chapter 4. It's very interesting what he said. It doesn't come out so clearly in Matthew 4. In Luke chapter 4, verse 6, the devil said to Jesus in the temptation, after showing him all the glory of the world, he said, they are all yours in all their splendor.

I am in charge of all this glory. It has been given to me. It says here, in the New American Standard, it has been handed over to me.

Verse 6, and today, all the glory of the world which has been handed over to me, I give it to whomever I like. Somebody pleases me, I'll give them. You want something in the world? The devil says, come to me.

He says, Jesus won't be able to give it to you. Come to me. Come to me, I'll teach you the way to do it.

You want to pass in your exam? Come to me, I'll tell you how to do it. Don't question the methods. Maybe right methods, wrong methods, but I'll do it for you.

You want to be an MP? Come to me. You want to be, whatever you want. What's the glory in the world you want? You want to progress in your company? You're willing to forget about principles? Come to me.

It has been handed over to me. Who handed it over to him? It wasn't God. It was Adam.

God gave the whole world to be under Adam's authority. Adam gave it to the devil. When he obeyed, you know, it was only a simple act of obedience.

The devil said, eat this. And Adam didn't realize the moment he obeyed the devil, he was actually submitting to his authority. And the devil got what God gave Adam.

He took over. It has been handed over to me and today the devil says, I'm in charge of it. I didn't grab it.

Adam gave it to me voluntarily. It's all mine today, Jesus. And if you want, I'll give you a little bit of it.

I'll give you all if you want. But you got to bow down to me. And Jesus said, nothing doing.

I'm going to take it from you without bowing down to you. I'm going to put it under my feet. And he tried all his life.

It says, the devil left him for a little time. Last part of verse 13. He lay in wait for another opportunity to tempt him again with the same things.

You know, that wasn't the end of the temptation. It says, he waited until he got another opportunity. That's what it says in verse 13.

And so he tried him again. He tried for so many years. And the devil didn't succeed.

That's why at the end of Jesus' life, he could say, the ruler of this world comes. He's got no claim on me. That's challenged me so much.

I say, Lord, I want to end my days like that. I didn't start my days like that. I lived for so many years as an unbeliever and even as a believer sometimes with the devil having a lot of claim in many areas of my life.

I'm sorry to say, even after I was born again. You know, I really began to take my Christian life very seriously after we started meeting as a church in 1975 in our home. And that's when Christianity became really serious.

I mean it was to some extent serious before that. But I never understood the way of victory before that. I was a defeated Christian.

But from that time we started meeting in August 1975. Things were completely different for me. Turned my life around.

For you, I don't know when, I hope sometime in your life you began to take your Christian life seriously. If not, today is the day. There must be a day in your life when you say, well, I finished with this fooling

around.

And the sooner that day comes, the better. You young people, I hope you will take a decision and you can be very young. You don't have to be.

You can be in school. Take that decision. I'm going to take the Christian life seriously.

I tell you, God will make you a mighty man or a woman for Him. It will take Him 10-15 years to do it. But He'll do it.

He'll do it. Give Him 5 or 10 years and He'll make you something which the devil will be afraid of. Something that will bless this land of India and probably other nations too.

If God can do something with you, that you live such a life where everything the devil offers to you, you say, no. If it means a violation of a principle, I'm sorry, I don't want it. I'm not going to allow those godless models to lead me.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God. Heavenly Father, help us to live by the principles of Your Word.

Not to be mere hearers, but doers. Help us to take decisions today that will change our whole life. In Jesus' name.

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