

Important Messages for the New Year 2024

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, mercy, and compassion in the Christian life. It highlights the need to prioritize mercy over sacrifice, to be merciful towards others as God has been merciful to us, and to let our mercies be new every morning. The speaker urges the audience to seek humility, compassion, and grace, rather than seeking greatness or recognition. The message encourages a revival of mercy and compassion in churches, focusing on changing lives and relationships through humility and love.

Scripture: Revelation 3:10, Matthew 11:28, Lamentations 3:22, Matthew 9:13, Hebrews 8:12, 1 Peter 5:5, Romans 6:14

Topics: "Humility", "Mercy and Compassion"

Description

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Transcript

Praise the Lord, brothers and sisters. I'm very happy to meet with you in the first of the new year. And I see all your churches on the screen here, sitting together in your meeting halls.

I remember how God began the work in Tamil Nadu way back in 1983. 40 years. And almost all of those 40 years, I've had the privilege and honor to visit Tamil Nadu churches.

I have not traveled in any state of India more than in Tamil Nadu. That was not my choice. God opened more doors in Tamil Nadu than in any other state in India.

I just went. I cannot open a door. I would go where God opened the door.

In Revelation 3.10, God says, I have set before you an open door. And that is the way God opened door after door after door in Tamil Nadu. And it had nothing to do with me.

Even the first church in Thoothukudi started with some young CSI brothers who came together. Who had heard me speak and decided to come out of the CSI church and start a church there. And God has done many wonderful works throughout the years in so many different places.

And that is the result of God raising up some wonderful Godly humble co-workers in Tamil Nadu. Jesus told his disciples, when the harvest is plenteous, don't go, but pray that the Lord will raise up. So he told his disciples, don't think you're so capable to go and do everything yourself.

He said, prayer is a mark of our helplessness. I'll tell you something about prayer. The most effective prayers are those which come from people who feel most helpless.

That's why the devil makes us proud and self-confident and capable. And we think we are capable. Until God does something to weaken us.

See the Apostle Paul wrote the second letter to the Corinthians when he was around 57 years old. He had already walked with God for 27 years. And God had done so many mighty works through him.

Even though he knew God's ways, God had to do something special to humble him. Even the Apostle Paul needed to be humbled. One would have thought he knows everything about humility.

He will definitely not be proud. He knew that. But because God had used him so mightily, turn with me to 2 Corinthians 12.

Because this is something God has been speaking to me also. Especially when I see what a work God has done in Tamil Nadu. Not only to me, but I'm sure this is something God is speaking to all of you in Tamil Nadu also.

Not only to me, but I'm sure this is something God is speaking to all of you in Tamil Nadu also. 2 Corinthians 12 He says in verse 7 Because of the surpassing greatness of revelations I got to keep me from exalting myself, God gave me a thorn in the flesh. Because of the surpassing greatness of revelations I got to keep me from exalting myself, God gave me a thorn in the flesh.

Jesus never needed a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. He was the perfect man who lived in such perfect fellowship with the Father. Not for a single second did he become proud.

Not for a single second did he think that I did something for my father. So he never needed a thorn in the flesh. He could remain in humility all through his life till the end.

Right from the time he came down from heaven, all the way till he died on the cross. You can say he walked the way of humility every single second. The Father was delighted in him.

Not because he preached or did miracles. God delights in humble people. Paul was one of God's greatest servants.

God used him mightily to write scriptures, to plant churches, to do miracles. But he was not as wholehearted as Jesus. So there was a temptation to pride.

In his case, mainly because he got these supernatural revelations from heaven. Also because he planted so many churches. So he had to get a thorn in the flesh to humble people.

I think that thorn in the flesh was some problem with his eyes. He calls it in verse 7, a messenger of Satan to torment me. He calls it in verse 7, a messenger of Satan to torment me.

Torment is a very strong word in English. We read about how demons tormented people. Satan wanted to destroy Paul.

And even today, anybody whom God is using, Satan wants to destroy him in some way. Many preachers are destroyed by immoral relationships with women. It happens worldwide.

It happens in India, but because there is not publicity, most people don't know about it. But more than women, Satan destroys preachers with money. One of our protections in CFC through the years has been that we don't pay anybody for serving God.

One of our protections in CFC through the years has been that we don't pay anybody for serving God. I have never taken a salary. I don't take gifts for my service.

I don't even take any money for the books I write. That's not something great. God helped me to write the books.

How can I take the money? It has to go to God. God helped me to write the books. How can I take the money? It has to go to God.

If I distribute a cake on New Year's Day made by somebody else, If I distribute a cake on New Year's Day made by somebody else, and somebody says, Brother Jack, what a beautiful cake you baked. and somebody says, Brother Jack, what a beautiful cake you baked. If I don't immediately say I did not bake it, I am only distributing it.

Somebody else baked it. If I don't immediately say I did not bake it, I am only distributing it. If I don't immediately say I did not bake it, I am only distributing it.

I want to warn all the preachers and elders. God has done a great work through you in Tamil Nadu. But remember, it is God who did it.

not you. Don't look down on some of your fellow elders in your church. I've had fellow elders in Bangalore and I know that it's a large extent because of them that the work in Bangalore has spread.

But because I am always in the pulpit, I get the credit. You may not know it but I know it. It's my co-workers who work with me that do it.

And ultimately the Lord. So we give God all the glory. So the first thing I would like to teach all of you in this new year, repent of all the times you have taken some credit for yourself.

If you examine yourself, you'll find you have taken some credit before people. And even when you're not before people alone, when you're thinking of your ministry, you've thought high thoughts about what you did for God. And here we read in verse 8, three times I asked the Lord that this should go from me, this problem.

You know why I say it was an eye problem? Because in Galatians 4, Paul says, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. That means when Paul stood up to preach, they saw he had some suffering with his eyes, some pus coming out of his eyes or something. And that must have been a problem for him always.

He has to wipe it every time he speaks. And these Galatians felt sorry for him and said, Lord, we are ready to give our eyes to him. Take some time and read that in Galatians 4. They loved Paul so much.

Lord, don't let his eyes suffer like this. Take our eyes and give it to him. And Paul prayed three times, Lord, take this away.

This is a nuisance for my ministry. Imagine if you had eyes leaking all the time with pus. Especially if you are a preacher.

And every time you have to take a cloth and wipe and continue. And almighty God can heal that in a second. And he doesn't do it.

He prays a second time. No answer. Third time, Lord, don't take this away.

No answer. The Lord says to him, Paul, you are in danger of becoming proud. And that pride is million times worse than this pus.

This pus will not prevent me from giving you my grace. But the moment you become proud by my laws, I cannot give you grace. Because it's a law, like the law of gravity, that grace, I give grace only to the humble, God says.

The most important law you must learn is that God gives grace only to the humble. Remember two verses. 1 Peter 5.5, God gives grace only to the humble.

And Romans 6.14, if you get grace, no sin can have power over you. Those two verses are enough for you to carry you through life. Can you remember them? Don't turn to them now.

Write it down somewhere. 1 Peter 5.5, easy to remember. What is it? God will fight with you if you are proud, but he'll give you grace if you're humble.

If God fights with you, there is no hope for you. But he fights only with proud people. I give you God's word.

God will never fight against you if you are humble. God will give you grace. It's like saying he'll lift you up if you are humble, but he'll push you down if you're proud.

If you want to grow spiritually, God must lift you up. You cannot lift yourself up. And he lifts up only one type of person, a humble person.

Philippians 2 says, because Jesus humbled himself to the lowest depth of the cross, God exalted him to the highest level in the universe. So when we say we want to follow Jesus, which is the main teaching of CFC, it is not following Jesus in how we can preach. I'll never be able to preach like Jesus and I don't even want to try.

But I want to humble myself like Jesus, because that God will lift me up. See, God calls only one in 10,000 people to be a good preacher. There are so many preachers even in our churches in CFC.

How many of them are really good preachers that challenge you? Very, very few. I've told people in Bangalore CFC, please don't try to imitate me. It's not because I'm such a spiritual person that God gave me the gift of preaching.

Let me tell you the truth. When I was 23 years old, two years after my baptism, as I was seeking for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, not in any church or with any person, all alone in my room when I was working in the Navy, with no supernatural experience, God anointed me. And at the age of 23, at that time, 1963, God gave me such an anointing to preach to thousands of people regularly that even a person like Brother Buxing recognized it and made me preach in his main conference.

But I did not have victory over sin. From the age of 23, I could preach powerfully. And I traveled in so many countries preaching and they all respected me.

But right up to the age of 35, for the next 12 years, I was a defeated Christian. Not defeated outwardly. I did not fool around with women or steal anything.

My defeat was in my thoughts and not able to control my tongue sometimes and pride. But I had the anointing. I could speak powerfully even when I was proud because I had the gift.

Gift is different from grace. Some of you are very gifted. Don't think that means you have got grace.

I had gift for so many years that I was appreciated around the world, but I did not have grace. I had grace for the forgiveness of sins, but not grace for victory over sin. Why didn't I get grace? Answer is there must have been some pride in me which I did not know.

And God saw that. And it is a law. Just like if you throw a ball up, it won't stay there, it will come down.

The law of gravity operates whoever throws the ball. A spiritual man prays, Lord I am throwing this ball, please keep it there. It will not, it will come down.

It's a law. And however much you may pray, if you are proud, you will not get grace. You will be humbled.

And that's how it was with me. What I learnt in those days was, I can have gifts without grace. And the classic great example of that is Satan.

Many years ago, God created all the angels before he created man. And then he made one person as the head of the angels. We don't know his name, his name is not given in scripture.

Let's call him the head of the angels. He was called Morning Star, that's the only name we have. And he had such power, such anointing, such wisdom.

He was a holy angel. God appointed him as the head of all the angels. With more gift than anybody else.

And then sin came. What was the first sin in this universe? Not eating the forbidden tree. Like Eve did.

Not killing your brother like Cain did. It was pride. Pride.

The first sin in the universe was not visible. Like pride today. Some of you elders, do you think your people can see the pride in you? No, they can't see it, it is hidden in your heart.

Somebody with discernment can see that you are not getting grace. You elder brother, when you shout at your wife, it proves you have not got grace. When you get angry with any situation, with anybody in the church.

That is not the anger of God. That is the anger of the devil. And you get it because you are proud.

You may give some other excuse for it. You can say, what to do brother, people are so bad. I will tell you, people are not so bad, you are so bad.

You are proud. And because you are like a Maharaja in your church. Nobody to correct you.

I am sorry to say, there are many elders in CFC churches who are like Maharajas, with nobody to correct them. They don't judge themselves. We have to judge ourselves.

Many years ago, the Lord told me that. That you may not have many people to come and tell you things wrong in you. So judge yourself.

And when your enemies say something, listen carefully, they may be telling the truth about you. Because the Lord said, your enemies will sometimes tell you the truth about you, which your friends are afraid to tell you. I say, Lord, please help me to listen to when people accuse me or say something against me.

When people write emails to me, criticizing me for something I said or did. I take it before the Lord. And I read it.

And I read it again. I said, Lord, I know our enemies will tell us the truth about us more than our friends. But I will not accept it as truth.

But I want to listen to it. You know, people call Jesus Beelzebub, Prince of Devils. That was a lie.

So enemies will tell lies also. Like most of the things they tell are lies. I've heard so many criticisms of CFC churches.

90% of them are lies. But I say, there may be 10% of truth. Let me listen to that.

That's what I say to all of you. Don't get discouraged when people criticize you. Don't rule it out saying, oh, they're all enemies.

They're all worldly people. They don't understand. See, there's a black mark on my face.

Some charcoal or something. And one enemy comes and tells me. I say, oh, thank you very much.

I didn't notice it was there. So examine yourself. Don't condemn yourself by what your enemies say.

I get many criticisms. Because I'm serving the Lord. But I take it before Jesus.

Say, Lord, you tell me. Is there truth in it? Let me listen. I don't care who says it.

I want to live a pure life. And then the Lord will show up sometimes and say, forget it. Just ignore it.

Some things, yeah, I have to think about it. 99% is all foolish criticism. But I don't want to lose even that 1% genuine criticism.

It'll help me. Please, all of you, dear brothers. Please take that attitude in the new year.

Your wife may not be as spiritual as you. But at least something she says may be truth about you. The Lord said about Eve, she is to be the helper for Adam.

And your wife is a helper to help you to become more spiritual. Man was made in the image of God. And he lost that image when he sinned.

Then Jesus said, I will send a helper when I go to heaven. That helper is the Holy Spirit. What is his job? Not to make you an elder.

Not to make you preach well. But to bring back the image of God that you lost by sin. So many people are seeking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I'll tell you, I also sought immensely for the baptism of the Holy Spirit about 50 years ago. I prayed, fasted, sought God. For many months.

And then one day God met with me. But it was not to make me a better preacher. I was preaching well even before that.

To make me a better Christian. To help me to get light on myself. Don't think that gift equals spirituality.

Among all the created beings, do you know who has maximum gift? Not Michael the Archangel. Not Gabriel, another Archangel. No.

Satan. Even today. Even today.

He fell away from God, but God did not take away his gifts. God took away his grace. But he didn't take away his gifts.

Please remember this. If God has given you a gift, he won't take it away. He'll take away the grace.

And then he will test you to see whether you will live by your gifts or live by grace. And I'm sorry to say, in my life, I lived for many years by gifts and not by grace. I was defeated in my thoughts, defeated in my words, but I would get up in the pulpit and preach powerful sermons.

50 years ago. For the last 49 years, it has changed completely. Today, how I preach is not important for me.

I'll tell you one example. I don't mind preaching the same message, word for word, 100 times. Let people say, oh, brother Zach is preaching the same message again.

Doesn't he have any authority? Let them say that. I'm not looking for their honor. I'm looking for their spiritual growth.

And if they have to listen to it 100 times, I will say it 100 times, so they'll grow spiritually. Otherwise, I'm seeking my honor. That people must think, oh, brother Zach is preaching a new message every time.

You've heard me so many times preach the same message again and again and again. And when I read the Gospels, I find Jesus preached the same message many times. And I learned from that.

The very fact there are four Gospels, it's so much repetition. Say, why is it written so many times? Isn't it once enough? Why should I read four times that Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish? Once is enough. I'll believe it if it's written once.

It's repeated four times. So many things written in Ephesians is written again in Colossians. It's written in James 4, God gives grace.

It's written again in the next book, 1 Peter 5. So many things written in the book of Kings is repeated in the book of Chronicles. And there are some chapters which are repeated word for word. That's amazing.

Something written in 2 Samuel is repeated word for word in the Psalms. God's ways are not our ways. He repeats things.

We are so proud that we will not repeat because we want honor. Dear brothers, all those who preach God's word, don't be afraid of repeating a message. If you want to learn, go to the kindergarten and learn from the kindergarten teacher.

And ask them if they teach ABC only with one lesson. 100 times, then they learn it. Addition.

Is there only one lesson, one hour teaching on addition? Haven't you seen how many times your children have to do homework on the same type of addition and subtraction? Then they learn. That is how you and I learn. Why is it the people in your church are not learning like those students are learning? Maybe because you are seeking honor to always preach something new.

If your kindergarten teacher was like that, you would have learned nothing by then. Dear brothers, this seeking honor is such a big sin. In our CFC churches, let's finish with it in this year.

Lord, I only want your honor. So Paul prayed here three times in 2 Corinthians 12. Take this away, weakness from me.

Lord, this pus coming from the eyes is not only a nuisance to me, it's a hindrance to other people when I'm preaching. Lord, it will distract them from my message. And the Lord says, I know that Paul, but you still need it.

Because you are so mightily used by God that I have to do something to keep you humble. Paul did not tell us exactly what was the message. I'm only guessing it from Galatians 4. It may not be true, I don't know, but it looks like that could be the reason.

But a godly man, many godly people have a thorn in the flesh, but they will not tell you what it is. I know God has given me also. I don't have to tell other people.

But I know God has, for the same reason, given me thorns in the flesh. And like Paul, I pray and it doesn't go. Usually some type of physical weakness.

And I get the same answer from God. You need this to keep you humble. Because I'm using you.

I don't want you to lose my grace. So I have to do something to keep you humble. So that you cannot even glory that you kept yourself humble.

You know, people say, oh brother, Zach is used so much, but he's still so humble. I tell you, it is God who does it. Sometimes he does it by giving me a thorn in the flesh.

I thank God for those thorns in the flesh. Because God says, verse 9. In Corinthians 12, 9. My grace is enough for you. Because my power is made perfect in your weakness only.

That is a great truth. That it's only when we are weak and other people see we are weak, that God's power will be manifested the most. The man I respected most in India was Brother Bucksing.

I knew him very closely. For some time I worked with him. And because God wanted to start CFC, he took me away from him some later.

But he was a mighty man of God. He knew God face to face. He never cared for money.

He was the most upright person, preacher with money that I've seen in my life. Never asked anybody for anything. He taught me that also.

He was the first person who taught me that. Three things. Never tell your earthly needs to anybody in the world.

Second, live very very simply. Don't buy unnecessary things for yourself. Third, when people accuse you, keep your mouth shut.

Don't defend yourself, let God defend you. He gave me that advice 60 years ago. I've never forgotten it.

Very helpful advice. I give it to you also. Never tell your earthly needs to anybody in the world.

Tell your father. And live very very simply. Don't waste unnecessary money on clothes and expensive things which you don't need.

When you have so many sarees, why do you want to buy some more? When you have so many clothes, why do you want to buy some more? And when you have so many clothes, why do you want to buy some more? And thirdly, when you're accused falsely, keep your mouth shut. I know when some people took me to court once, I did not know the laws of the court because I had never been to court before. So when somebody said something false to the judge, I was going to raise my hand and say, sir, that's not true.

But my advocate said, no, you're not allowed to speak in the court. I'm supposed to speak for you. He actually told me that.

I never knew that law. But I learned something spiritually. And I tried to defend myself.

Jesus, my advocate, says, keep quiet. I'm here to defend you. Please remember that.

So when people accuse you, just keep quiet. Because all that will make you look weak in the eyes of others. And he says, it is when you're weak that my power can be manifested the most, verse 9. So verse 9, other people boast about their strengths, but I boast about my weakness, he says here.

He boasts about your, do you think inwardly of what a wonderful preacher you are? Do you think inwardly what a wonderful church you have planted? Do you think inwardly when you're lying in your bed about how many churches you've planted? There's one solution I give to all of you for that. Die. Die.

What does a dead man think about? What he has preached or what he has done? The greatest need in CFC elders and all of us is to learn how to die. You know, it says here, verse 10, when I'm weak, then I'm strong. He says in verse 10, I'm happy with weakness, insult, distress, persecution, difficulties.

Who will be glorying in all these things? Weakness, insult, distress, persecution, difficulties. In all those things, he glories. Why? Because all these things make him weak in the eyes of others.

This great truth, last part of verse 10, I've learned that when I'm weak, then I'm really strong. There's a word called paradox in the Christian life, in the English language. Things that look opposite are actually true.

When I'm weak, then I'm strong. Have you understood that? When I'm weak, then I'm strong. Let me show you another verse like that.

Please turn with me to 1 Corinthians, chapter 3. There are two things we always want to become. We want to be strong and we want to be wise. How to be strong, we already saw.

How is it? When I'm weak, then I'm strong. For God to make me strong, he has to make me weak. How will he make us wise? 1 Corinthians 3, verse 18.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinks he is wise, he must first become foolish, so to become wise. Let no man deceive himself.

If any man thinks he is wise, he must first become foolish, so to become wise. How to become strong, we have to become weak. How to become wise, we have to become foolish.

That means, recognize that in spiritual things, you know zero. If you are going to some big scientific conference on some complicated scientific subject. And you don't know anything about that subject.

And they say, we want you to get up and speak on that subject. And they say, we want you to get up and speak on that subject. Dear brothers, do you get up to preach God's word like that? Dear brothers, do you get up to preach God's word like that? Lord, in spiritual things my knowledge is zero.

Worldly things are very clever. Worldly things are very clever. The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. Because he catches all the wise in their own craftiness. Because he catches all the wise in their own craftiness.

And he says in verse 20, the Lord knows all the reasonings of the world's wise people are useless. And he says in verse 20, the Lord knows all the reasonings of the world's wise people are useless. Are you a wise brother? Are you proud that you are a wise brother in your church? This verse is for you.

Lord knows all your reasonings are useless. Lord knows all your reasonings are useless. This is the great secret of the Christian life.

We have to become weak to become strong. This is the great secret of the Christian life. We have to become weak to become strong.

We have to become wise to become wise. Another verse, Matthew 11. In Matthew 11, Jesus tells us how to get revelation on the word of God.

In Matthew 11, Jesus tells us how to get revelation on the word of God. I will tell you someone who knows the Bible very well. Satan.

He knows it so well that he knew exactly what word to quote to Jesus. Three times, he tried to tempt Jesus. When Jesus quoted a word saying that man shall not live by bread alone.

Satan used the word of God to tempt him. Jump off the temple because his word says that his angels will protect you. Imagine.

Satan could quote the word of God to Jesus. I think that Satan won't quote the word of God to you. Any word that comes to your mind, it may be just your own desire which Satan is putting in, not from the Lord.

How will you know that the word came from God or from the devil? Humility. You heard me say the three secrets of the Christian life, humility, humility to humility. Ten thousand secrets, it's the same thing, humility all the way.

When God wanted to reveal wonderful truths of eternity and heaven to people, He did not choose all the clever people He made in the world. Who do you think were the cleverest people in Israel? Today when people select a pastor, they go who came first in the Bible school. That was a Bible school being run in Jerusalem by Gamaliel.

But Jesus did not go there and select the top students to be His disciples. He went to the seaside and selected some fishermen. And if you want to see how educated fishermen are, go to the Madras beach or to the Tuticorin beach side or in Kerala Alapppy beach side.

I have been to all these places and I have sat with some of those fishermen. Very simple, humble people who do not know anything about worldly knowledge. They will not even know there is a war going on in Ukraine now.

Or there is a war in Israel, they don't know all that. They don't know things that third standard students learn in school. And Jesus went and selected such people and said, you are going to be my apostles to turn this world upside down.

I praise the Lord with all my heart that He chose such people who were like little children not knowing anything. Because they were ready to receive. Clever people are not humble enough to receive.

Pharisees got knowledge and they thought Jesus was the devil. The uneducated Peter got revelation. He said to Jesus, you are the son of God.

And Jesus said to him, your human cleverness did not teach you that. Father in heaven gave you revelation. Knowledge is given to clever people.

To whom does God give revelation? The most important thing in CFC churches is revelation, not knowledge. That's why we don't select Bible school people to be our elders. See Matthew 11 verse 25.

It says in the last part of that verse, Lord father you have hidden the things from the wise and intelligent and given revelation to little infants. What did he give the little babies? He doesn't even say children, he says babies. Because children even when they are 5 years old can become proud.

He is talking about babies, you know this 2 month old baby lying in a cradle. That doesn't know anything. God gives revelation to people who are like that.

It says 26, father this was well pleasing in your sight. It's not only that he gives revelation to babies. He does another thing.

Verse 25, he hides these things from the clever and the intelligent. What I told the Lord, I said Lord my cleverness and intelligence is not by my ability. I was born that way, clever and intelligent.

I did not make myself, I was born with some intelligence in my mind. What shall I do, I am like a handicapped person. I am like a lame person when it comes to spiritual things.

Because I am clever, I am intelligent. So Lord won't you reveal to me? Because it says you hide things from the clever and intelligent and I am clever and intelligent, are you going to hide from me? What shall I do, I wish I could be born like a stupid foolish person. I wish I could have been as ignorant and stupid like the fishermen on the coast.

So that I won't revelation. The Lord said you don't have to be like that. I made you wise enough.

But when you come to my book, the Bible, don't bring your cleverness and intelligence there. Mathematics and science use it. But when you come to the Bible, come as a baby.

Say Lord, in this book I know nothing. I want to give you my testimony. That is how I have studied the Bible.

Lord, these are spiritual things, I know nothing. It's like reading a book in another language. Supposing you have a Bible which is written in Russian.

Or Chinese. Russian at least I can read, I can't understand. Chinese I can't even read.

I say Lord, this is like reading a book in Chinese. I can't understand, I can't read. I have to do something in my mind to make me understand the Bible.

Please read your Bible like that. Lord, this is written in Chinese, I can't understand it. If you don't explain it, I won't know what it is.

I think it means this, but it doesn't mean this. Because I don't know Chinese and I don't know the heavenly language. Come like a baby.

Like a student going to kindergarten first class. Usually A, B, C. Even if you are 50 years old. I am 84 years old.

Today I go to the Bible and say, Lord I am a baby, teach me. That is how I get revelation. What is the difference between revelation and knowledge? Knowledge will make you proud.

And it will make you a great preacher. Revelation will change your life. And will help you to change other people's lives.

If you preach with knowledge from the pulpit. People will be impressed by you. But if you speak from revelation.

They may not think you are a great preacher. But their lives will be changed. All of you elders, tell me please.

All you Tamil Nadu elders. Please tell me in Jesus name. Do you want to be known as a great preacher or do you want people's lives to be changed? And if you have been seeking to be known as a great preacher.

Begin 2024 with repentance. Lord, I want to change people's lives. I want to change my life first.

And my family life. My children. I don't want any honor.

That is one of the most important things to remember in 2024. And then I want to share with you another very important thing. And that is again in Matthew's gospel.

You know once Jesus told his disciples. Just let me turn to that verse in Matthew's gospel in chapter 8. I am just trying to find that verse. I am getting a bit old now.

Jesus once said. It is more important to be. God is not looking for sacrifice.

But for compassion. I think it is in Matthew 8 or 9. And that is a very important lesson to learn. Because we think the great thing is sacrifice.

I got to sacrifice this. I got to sacrifice this and the Lord will be impressed by me. I have done so much sacrifice for the Lord.

And the pharisees thought like that. And sacrificed so many things for the Lord. But the Lord said to them it is not sacrifice I want.

But compassion. And that is one word which I want to share with you for the new year. Just one minute.

Very important for you to remember that verse. 913. I knew it was in Matthew 9. So you know how important it is to have.

Fellowship in the body in a situation like this. We need one another all the time. So Matthew 9.13. Please remember this verse.

The Lord says go and learn what this means. It is a word to us today. I desire compassion and not sacrifice.

Many of us have sacrificed for the Lord. The Lord says I want compassion. Another word for compassion.

In Tamil maybe the same word mercy. So to be merciful to other people. See in Matthew 5. The Lord says.

Verse 7. So all your sacrifice for the Lord. So many of us have sacrificed so much for the Lord. It is worth nothing if you don't have mercy on other people.

You can sacrifice your whole life. You don't have love and compassion for people. 1 Corinthians 13 says you are a zero before God.

I want to show you a verse that the Lord showed me many years ago. It is in the book of Lamentations. Lamentations comes after the book of Jeremiah.

This blessed my heart tremendously when I was a young man. Lamentations 3. The Lord's loving kindness never stops. Remember that.

Even when you think you have failed. The Lord's loving kindness does not stop. His compassions never fail.

Never never fails. And listen to this. Verse 23.

Lamentations 3.23 Please remember this. What that means is Supposing the Lord has forgiven me crores millions of times in the last few years. He has been very merciful to me.

This morning His mercy is new. What does it mean? He looks at me and says I have never forgiven you till today. This is the first time I am going to forgive you today.

I say Lord really this is the first time you are forgiving me today. That is the meaning of His mercies are new every morning. You know why? Because He says when I forgive you I do not remember your sins and iniquities anymore.

Hebrews 8.12 new covenant. He will not remember. Lord what about that thing you forgave me yesterday? I tell you I do not remember your past.

So when you ask me for forgiveness today it is the first time. You have brothers and sisters. Can you look at your wife and husband like that? That every morning if they make a mistake it is the first time you see them making a mistake.

You will never have to say to your husband and wife how many times you are doing that. Do you ever say that? I am sure many of you have said that. How many times I am telling you not to do that? Supposing somebody sent a message to your wife with a very important message for you.

You came back from the office and your wife completely forgot to tell you. And because of that some problem happened. Then your wife says oh I remember I was asked to give you a message.

That is the time to remember lamentations. That is the time to remember lamentations. Say oh darling it is ok.

God is on the throne. Maybe God allowed you to forget it for some reason. Don't instead of saying all the times I have told you you must tell me immediately anything that happens.

Finish with that in 2024. Husband and wife never touch your head and say how many times I have told you. Don't say that to your children, don't say that to your wife or husband.

Lamentations 323. His mercies are new every morning. I don't want sacrifice the Lord says.

You are sacrificing so much serving me in the church and preaching and all that and traveling here and there. I don't want those sacrifices. I want mercy and compassion.

Be merciful and compassionate to the weak people in your church. Don't just be friendly with the clever people and the rich people in your church. Make friends with some of the weakest poorest people in your church.

How many of you go and try to make friends with the weakest and the poorest people in your church. Tell me. That's how Jesus was.

Jesus did not always go looking for the richest and the most influential people in his churches. Because you say if I have some trouble I can go to this person to help me. If I have a trouble I will go to my heavenly father to help me.

He is more influential than all these influential people in the church. Dear brother, sister, be like Jesus. Make friends with the poorest people in your church.

The least educated. See my children got a good education. But whenever they came to Bangalore, I would tell them.

Please go and make friends with some of these Tamil speaking brothers who cannot speak English properly. And they are so gripped by that, Santosh even wanted to try and learn some Tamil. And that kept them humble.

Mingling with the poorest and the least educated people in CFC. I have seen other young people. Their parents wanted their children to learn Tamil.

In CFC. Where are those young people today? They have all fallen away. Teach your children to mingle with the poorest, least educated people in your church.

It will change their lives. They will be preserved for eternity. But these are little things.

Don't look for greatness in the world. Be merciful towards others. We have a motto in our church building in Bangalore.

The back of the pulpit is saying, Be merciful to others just as God has been merciful to you. Right from the time we built the first building in 1981. For these 42 years.

We have had that same verse. To remind people. When you pursue holiness.

Be merciful to others just as God has been merciful to you. So I want this 2024 to be a year of being merciful to others for all of us. Every day of this year.

Let your mercies be new every morning. This is a leap year. So we have 366 days.

Every one of those days. Remember what I told you today. Lamentations 3, 22 and 23.

The Lord's loving kindness never ceases. His compassions never fail. They are new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness Lord. Whenever we say Lord you are a faithful Lord. We are remembering that his mercies are new every morning.

It is written in the same verse. There is a song in English called Great is thy faithfulness. Many people who sing that song don't realize the first part of that verse.

Your mercies are new every morning. That proves that your faithfulness is great. So my mercies must also be new every morning to everybody.

My dear brothers and sisters I plead with you. Keep this verse in your mind. Forget many of the other things I said today.

Remember Lamentations 3, 22 and 23. The Lord's compassions never fail. They are new every morning.

Faithful like that. He is faithful. You also follow his example.

Your compassions towards others will never fail. He does not desire sacrifice but he desires compassion. Don't boast in your sacrifices anymore from today.

God doesn't care for that. He says I don't desire your sacrifice. I want compassion.

During this year if you travel here and there and you think you are doing a great thing for the Lord Remember Matthew 9, 13 I don't want your sacrifice. I want compassion. I want your mercies to be new every morning towards your wife, towards your husband and towards your children and towards all the foolish people in your church and towards all the simple people who make so many mistakes somebody who spoiled something of yours or somebody wasted or lost something of yours or all of you who have high thoughts about yourself please humble yourself.

Please remember you are a zero in God's eyes. Let this be a year where we will be merciful to others as God has been merciful to us. Make this a motto.

Write it on a piece of paper and keep it in the front of your Bible. Be merciful to others as God has been merciful to you. Let your mercies be new every morning.

You write those two sentences. Be merciful to others as God has been merciful to you. Let your mercies be new every morning.

Keep it in the front of your Bible so that you remember it every day. And never never forget it. And the result will be your home life will become heavenly.

Your church will be heavenly even if it does not increase in number. Don't glory that your number of people in your church are increasing. There will always be more demons in hell than the number of people in your church.

So devil has got a lot of people. Don't glory in people. Jesus said very few find the way to life.

The way to life is the way of compassion. People whose mercies are new every morning. I would rather have 10 people in my church whose mercies are new every morning who are merciful to everybody else who are merciful to their wives and husbands.

I would rather have 10 people like that than 5,000 people in my church who are clever and can preach well. We want a revolution in our CFC churches in 2024. Revival at mercy and compassion may it be fulfilled.

May it be fulfilled in our lives. Thank you Vincent for translating. Dear brothers, let's bow our heads in prayer.

Brothers and sisters, God has got a great plan for CFC churches in Tamil Nadu. Brothers and sisters, God has got a great plan for CFC churches in Tamil Nadu. Don't let him down.

Don't disappoint him. Say Lord, help us to take heed to what we heard today. Say Lord, help us to take heed to what we heard today.

What a revival there will be in all our hundreds of families if we take seriously what you heard today. What a revival there will be in all our hundreds of families if we take seriously what you heard today. All over Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka and all Tamil speaking people in Sweden and every part of the world.

Italy Any place. Let this be a year where we will be more merciful and compassionate towards others. Let this be a year where we will be more merciful and compassionate towards others.

Help us Lord. You can be glorified in our churches. Help us to walk in humility that your grace will be upon us.

If necessary, give us any number of thorns in our flesh to keep us humble. If necessary, give us any number of thorns in our flesh to keep us humble. But we want to receive grace.

Thank you Father. Thank you with all my heart for these wonderful brothers and sisters whom you have given me in Tamil Nadu. And in Sri Lanka and all over the world.

They are my precious brothers and sisters and I value them. And I consider it a great honor to be their brother. I thank you for all the leaders in Tamil Nadu and other churches.

You have raised them up. Help them to be faithful to the end in humility. Help them to be faithful to the end in humility.

Lord, fill us with the Holy Spirit for that purpose. Lord, fill us with the Holy Spirit for that purpose. We don't want great preachers, we want merciful people.

We don't want great preachers, we want merciful people. Answer our prayer for us in 2024. Let it be for everybody the best year they have ever had.

Many people in our churches have many needs, physical, financial. I know that if they pursue humility and mercy, those needs will be met. Seek the kingdom of God, other things will be added to you.

Help them all to seek mercy and humility. Help us all we pray. Thank you for the tremendous privilege you have given me to be a brother to these precious brothers in Tamil Nadu.

Thank you for the tremendous privilege you have given me to be a brother to these precious brothers in Tamil Nadu. Thank you in Jesus name. Thank you all very much and God bless you in the new year.

Thank you for listening to me patiently for one and a half hours. Thank you for listening to me patiently for one and a half hours.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/vMuZ-LsKAWs.mp4>

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