

Jesus' Attitude to Material Things

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having the attitude of Jesus, which is to please the Father and seek the good of others, and encourages listeners to live a life of simplicity and devotion, following Jesus' example.

Duration: 58:36

Scripture: Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Stewardship", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being discerning and wholehearted in serving God, drawing parallels to Apostle Paul's high standards. It highlights the need to have the same attitude as Christ Jesus, focusing on sacrificial living, contentment, and being rich towards God. The speaker addresses the dangers of debt, wastefulness, and the love of money, urging listeners to prioritize spiritual growth, honesty, and a heart of giving.

Transcript

You know when the Apostle Paul was talking about his co-workers, Paul was a man with a very high standard and he did not take on to his team anyone who was half-hearted. And if you and I were living in Paul's time and if we got selected to work on Paul's team, boy that would be a tremendous honor. Paul was a very discerning man.

He wouldn't take people who were half-hearted. In fact, once he turned away John Mark saying, I'm never going to take him again because he turned back after beginning to serve the Lord and found the going tough and he turned back and he said, well we don't want guys like that on our team. And in connection with that, he says in Philippians chapter 2, you know Philippians chapter 2 is a great chapter.

And if I were to sum up the title of that chapter, it would be in these words, Philippians 2 verse 5. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. Once you're born again and you have found salvation in Christ and you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, there's really only one verse that you need for the rest of your life and that's this verse. Have this attitude in you which was in Christ Jesus.

If you don't have the Bible and you only have that one verse and you keep that one verse before you every day of your life, examine everything you do, everything you say, everything you think, your attitude towards others, your attitude towards the world, towards sinners, towards the church, towards money, towards material things. Everything you evaluate by this one verse. Have the same attitude that Jesus

had.

Your attitude towards the opposite sex. Have the same attitude that Jesus had. I tell you, in one year you'll be a holy man.

You'll be a saint. We read so much of the Bible. We get so much information.

We sing well. Why are we not more like Jesus? Because we have not kept that verse in front of us as much as we should have. I'm not preaching what I have not practiced.

I have tried to keep that verse before me for 45 years at least. I haven't always succeeded. Periods in those 45 years when I backslid or was not as wholehearted as I should be.

I repent of those times but basically that has been my guideline. I have never made any man my example because I hardly found anybody whom I could follow in my younger days. If there was somebody like Paul, I would have followed him because he said follow me as I follow Christ.

But most of the people I knew when I was young were not wholehearted disciples of Christ. So I looked at Jesus alone. If you find a good example to follow, that's great.

You're lucky. But if you don't, you can still follow Jesus. And you can measure how spiritual you are by that verse.

How much of the attitude of Christ do you have in different areas of life? Don't go by any other standard. Don't go by what any church teaches or even what you may hear in this church. That is the standard.

You will never go astray. If you want to know how Jesus, what attitude Jesus had, you just got to read the Gospels and the Epistles. You read the New Testament, you'll understand it.

Because if you don't read the New Testament, you're too lazy to read the New Testament, you'll never understand it. If you are living by being spoon-fed every Sunday here in the church, I can guarantee you won't grow spiritually. Because the Lord is a very jealous God.

And when he sees that you are more interested in listening to a man than listening to him, he will make sure that you don't grow spiritually. I guarantee that. He wants to have a connection.

He wants you to have a connection with him. He may use a man. He uses different men.

But when he sees anyone more dependent on a man than on him, more eager to hear a man than on him, he's a jealous God. And you will miss some of his blessing. There's no doubt about it.

I have been blessed through listening to many godly men through my life, reading many wonderful books. But they have never taken precedence over listening to Jesus himself. Our God is a God who speaks.

He's not a dead idol. If the God you worship does not speak to you, you're an idol worshiper. Idols don't speak.

But the God we worship speaks. In fact, in the very first page of the Bible, we read, six days of the week, God spoke every day. That's what you read in the first page of the Bible.

And when the earth responded to what God said, something happens. Something wonderful happened. Something wonderful happens in our lives when we listen to God.

Jesus himself said the first words that came out of Jesus' mouth that's recorded in Scripture after his baptism, you know what they are? Man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Those are his words, very first words recorded in Scripture after his baptism. Man shall live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

So I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, please develop the habit of reading, especially the New Testament, and hearing what God has to say to you every day of the week. It will make all the difference in your life. But here's the heading of this chapter, have this attitude which is you and you, which is in Christ.

And he speaks about Jesus himself. And then he speaks about a young man who followed Jesus in this area, and that is Timothy in verse 19. He's saying, I want to send Timothy to you so that I can be encouraged when I learn of your condition there in Philippi.

And listen to this, among all my co-workers who are with me at present, that probably doesn't include all his co-workers, he had some excellent co-workers like Titus and others, they were not probably with him at that time, but among all those who are with me at present, my co-workers, I don't have a single one whom I can send to you. Imagine, people who joined Paul's team were very wonderful brothers when they started, but now they are backslidden so much that none of them is fit to be sent as a messenger to the church in Philippi because, he says except Timothy, I don't have anyone else, because none of them will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. They all seek their own welfare, they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

Now when you put those two verses together, you see the outstanding feature of a man like Timothy was, he did not seek his own interests, and that is the attitude of Jesus. If Jesus sought his own interests, he would never have come from heaven to this earth, he would have stayed there, he never came to this earth to get anything for himself. He came here with a pure desire to fulfill the will of his father, to please his father, and to seek our good.

Did you get that? To do the will of his father, to please his father, and to seek our good. That is the attitude of Jesus Christ. When it says have the same attitude that was in Christ Jesus, that is to please the father and seek the good of others.

That's why he came from heaven. It's what it says earlier, he didn't lay hold of what he could have, equality with God, but gave it up. And a true disciple of Jesus is one who is increasingly seeking to please the father more and more.

None of us can do it perfectly, I don't believe I'm doing it perfectly, but I certainly see in my own life that I have a sense that I'm pleasing the father more this year than ever in my life. And I think I can say that I'm seeking the good of others more this year than ever in my life, it's progression. The mountaintop may still be a long way away to be perfectly like Jesus, where I only seek to please the father and only seek the good of others, but I'm climbing.

I hope you're climbing too. I hope you're seeking to please the father more now than you were last year. I hope you're seeking to the good of others and not seeking your own interests more this year than last year.

If not, I want to say you are going in the wrong direction. Many of us may think a backslider is someone who started going to the movies and started drinking and gambling, etc. Well, that's sort of the end of the pit when you hit rock bottom.

But backsliding starts, it's a slippery slide and backsliding starts very much earlier. All backsliding is when I stop seeking to please the father and want to please myself. When I seek my own good, not the good of others, I'm already a backslider.

And if you keep that as the standard, you may discover, if you're honest, that a number of you are backsliders. Well, if you face up to it, if you go to God and say, I remember the times when God's given me light and I said, Lord, I'm a backslider. And God loves honest people.

And that's what's made me slide forward. But if you keep on pretending that you're not a backslider, God sees you're dishonest and he lets you slip down further. One of the concerns I've had, as I've observed our own church here for many years, is the lack of spiritual growth and maturity and spirituality in many, many people who have been here for 10, 15, 20 years.

I want to be honest. I'm not saying that to criticize anybody, but I'm saying I've been concerned about it. And I said, Lord, what is the reason? Why is it that people who should by now have been reaching out and blessing others in India and setting others in India on fire are sitting here cold, needing to be set on fire themselves.

All they can do is sing well. New songs, new choruses. It's not spirituality.

I'll tell you that. That is not spirituality. Don't let ever be deceived by that.

You can be enthusiastic about many things and it's not spirituality. You can help in the renovation of this building and you may be even unconverted. That's not spirituality.

Spirituality is a fervent devotion to Jesus Christ. Nothing less than that. Even if we meet in a hut, it's fervent devotion to Jesus.

Whether we don't sing in tune, it doesn't make a difference to God if we are fervently devoted to Jesus Christ. So why is it that we are not all that we should be? And that's something, you know, it's like when you go to a doctor for a checkup and he compares your physical health, your blood pressure, your blood sugar and various other things in your blood and your physical condition, your weight and general physical tone of your body and compares it with the way he checked you up if you go for an annual checkup with last year and the previous year. I mean, if he's a good doctor who loves you and is not just interested in your money, he'll say, hey, my friend, I'm a bit concerned about you.

Your health is not as good as it was last year. Would that be a good doctor? Or would you rather go to the doctor who bluffs you and says, you're okay, man, you're doing fine. You may be overweight and you may be sick and he just collects his fees and sends you home to die soon.

I don't want to go to a doctor like that. I'd rather go to a doctor who tells me the truth about myself, even if it's hard to bear, so that I can do something about it. That's exactly the way I'm trying to speak to you this morning.

I don't have a grudge against any of you. I'm not here to criticize. I remember the Lord told me that when I get up to speak, not only here, but anywhere, if I have an atom, an atom of a critical attitude towards people, I will be in fellowship with the accuser of the brothers and whatever I speak, the channel will be polluted and the river of life flowing through me will be polluted by my filthy, accusative, critical spirit.

I know I've been foolish in my younger days and I used to speak like that and I know it was polluted. The truth may have been right, but the truth was polluted. But I've determined it's not going to be like that.

I never want to stand up and have a critical attitude towards a single human being, but I want to speak the truth. I believe Jesus didn't have any fellowship with the accuser of the brethren. He could say the prince of the world comes and he's got nothing in me.

He is the accuser of the brothers, but there was nothing of him in Jesus and yet Jesus could turn around to people and say, get behind me, Satan. He told Peter, you serpents, you generation of vipers. He told the Pharisees because he loved them.

I've never called anybody a generation of vipers because I don't love them enough. I don't love them like Jesus did. If I could love people enough to die for them, then I'd be qualified to call them generation of vipers.

But because I don't love them that much, I have to use less strong language. I'll tell you, Jesus is very strong in his language because he loved people so much. He was a doctor who was so interested in people's health that he didn't want their money.

He didn't want that good approval. He wanted them to be healthy. That's why he came to earth.

That's why he died. That we might not ruin the one life we have. When God sent Jesus to earth, he sent him to demonstrate to this world how he originally wanted Adam to live.

That's how I see the life of Jesus. When God created Adam, there was a particular way in which he wanted Adam to live. And for 4,000 years, nobody ever lived like that.

Nobody, starting from Adam, even the best of men like Enoch who walked with God did not live the way God wanted. They were pretty good. But they did still did not live the way God wanted man to live.

Finally, he sent his own son in human flesh and watching his life for 30 years. He never allowed him to preach a message for 30 years. So many preach so many young people have a great lust to get up and preach.

Jesus wasn't like that. He was not interested in preaching. He was interested in living first.

But 30 years he never preached. And he wasn't interested in just cramming up Bible knowledge. He knew enough of the Bible at the age of 12, more than all the Bible school PhDs.

He used to discuss with them and they didn't understand where he got this knowledge from. At the age of 12, he could have preached anything, but he didn't. He lived.

And at the end of 30 years, God said, I'm so well pleased with him. Now I'm going to give him a ministry. That's the basis of Jesus ministry came out of his life.

And there I see the way God wanted Adam to live. That's the way God wants every human being to live. That's the way he wanted Eve to live and Adam to live.

And I see that that is the way God wants me to live. And the more my life patterns after the life of Jesus, not after the lives of Christians around me, and certainly not like the preachers of today. Oh, no, I want to be a million miles away from all that.

But the more I pattern my life after the life of Jesus, the more I know that I will live the way God wants me to live the way God expects man to live. And I know that the more I live like that, when I come to the end of my life and stand before the Lord one day, I will have very little regret over my life. We all have some regret over our lives because we messed up our lives in our younger days and did so many wrong things when we were unconverted.

We got regret for all that. But at least after we are converted, I want to lessen the regret I have over how I lived on this earth. I'm serious about it.

I don't know if you are. I'm very serious about it because I know I have only one life. And every year that goes by, life slips away and I can never get that bad time back again.

I don't have time to play the fool like so many people around me. I don't have time to waste in watching useless television programs and watching useless movies because life is so short. Yeah, we need some relaxation, some entertainment.

I agree. And I'm all for it and I'm open to that whenever I need it. But I keep everything in balance because life was not meant, life was not given for entertainment.

Life was given to please God. And if a Christian recognizes that, he'll live for that and he will seek to please God and he'll really look at Jesus as his example because it's the only example that God gave. First of all, as an example, how God wants man to live.

And people like Paul patterned themselves after Jesus. So Paul is a good example for me too. And Paul said in Philippians 3, 17, there are other people who follow this example.

Look at them. And through the years I have tried to look and they are very rare and very few that you can find in the world to obey that command in Philippians 3, 17 and 18 where it says, look at those who follow our example. I tried to obey that exhortation and I looked around and I find very, very few.

So I, when I find someone I'm tremendously challenged and people like Sadhu Sundar Singh have been a tremendous challenge to me when I read the way he lived. And there's so few and so rare. And Jesus and Paul and Sadhu Sundar Singh and a few others here and there, you read, I praise God for those men and I seek to learn from them.

People like Watchman Neem, few others like that. You know, the way they lived on earth, they, they, they had the same life I have. They have the same passions I have, but they did something with their life before they left.

You know, you have the same life. You have the same passions. You have the same opportunity.

You have the same 24 hours every day. But what you do with your life is up to you. We can't do anything about the past.

We can do something about the future. To seek to please God, the things that are Christ's and the good of others. And when we do that, will God take care of us? He certainly will.

Jesus never starved at any time. If he did, God would have permitted it with a good purpose. He fasted a number of times.

Sometimes God may permit us to go without food, even when we don't want to fast so that we learn how other people in our country who are without food feel. One of the benefits that I have got from fasting besides physical health is that I have learned how these hungry boys who pick food from the garbage bin feel like. I mean, it's alright to sympathize with them and give them some money, but I never felt hunger like them till I fasted.

And you'll never feel hunger like them till you fast. Of course, if you're not interested in that, that's another thing. I am interested.

I'm interested in my countrymen. I'm interested. I can't minister to them.

When I go to the villages in Tamil Nadu, I can't minister to these people if I don't know what they're going through. If you haven't learned to live simply, live with necessities, minimize your luxuries, you won't be able to minister to most people in this country. That I'll tell you.

You'll be able to minister to the rich elite and preach the prosperity gospel to them like many preachers do. Well, I'm not interested in that. Many years ago, I told the Lord that I wanted to go to the poor, and he took me at my word because Jesus said in the first sermon he preached, Luke 4, 18, he said, the Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

Luke 4, 18. That's the first sermon Jesus preached. Luke 4, 18, the Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

And I said, Lord, I want to be like you. I don't want to be like today's preachers. I want to preach the gospel to the poor.

And it's most amazing, even when I've gone to a country like the United States, God's taken me to some very poor people to preach. Now, I couldn't, didn't believe there were poor people there. I've been so encouraged to see that.

If you are wholehearted and you have a burning desire, God will grant you what you desire. But if you seek your own, well, I want to say to you, my brothers, you may enjoy yourself here on the earth, but mark my words. Please remember them when you and I meet at the judgment seat of Christ.

You will regret throughout eternity. Please take seriously what I'm telling you right now. I'm seeking your good.

I'm not seeking my own. I'm seeking your welfare. I'm seeking what will make life good for you on earth and in eternity.

That's what Christianity is all about. That's what the Bible is all about. We've been fooled by a generation of preachers today who tell us that the most important thing in life is to God's interested in your having fun and living a comfortable life and making a lot of money.

Jesus was our example. That's why we never discouraged and we decided even if he had very, very, very little, and we did have very little, I'll tell you honestly that I earned less than anybody sitting here earned any month. It's a fact.

And I decided at that time that I would never borrow money. I would never get into debt because I saw that in Jesus, that he never got into debt. You know the word for debt in the Hebrew, I looked up a concordance.

I don't know Hebrew but I've got a young's concordance with which I can look up Hebrew words. And I discovered that it's the same word as the bite of a serpent. It's the same word.

It's a Nakash or something like that. It's a bite of a serpent. You read about the bite of a serpent in Ecclesiastes 10.

It's a similar word. To be, to get into debt means a serpent has bit you and the serpent is the devil of course. Jesus never allowed the serpent to bite him.

I decided I'm never going to allow the serpent to bite me. If I don't have, I live with less. And I'll tell you this, after living on earth for 66 years without being in debt, I'm a very happy man when I decided to buy something only when I had the money.

It's true. The first washing machine I ever bought, new one I mean, was after my children started working. Well that's fine.

If I could afford it earlier I'd have bought it. If you fellas can afford it earlier, there's nothing wrong buying it. I couldn't afford it earlier.

That's why I didn't buy it. What do you do? Well we wash hands the way Jesus washed his clothes. What else? Can you do it better than that? Wash our clothes the way Jesus washed his clothes.

You know we have been fooled by the advertising world that you can't live without this, you can't live without that. I'll tell you what you can't live without. You can't live without the blessing of God.

And I know the blessing of God does not come on people who don't know how to live within their income. And I decided I wanted the blessing of God more than anything else. Jesus never got into debt.

Can you imagine Jesus going to somebody and saying, can you please lend me some money? I'm a bit hard up. My heavenly father sort of let me down the last month and didn't give me what I needed. Can you imagine that? Somebody would say, are you suppose really the son of God? You really say you're a father in heaven? That's exactly what people should say to us.

You really say you're a father in heaven? And not only debt, Jesus didn't live on a perpetual handout from other people. See one of the things I find in India is we like to receive anything free. Anything free, we go for it.

Anything you have to pay, we think twice about it. We've got to pray and even fast perhaps before you decide. But if it's free, you don't have to pray, you don't have to fast, it's for me.

Now you know that sounds okay, but it's not a good lifestyle. And if you are living from, you know, good brothers around you always give you some money, always give you some money, and always give you

some because you always appear so needy. I want to tell you, you are a million miles away from being like Jesus.

Not at all, you're not like Jesus, you're more like Delam. Not like Jesus Christ, not at all. Jesus didn't go around, even when he was poor, he didn't go around giving other people impression, oh I need some money, I need some money.

Not even so, I won't tell anybody what I need, I'll just look so pathetic that people will come and give me something. No, there was a dignity about Jesus and there must be a dignity about you, if you're a child of God. If you're in debt, if you're in need, I'm not saying you should not borrow in an emergency, okay, but ask yourself why did that happen? It's like saying if you slip up and fall, okay, you slipped up and fell, but you need to ask why did that happen? Why did you suddenly get into debt? There could be a number of reasons.

Perhaps you were not wise enough to save for the future. You know there's a verse in Proverbs chapter 6 which says, go to the ant, you lazy man. Go to the ant who does not have any overseer, does not have any preacher, doesn't have any conference, doesn't have any Bible, but it has got enough sense.

Can you imagine the size of the brain of a little ant? I mean the ant itself is so small. Can you imagine the size of its brain? But inside that little brain, Proverbs 6 says, it realizes that in winter there won't be so much food in places where it's very cold. So it says, I better store up something.

Imagine it's planning for six months ahead in summer and storing up some food so that later on it'll have enough for itself and its family. And the Bible says in Proverbs 6, you go to the ant, you lazy man. Be wise from that ant.

That's in the Bible. And learn from it that it stores up for the future so that when the need comes, you have something saved up for the rainy day. You have something saved up there.

I've seen people even in our church, you know, I trust the Lord. I trust the Lord. They think they're George Muller or something and they trust the Lord.

And I have seen what they do when they are in need. They're waiting for handouts from other good believers. Hypocrites of the first order who are bitten by the serpent, saying, thinking they're like George Muller.

Why not humble yourself and say, I was stupid. I was foolish. I don't have faith.

You could be in debt because you're wasteful. When you have plenty, you waste it on all types of things, unnecessary things. Waste money in buying all types of food stuffs for the home and you can't afford it.

And then get into debt. You don't have money to give for God or his work because you eat it all up. A lot of us think we belong to CFC.

Oh, it's a spiritual church. I'm in a good spiritual church. That may be true.

Judas was in the most spiritual church in the whole world in his time. And Jesus said about him, it was better for you if you are not even born. Can you imagine being in the most spiritual church and for God to say it's better for you if you were not even born.

It's possible. You can listen to the most powerful sermons. Can you imagine Judas Iscariot? Who ever heard more powerful sermons than him? It never changed him.

He was a lover of money till the end and it destroyed him. He thought of what he could gain out of being along with Jesus. Don't ever have that attitude, brother, sister.

I have the authority to speak that. A lot of preachers don't have that authority because they go around begging for money so much. They ask for money.

Many of you have known me here in this church for 31 years. You know that I've never taken one cent from this church in 31 years. No.

24 books of mine have been published by this church. I've never taken one cent of royalty for those books, CDs, DVDs, nothing. Because Jesus has been my example.

Paul has been my example. I've never looked for a handout from anybody. Paul said, I deserve to be supported because I'm serving you.

And one who gives you spiritual food deserves a material blessing in return. But Paul said, I won't take it on. I will not take that privilege.

But I have seen people who never give anything spiritually out just waiting for a handout. That's not Christianity. That's all I want to say.

Something is seriously wrong with your life if you're always going around looking for a handout. And I've seen another thing. That people who are once poor and received gifts to support them in their time of need.

That's good. And there's nothing wrong in receiving. If you're in need, somebody gives you a gift.

Take it and use it. Jesus received gifts. But what I have seen in those same people is that when they become rich, they never think of giving that money back to the church or back to the people who gave it to them.

Saying, brother, I have enough now. I'd like to return this 10,000, 20,000 which I got. Please give it to somebody poorer now.

They never think of that because they are self-centered, thoroughly self-centered. How is it such thoughts never occur to them? I mean, you may start doing it today because you heard me say it. Because you're convicted about it.

But how is it it never occurred to you all these years? Because you're self-centered. I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, I'm a doctor. Remember, I'm just trying to give you a diagnosis of yourself.

You can tear up the diagnosis if you like after you go away from here. But if you take it seriously, it'll do you some good. You can be healed from this disease.

It is a disease to be bitten by the serpent. Why do I say I have the authority to speak about this? There are very few people who can speak about the love of money today. The devil has silenced the preachers of today because they're always going around begging for money.

I have never, I've been a full-time Christian worker for 40 years. I've never asked anybody for a single cent. I've never sent a report about my work or about the work of this church to anybody expecting money from anyone.

I've been in times of dire need. Never let anybody know my need. God has provided my need.

I worked, earned my living, done my own business. I didn't know head or tail about it when I started. I asked God to bless it.

He's blessed it beyond my expectations. Because I decided I will not be bitten by the serpent. The prince of the world will have nothing in me.

I will never borrow. I'll never get into debt. I will never look for a handout.

I will never make my needs known. I will trust my Heavenly Father and God has blessed me. I say that for your testimony.

But I have lived simply also when I didn't have enough. That is what I'll tell you why I'm not in debt. In the days when we could not afford to buy fish, we never bought fish.

We love fish like you do. We couldn't afford to buy chicken or ice cream. We wouldn't afford buy it.

When we could afford it, we'd buy it. But when we couldn't afford it, we'd say, I'm not going to go in debt. We can live vegetarian.

It's better to live vegetarian, not be in debt, than to buy fish and get into debt. I don't know whether you agree with me. To me, that's the way Jesus.

I cannot believe Jesus would have borrowed money to get better food. Never. And he would not have used money that he wanted to give for God's work to buy more food for himself.

I cannot imagine Jesus doing that. A lot of Christians do that. They think they're very spiritual because they got so much head knowledge.

They're not spiritual. Your attitude to money shows how much you have been saved. Please remember that statement.

Your attitude to money shows how much you have been saved, how much you have progressed in your school, whether you're in kindergarten still or up to 20 years or whether you moved on to 10th standard and a degree, etc. It's really true. Your attitude to wastefulness.

I have tried my best to use things. I use the same couches and sofas I've had in my house for 34 years. Come and see it.

I sleep on the same mattress I've used for 34 years. We have taken care of it and we use it. When they get, if they get really bad, we'll throw it out maybe another 50 years or so, but till then we'll use it.

I'm expected to live long by the way. I'm not boasting. I'm just trying to tell you that you can be free from debt if you live a little simply.

I've had the same car for 21 years and most, when I couldn't afford to put the petrol in, I wouldn't use it. I'd use the scooter because of one reason. I didn't want the serpent to bite me.

That's the only reason. I will not allow the devil to touch me because I'm a servant of God and Christ has put me on earth to do a task for him and I'm not gonna let that task be corrupted by the devil defiling me with debt or waiting for a handout from people, expecting something. I will never let anybody know my need even if I'm starving.

I believe that God provides for me and I have seen that and proved it in 40 years. It's true and I say that for your encouragement. If you live simply and you decide that you're not going to and you teach your children to live simply and don't waste money on unnecessary things.

I mean I had some crazy ideas. I would never give money to my children as pocket money. You know, first of all I didn't have the money to throw around like that.

I would not give them money to buy food in the school. I said we'll send you something in your lunch package. All these rich people can do it.

They'd come with a hundred rupee notes to school. I said they can do it. We are servants of God.

We want to be faithful to God because God's given us a ministry. A lot of people are waiting for a ministry. I'll tell you what, you be faithful with money, God will give a ministry to you.

I remember years ago I said Lord, how can you be with my mouth so that every time I open my mouth, whether it's in a pulpit or in personal conversation, your word will come out through me. And you know what the Lord said to me? Two things, be faithful with money and be faithful with your mouth. That means, you know, that both are in Scripture.

It says in Luke chapter 16, Luke chapter 16, it says in verse 11, if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? You know what the true riches are? The anointing of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God in my mouth, transformation into the likeness of Christ. These are the true riches I have sought in my life. I've said God, I'm willing to give up everything on earth.

If you will anoint me with the Holy Spirit always, make me like Jesus and put your word in my mouth. I'm willing to lose everything else. Those are true riches because they last for eternity.

And the Lord says if you want those true riches, be faithful in the use of material things. Now I know why so many people don't have the Word of God in their mouth. Now I know why so many preachers are boring.

Now I know why so many people are spiritually dead. Why they don't have a continuous anointing. Why they're not on fire.

They were on fire once upon a time. Now they get on fire when they are put on fire in a meeting by somebody else. Why is it they are not faithful with money? They have not repaid people whom they have cheated to begin with.

I repaid every single person I cheated in my younger days. I said I don't want anybody in the day of judgment to stand before me and say this guy cheated me. Lord how can you take him into your kingdom? Nobody will be able to say that about me.

This guy borrowed money from me and never returned it. Nobody will be able to say that. I don't want my Lord to be embarrassed and ashamed when I stand before him and somebody comes and points his finger at me.

Yeah, are you concerned about embarrassing the Lord like that? Or you're not bothered? I hope you are my brother sister. It's very important to be faithful. First of all give back whatever you've taken wrongfully.

Doesn't matter, sell what you have and give it back. And then if you're in debt, the Bible says in Romans 13 verse 8, owe nobody anything. It's a clear word.

Don't owe anybody anything. Deuteronomy 28, the Lord said to Israel when I bless you one of the marks of my blessing on your life will be you will never borrow. You'll have plenty to give to others but you'll never borrow.

It's very very important to understand these simple principles of life. You want to follow Jesus. Some of this in the world in which we live.

Sometimes it becomes necessary to borrow, to build a house perhaps, buy a scooter. Make sure when you do such situations you get money from a bank that there's something on the other side of the balance. That is if you borrow money here that this side there's a house or a scooter, something so that it's not a debt, there's something there.

Be careful. And if you do business, be careful in borrowing money for business. Make sure you can repay it.

If you find yourself continuously in debt, something is wrong. You need to re-evaluate your finances. It's important.

Jesus was a carpenter. He was doing business but I don't think he lived in debt because he was satisfied with little. And if you're content with what God has given you, you'll be perfectly okay.

It's when we are not content and if you unfortunately have a very covetous wife who prods you and prods you and say we got to get that, we got to get that, we got to get that. I feel sorry for you but now please resist her and say I'm not going to disobey God. That's what Adam did, you know.

He disobeyed God to please his wife. Please don't follow Adam. Be like Job.

Another good example in Bible who did not displease God to please his wife, you know. But don't ever get into this because it's a trap. One of the first things I try to check in all our churches is are our brothers free from debt because I want them to be free from the bite of the serpent.

The Bible says the borrower is servant to the lender. I don't want to be a servant to anybody but Jesus Christ. It says the borrower is servant to the lender.

It's true. And I don't want to be a servant to anyone but Christ. Are you a servant to somebody else who's lent you money and you don't? That's the second thing.

And the other thing is don't be wasteful. Take care of your family's needs. Live simply.

And like Jesus said in Luke chapter 12, Luke chapter 12, he used an expression which is often comes to my mind. Jesus spoke about this man whose farm produced a terrific crop. Man was a farmer.

Those days most people were farmers. The land of a rich man, verse 16, was producing very productive. God was blessing him.

And when God blessed him, I know of many of you brothers who were extremely poor when you came to CFC. Extremely poor. Today God has blessed you, many of you.

Many of you are young people are earning much more than your parents ever earned in their lifetime. In one sense I'm happy. At the same time I'm scared.

I'm scared as to how you will destroy yourself. I'm scared that you'll miss out on what God has for you. I'll tell you honestly, well praise the Lord if you've got a better vehicle, a scooter, a car and all that's good.

You got all the gadgets you need in your home, fine. But I've learned through the years Christ and money are the equivalent of Jehovah and Baal in the Old Testament. Elijah stood up on Mount Carmel and said, if Jehovah is God, serve him.

If Baal is God, serve him. And I would say to you in that same spirit, if Christ is God, serve him. If money is God, serve him.

But you cannot serve both. Jesus said that in Luke 16 13. You cannot love God and money.

You hold one, you despise the other. But here in Luke chapter 12 he tells a story about this rich man who's very productive. Now apply this to your case.

How God has blessed you. Think back my brother, every one of you. Think back to the day you first came to CFC.

Every one of you, please do that. Think back to the day you first came to CFC. What was your financial state then? Got it in your mind now? Okay.

You've been here some years. You've been blessed. This story is for you.

And he began to think when he got so blessed, what shall I do now? I don't have any place to store my crops. I'll tear down my barns, build larger ones and I'll store all my grain and goods. I'll say to my soul, now I've got plenty and I can live for many years.

Take your trees, eat, drink and be merry. Verse 19, Luke 12. But God said to him, you fool.

This night your soul will be required for you. Who will own what you have prepared? Maybe you say my children will own it. That's fine.

But think of how it is today. You fool. Even if you store up so much and give to your children, what are you going to have in eternity? And listen, this is the word I was coming to verse 21.

So is the man who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. That's the expression that has come to my mind many times. Rich towards God.

I want to be rich towards God. I have never preached typing because I believe it's an Old Testament law. I have never practiced typing because an Old Testament law.

When I was working, I was a single man. I had no needs. I used to give more than 50% of my income for God's work.

When I left the Navy, I had no savings in my bank account. Of course, I was single. I'm not asking you to follow me.

God, my calling was special. I was called to be a full time worker. God told me to give up everything.

I gave up everything, all my money, everything. You may not be called to that. I'm not I'm not telling you to do it.

I'm just saying. I have believed in giving, not typing. And I believed in giving cheerfully.

That's why I've never preached on typing in this church. But I have seen through the years that some of us have missed something. And I've sought the Lord.

Lord, why is it many people in our church have missed something? And the word the Lord has brought to my mind is that verse we have there at the back. It's more blessed to give than to receive. Jesus words in Acts 20 verse 35.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. When you receive, there is a blessing. If you're in need, for example, somebody gives you some money, there's a blessing because your need is met.

Praise the Lord for that. But do you know that you're missing a blessing when you don't know how to give? And I feel that many brothers and sisters in this church have been robbed of that blessing because they have not learned to give. We don't type, but unfortunately we don't even give.

I don't know. I don't know who gives, who doesn't. I'm not interested in finding out.

But there will be a blessing on the life of people. The Bible says the father who sees in secret will reward openly. What does God want from our life, first of all? He wants our heart.

You don't give me a heart, then God doesn't want anything else. Then He wants our body, our eyes, tongue, hands. That's what He wants.

If you don't give that, brother, God's not interested in anything else you can give Him. But beyond that, you know, God tests us in our attitude to money, in seeing, do I recognize that it is the blessing of God that gave me this? Or do I recognize that I worked hard or I was smart? I was a smart businessman, so I earned this money. It's all a question of how you think.

You think you're a smart businessman who earned all this money? Keep it. But you say, I didn't deserve this. God gave it to me.

Lord, how am I supposed to use it? Can I give you something? Little, little things, my brothers. Think of little, little things. It's all a question of attitude.

It's all a question of attitude. And I tell you, if you're not serious of changing your attitude to the attitude of Christ, in a hundred years, you'll remain the same. God doesn't want you to be like that.

He wants us to change. And you can change today. If you say, Lord, first of all, I want to be honest with myself and acknowledge my need, my failure.

God loves honest people. He came for sinners. I remember the time when I cried out to Jesus and said, Lord, I'm lost in the love of money.

Will you please deliver me? Will you say that today? If you don't say you're lost, He won't save you. You say, Oh, I'm okay. And the Lord says, and I didn't come for you.

I came for sinners. But if you say, Lord, I'm lost in the love of money, you may find salvation. He came for those who are honest to acknowledge their need.

Dear brothers and sisters, I have sincerely sought to please God in what I've said and your good. I've not sought my good. I don't need anything from you.

I've not even sought the good of this church. I've sought your good. God bless you.

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