

(Kitchener, on 2012) a Servant / Sonship

by Zac Poonen

Pressing on to maturity means becoming more and more like Christ, involving purifying ourselves and fixing our eyes on Jesus.

Duration: 57:57

Scripture: Luke 16:13, Romans 6:22, Hebrews 4:15-16, Hebrews 11:40 - 12:3

Topics: "Sonship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the promise of God to provide jobs for his grandchildren, based on his own experiences in India. He warns against making money the master of our lives, comparing it to fire that can be a good servant but a bad master. The three marks of being a servant of God are to be free from sin, free from the mastery of money, and not seeking the approval of men. The speaker also highlights the importance of seeking God's approval rather than worrying about what others think, using the example of a little boy playing the violin who only cared about his teacher's opinion.

Transcript

So we've been looking at this expression found in Hebrews chapter 6, which says in the verse first, let us press on to maturity or perfection. And we know that perfection is found only in Jesus Christ. So really, he's talking about pressing on to become more and more like him as we progress in the Christian life.

And that is what is God's goal for us. I want you to turn again to Romans 8 and 29. In Romans 8 verse 29, we read about the goal that God has for all of his children.

The goal is total likeness to Jesus Christ. It's called here pre-destination. There's a lot of controversy concerning that word in Christendom, but it's very simple here in verse 29.

He predestined us to become like Jesus Christ. That is the maturity and the perfection we are to press on to. We must see that clearly.

In the old covenant, they didn't have a goal. Well, they did have a goal in one sense. The goal was to possess the land of Canaan.

It was an earthly goal. First, their goal was to get out of Egypt. And then God had a goal for them to possess Canaan, but they never got into Canaan.

But God's will for them was to possess something of earth. If you read the Old Testament, in the whole Old Testament, there's no promise of something heavenly or change of our nature. No.

It's only an earthly blessing that God promised Israel, but in the new covenant, it says God predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son. So, we must never forget that. To press on to maturity means I must become more and more like Christ.

And like we saw earlier, the hope that we have, you remember that, is not only that we shall see him, but when we see him, we shall become like him. So, that's our goal. And if that is our goal, then we seek to purify ourselves more and more as we approach that day.

So, that is why the Bible says that this Christian life is like a race towards perfection, where we look to Jesus as our example. So, I want you to turn to Hebrews chapter 11. In Hebrews 11, we have a great men of faith in the Old Testament.

And some of them lived very wonderful lives. And there are many good things we can learn from all these people. You know, you can take a Bible study on Abraham or David or Elijah and learn many, many things about the Christian life from their faith.

In fact, all of these people had faith. But if you look at the entire list of the faith they had, it was mostly for earthly things, almost entirely. They pleased God, but we don't read much about heaven except perhaps in one little phrase about Abraham where it says that they were seeking for a heavenly country in verse 14.

Otherwise, all of them were seeking, you know, the blessings were earthly by faith. They pulled down the walls of Jericho, they shut the mouths of lions, they crossed the Red Sea, they defeated their earthly enemies. It was all earthly.

We can say it was an earthly faith that the whole people had in the Old Testament. And when your faith is limited to earthly things, it's an Old Testament faith. Yeah, we can get a lot of earthly things by faith.

And Hebrews 11 teaches us that. But at the end of Hebrews 11, in the last verse, verse 40, it says, God has provided something better than all this for us. Hebrews 11, 40.

So, we must, whenever you read Hebrews 11, every verse concerning anybody, when you read about Abel, Abraham, anyone, always remember the last verse. That's not the best. God's provided something better for us.

You read Genesis to Malachi, whatever you read there, remember this verse. God has provided something better for us. In fact, this is a verse that you must remember when you read any part of the Old Testament.

If you forget this verse, you'll get stuck in the Old Testament and you'll think that those blessings are the blessings God is offering us. And that's a mistake that lots and lots of Christians make. A lot of people go to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 28, and think of all the blessings that God can give us on this earth.

And there are many pastors who threaten their congregation, saying God will curse you if you don't pay your tithes. It's all from the Old Testament. So, whenever you read the Old Testament, remember this verse, Hebrews 11, 40.

God has planned something better for us. That is the last verse at the end of the history of all these great Old Testament people. And then what is this better thing? And the better thing is in chapter 12, verses 1 to 3. It says in chapter 12, verse 1, we must run the race.

And verse 2, it says, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, the perfecter of our faith. This is the perfection we aim for. Who for the joy set before him endured the cross and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So, the goal of the Old Testament people was Canaan. Our goal is the throne of God. That's where we're going.

That's in heaven. Now, anybody can tell you the throne of God is better than an earthly Canaan. That's the better thing God has provided for us.

And that's why it says that we must press on to this goal. And if you were to ask me in very simple terms, what does it mean to press on to maturity? It means being more and more detached from attachment to earthly things. Till our mind becomes more and more heavenly minded.

The more heavenly minded you are, the more mature you are. And the more earthly minded you are, the more immature and carnal you are. A lot of Christians, they have problems because they are earthly minded.

You will fight with other people. Most of the fights among believers, even fights among husbands and wives at home, are all about earthly things. It's not about, you're not fighting about how to reach the throne of God.

Fighting about some silly earthly thing that has no value when we leave this earth. So, when we think of our mind, you know, we thought of Romans 12, where our mind is to be renewed, to think like God. That is, to be more and more detached from earthly things, to be heavenly minded.

That's how Jesus was. That doesn't mean that we don't care for the things of earth. We know that Jesus worked as a carpenter.

He lived in his home as a little boy, and he grew up as a little boy. He lived a very down-to-earth life, but his mind was not on earthly things. And he wouldn't fight for earthly things.

In the Old Testament, they fought for their property. Israel fought. Anybody, enemy took their property, they'd fight to drive them out, and God himself told them to do that.

But now and then in the Old Testament, you have a prophecy concerning Christ. Like, behold my servant. Look at my servant.

He's the one you're ultimately going to follow. Of course, they didn't understand it, but now through the Holy Spirit, we see that this is what it means to press on to perfection, to see how Jesus lived on earth just like any other human being, but yet he did not live for the things of earth. And the earth, the things of the world could not get inside him.

I mean, the perfect description of a wonderful illustration of a Christian is like a ship in the water. Surrounded by water, there's no water inside the ship. When the water comes inside the ship, that's when the ship sinks, or a boat.

So when the spirit of the world comes inside the Christian, he's a little more time and he's sunk. And that's what's happened to so many people. But the solution is not to run away from the world and live in some monastery or in some mountain like a hermit.

Jesus did not live in a monastery. And John the Baptist lived in the desert, but Jesus didn't live in the desert. We're not followers of John the Baptist.

We're followers of Jesus Christ, who lived right in the middle of the world, and the world did not come inside him. This is the example we have to look at. We have to look at Jesus, the perfecter of our faith, who aimed for the right hand of the throne of God.

That was the joy set before him. When it says there, because of this joy set before him, he was willing to suffer anything on the earth. Endured the cross, despised the shame, he was willing to suffer shame, because he said, I'm aiming for the throne of God.

And if whatever I go through is helping me to get to the throne of God sooner, I'm prepared for it. So, dear brothers and sisters, let me say this, that if your aim is earthly, and you're thinking of how to get more and more earthly blessings, you're not likely to make much progress in your Christian life to spiritual maturity. I mean, you can increase in a lot of knowledge and know more of the Bible, but you're not going to grow to maturity.

So, I want to encourage you to take this very seriously, that Jesus lived on earth just like a man, just like any of us. That's why God allowed him to be born as a little baby, so that he could grow up and be an example to five-year-old boys, ten-year-old boys, twelve-year-old boys. He could be an example to every one of them, to example to teenagers, example to adult working people.

He worked as a carpenter. He had to work hard to earn his living, just like we have to work hard to earn our living. He had to work hard to earn his living, so that he could be an example for us.

And then he became, for three and a half years, a full-time worker. And there he has become an example even to full-time preachers. How to preach, what should be your attitude to money, what should be your attitude to people.

So, for every type of human being, right from a little child to businessmen and full-time workers, Christ has lived on earth to be an example for us. Many of us look at Jesus only as hanging on the cross. But here it says we have to look at Jesus who was the perfecter of our faith, the way he walked on earth.

That's where we have to look at and follow. So, I just want to consider a few areas where we see what was Jesus' attitude. I quoted this verse in Isaiah 42.

Let me just show you that, first of all. In Isaiah 42, the Lord says, in verse 1. Isaiah 42, verse 1. Behold my servant. That's referring to Jesus Christ.

Behold means look carefully at my servant. Just like we read in Hebrews 12. Look carefully at my servant.

This is the one whom I uphold. This is my chosen. This is the one in whom my soul is delighted.

I have put my spirit upon him. And he will bring justice to the nations. Behold my servant.

So, Jesus is called a servant of God. He was a son and a servant. Now, not just a servant.

You know, like if a man has got a business. And his son is a partner with him. And he employs certain people in his shop, in his store.

Both are serving. The son is also serving there, maybe at the counter. And those servants are serving at the counter.

But there's a difference between the son and the other people, employees in that store. The employees are working for money. The son is a partner.

He's not working for money. He doesn't get a salary. He's a partner in the business.

And his employees will work from, you know, 9 o'clock to 5 o'clock or something like that. And then they go. But the son doesn't work like that.

He has no hours. He's just all the time, he's ready to work in the store till midnight if necessary. Or come early in the morning for no extra pay.

You see, both are serving. The employees and the son. But there's a lot of difference between a son serving and an employee serving.

So, our service for God in the Old Testament, it was like employees serving a master. But now, God has become our father. We are to serve him as a son serving his father.

There's a lot of difference. And you need to ask yourself, with what spirit are you serving God? Is it with the spirit of, Lord, I've done this for you, what are you going to do for me? That's like looking for a salary. You know, the employee telling the master, well, I worked for you 30 days, what are you going to give me now? When I come to God like that, with that spirit of, what are you going to do for me when I've done this for you? You're doing business with God.

You've made an employee contract with God. Maybe God will give you some things. But I never want to have that relationship with God, never.

I want to be a son. A son doesn't go to the father at the end of the month and say, Dad, what's my salary? I'm a partner with God in his business. You remember Jesus, even at the age of 12, he said to Joseph and Mary in the temple, didn't you know I've got to do my father's business? He had that sense of responsibility when he was 12.

He was not an employee. He wasn't sitting in the temple talking about God's word for some type of salary. Today you'll find, even among preachers, there are those who do it as a calling.

It's the burden of their heart. And there are other people who do it only if you pay them. They'll go where they can get the best salary.

A lot of preachers. They are pastors in a church, and then they get a higher salary offered somewhere else, and then they go there. These are not sons.

They're employees. And that's why Christendom has suffered. And therefore, he says in Isaiah 42, look at my servant, look at Jesus.

How did he serve? He did not serve for any money. He served in the spirit of a true servant of God. So when we look at Jesus Christ, we can learn what it really means to serve in the spirit of a son.

And as we do that, we grow up to maturity. So there are three areas I want to speak about. How to be a true servant of God.

Number one. In Romans 6 and verse 22, how can I be a servant of God like Jesus Christ? Like a son. Romans 6 and verse 22.

It says here, having been freed from sin and become servants of God, you derive your fruit. Slaves of God or servants of God, same thing. How do I become a servant of God according to this verse? I have to be free from sin.

Now, most people say today, if you want to be a full-time servant of God, you've got to be free from an earthly job. Give up your earthly job and then become a pastor. But the apostle Paul did not give up his earthly job.

He was a tent maker until the end of his life. And he was far better than any pastor. He was an apostle.

He worked. He received occasional gifts, but basically he took care of himself. So it's not being free from a job.

There are some denominations of Christianity that say if you serve God, you can't get married, like the Roman Catholic priests. You have to be free from marriage in order to serve God. All these are wrong.

You don't have to be free from marriage. You don't have to be free from an earthly job. But you have to be free from sin.

That's the way to be a servant of God. That's what's written in the Bible. So all these wrong ideas that people have, they have come from human ideas.

Any of us can be a servant of God if you're determined to be free from sin. That's why I speak so much about being free from sin. Because I believe all of us ought to be servants of God.

In the Old Testament, you could be a servant of God only if you were from the tribe of Levi. But now we can be a servant of God. Anyone can be a servant of God if you're free from sin.

That's the number one thing. And that's why we need to look at Jesus as one who overcame sin, first of all, in his life. So I want to ask you if you really want to be a servant of God as a son.

And the Bible says, look carefully at my servant. He was free from sin. And even though I may not be as perfect as he was in free from sin, like we read we are pressing on to that perfection.

As we look at him, we can seek to be free from sin as he was. And the Bible says in Hebrews in chapter 4, Hebrews 4 in verse 15 and 16, it tells us how he was free from sin. Hebrews 4, 15, it's talking about Jesus Christ.

We don't have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses. I'm putting it in a positive way. We do have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses.

How can he sympathize with our struggles and weaknesses? Because, listen to this amazing verse which some of you may not even have thought of in your life. He was tempted exactly as we are in every area, every respect, yet without sin. He was tempted as we are in every area, but he did not sin.

That's why he can say to us, follow me. This is a great truth, my brothers and sisters. When you see it, you'll see the secret of overcoming sin lies here.

Looking at Jesus and saying, Lord, you are tempted like me. I know when I understood this truth for the first time many years ago, whenever I was tempted very strongly, all of us are tempted strongly at different times by different temptations. It could be a temptation to be discouraged or a temptation to sexual lust or a temptation to anger or a temptation to have a bitterness against somebody who hurt us or all types of temptations.

I must say, Lord Jesus, when you were in Nazareth as a young man, you were also tempted exactly like I am being tempted right now. I want to look at you, like the Bible says, behold my servant. I want to look at you and see, I want the Holy Spirit to show me how you overcame that temptation by resisting it and hating it and fighting against it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I want to do the same thing. I want to ask God's help to do the same thing. So, let's get this verse clearly.

He was tempted like we are yet without sin. And you may say, so what? You see in the next verse, verse 16. Therefore, then, if that is the case, that he was tempted and he did not sin, then we also can come with confidence to the throne of grace so that we can also receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Now, remember, this is connected to the previous verse. So, the time of need it's speaking of here is not financial need. It's a time of temptation.

The meaning is, like he was tempted in every point and did not sin, in our time of temptation, let us come to the throne of grace and ask God to give us grace to overcome so that we also don't sin. I don't know whether you have a great passion in your life to be free from sin. Like I often have said, the mark of a spiritual man is that he hates sin more than he hates sickness.

That he fears sin more than he fears sickness. That he fears getting angry more than he fears getting cancer. That he fears dirty thoughts more than AIDS.

That's the mark of a spiritual man. You can find out right now whether you're spiritual or not. If a doctor gives you a diagnosis of a sickness, an incurable sickness, would that disturb you? Or would you be more disturbed by the fact that you're committing sin in different areas? How much effort would you make to be free from cancer in your body? You would go to this doctor and that doctor and if you hear that some doctor in some other country, you'd go over there and if you hear that you need to spend so much money to be cured of that cancer, you'd go there and spend it.

You'd draw out your bank account and spend it. What a lot of effort people make to be free from cancer. What about how much effort do we make to be free from sin? So many people so lazily sit back and say, Oh, I'm trying but I don't get any freedom from sin.

Well, if you tried as hard as some people try to be free from a sickness, you'd have got freedom from sin long, long ago. It's not because you can't. It's because you don't think it's such a serious thing.

I mean if your shirt is torn, yeah, throw it away perhaps and get another shirt. It's not a serious thing. So when I treat sin like some tear in my shirt, it's not a serious thing.

That's exactly how many Christians treat sin. That's why they never become servants of God. That's why they never press on to maturity.

This is very fundamental. Let us come to the throne of grace. And at the throne of grace, we receive two things.

I want you to see here. If you've heard my tapes, you know the difference between mercy and grace. Two different words.

But if you haven't heard it, let me explain it to you. Mercy refers to my past life, grace to the future. Mercy refers to the sins I've committed, and grace refers to the sins I need to overcome when I'm tempted in the future.

Jesus never needed mercy, not once, because he never committed sin. We need mercy. Till our last day on earth, we need mercy because any of us can slip up and fall any time.

We need the blood of Jesus to cleanse us at all times. But in addition to mercy, we need to get grace. In the Old Testament, they didn't have grace.

They only had mercy. You read words like the mercy of the Lord endures forever. But you never read about grace in the Old Testament because the Bible says grace came through Jesus Christ.

And grace is, we can look at that last expression as a pretty good definition of grace. What is it? Help in time of my need. To me, that's a beautiful definition of grace.

It's the help that comes to me in the time of my need. If my need is to overcome a particular temptation, grace is there. If my need is to face a particular trial and to be a conqueror, grace is there.

You know, trials can be different from temptation. Trials can be related to, say, a financial difficulty in my life or a problem in the office or problems with my relatives. Problems, serious problems.

We live on the earth, we have so many problems. And grace is the help that comes to me to help me to overcome in that situation and to solve that problem. So, it's not enough to get mercy.

Many Christians only ask God for mercy. Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me, forgive me. It's good.

But they never ask for grace. Grace is help. Help me, Lord, to overcome.

Don't let me sink. And one of the best examples is Peter sinking in the sea. You remember that time when Jesus was walking on the water.

To me, Jesus walking on the water is a beautiful picture of overcoming sin. Because, you know, why we can't walk on the water? Because there's a law called the law of gravity that pulls us down, down, down, down. As soon as you step on the water, gravity pulls you down.

And gravity is a beautiful picture of the law of sin. The law of sin in our bodies is like the law of gravity. Always pulling you down into sin.

And Jesus walking on top of the water without sinking is a picture of overcoming that law of gravity. It's a picture of Jesus overcoming the law of sin that tried to pull him down. He did not have sinful flesh like we have, but he did have temptation.

We know that Satan tried to pull him down in temptation even in the wilderness. It says he was tempted for 40 days. He was tempted all through his life.

And it says in the previous verse, in every way as we are, he felt that pull. But he did not sink. Just like he walked on the water.

The gravity could not pull him down. Sin could not pull him down. And that was by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now the greatest miracle there is not Jesus walking on the water. The greatest miracle there is Peter walking on the water. What do you think? Which is a greater miracle? Jesus walking on the water or Peter walking on the water? Jesus walking on the water is not such a great thing.

He is the Son of God. But Peter, a guy like you and me, walking on the water. Boy, that's really a miracle.

And Jesus said, come. What he was saying is, now you got to take that message to yourself instead of Peter. You.

The Lord is saying to you. To all of you. Come.

You can overcome this law of sin. Just like I overcame. See how I am walking on the water? See how I overcame sin? You can do the same.

Come out and step out in faith. And if you have faith. And Jesus says, come.

Don't sit in the security of the boat. Get out and say, Lord, I believe I can be an overcomer. Also in my life.

I can overcome. I can't overcome the law of gravity, but I can overcome the law of sin. Let us find grace to help me in my time of need.

And as I overcome sin, you know what happened to Peter after a while? As long as he was looking at Jesus. He was overcoming and walking. Overcoming the law of gravity.

But just for a short moment, he took his eyes away from Jesus. And looked at the wind and the waves. And he sank.

And if you begin to look at the seriousness of temptation. You begin to sink. Or you begin to look at other people.

And begin to compare yourself with them. Say, I am better than them. You sink immediately.

A lot of people sink just because they are looking at other people and saying. I am a better believer than them. It is the easiest way to sink.

But you look at Jesus. Like Peter, you didn't sink. He sank when he was looking around.

And what did he do when he was beginning to sink? Do you know the story? In Matthew 14. He said, Lord, save me. That's all he said.

Three words. Lord, save me. Peter stretched out his hand and held him.

And made him stand. That is help in time of need. When you feel, dear brothers and sisters.

Now I want to make this very practical. Next time you are tempted. You could be tempted when somebody provokes you to get angry.

You could be tempted with dirty pictures. You could be tempted when you are sitting at the computer. To go to sites that can pollute you.

You can be tempted to make money in some unrighteous way. And the temptation can be strong. Because everybody else is also doing it.

Telling lies. You could be tempted to have a very bitter attitude to somebody who did great harm to you. All these things are temptations to make you sink in the sea.

What should you do? If you find it so strong. Lord, give me grace now. Help me to stand.

Immediately Jesus held Peter's hand and made him stand. I find that such a tremendously encouraging picture. It is not a question of me overcoming sin.

As much as it is a question of Jesus keeping me from falling. You know if I say I overcame sin. The emphasis is on me.

But if I say Jesus keeps me from falling. Then the glory goes to God. And I want to say to you.

Not that you can overcome sin. But I want to say to you that Jesus can keep you from falling. But you ask Him for grace.

You don't have because you don't ask. If you ask. He will give you grace.

And it says in Romans 6 and verse 14. That when you get grace. This is what happens.

Romans 6. Chapter 6 of Romans. And verse 14. Sin shall not rule over you.

Because you are not under law. But under grace. Very simple verse.

Sin cannot rule or have dominion over you. So from that verse. I could even ask a little child here.

If you can read and understand English. From that verse. Tell me.

What is the mark that you are under grace? Very simple. Sin cannot rule over you. Sin cannot have dominion over you.

From that verse. What is the mark that you are under law? Sin has dominion over you. Now whether you know it or not.

When sin rules me. I am under law. If I am under grace.

Sin cannot rule me. Because if Jesus holds me up. How can I fall? That's grace.

Help in time of need. I fall because I am not getting grace. Because I don't ask him for it.

I am looking here and there. I am looking comparing myself with other people. And looking at the seriousness of temptation.

Or looking for some earthly gain for myself. Then I sink. But if I look to Jesus.

I will not sink. And if I happen to look away. And I am slipping and falling.

All I need to do is say. Lord forgive me. Help me.

Hold me up. He will keep you from falling. It's wonderful.

It's a wonderful message. The message of the gospel. So the Bible says.

Look carefully at my servant. Being free from sin. What's the number one condition of being a servant of God? Free from sin.

Okay. Now we go to point number two. And that's Luke 16.

Any of you can be servants of God. I told you. Seek to be free from sin.

Second condition. Luke 16. And verse 13.

Where we see. No servant can serve two masters. Now if you don't read further in that verse.

And I ask you. Who are the two masters? You say God and Satan. No.

The two masters in the last part of that verse. Is God. And money.

Who are the two masters? See the last three words. God and money. You cannot serve both masters.

You can make money your servant. That's okay. But don't let money be your master.

That's the point. Jesus used money. You know not only Jesus used money.

You know that as a carpenter. For at least 12 years of his life. He was a carpenter.

Maybe from the age of 18 to 30. He was working. How do you think he earned his living? He had four younger brothers.

Two younger sisters. And a widowed mother at home. Seven people at home.

Eight members in a family. How many of you got eight members in your family? Jesus had eight members in his family. And he had to work pretty hard to earn money for all of them.

And he worked as a carpenter. And he made profit. Otherwise how could he earn his living? Teaching us.

That if you earn profit in your business, it's not a sin. But he was honest. He didn't cheat anybody.

He didn't do a patchwork job and take money from people. He was honest and upright in his work. And he earned his living as a carpenter.

And he used money. He needed money to buy food, clothes for fathers in the home, etc. He used money.

And even as a full-time worker. We read in Luke 8, verse 3, people gave him money and he took it. Because he was not working then.

And he took it in order to serve his father. So we see that Jesus did not allow money. He used money, but he did not allow money to be his master.

In other words, he didn't live for money. His aim was not, I must be the richest carpenter in Nazareth. That was not his aim.

Not at all. Because I can imagine that if Jesus was asked to make a table or a chair for some poor widow. And he made it and took to that widow.

And the widow said, how much does it cost? I can imagine Jesus saying, that's a little gift from me. Keep it. You think people who live like that will end up becoming the richest carpenter in Nazareth? Impossible.

They'll do a lot of good to the poor and the weak and the helpless. Behold my servant. See what his attitude to money was.

And make that yours. Use it. And if somebody gives you a gift, receive it.

But don't let it be your master. Your master must only be God. You cannot serve two masters.

You've got to hate the one. In other words, to hate money means, I'm not going to let money be my master. That's what it means.

It's not hating money itself, but hating the mastery of money. I hate it. I will not allow money to be my master.

I will make it my slave. In other words, money will not run my life. But I will use money as my servant.

What does it mean to have money as your master? That means all your decisions are determined by money. Money. Money.

A lot of people's decisions on life are determined by money, money, money. But a true servant of God has to have his decisions determined by God, God, God. What does he tell me? And the Bible says, if you live like that, Matthew 6 and verse 33, well-known verse.

Matthew 6 and verse 33. If you're thinking of God, God, God all the time, it says here, if you seek the kingdom of God first and His righteousness, all these earthly things that you need will be added to you. That means God will bless your business enough for you to earn a living.

There's a very lovely verse in the Old Testament. I love that verse. I love quoting it to people in times of recession.

If there's a recession in the country, here is the verse you must remember. When it's difficult to get a job, difficult to make ends meet, difficult, Psalm 37. Wonderful verse.

Psalms 37 and verse 25. This is David. David wrote many psalms when he was young.

25 years old, 28 years old, he wrote psalms, many psalms. But this psalm he wrote when he was nearly 70. Psalms 37 and verse 25.

Psalms 37, verse 25. I have been young. Now I'm an old man, David says, but I have never seen a righteous man forsaken or his children begging for bread.

And the NASB is more accurate. His descendants begging for bread. That means my children will not beg for bread.

My grandchildren will not beg for bread. Condition, I must be righteous. You know it's a wonderful thing, my brothers and sisters, to be a righteous man.

A righteous man. David says, in all my life, I've never seen a righteous man's children begging for bread. In other words, I could paraphrase it to today's language, I've never seen a righteous man's children hunting for a job and not getting it.

They get jobs. How do you get bread otherwise? How do you get food? You've got to have a job, right? The opposite of begging is working hard and earning a living. So they don't beg, that means they earn their living by getting a job.

So I could paraphrase this and say, if you're righteous, your children will find jobs. And not only that, your grandchildren will find jobs. Can rich people, people who are multi-millionaires, can they say that? No.

I've seen a lot of multi-millionaires whose children get their millions and waste it on drugs and ruin all that millions and become paupers. And their grandchildren also going on drugs and all types of bad habits. But not a righteous person.

A righteous person brings up his children in a godly way. They may not become millionaires, but they'll get jobs. They won't beg for bread.

Their grandchildren may not become millionaires, but they'll have jobs. That's a promise of God. I believe it with all my heart.

I've seen it in a poor country like India. I've seen it in so many little villages in India. A righteous man.

I've seen it in my own life. If you're righteous, you don't have to worry about your earthly needs. But don't make money your master.

You know, like fire. Fire is a very good servant, but a very bad master. You know what it means for fire to be a master? Fire as a servant means you put it in the stove and light the stove and keep the fire there and you control it.

Turn it off, turn it off or simmer it or whatever it is. And say, you're not going to run this house. I'm going to control you.

I turn you off and I don't want you. I turn you on, I lower the flame. I'm in control.

Fire becoming the master means it's taken over the house and burnt the whole house. That's the difference between controlling money and saying, hey, you're going to be my servant. You're not going to

tell me what to do.

You're not going to tell me run here and run there. That's burning up the whole house. So please remember this because I believe this is how so many Christians have ruined their lives.

The world is in the pursuit of money. And the world is in the pursuit of sin. Any new type of sinful pleasure.

Any new way to get money way beyond my needs. Of course we need money. And if you don't get enough for your needs, you certainly need to find ways of making more money.

There's nothing wrong in that. God wants us to. God told Adam, you will earn your bread by the sweat of your brow.

So you got to work hard. And we must be willing to look for ways and means to take care of a family. That's OK.

But don't let it be your master. I see Jesus' attitude to money in. There are two things.

There's a lovely verse which tells me how Jesus used his money. As I've tried to follow these things I'm telling you. I said, Lord, I want to look at Jesus.

I saw how he was free from sin. That he was tempted like me and he sought for grace and he overcame. And I said, Lord, I want to see what was your attitude to money.

And the Lord showed me an amazing verse. Which showed me the two things that Jesus spent his money on. Great verse.

Let me turn you to that verse. In John Chapter 13. Do you know how Jesus spent his money? That's a good example for us to follow.

This is the time when Jesus, people asked him, who's going to betray you? This is the Last Supper. And Jesus said, he took, he dipped the bread in the morsel in the wine and gave it to Judas. And then he told Judas, what you do, do quickly.

And then it says there, no one knew what he was going for. Now I want you to turn to John Chapter 13 and verse 29. John 13, 29.

Some of the disciples worse thought that because Judas had... They did not know what Jesus meant when he said, go and do what you want to do quickly. They thought, because Judas was the treasurer and had the money bag. Jesus was telling him to use that money for two things.

What are the two things? Buy what we need. To give to the poor. Why did they think that that's what Jesus was saying? Because they had seen for three and a half years.

That those are the two things for which Jesus used his money. Buy what you need. Give to the poor.

It's a great example for me. Now I'm not here to judge what you need. And I'm not here to judge anybody else.

You may have one car and you may judge somebody else who's got two cars. Perhaps he needs two cars. And somebody else may need three cars in his house because he's got two of his children going to

work.

So don't judge somebody else as to what his need is. You worry about your own need. Your need may be a small house.

Somebody else may need a bigger house. It's none of our business. The moment you go to judge other people, you're off track.

Buy what you need. I mean, that's up to you. You can need a washing machine, a dishwasher, a dryer, and maybe three cars, and maybe a carpet, and a curtain.

Buy whatever you need. In other words, don't waste money on unnecessary luxuries. Just to show other people how rich you are.

You think Jesus spent money to show other people how much money he was getting? A lot of foolish people would do that. Jesus never did that. He's a great example for us on how to use our money.

Buy what you need. And if you have plenty, give something to the poor. He doesn't say give all your money to the poor.

Give something to the poor. That will teach you to be good to those who have less than you. I have found this to be a great guideline for me.

Behold my servant. Remember we started with that verse. Look at his attitude to sin.

That's what we saw first. Now look at his attitude to money. That's what I need to see, servant.

This is how to be a servant of God. I want to be a servant of God. Not an employee, but a son.

A servant as a son. And I have an example before me. Jesus.

And I want to be a servant, so I want to be free from sin. And I want to be free from attachment to money. I don't want to serve money.

It's very, very important. Now we come to point number three. How to be a servant of God.

We've been looking at that word servant. The third one is Galatians chapter 1 and verse 10. And if we look at Jesus' example in all these areas, we can grow to maturity.

Because he's the ultimate example of perfection. And I want to be like him. Galatians 1.10, Paul is saying, Am I seeking the approval of men or the approval of God? Very important question.

If I'm trying to please men, if I was still trying to please men, I cannot be a servant of Christ. Again, that word servant. How can I be a servant of God? Do not seek to please men.

Don't seek the approval of men. Seek the approval of God. Seek to please God.

Do you hear what I said? The three mocks of being a servant of God. One, be free from sin. Romans 6.22. Second, Luke 16.13. Be free from the mastery of money.

Make money your slave. Use it by all means. But let it be under your feet.

Third, don't seek the approval of men. Don't seek to please men. Don't worry about, what will so and so think if I do this? Never mind what he thinks.

Ask yourself, what does God think? You know, supposing your children, you want a good testimony for your family in the church. So if you see your children dressing in a certain way, and you tell your children, what will people say? My girl, if you dress like that. Are you worried about that? Or what will Jesus say? My girl, if he sees you like that.

Which is more important for you? Tell me. Or your child is doing something, and you say, what will people say? My girl, or my son, if you do that. Are you worried about that? Or what will Jesus say? My son, if you do that.

What are you training your children for? To behave nicely before people? And training them to be hypocrites? Or saying, forget about people. What does God think about your life? It's the only thing that matters. Are you seeking the approval of men? Very often we find, in our lives, the little things we do, in the back of our mind, we are thinking, what will people say? Will they accept me? I couldn't care less whether they accept me.

I find this even as a preacher of the Word of God, that I'm tempted, I'll tell you honestly, not so much now, but in my early days, lots. But as I fought it, and fought it, and fought it, I've become more and more free from it. In the early days, when I got up to preach, you know I was young, I started preaching when I was about 21, 22 years old.

Very young, newly converted, baptized, one or two years earlier. And as I started preaching, you know, people saw me as young, 22 year old, and I thought, these fellows think, who is this young fellow, what has he got to teach us? And so I would try to preach in a way to impress people. With clever ideas, and clever words.

Until one day the Lord said to me, do you want to impress people or do you want to help them? I said, Lord, I want to help them. And He said, stop trying to impress them. That's all.

God has been very patient with me. Very patient. I've taken time to learn some lessons, but He's been very patient with me.

And I've come to see, I think by the grace of God I can say today, it's been a battle, I don't seek to please men now. When I stand up to speak, I don't care what they think about me, whether they think I'm a great preacher, or whether they think I'm a false prophet. It's just the same to me.

I can honestly say that. Because the Bible says, reckon yourself dead. And I think of that very often, you know, Romans 8, 11 says, reckon yourself dead.

It's a great verse. And I think of a dead man lying here. Supposing you tell him, you're a great prophet.

He doesn't get excited. Or if you tell him, you're a good for nothing rotten fellow. It's just the same.

No change in his expression. Whether you call him a prophet or you call him a useless rotten fellow. I say, Lord, I want to reach that standard.

Of being totally dead to the opinions of men. What they think about me, what they speak about me behind my back, what they say about me, what they say about my children. Dead.

I don't want to please men. Dead to the world, but alive unto God. And say, Almighty God, my father, what do you think about me? I remember a story I heard of a little boy playing a violin concert.

He was just about 10 years old and he played in such a fantastic way that moved people. And then they asked him at the end, interviewed him and said, how did you play so well? He said, in the balcony there, my violin teacher was sitting. And I was only looking at him.

Saying, you think I'm playing okay? And if he nodded his head, I was happy. I didn't care what all the others were saying. And if he faced his face, no, you've got to improve.

I said, Lord, make me like that. I've got a teacher up there who's looking at me and I want to make sure he's pleased. Live your life like that.

You may not be a preacher, but live all your life like that. Wherever you are, whatever you do, your eyes are looking at your teacher. What do you think of me, Lord, right now? It doesn't matter what other people think.

I'll tell you why it doesn't matter. When you stand at the judgment seat of Christ and I stand at the judgment seat of Christ, do you think he's going to call all the people in your church and say, well, fellas, what do you think of this man? Do you think they're going to ask? He's not going to ask any of you about your opinion of anybody here. He says, I don't want your opinions.

I know this guy better than all of you. I know his private life. I know his thought life.

I know how he lived in secret. You guys saw 5% of his life. What is your opinion worth? You see how foolish it is to seek the approval of men? Behold my servant, Jesus never cared for the approval of men.

There were times when they said, oh, this is the Messiah, this is the Prophet, let's make him a king. He was not excited. He'd go away.

Other times they said, Prince of Devils. Just the same. Whether you called him Prince of Devils or Prophet, it was the same to him because he was dead to the opinions of men.

So, behold my servant, God said. Look at my son, Jesus. You want to grow to maturity, brothers and sisters? Seek with all of your heart to keep these three things before you.

To be free from sin. To make money your slave, not your master. And third, always to seek to please God.

Never to seek to please any man. And to progress in these three areas. Because Jesus is perfect in all these three areas.

We have to press on to perfection that each of these areas, year by year, year by year, we're growing. God bless you all. Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads before God. Our Heavenly Father, I pray that what we have heard, we will never forget. And we won't just think of it as three points of a sermon, but guidelines for our whole life.

Help us, Father. I pray that many here will press on to perfection and maturity. I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Thank you.

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