

Knowing God Through Brokenness

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God personally through brokenness and suffering, and how this knowledge leads to eternal life and a deeper understanding of God's care.

Duration: 1:07:36

Scripture: Job 40:4, Isaiah 53:3, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Matthew 8:17, John 17:3, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Philippians 3:8, 1 Timothy 6:12, James 5:10

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Spiritual Brokenness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God personally and experiencing eternal life as defined by Jesus in John 17. It highlights that eternal life is not just living forever but knowing God intimately, being broken to know Him better, and laying hold of eternal life by fighting the good fight to deepen our relationship with God.

Transcript

The most important thing that God wants us to experience on earth is to know Him personally. Jesus defined, you know, that Jesus came to give us eternal life, and we must never forget the definition of eternal life that Jesus gave in John 17. This is the clearest definition of eternal life.

Many, many people think of eternal life still as living forever. That's not eternal life, because man was created to live forever. Whether he goes to hell or heaven, he will live forever.

That's not eternal life. That's just living forever. The word eternal, like I've often said, is something, meaning something that has no beginning and has no end.

That's eternal. Man's life is not eternal. It had a beginning, so it cannot be eternal.

It has no end. But eternal means that which has no beginning and has no end. No angel has it.

Only God has eternal life, and God sent His Son so that those who believe in Him may have this eternal life. That's the greatest thing that we can ever have, eternal life. There's absolutely nothing superior to that when it says that God has given us great promises and above all of them that we can partake of His nature.

In John 17.3, it says this is eternal life. Jesus defined it like this, that they may know you, the only true God. He was praying to the Father and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

There's only one way that I can have eternal life, and that is by knowing God personally and knowing Jesus Christ personally. The measure of your spiritual growth is the measure in which you know God personally, where you know Jesus personally. It's not just the assurance that my sins are forgiven.

And we know that knowing about a person is very different from knowing a person. To know God intimately is the greatest privilege. That we can ever have to fellowship with Him day by day.

And in a world cursed by sin, because of the defilement that sin has brought into our bodies and minds, it appears to me that there is no way in which God can bring us to a knowledge of Him except through trial and suffering in some way. There doesn't seem to be any other way. You can't know God if your life is all very comfortable and prosperous.

It just is like that because we live in a world which is under a curse. So God has to allow suffering and difficulty to get us to know Him. And sometimes we don't understand that.

But throughout the scripture from Genesis to Revelation, that is the message. Turn with me to James chapter 5. James 5, it says, he's talking about people who have been exploited by others. You know, rich people, James 5, he says, some of you rich people, you have not paid your laborers, verse 4. And he says, you will be judged if you don't pay your servants properly.

Then he speaks to those servants who have been ill-treated by their masters. You know, maybe masters who claim to be believers and did not pay their servants properly. He's saying to them in verse 7, be patient, brothers.

Don't worry if your masters didn't pay you properly, they exploited you, took advantage of you. Don't worry. Be patient till the coming of the Lord.

Just like the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient. You also be patient. And don't complain.

Maybe somebody didn't give you your pay. Don't complain. Leave it in God's hands.

God will use that suffering you go through to accomplish something in you. To help you to know Him. And to have eternal life.

Don't complain against one another. Because if you do that, then you'll not only suffer on earth, you'll suffer in eternity. Because you'll be judged.

It's a very serious thing to complain against others. It's so clear. Don't complain, brothers, against one another.

Otherwise, you will be judged. And if you don't want to be judged, there's a clear way to escape judgment in verse 9. If you don't want to be judged, don't complain against others. Isn't that an easy way to escape God's judgment? I take these words seriously.

That's why I've given up complaining against people long ago. I want to be absolutely sure when I stand before God that there's no judgment against me. And God showed me the way that I never complain

against anybody.

Even where people have mistreated me or made a mistake. Take, for example, a doctor who makes a mistake in treating you. I've experienced that seriously more than once in my life.

But I decided not to complain. And it doesn't solve the physical problem, but you get to know God better. That's the thing.

When you spend your life complaining against a doctor who treated you badly, or some man who didn't pay you, or something like that, you're losing an opportunity to get to know God better. The suffering that God takes you through, His plan is so that you may know Him, so that you may have eternal life. And He says, for example, as an example, brothers, James 5.10, of suffering and patience.

Take the prophets. There was not a single prophet in the Old Testament who was not persecuted or who did not suffer in some way. Those are the greatest men of God in the Old Testament.

They suffered a lot. Sometimes it's not all written down. And exactly the same in the New Testament.

The apostles and prophets got to know God through suffering. I mean, if you read the sufferings that Paul went through in 2 Corinthians 11. Imprisonments and beatings and all types of things.

You think Almighty God couldn't have protected him? Of course He could have. But God has protected you and me from so many dangers and harm that other people try to do to us. Is it difficult for God to get Paul out of a prison? He took Peter out of a prison.

But God, in His great wisdom, knew that He had a great ministry to accomplish through the Apostle Paul. And for that, He had to know him. And the only way He could know him was, believe it or not, by being beaten, by imprisonment, by shortage of money, shortage of food.

All of these things Paul went through. Now, when a person does not want to have such a ministry, and whenever God tries to lead him further, he's not bothered about a ministry, but he wants a little comfort on the earth, God will allow such a person. To make a lot of money, live comfortably, and as far as eternity is concerned, live a useless life.

He may be a good brother in CFC, but in terms of eternity, he's accomplished zero. Don't be like that. It's possible to be here.

And if you don't have your focus right, to miss out in eternity, even though you may think, Oh, God's blessing me, my life's so comfortable, I'm healthy, I don't have any sickness, and I got a good house, I got a lot of money, I'm okay. Make it your passion, my brothers and sisters. Please listen to me.

Lord, at any cost, I want to know you. You kept me on earth, that I might know you, before I leave this earth. And I want, this is my passion, that I want to know you better.

And he says, then he takes the other example, he says, we count those blessed who endured. You've heard of the endurance of Job, and seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings. See, James quotes Job, and says, see, there's an outstanding example of a man who suffered, even though he was so upright.

Now, you would think a man who was upright, and who was faithful, and turning his eyes away from evil, and fearing God, I mean, in the understanding of many Christians today, he should be so blessed. He

should have plenty of property, and money. But the way God blessed him, was by taking away his property and money, so that he could get to know him.

He even got sick, and he got to know God better, through that whole experience. And he says, don't think of just what he went through, think of the outcome, that means the final end, of the Lord's dealings. And these are the examples given us in Scripture, to remind us that there's a final end.

Sometimes when we are going through a trial, as some of you may be going through right now, you can only think of that. But the Lord says, always think of the final end, of the Lord's dealings. That the Lord is full of compassion and merciful.

When a person is being beaten like Paul, and imprisoned, or, you may think, oh, well the Lord's not compassionate and merciful, He is. Or when Paul had a sickness, which he prayed to the Lord three times to get rid of, and God said, no. Imagine, God's greatest servant on earth, and God says, no, I'm not going to grant you a prayer.

Now the average, worldly type of believer can't understand that. They think if you know God better, He'll answer your prayer. He'll give you a comfortable life.

He'll give you health, He'll give you wealth. Not so. Those are people who don't know God.

And, God told Paul, I'm not going to take it away, but he got to know God better. And the same with Job. You know the end of the Lord.

You must always think of the outcome. What is the Lord accomplishing in me through all this? And let me read the paraphrase of that. You've heard of Job's staying power.

And how God, God finally brought it all together for him. At the end. Our life is like a jigsaw puzzle with all the pieces scattered around.

They look so strange. But when it says God brought it all together for him at the end, He put all the pieces in the right place. The trials and the sufferings and everything else.

And when we finally look at it, the outcome and the jigsaw puzzle is all complete. We say, wow. Lord, you did it perfectly.

I couldn't understand it when I was on earth. But you did it perfectly. And here it says, that's because, the last part of verse 11, that's because God cares.

He cares right down to the last detail. That's what the Message Bible paraphrases it as. And I want you to remember that, my brothers, and I think you will need, you and I will need that more in the days to come.

The Bible says very clearly, it's not going to be easy to be a Christian in the last days. And we are approaching those days. And you must remember, when such days come, sometimes you hear a word today, which may be preparing you for something in the future.

Remember in that time, when you can't understand why you are going through certain things, that God cares right down to the last detail. That's why Jesus often told his disciples things to encourage them. He says, the hairs on your head are numbered.

Never forget that. Never forget that the care of God for you goes down to the last hair on your head. Every little hair.

And he said, you are more valued than the sparrows. God cares for them. These are real truths.

And it's easy to believe that, when everything is going easy. I mean, when you've got comfort and money and ease and everything, you say, yeah, yeah, I believe that. That's not the place where you prove your faith.

It is in the darkness that your light must shine. And there is an expression that says, never doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light. Never doubt in the darkness of your life what God once showed you in the light.

I mean, if you got a hundred rupee note and you saw it clearly in the sunlight, and then you are in a dark room at night and you take it out and you can't even see what it is, you know it's a hundred rupees. Because you saw it in the light. But in the darkness, you look at it and say, hey, I don't know, is this counterfeit or not? No, you saw it in the light.

Never doubt in the darkness what you have seen in the light. And God gives us understanding of certain things in times of relative ease so that, in the time of trial, we remember and we confess, God is still my loving Father. That's a tremendous testimony.

And he speaks about Job here and I love the book of Job because as you have often heard me say, it was the first book of the Bible. The first book that God wrote in the Bible was the book of Job written about maybe five hundred years before Moses wrote Genesis. So, I've said this before, I repeat it again, when God wanted to write a book for man, he did not say, I must tell them how I created the heaven and earth first.

That can wait. God waited five hundred years before he wrote about the creation of heaven and earth. The book of Genesis is not the first book that God wrote.

It was the book of Job. Job lived five hundred years before Moses who wrote Genesis. And the reason I emphasize that is because you see something of God's heart there that God is seeking to show us what is really his passion.

What is really his passion for man? God writes about a man who suffered. Imagine when God wanted to write the first book for the human race. He talks about a godly, upright man who suffered more than anybody else.

There was nobody on earth who was more godly than him and there was nobody on earth who suffered more than him. I mean, can you combine that? Can you believe those things that the most godly man on earth suffers the most? That's not only true in the case of Job. The greatest example is Jesus Christ himself.

You see, it's a tremendous lie of the devil this prosperity gospel, this health, wealth gospel. Because if that is the gospel then everybody should choose it. Why do people go after another god? No, the reason why true Christianity is rejected is because the true message of Christ says if you really want to know God you will suffer on this earth.

That's not a message most people want. But that is the gospel and it's proved by God writing his first book about the most upright man in the world suffering more than anybody else in the world and being misunderstood by all the other preachers of his time. Those preachers we can say they knew theories about God but they didn't know God himself.

So when they saw this godly man suffering they say, hey, you must have sinned. I mean, there must be something wrong in your life. Just like, you know, when you see somebody sick you think, ah, there must be some sin in his life.

I'm healthy because I follow the Lord. Look at all the terrorists in the world who are healthy, who go around killing people with bombs and all that. And that should expose the lie that everybody who is healthy is pleasing to God.

Or look at all the criminals and crooked businessmen and crooked politicians who make millions and millions of billions of rupees. They're not pleasing to God. It's amazing how Christians don't seem to understand that.

It's right before their eyes. The most godly are the ones who suffer the most. And examples are Job, Jesus Christ, Paul, all the prophets in the Old Testament.

Or take all the apostles. Every one of them was killed. The most godly followers of Jesus Christ were all killed.

We don't know about John, but even he was persecuted. I've heard that he was put into a tub of boiling oil. John the Apostle is an old man.

That's where the story goes. I don't know what happened, but when they exiled him to Patmos, there he was alone. But he knew God.

When you think of all these people now in heaven, Job, Paul, and all the apostles, and you go to them and say, well, what do you think about it all now? I'll tell you the answer they'll give. Every one of them. All the prophets, all the apostles.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 16 to 18. We don't give up. I want to read this in a paraphrase.

We don't give up. 2 Corinthians 4, 16. Even though on the outside, it looks as if everything is falling apart.

Do you feel like that sometimes in your life? That on the outside, everything is falling apart? On the inside, God is renewing us, making a new life. Not a single day goes by without God unfolding His grace to us. When outside, things are falling apart.

And He says, these hard times are nothing compared to the good times that are coming. This momentary light affliction, that's what He calls it. That's what they all call it in heaven.

Job, I don't know how long you've suffered. Paul, I know you've suffered for 20, 30 years. And the apostles suffered many years.

John suffered 60 years. But from heaven's viewpoint, He says, it was only a moment. On earth, it looked so long.

But now when we are in heaven, we realize, it was only for a moment. Because, you know, when we get to heaven, we have the eternal perspective. And we see in the light of eternity where I'm going to live forever and ever and ever and ever.

Like that song says, I've got so many million years, I can't even count them. Got so many million years to live, and I can't even count them, so don't ever weep for me. I've got so many million years of joy in eternity is coming into a short momentary, a moment.

They call their entire life of suffering on earth as a moment of light affliction. That's great. But Paul wrote that before he went to heaven.

And that's one of the wonderful things of being filled with the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we get to see heaven's viewpoint now. That's a wonderful thing.

The way I will look at things from heaven, one day, I can look at it now. And particularly in the New Covenant, the New Covenant apostles and followers of Jesus had a greater understanding of that than even Old Testament. Because the Holy Spirit had come in and shown them heaven's viewpoint.

That's one of the wonderful things when we come to know God and have eternal life. That we look at everything we go through on earth as heaven's viewpoint. Do you think heaven is very excited when you got an increment in your salary? I don't think so.

Because I know a lot of people who got plenty of money and it destroyed them. I know brothers in CFC churches who were far better off spiritually when they were poorer. They were humbler and they had a greater sense of need in their life for God.

And when they got plenty of money and it went well with their children, it destroyed them. So from heaven's perspective, was that good or bad? It was bad. But from an earthly perspective, it looked very good.

Oh! I got a lot more money now. I can afford a lot more. And my children are all well off now.

Really? If they really are well off, they'll be knowing God better. And if you know God better, I'll tell you this. The mark of a man knowing God better and better is that he becomes humbler and humbler.

As year by year goes by, he thinks less and less of himself. He's humbler and humbler. You see a man who's getting humbler and humbler year by year.

There you see a man who's not spending his life thinking about himself. He's not thinking about how smart he is or how much people appreciate him because he's getting to know God. He's getting prepared for heaven where one day, when he gets there, they only sing about the lamb that was slain.

They don't sing about Paul or Job or anybody. He's getting prepared for that. And so, like John the Baptist, he's decreasing every day so that Christ can increase.

Eternal life is for Christ to increase in us. And I'm absolutely convinced that the reason why Christ does not increase in the lives of many believers is because they are not willing to decrease. If you are serious about being willing to decrease, Christ will increase in your life without any doubt.

You'll get to know God better. Your life will be a tremendous blessing to other people because they'll be less of you and more of Jesus. We can't bless people just with Bible knowledge or correct doctrine.

Remember this. I wish I could convince you all of it. We thank God for all the wonderful doctrines of the New Covenant and all that God has revealed to us.

But you can understand all that intellectually. The whole purpose of the New Covenant is so that we might get to know God better. The New Covenant was mentioned in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

It's quoted in the New Testament. I want to show you a verse in Jeremiah where he's the man who spoke about the New Covenant first. There was no prophet who used the word New Covenant like Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

And he was the one who prophesied that the day is coming when he'll establish the New Covenant with God's people. And in Jeremiah chapter 9 this man who was the prophet prophesying the New Covenant says this. Jeremiah 9 and verse 23 Don't let the wise man brag about his wisdom.

And don't let the mighty man boast about his might. And don't let the rich man Jeremiah 9 verse 23 And don't let the rich man boast about his riches. If you want to boast there's only one thing worth boasting about.

God says that you know me that I am the Lord. Do you know that's the only thing worth boasting about on this earth. The things that even Christians inwardly boast about.

Some about how good looking they are or how clever they are. How well they did in their profession. How God honored them with money or position or honor.

It's all rubbish. It's all fit for the trash can. Never forget it.

It's all fit for the trash can. The only thing that's worth boasting about God says is that you know me. That you know what type of person I am.

That I am full of loving kindness and justice and righteousness. That is the essence of the new covenant. If you haven't seen that my brother sister you've understood a doctrine.

So make it the pursuit of your life to know God like Paul says at the end of his life. Turn with me to Philippians 3. Philippians 3. It's a great verse. Philippians 3 verse 8. Remember Paul is writing this from prison.

He was in a prison when he wrote Philippians. And he has already labored and raised the dead and he's planted churches and written scripture. But what does he say there? He says, yeah there are so many things I've done but I count everything to be lost.

Philippians 3.8 Everything is lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ. And I've considered everything as rubbish compared to knowing Christ. Everything outside of Christ is rubbish.

Have you seen it? Brothers, sisters. Your ability, your qualifications, the things that you feel make you superior to other believers. What is it? If we don't have the right values it will hinder our spiritual progress.

In the paraphrase it says, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord, firsthand. I count everything else as rubbish and he says, I count it like dog dung.

That's the actual word. The dung on the road. That's how I look at it.

Everything. Except knowing Jesus. All the things that once I considered important I've thrown it away.

It's not only trash, it's dog dung. Only God's Holy Spirit can open our eyes to see that and once we've seen it the passion of our life will be to know Jesus better. To know him better and better.

Whatever trial he takes us through that we might know him better. He had many good qualities and you and I have many good qualities. Sure, I'm sure.

In fact, Job was the most God-fearing man on earth and I think many of us are among some of the most God-fearing people perhaps in Bangalore. I don't know. I hope so.

But even if you are even if God can point you out and say there's a God-fearing man or woman in Bangalore Job still did not know the Lord the way he should know him. He turned his eyes away from evil. He was God-fearing and all that but there was something in him that was missing still.

And God was such a jealous God, you know. It's like like a father who saw his son get 90% and said son, I want you to get 100%. 90% was so good.

I mean, if you get 90% in some tough examination you're way ahead of most of the other people and just pass them off. Just go into heaven and you're getting 90%. That's how Job was compared to all the other people in his day.

And you may be like that because of the truths you've heard. You've taken life seriously. But God may still say there's something in you that's still missing.

Don't compare yourself with others. One of the easiest ways to stop growing spiritually is to compare ourselves with others. You'll destroy yourself.

2 Corinthians 10 verse 12 says, those who compare themselves with each other are spiritual idiots. If you want to be a spiritual idiot, just compare yourself with other believers in CFC or other places and say, oh, thank God I'm not like them. That's what the Pharisees said.

It's foolish. The only person worth comparing ourselves with is Jesus Christ. And if we... There was something in Job that was missing.

There was something in Paul that was missing. And that's why God had to... Paul was an upright man. He once said, I've lived all my life with a good conscience.

Something like Job. All my life I lived with a good conscience and yet something was missing. Job was a perfect and upright man and yet something was missing.

You know what it was? They were not broken. A man can be very holy and very good in many ways and yet he may not be a broken man. God has to break us before we can come to know him better.

And that's not something people seek for. Why did God take this godly man through sickness and bring him down to poverty? Only one reason. I don't think he became a holier at the end of that but he was a broken man by the time he came to the end of that experience.

And the experience that God leads us through is to break us. I find many good people in our CFC churches. But I can sense when I get to know them.

They're not broken yet. There's not a brokenness in their life and that's why God is limited in what he can do through them. The greatest work you can do for God, my brother and sister, this is what somebody told me when I was about 30 years old, the greatest work you can do for God is to fall into the ground and die.

Do you believe that? Somebody told me that. You want to do a great work for God in India, brother? I was about 32 years old and he said, if you want to do a great work for God in India, fall into the ground and die. That's not the type of teaching that most people give to young people.

But if you haven't understood that, you missed out on the most important thing in the Christian life. And I knew it was true and I decided I was going to die. Die to my reputation and die to the use of my spiritual gifts the way I thought I should use them.

Die to what people thought about me, just like that grain of wheat falling to the ground and die. The alternative is that you may be a beautiful Christian and you can be like a corn of wheat that's in a glass case in CFC. Everybody admires you.

Wow, what a beautiful corn of wheat. Do you want that? There'll be no fruit in your life. If you're interested in admiration or fruit, if you want admiration for your Christ-likeness, put yourself in a glass case and all your life will be one grain of wheat.

But if you want fruitfulness, let that thing go into the ground, let your reputation be ruined and spoiled and let people say what they like about you. That grain of wheat goes into the ground and people trample on it, it goes inside the ground, it cracks open, it's broken. And when it's broken, the life inside that grain of wheat comes out.

There's a life inside the grain of wheat. You know that? There's a life in every seed. That's what produces the trees.

But that life will never come out till it is broken, open. That's what I mean by brokenness. It's like the alabaster bottle of perfume.

It may have wonderful perfume, but nobody gets the smell of it till it's broken. And that's when the perfume was broken and poured out. Then the whole house got the odor of it.

It's a message right through Scripture. Brokenness. Moses was an accomplished man at the age of 40.

And he thought he could lead God's people. And God said, he got many good qualities. At the age of 40, he said, I don't want to be the ruler in Egypt.

I reject the honor of the world. He rejected the pleasures of sin. Imagine a 40 year old man.

Rich, wealthy position in the best country in the world and saying, I don't want honor. I don't want the pleasures of sin. And I don't want anything that this world can offer me.

I don't want money. And God still says, you're not good enough. Yeah, I mean you may be like that saying, I don't want the money of this world.

I don't want the honor of this world. I don't want the pleasures of sin. And you think you've made it.

You know it says in Hebrews 11 verse 24 and 26 that God, that Moses said those words when he was 40. I don't want the pleasures of sin. I don't want the wealth of this world.

And I don't want the honor of this world. You think such a man is spiritual. God says no.

That's good. Now he's got to be broken. And it took him 40 years to be broken.

And then God says, now you're ready for me. Till now you were just admired by the world. There's a man who doesn't live for money who's kept himself pure and who doesn't seek for honor.

There you get the glory of the world. But God says, if I'm to use you, I have to break you. And he took him for 40 years and broke him and crushed him till he was so broken that he said, Lord, I'm not fit to serve you.

When Moses said, I'm a wretch, he meant it. We can sing amazing grace that saved a wretch like me. And I don't know whether you really believe you're a wretch.

A broken man will feel like that all through. And it's a wonderful thing when God breaks a man so thoroughly. Because Moses had to remain broken for 40 years.

So, and that's why it says about Moses, he was the humblest man in all the earth. All your holiness, my brothers and sisters, is not enough. When you know God, you'll be broken.

And that's not a message that's proclaimed in most of Christianity or even in other, all religions will appreciate holiness. But who understands brokenness? It says about, even about Jesus, that it pleased the Father to bruise him and to crush him. So Job, the one thing he lacked was brokenness.

And you can see evidence of that in, let me show you one chapter in the book of Job. It says in Job 29. You know, when he was going through all this suffering, in the beginning he reacted well.

But as time went on and the suffering did not stop, he began to complain. When we suffer physically, in the beginning we usually react well, like Job. He said, yeah, I know I must give thanks to God.

But I have a secret hope that if I give thanks to God, he'll sort it all out in a week or so. When nothing happens, in a week or in ten years, then we can sink like Job and say, what's the matter now? I did all the right things and, yeah, Job, in his heart, he was thinking, Job 29, how it was in the days, verse 2, when God watched over me. Verse 4, the friendship of God was over my tent.

The Almighty was with me. Verse 5, my children were around me. My steps were bathed in butter.

I was so rich, I went out to the gate of the city, and when I took my seat in the square, the young men saw me and hid themselves out of respect. The old men stood up. The princes stopped talking when I came by.

The voice of the nobles, they kept quiet. When the ear heard what I said, it called me blessed. He's a man who's got a ministry, a spoken ministry that blessed people.

People heard it and said, oh, how blessed. The eyes saw me, gave witness of me. I delivered the poor, who cried for help, and I helped the orphan.

And on, and on, and on, and on, he says how he lived and the purity of his life. Chapter 31, verse 1, I did not lust after women, and I did not seek after gold or any such thing. So many wonderful things he says.

All that inward congratulating oneself and boasting oneself is the clearest proof that a man is not broken. It was there all in his mind. Paul said forgetting the things that are behind and pressing to the things that are before, that means forgetting all the orphans I helped and forgetting all the poor people I helped and forgetting all the good things I did, that's not easy.

A broken man does not keep on remembering all the good things he did. Job remembers it very well. He says I can look back over my life and see all the good things I did, how I kept myself pure, and I did this, and I did this.

Be careful of such thoughts, my brothers and sisters, those are an indication that you are not a broken person. You may sing amazing grace that saved a wretch like me, but you don't really believe you're a wretch because you can list at least 20, 30, 40 things, good things that you did. You're not a wretch.

Yes, brokenness doesn't come easily, but when it does come, there will be abundant fruit, and you won't take any credit for it. It's God's will that all of us should be fruitful. It's not only few outstanding brothers and sisters that should be fruitful.

I want to say to you in Jesus' name what Jesus said, I have chosen you, the Lord says, in John 15, and appointed you, John 15, 16, that you should bring forth fruit. To everyone sitting here, if you're born again and you've given your life to Christ, I want you to take that word from the Lord, the Lord saying to you, I have chosen you and ordained you that you should, John 15, 16, that you should bring forth fruit, and not fruit that comes and disappears, but fruit that remains. For that, you have to fall into the ground and die.

That beautiful grain of wheat will lose its beauty and men will despise you. Well, that's what happened to Job. He had to sit outside the gate of the city, scraping himself.

Men despised him, misunderstood him. Oh, this great rich man, there must have been some secret sin in his life. That's why God has punished him like this.

Even his wife couldn't understand. Other preachers couldn't understand. There may be other godly men who can't understand what you're going through.

Maybe your wife can't understand. Your husband can't understand. But you don't defend yourself.

You don't complain. You keep your mouth shut. And God does a work in breaking you.

And we know that Job was broken because finally he says these words. And these are the words of a broken man. See what he says in Job chapter 40.

And there you see what James says. You know the end of the Lord, the outcome of the Lord's dealings. What God finally accomplished in Job was this.

Job 40 verse 4 Lord, I am insignificant. What can I reply to you? I boasted about how wonderful things I did. Now I lay my hand on my mouth.

I've spoken once, twice, but I'll never say anything anymore because I've seen what I am. I am insignificant. You know that first word of the Sermon on the Mount? Blessed are the poor in spirit, for there is the kingdom of God.

In the Amplified Bible it says, blessed are those who rate themselves as insignificant. I want to ask you. Do you rate yourself as an insignificant person in CFC? Perhaps not.

The more people, because some of you are serving and doing so many good things and many others are appreciating you, it's very easy to begin to rate yourself as well, not so insignificant. I'm one of the significant people in CFC. Well, I pray that you will get to know God.

Because when you do, like when Isaiah saw the glory of God, he said, oh, woe is me, I'm unclean. John the Apostle, when he saw Jesus at the age of 95, he fell at his feet and said, oh, I'm nothing, I'm like a dead person. It's always the mark of broken people.

They rate themselves as insignificant. It's not saying it just to act humble. It's a deep conviction inside, I am insignificant.

That doesn't mean I have low self-esteem, not at all. I know in God's eyes I'm a son of God. I'm a prince of heaven.

I have no doubt about that. I know where I stand before God. And we must know where we stand with God, a son or a daughter of God.

But in our relation to other fellow believers, we rate ourselves as insignificant. We don't desire any honor. We don't desire any recognition.

And we don't question if God puts us in prison or makes us suffer or gives us a thorn in the flesh that he'll never heal. Or like in Timothy's case, give us frequent sicknesses that are never healed. You know, we read about Paul's thorn in the flesh, but a lot of people don't know about Timothy's thorn in the flesh.

Paul told Timothy, one Timothy, in chapter 5, he says, don't just drink water, one Timothy 5.23, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. Timothy was the most outstanding servant of God. Next to Paul.

Paul says that in Philippians 2.19. But that man had frequent sicknesses. How do you understand that? That God's greatest men on earth in the first century had frequent sicknesses. That's not what today's Christians understand.

You know why? Because they don't know God. They don't know brokenness. They don't know that God's whole purpose in keeping us on this earth for a length of time is not to make us healthy or wealthy.

Dear brothers, take it from me. Your wealth is no mark of God's blessing. You may have it, but it's an incident in the color of your skin.

Do any of you think that because your skin is white, you're more acceptable to God? I'm sure you don't have that idea. It's exactly the same. Wealth is like that.

Just because God gave you, maybe you came to CFC years ago and you were very poor, and now God has blessed you so much. Blessed you in what way? I hope you're broken. Not money.

Not even children. No. If you have many children, that's not God's blessing because any Muslim family will beat you outright when it comes to children.

Don't boast in that. It's in brokenness which is a mark of God's blessing. You mustn't forget it.

Not that He gave you this and He gave you that and a lot of things that worldly people aspire for. That's not it. That's not it.

It can be a deception. The more you think about it, the more your mind gets clouded. Think of brokenness that God is seeking to do in your life so that you really come to know Him personally.

Let Him who glories, glory in this, that He understands and knows me. Turn with me again to Isaiah 53. Isaiah chapter 53 we read about Jesus.

I've often meditated on this chapter. There are parts of this chapter which we can have no part in. Like it says, the sin of the world was placed upon Jesus.

Verse 6. Those things we have no part in. But there are many other aspects of this chapter that have a message for us. We look into the scriptures to see Jesus and it says the Holy Spirit makes us like Him.

So here is Jesus. Isaiah 53 verse 2. First of all it says in verse 1, who would have thought that God's saving power would look like this? Who has believed our report? I mean this whole chapter. He says, when I say it, Isaiah says, Lord, when I proclaim this, who in the world is going to believe that this is the description of a man of God? No.

Nobody can believe this is the description of a man of God. Who will believe it? Who will believe that God's saving power makes a man like this? Like what? There's nothing attractive about Him. Verse 2. He's looked down upon.

People don't even give Him a second look. He's passed over. A man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.

One look at Him and people turn away. Is this the description of a man of God? Most of today's preachers you see on the television are like film stars. They have as much money as film stars collected from poor people.

And they look like film stars too. But not Jesus. Don't get fooled by all these movies about Jesus.

The real Jesus is here. There was nothing attractive about Him. Nothing to cause us to take a second look.

He was looked down upon. Passed over. A man who suffered and who knew pain firsthand.

One look at Him and people turned away. We looked on Him and thought He was scum. Scum means rubbish.

Do you want to be like Him? There was no man on earth who knew God better than Jesus Christ. You know, God's greatest men are not attractive in the eyes of the world and not even attractive in the eyes of worldly believers. You have to have spiritual eyes to see men whom God values.

And not just admire such men. You can admire a godly man but you may never want to pay the price to be like that yourself. Every godly man and woman that's ever been on this earth right from the time of Enoch has paid a price for it.

And you can be like that too if you're willing to pay the price. And it's worth it because in eternity when you look back you'll say, Lord, I'm so thankful that I counted everything else as rubbish just to know You. Make it the passion of your life to know You.

And if you want to know Jesus read the scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the beauty of Jesus. The beauty in God's eyes. And say, Lord, I want to be like that.

And you'll see the way of the cross that is marked on Jesus' face and life. Throughout His life He went that way of the cross as a message that's not proclaimed in most of Christianity. I don't know whether you know that Jesus was sick.

I've been accused of preaching a lot of strange doctrines. And this may be another one, but it is in Scripture. Let me give you a little two-minute Bible study.

It says in verse 4 Our griefs He bore and our sorrows He carried. The word there, if you look in your margin is sickness. If you've got a margin in your Bible, it says Our sickness He bore.

But the translators did not have the courage to write sickness. They wrote griefs. But the real meaning is our sicknesses He bore.

In Matthew chapter 8 and there it doesn't say griefs. It says sickness. Matthew chapter 8, quoting Isaiah It says in Matthew chapter 8 verse 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet He took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.

Now some people misquote Scripture and say that is what Jesus did on the cross. That He took our sicknesses on the cross. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that.

Those are people who read the Bible carelessly. This was fulfilled, it says. Read it carefully.

This was fulfilled here, three years before He went to the cross. When? When He healed all those who were brought to Him who were sick. He healed all those who were sick verse 16 and as He healed all those who were sick the saying was fulfilled that He took away our sicknesses and our diseases.

It was fulfilled there. Not when He died on the cross. When He died on the cross He died for our sins.

That we might die to sin and live unto righteousness. And He didn't carry our diseases on the cross. You won't find a verse in Scripture that says that.

1 Peter chapter 4 I'm sorry 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 24 He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness for by His stripes we are healed. Healed from what? Read the context. Healed from sin to live to righteousness.

That is spiritual health. So we see that the word griefs in Isaiah 53 4 He carried our sicknesses. It is sickness.

The same word comes in Isaiah 53 verse 3 and let me read it to you as it should be. A man of sorrows and acquainted with sickness. This is not some strange teaching.

A lot of people think sickness is due to sin. That's what Job's friends thought. If Jesus was not acquainted with sickness, this one part of our experience on earth which He never had.

I would be able to say to Him, Lord You don't know what I'm going through. A lot of people don't believe He was tempted like us. He was tempted like us but He never sinned.

I have been in times of sickness where I ask the Lord, Lord, did you go through this? See how difficult it is to overcome temptation when I'm sick even if you have a headache. I remember once when years ago when my children were small, I had a very severe headache and I was lying in bed and I said, Lord, did you ever have a headache on earth? Do you know what it is like to have a headache and to try and fight against sin when you got a headache? And the Lord spoke to me. Yes, He had a headache also on earth but He never sinned.

And the Lord said to me, I'm leading you to a higher level. You have overcome getting irritated with your children. You have overcome that without a headache.

Now I'm taking you to a higher class where you learn to overcome that irritation with a headache. I said, oh, praise the Lord. That means it's an education for me under greater pressure to be an overcomer.

So Jesus faced temptation when He had a headache. There was no sin in Him. Absolutely not.

You all know that death is worse than sickness. And we say, oh, sickness is the result of the curse. How could Jesus have it? Do you know that perspiring is also a result of the curse? How many of you believe that Jesus, when He was slogging away in the carpenter shop, never perspired? You believe that? I believe He perspired just like you and me.

Or, death is the result of the curse. Do you believe Jesus died? Perspiration, sickness, death, they're all the result of the curse. Jesus became a curse for us that we might never have a curse ourselves.

But we do face perspiration. We do face death, so we face sickness too. But in it, we are overcomers.

And God uses it to make us more like Him. God used the sickness of thorn in the flesh to make Paul humble. God used frequent ailments in Timothy's body to make him the most outstanding servant of God in Paul's time.

And I say, Lord, if that is the price I have to pay, I'm ready for it. It's rubbish. It's a momentary affliction which produces in me a tremendous glory.

Because my passion in life is not to be wealthy or healthy. My passion in life is to know God better as my Father. And I don't have any fear.

Nobody could ever kill Jesus before His time came. People tried to once catch Him and throw Him over a cliff. Could not kill Him.

Why? His hour had not come. When soldiers were sent to capture Him, to kill Him, they could not catch Him. One reason.

His hour had not come. Always the reason is His hour had not come. Not that they were not strong enough or He quickly escaped.

No, no, no, no. His hour had not come. And remember this, my brothers and sisters.

No sickness, no attack of evil people or anything. If you're living in God's will and your only passion in life is to know God better, to have eternal life and to fulfill God's will on earth, you cannot die till your hour comes. I believe that for myself.

I'm immortal till my life's work is done. If my only ambition in life is to do the will of God and to finish the work He gave me, you were born on earth with a particular task to be fulfilled for God and Jesus Christ. And if your aim in life is to say, Lord, that's the only thing I want to do on earth.

Everything else is secondary. I can give you this promise. You are immortal till your life's work is done.

What more do you want? You should be the happiest man on earth. I believe I am. What a wonderful life.

That's why Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 6 17, lay hold of eternal life. Lay hold of eternal life. Let's look at that verse in closing.

1 Timothy chapter 6 in verse 17. 1 Timothy in chapter 6. Sorry, verse 12 not 17. 1 Timothy 6 12.

Fight the good fight and take hold of eternal life. 1 Timothy 6 12. Fight the good fight and take hold of eternal life.

What does that mean? He wasn't telling him to accept Jesus Christ. That's what some people say to him. Accept Jesus Christ, you get eternal life.

He had accepted Christ years ago. Lay hold of this knowledge of God. To know God is eternal life.

To which you were called. And I would say that the same thing to you, brothers and sisters. Lay hold of eternal life.

Say, Lord, whatever the price, whatever the cost, I want to know you better. I want to know what it is to be broken so that I can know you better. Job knew God better.

He said, I'm insignificant. He says, till now I only heard about you. Now I see you.

And I know that a broken man will always repent constantly. May God help us. Let's bow in prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, it's a wonderful thing that you've given us the Holy Spirit to help us to know the things that have eternal value. We live in a world where hardly anybody has that eternal sense of values, even among so-called believers. It's possible that many sitting here don't have the eternal sense of values.

And it's so easy to be influenced by them. We want to be different, Lord. We want to be like Jesus.

That our whole mindset is a mind of Jesus. Those things that are really valuable and help us to decrease that Christ might

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