

Laws of the Spiritual Life #1 - the Law of Wholeheartedness

by Zac Poonen

The law of wholeheartedness is the principle that God desires us to seek Him with all our heart, making Him first place in our lives, and that this is essential for experiencing the fullness of His love and presence.

Duration: 48:55

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, Luke 14:33, Revelation 3:17-18

Topics: "Spiritual Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of putting Jesus Christ above all else in our lives. He warns against allowing other things, such as studies, relationships, money, or ambitions, to become more important than our relationship with God. The speaker highlights the tragic consequences of prioritizing anything above Jesus, leading to a life of backsliding and producing more backsliders. He references Revelation 3:18, where Jesus advises believers to 'buy' certain things from Him, emphasizing that there are aspects of the Christian life that require sacrifice and commitment. The speaker encourages listeners, especially those going into Christian work, to choose to live according to God's principles and not waste their lives pursuing worldly desires.

Transcript

Brothers and sisters, certain principles of the spiritual life that God has revealed in His Word and lived by those principles, we will find that the level of our spiritual life goes far higher than it is right now. You know, God has made this world according to certain laws. We know, for example, about the law of gravity.

Anything that is dropped falls down. Water always falls down. And men have used, once they have understood those laws, they have used those laws for the benefit of mankind.

We see in waterfalls, people put a little wheel and produce electricity. And many other laws people have discovered. People have discovered magnets and seen how they could use them for making motors and things like that.

And in exactly the same way, in our body, doctors and medical people have discovered certain laws, how this body functions. And when you obey those laws, you find your body is much fitter. In exactly the same way, there are certain laws in the spiritual life.

And if we understand those laws and obey them, we will find that our spiritual life progresses far more than if we live the Christian life in a sort of half-facade way, just going through certain routines. So I thought I would share with you in these evening messages some of those laws of the spiritual life. See, very often we think that the most important thing God requires from us is that we do some work for Him and go out and preach the Gospel to others.

All this is important. But God wants Himself to be more precious to us than anyone else. More precious to us than our fellow believers, more precious than wife, children, even our work, everything.

So the first law which I want to share with you this evening, I would call the law of wholeheartedness. In Jeremiah 29 and verse 13 we read, the Lord says these words, Jeremiah 29 and verse 13, And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. That's a law.

Not every believer finds God to the same depth and therefore not every believer lives in that same spiritual depth. It depends on how wholeheartedly they seek. You will find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

We could put that verse another way and say, you will seek Me and you will not find Me when you don't search for Me with all your heart. See a lot of us can content ourselves with the fact that we read the Bible every day, we pray and we do something or the other for the Lord, we go for meetings and we live a fairly clean life and we can ease our conscience. Even full-time Christian workers, in our place of work, we do something for the Lord and we are happy that there is some fruit, people are saved and we establish a church and we can find our satisfaction in that.

And we miss something. We miss the most important thing in the Christian life and that is to find God Himself. I want to say to all of you young people, the Lord's desire is that each of you will discover Him to be the most precious thing, the most precious person in your life, where everything else, like we sang in that song just now, is only a shadow.

You know the difference between a shadow and a reality. Here is my body and here is a shadow. There is a world of difference between the two.

And God must be so real to us that everything else, our work for Him, our relationship in family and among friends and fellow believers is all a shadow compared to our relationship with Jesus Christ. Now there are very very few believers and Christian workers who walk like this. That's what I've discovered in these 40 years that I've been a Christian.

Very few. But those are the ones who I believe are doing an eternal work for God. There is a lot of work going on for God on the earth today.

A lot of it is not eternal. The Bible says that when our work is evaluated by the Lord in the final day, a lot of it will be burnt up because it's not eternal. It doesn't have the quality of eternity in it.

And part of the reason for this is that God Himself was not precious to the worker. So in Psalm 73 and verse 25, we read these words of the Psalmist where he says similar words. He had found the secret.

And he says in Psalm 73, 25, on earth. That is wholeheartedness. Where a person's desire, even when he goes to heaven, is not to have a crown on his head or, well, all my sorrows will be over.

These are not the things that primarily excite a true wholehearted disciple of Jesus. The thing that excites a disciple of Jesus is that God Himself will be there. Jesus will be there.

And he says, I don't desire anything else. And he says on earth, I desire nothing but Thee. This is the first and most important law in the Christian life.

If you want your life to be spiritually effective for God. If you want your work to last for eternity. You need to come to that place in your life where you can honestly say, Lord, I desire nothing on earth besides You.

If I have You, I have everything. I don't need to work for You. I don't need the appreciation of men.

I don't even need to get married. All these things are secondary. If God gives them to me, fine.

I don't need a house. I don't need comforts. I don't even need money, which everybody in the world thinks is so important.

I desire nothing but You. You know, in my Christian life, when I was a young Christian, I met lots of believers and most of them were carnal and I wasn't much blessed through fellowship with them or listening to their ministry. But every now and then, I would come across a believer who was radiant.

Radiant because Christ was everything to him. And I felt that such believers, they were very rare. Only now and then I would come across them.

I felt that there was something about them which was different from all the other believers I had met. And as I got close to some of them, I discovered this was the secret of their life. Not a doctrine, not a work.

It was Jesus himself. They desired the Lord and the Lord was precious. And every now and then, as I said, I would come across such a person and I gradually began to have a longing in my life to be like them.

I said, Lord, this is the thing. This is the secret. These people have found something which 90% of believers haven't found.

And they are taken up with You. Other people are taken up with work and doctrines and activity and so many things. And I'm very thankful that every now and then God would send somebody like that across my path to challenge me to a higher life than I had experienced.

And I'm very thankful that I began to experience that when I was young. And I want to say to all of you, you don't have to wait till you're 40 or 50. You can enter into this life very quickly.

But this is the law. You have to seek God with all your heart. Otherwise you don't find Him.

You know, there are certain things in the Christian life which are free. When you turn to the New Testament, you find, for example, forgiveness of sins. That's free.

You don't have to pay anything for it. And we know how ever since the Reformation, the last 500 years, Protestant Christianity has publicly proclaimed, such that everywhere in the world this gospel is preached, that forgiveness of sins is free. That our works are like filthy rags and no matter what we do, we can never give something to God that will get us forgiveness of even one sin.

It has to be free. We receive freely the benefit of Christ's death for us on the cross. We know that eternal life is a gift.

The Bible says that, Romans 6.23. The gift of God is eternal life. You can't pay for it. You have to receive it free.

We know that the Holy Spirit is also called a gift. The gift of the Holy Spirit we read in the Acts of the Apostles. Free.

But, I want you to know also this. There are certain things in the Christian life which are not free. The mistake we make is thinking that everything is free.

And I believe that many, many Christians, the mistake they make is they get taken up with some truth and that becomes everything to them. And they miss out on a corresponding truth, which is also required if this first truth is to be held in its proper balance. And I want to show you two parables that Jesus spoke in Matthew 13.

In Matthew 13, He spoke about the kingdom of heaven being like a treasure hidden in a field. Now, this is not talking about heaven itself. This is talking about the expression of heaven's kingdom here on earth in the church.

By that I mean believers coming together. That's what I mean by church. And here is to be an expression of heaven on earth.

This is the purpose of the church. This is why God places believers on earth to show the world a little bit of what heaven is like. That's our calling.

And this kingdom of heaven is called here in verse 44. Jesus said in this parable, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man discovered. And from joy over his discovery, he goes and sells everything that he has and he buys that field.

So this was obviously not free. It wasn't something that he could get freely. He had to pay a price for it.

He had to buy it. He had to sell something and get it. Now very rarely did Jesus speak two parables on the same subject.

Most of Jesus' parables were emphasizing different points. Whether it's the parable, even there's a difference between the story of the prodigal son and the last sheep. But I won't go into that now.

But here are two parables which are basically teaching the same thing. You see the next one. Verse 45.

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. And upon finding one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and he bought it. Again, you find him buying something.

It's not free. So Jesus spoke about certain things in the Christian life as not being free. And not only that, I want you to notice in these two parables that it wasn't something that they could get by selling part of what they had.

In both cases Jesus said the man sold all that he had to get the field and to get the pearl. Everything. That was the price to get the kingdom of heaven.

Do you know that God's will for you is that when people come in touch with your life they taste a little bit of what heaven is like. Heaven is a place of perfect peace. Without anxiety, without fear.

And when people come in touch with your life, whether in your hostel or if you work in an office or anywhere, or in your home, they must taste a little bit of that perfect peace that there is in heaven. Heaven is a place of overflowing joy. Nobody complains in heaven.

No angel is ever depressed or gloomy in heaven. Heaven is a place where they are praising God all the time. They have no time to complain.

There is nothing to complain about. And when people come in touch with your life, they must get a little taste of what heaven is like. This is the purpose of our salvation.

And if when we go to preach the gospel, if it's only words and it's only a doctrine that we are proclaiming to people, but not a life, then we have failed. The kingdom of heaven is not a doctrine. It's a life.

And from that life we give these words. And that life must be a little taste of heaven that people see. Why is it that the vast majority of Christians are not living like this? A Christian home, a husband and wife who are believers, should be able to demonstrate in their home to the world around and to everybody who comes into that home a little bit of what heaven is like.

The joy, the peace, the humility, the goodness, the generosity and the patience of God in heaven. But you know, because you've seen many, many Christian homes, and you know as well as I do that many of these Christian homes are no better than the homes of heathen people. There's just as much quarreling and fighting and grumbling and complaining among Christian husbands and wives and even full-time Christian workers and even people who claim to be spirit-filled.

There's just as much quarreling and fighting as there is in other homes. Why? Why has the kingdom of heaven not come into such homes? Into such lives? Here is the reason. They have not fulfilled the law of whole-heartedness.

You have to sell everything that you have to buy this field. You have to sell everything that you have to get this pearl. And obviously, such believers and such homes, they have not felt that it is worth paying such a price to buy this pearl.

They have not felt it is worth paying such a price to buy this field. I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, that is the only reason. Supposing this man found this pearl of great price and when he found out the price of it, he discovered that he had to sell everything that he had in order to get it.

He could have gone home and said, Wow, it's not worth it. Why should I sell everything I have just to get this one pearl? And so he never gets it. And that's exactly the reason why we are not able to manifest the Spirit of Heaven in our lives, in our homes, and even in our work.

I left my job in the Navy thirty-three and a half years ago to serve the Lord full time. And when I left, I did not know much about Christian work. I had occasionally visited different places and met different Christian workers, but when I left, I thought, full-time Christian work and different mission organizations and different churches must be exactly like Heaven.

But I was mistaken. When I got into the midst of Christian organizations and Christian churches, I found politics, I found fighting for position, fighting for salaries, I found people seeking their own, promoting themselves, promoting their children, so many things. It was exactly like the political world.

And I was so disappointed. I said, Lord, this is not it. All these groups have missed something.

There is something in Scripture which they have missed. And I began to seek God. And I discovered it was here.

They were not willing to sell everything that they have. And I want to say to some of you who are going out into Christian work, you can end up like that in a few years and waste your whole life. Or, you can choose from the beginning to live in a different way.

To live according to the principles of God's Word. And follow the laws of the spiritual life. Let me show you another verse.

In Luke's Gospel, chapter 14. See, the reason why God says you will seek Me and find Me only when you search for Me with all your heart. There is a reason for it.

And the reason is, God will never, never take second place in anybody's life. Never. Because He is the Creator of the Universe.

If you don't give Him first place, He will not take any place in your life. Some of us think that we can give the Lord a second place or a third place and maybe your work is more important or your money is more important or your house is more important. But I want to tell you that God never takes second place.

You either give Him first place or He won't take any place at all. And it's because people don't give the Lord first place that they don't find Him. Because He is not the most precious thing in their life.

Something else is more precious. Maybe some boyfriend, some girlfriend, husband, wife, job, a ministry perhaps. Something else is more precious.

There are people who started out their Christian life loving the Lord with all their heart but after some time something else took over. That's the moment you become a backslider. If you want to know whether you are a backslider or not, you just got to ask yourself if there is anything in your life more precious than God.

Do you desire anything on this earth other than God Himself? Are you happy with Jesus alone? Or do you want Jesus plus perhaps marriage, Jesus plus a house, Jesus plus a job, Jesus plus something else? Well, then you are not going to be the type of Christian God wants you to be. That's for sure. Jesus spoke here about disciples.

The tragedy today is in a lot of Christian work, people have gone out and asked people to receive Jesus as their saviour and tell them that their sins are forgiven. But they never made them disciples. When Jesus said to His apostles, when He gave the great commission to His apostles, He said, go into every nation and make disciples.

And who is a disciple? Here Jesus spoke in Luke 14.26 that a person can be a disciple only if he puts the Lord above father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and his own life. In other words, the Lord must have first place. It's good to respect your father and mother, but they are not going to have first place in your life.

Your wife and children are not going to have first place in your life. God Himself is going to be so much above them that Jesus said, you got to hate your father, mother, wife, children. And then He spoke about cost here.

He used the illustration of a man building a tower. He says, when you want to build a tower, verse 28, you first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it. Now this is not talking about what is free.

I told you there are certain things in the Christian life that are free. But there are certain things you have to buy. There are certain things for which you have to sit down and calculate the cost.

And very often preachers do not tell people about the cost of discipleship. Do you remember the story of that rich young ruler who came to Jesus once? You read about in Mark chapter 10. What a lot of good qualities he had.

He was rich. He was young. He was a ruler with a lot of influence in society.

And he was an upright person who could say to Jesus, I have kept all the ten commandments from the time I was a youth. From young, from childhood. An upright man.

And on top of all that, he was seeking for eternal life. And then the Lord told him, there is one thing you love more than God in your life, and that is your money. And if you are not willing to sell everything that you have, you know the question that that man asked was, what must I do to have eternal life? And Jesus said, one thing you lack.

Go and sell all that you have. And give it to the poor. And come and follow me.

And the Bible says that the man went away sad. Because he had many possessions. And Jesus did not go after him.

And say, okay, start with ten percent. Maybe you can give twenty percent next year. No.

Right at the beginning, Jesus presented to him the cost of being a disciple. He was telling him, if you really want to be my disciple, I will have to be first in your life. Your money that you have lived for, for so long, should have no more value in your life.

Now, I have often wondered if such a man came to a Christian church today, how many pastors and preachers would tell him exactly what Jesus said? No. Most people wouldn't. Most people would just tell him to pay his tithe.

Would have no discernment that this man loves his money more than God. He is not fit to be a disciple. And in fact, most pastors would be very happy to have such a man as a member of their church.

Within a few months, he would become a board member in a church. Because he is rich, he is young, he is a ruler, he's got lots of money. Just think what will happen to our offerings if he starts paying his tithes.

And Jesus said those words which you would never hear from any pastor. Go and give your money to the poor and you come to me without your money. Have you ever heard a preacher say that to anybody? You come to me without your money.

Jesus said it. Because Jesus was interested in that man's good. He wanted that man to come to the highest possible life that he could come to on this earth.

And he knew that was possible only if he put the Lord first above everything. That's what Jesus meant here when he said, sit down and calculate the cost. And if you're not willing to pay the price, like the rich young ruler, go home.

The Lord won't come after you. The tragedy today in our Christian churches is that we've got lots of people like that rich young ruler sitting in our churches. We have accepted people whom Jesus would reject.

What is the end result? We have a whole lot of people today who are not disciples of Jesus, for whom Jesus is not everything. Something else. It may be their job, it may be their money, it may be their house, it may be their wife, it may be their ministry, it may be something else is more important than the Lord.

And we have gradually begun to accept that as normal. Isn't that a sad thing? That's abnormal. That is not what the Lord wants.

Further down in Luke chapter 14 verse 33, Jesus said, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. See there is a difference between what we possess and what we have. You can live in a rented house, that's not your possession, it's not in your name.

But you have that house, you may live in that rented house for 5 or 10 years. You have it, but it's not your possession. You may borrow a scooter from somebody and drive it, and while you are driving it, you have the scooter, but it's not your possession.

There is a difference between what we have and what we possess. And Jesus was not saying here that we cannot have anything. He was saying that we must not possess anything.

That means, I mustn't think of anything on this earth as so precious that I have to cling on to it. If I have inherited a house from my parents, I have to say, well, Lord's given me this, but this is not important for me. The Lord burns it up or takes it away or somebody drives me out.

It's fine. That's the way we must live, my brothers and sisters, in relation to every single thing we have on this earth. We have a lot of... It's fine.

That's the way we must live, my brothers and sisters, in relation to every single thing we have on this earth. We have a lot of valuable possessions. We must make a list of those and ask ourselves whether any of these things we possess.

That's what Jesus meant when he said, sit down and calculate the cost. Is the Lord really more precious to you than all those things? You're going to go out and teach other people how to be a disciple of Jesus. But you've got to be a disciple of Jesus first yourself.

And that can only be if the Lord is more precious to you than every single other thing. The reason why Christianity in India is at such a shallow level is because we have welcomed into the church a whole lot of people whom Jesus would not have welcomed. Jesus said, go and make disciples.

We have not made disciples. Anybody who wanted to follow the Lord for some... Very often for some personal benefit he comes along and becomes a member of a church. And all he's interested in is healing or prosperity or some other blessing like that or maybe forgiveness of sins.

He comes only to get. He does not love the Lord with all his heart. How many churches have you seen where even 50% of the people love Jesus supremely? More than everything.

More than money, property, wife, husband, everything. Where God is everything to them. I've never found a church like that.

And yet the Lord intended that every church, every person in it should be a disciple like this. This is where we have failed. And we have failed because we are so interested in numbers that the quality of the person who comes in has become unimportant.

That's the tragedy. We haven't told... We have told people very clearly what is free. What they can receive from the Lord freely.

But we haven't told them to sit down and count the cost. There are certain things they have to buy. We haven't told them that they should not possess anything.

Do you know when God made Adam? Have you ever wondered why God didn't make Adam and Eve together? He could have made two lumps of clay and simultaneously made Adam and Eve and given them to each other. He didn't do it like that. He made Adam alone.

So that when Adam opened his eyes, he didn't see Eve. He saw God. And that was to teach him, Adam, remember all your life, I must be the first person you see always.

Not your wife, not the garden, not your ministry, but me. And then we read that God put Adam to sleep and took out a rib from his side and when Adam was fast asleep, he made a woman from that rib. And when Eve opened her eyes, the first thing she saw was not Adam.

It was God. And that was to teach her, I must be first in your life always. And if Adam and Eve had lived like that, they would have had a very happy marriage.

But they didn't. Their marriage was a mess, their first son became a murderer. All these things happened because that first lesson which God tried to teach them, they didn't follow.

I want to ask you, if at your young age, something else has become more important than Jesus Christ in your life, maybe your studies, maybe some person, maybe somebody you are in love with, maybe money, maybe some ambition. Sometimes when we are young, we have ambitions. And those ambitions can become more precious than the Lord.

And if that has happened to you at such a young age, can you imagine what your condition will be like in another 10 or 15 years? You'll be a first class backslider. And you just preach and produce a bunch of backsliders wherever you go. That's the tragedy.

Now what is the Lord's attitude towards people who are like this, who are neither here nor there, for whom something is more precious than the Lord? If you turn to Revelation 3, we read, Revelation 3, the Lord writes to the angel of the church in Laodicea, and that is to the elder, the messenger of the church in Laodicea, I know your deeds, verse 15, you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot. Because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Now there's a proverb in the world that says something is better than nothing. And if you apply that proverb to this passage, you would think that if a man is lukewarm, that's better than being cold. To be cold means out and out for the world.

To be hot means out and out for God. What about somebody who is not out and out for the world and not out and out for God, but sort of in between, like most believers are? You know, they're doing something for God. They're not worldly, but they're not wholehearted for God.

Do you know what the Lord says? We have to change our way of thinking. He says, I wish you were out and out for the world. Or out and out for God.

But not this half here, half there. If Jesus Christ were to stand in this pulpit here this evening, do you know what he would tell all of you? Every single person sitting here, he would say, I wish you were either hot or cold. Something is not better than nothing.

It's nothing or everything. That's in your Bible. I wish Jesus would say you were out and out for the world.

Or out and out for God. Let me ask you, my dear brothers and sisters. Are you out and out for God? Answer that question to the Lord himself.

If not, and how do you know that you're not out and out for God? Something else in life is more important to you than Jesus himself. Then the Lord's word to you is, I wish you were out and out for the world. He doesn't want any half-hearted people.

He says, if you're lukewarm, neither here nor there, I will vomit you out of my mouth. Do you believe that? I believe it with all my heart that every half-hearted, half here, half there type of believer is going to be vomited out by Jesus. I don't know all that that means.

But I certainly believe that to be spat out of Jesus' mouth is not something very pleasant. Do you believe that can happen to you? Do you believe that the Lord is looking only for those who are out and out for him? And then the Lord tells us how we can be out and out for him. Here we are not talking about forgiveness of sins.

We're not talking about baptism in the Holy Spirit. We're talking about something else. We're talking about being effective for God here on this earth.

And the Lord tells them, verse 18, Revelation 3, 18. He says to them, first of all, verse 17, you think you're rich and wealthy, but actually you don't know you're miserable and poor and blind and naked. I advise you, he says in verse 18, listen to these words, to buy something from me.

This is not free. This is not forgiveness of sins. You can't buy forgiveness of sins.

You can't buy the Holy Spirit. You know in Acts chapter 8 when Simon the magician wanted to buy the Holy Spirit, Peter said, your money perish with you. You can't buy the Holy Spirit.

You can't buy forgiveness of sins. But there are certain things in the Christian life you got to buy. He says that.

I advise you to buy this gold from me. To buy these white garments. To buy this anointing of your eyes.

What does he mean by this buying? It's what we read in that parable in Matthew 13. You got to give up everything that you have. It's what we read in Luke chapter 14 where Jesus means more to you than father, mother, wife, children, brother, sister, your job, your life, your ambitions, your reputation, everything.

Lord, I desire nothing on earth but you. I want to say to you my dear brothers and sisters, if you really want to serve God effectively on this earth before you die, say to the Lord, Lord, I desire nothing on earth but you. When I was converted 40 years ago, I said that to the Lord.

Lord, I desire nothing but you. And through all these 40 years by God's grace, I've said that same thing. No ministry is important to me.

No job, no money, not my wife, not my children, not my house. If I have you, that's enough. And that's made my life so satisfying.

My Christian life is not boring. I'll tell you the honest truth, not a single day of my life is boring. I'll tell you the honest truth, I am never depressed or discouraged.

I'm tempted to, but it never happens. These other things happen, why do you get discouraged and depressed? Because something else is more important to you than Jesus, that's all. Why do you complain or murmur? I have nothing to complain about.

Because I desire the Lord. And that's enough for me. That doesn't mean I don't do anything else.

I take care of my family, I serve the Lord, I travel here and there and do many things, but none of these things have become more precious than Jesus himself. God created Adam so that when Adam's eyes were opened, he was just mud. God breathed into him and his eyes were opened and the first thing he saw was God.

And I pray that you young people, your eyes will be opened to see Jesus. That he'll be the one who's the passion of your heart. All your life, not just for a day or two after these meetings, but every single day of your life say to the Lord, Lord I desire nothing but you.

Nothing is important. Even serving God is not important. Marriage is not important.

Money is not important. Deliberately, live before God like this. It'll be totally different from the way that other Christians are living.

But that's the type of Christian life that'll bring you satisfaction. Let me show you Philippians chapter 3. In Philippians chapter 3 we read how the Apostle Paul says how he gained Christ. How he came to know the Lord.

In Philippians chapter 3 in verse 7 and 8 he says, verse 8 particularly, more than that, I count everything to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ, Jesus my Lord. Now listen to this. For this I have suffered the loss of all things.

He was like that man who sold everything that he had in order to get the field or the pearl of great price. I've suffered the loss of all things and I count all those things as rubbish in order to gain Christ. Now how is it that Paul in order to gain Christ had to give up everything and how is it you found Christ without giving up everything? It must be another Christ.

Not the Christ that Paul found. Paul found the real Christ and he discovered that in order to gain the real Christ he had to give up everything. His position, his honor, his goals in life, his ambitions and his inheritance from his parents everything he said it's rubbish compared to Christ.

No wonder Paul's life was so effective for God right up to the end of his life. Do you want your life to be effective for God like that or do you want to live the third rate type of Christian life and Christian service that so many preachers and Christian workers are living today? Do you want your ministry to be a power from God a prophetic voice from God that stirs people up, challenges people to live for Jesus year after year after year after year after year? You want it to be like that? Follow Paul's method. Make a list of all the things that are precious in your life.

Make a list and say Lord I count it all rubbish if I can have you. You are everything to me. Even my health is not important for me.

Nothing on earth is important for me. You Lord Jesus are all that I need and I will never ask for anything else. Why do we complain? We complain because we want Jesus plus perhaps good food.

Jesus plus good food. So if you don't have good food you complain. Or Jesus plus good accommodation.

But when you want only Jesus you never complain because you don't want anything else and you have him. This is how the kingdom of heaven can come into our lives. This is how the kingdom of heaven can come into our homes.

This is how the spirit of heaven can come into our ministry. And this is how the voice of heaven can sound through your mouth when you speak God's word to other people. Determine my dear brothers and sisters that you will not be a third rate useless type of Christian worker like we have so many running around this country today.

And say Lord I do not want to be cold. I don't want to be lukewarm. I want to be hot.

I want to be out and out for God. That's the first law of the Christian life. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

When you count everything else as rubbish then you will find him like Paul found him. And like here and there godly men and women have found him and you will become one of those godly men and women. That's the secret.

It's not in an experience. It's not in getting a degree from a bible college. It is where Jesus himself becomes the most precious thing in your life.

And you maintain that till the very end. This is God's will for you. But like everything else in the Christian life God will not force it on us.

If you see a vision today of a higher life than you have ever experienced what the Lord tells you is not to make an emotional decision right now. He says go home sit down count the cost do you want to pay the price? You want to say Lord I really mean it you are going to be everything in my life from now on. And if you respond you will find the Lord responds to you.

There is no partiality with God. What he did for Paul he will do for you. What he did for another man he will do for you If you pay the same price let's respond to God.

Let's pray. I want to invite you my brothers and sisters to respond to what the Lord has spoken to your heart this evening. To seek him no more half heartedly but with all your heart giving him first place putting him uppermost in your life and considering everything else as rubbish from this day onwards.

Heavenly Father we pray that you will help these dear young people that in the days to come they will experience a taste of heaven in their lives and that each of us will go out into this world and manifest that life and that spirit to a needy world around us. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

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