

Learn to Live in Helpless Dependence on the Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and being poor in spirit. It highlights the need for a strong rebuke to awaken faith, the helpless dependence on God for all needs, and the continuous thirst for the Holy Spirit to flow through believers. The speaker urges a deep thirst for God's life to flow effortlessly, emphasizing the need for forgiveness and humility in relationships.

Scripture: Matthew 17:20, Matthew 5:3, John 7:37, Luke 23:34, Matthew 6:14

Topics: "Faith", "Humility and Dependence on God"

Description

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Transcript

You know, in the New Testament, it speaks a lot about faith. There's hardly any emphasis on faith in the Old Testament at all. But in the New Testament, Jesus often spoke about it.

In fact, sometimes he looked at his disciples and said, Oh, you of little faith, how long shall I continue with you? You would think that Jesus was getting fed up. He was not getting fed up with them, because he never got fed up with them in his life. But he wanted them to be rebuked strongly.

Oh, you of little faith. I mean, he never spoke like that about anything else. There were so many other weaknesses the disciples had, but the one thing he wanted them to have at any cost was faith.

I don't find him rebuking his disciples for anything else. You know, that they didn't understand the truth well, or they did not preach well, or you know, so many things that today churches are taken up with people must learn to sing well and preach well. It's all good, brother.

But I don't find Jesus ever emphasizing those things. He was always rebuking people for faith. And I believe there's a close connection between faith and poverty of spirit as well.

Because one of the best pictures of faith that I have found, see, faith is a helpless dependence on our Heavenly Father for all our needs. So that's very closely connected to poverty of spirit. A person who is poor in spirit says, I have no resources in myself to handle life's problems.

But I have a Heavenly Father, and I can lean upon him. And the picture which I've often used is what Jesus used in Matthew chapter 5, where he says that, if you abide in me as the branch in the tree, John 15, this is John 15. If you abide in me, you can bear fruit.

Otherwise, without me, verse John 15, verse 5, you can do zero. So that is faith, the helpless dependence of a branch upon a tree. We have heard so much about faith from Pentecostals who say that you'll be healed of sicknesses by faith.

And the more you listen to them, the more confused you'll be. I would urge you, don't listen to them. Listen to Jesus in the Bible.

I stopped listening to all these people who got wrong teachings on faith. And so I don't get confused. I say, Jesus said to be helplessly dependent on a tree like a branch.

What does the tree expect that branch to do? Nothing, except stick to me. Just stick to me. Don't cut yourself off.

You don't have to produce one fruit. Imagine if Jesus were to say to you, my dear child, you don't have to produce one fruit in your life. That is my responsibility, the Lord says.

Just depend on me and trust, lean upon me for everything. And keep the channels in your life open so that my sap, the Holy Spirit can flow into you all the time. The fruit will come automatically.

That is the secret of fruitfulness. And when you get that type of fruit, you will never be proud. No, the more fruit you produce in your life, the humbler you'll become.

You've seen these branches which have very little fruit. They're very erect. The more fruit comes in that branch, the branch begins to hang down.

The more fruit there is, the more the branch hangs down in humility. That's the mark of a person with much fruit. The more he has, the humbler he becomes.

Because he knows that I cannot produce even one mango tree. The branch cannot produce one mango by itself. It knows that.

So it says, I'm just going to lean in the tree. The Christian life is a very simple life. The person who's poor in spirit says, I can't do anything.

I'm just going to lean in Jesus and be dependent upon him constantly for everything. I wish all of us would come into that simple life and meditate, my brothers and sisters. When you read scripture, develop the habit of meditating.

We miss so much if we don't meditate. When Jesus spoke about the branch in the tree and said, you can do nothing without me, meditate on the branch in the tree. Whenever you feel, I want to do something for God, I'll tell you what you got to do.

Lean upon the Lord in helplessness. That's what you got to do. And to say, Lord, I can do nothing.

Do you know that Jesus himself said, I can do nothing? Turn with me to the Gospel of John and see what he says in John chapter 5 and verse 30. Can you believe Jesus saying this? I can do nothing on my own initiative. I told you how Jesus sometimes repeats some things two or three times within a period of one or two minutes.

This is another of those statements. Just one minute earlier, he said in verse 19, John 5, 19, truly, I say to you, I can do nothing. And then one minute later, he says, I can do nothing.

He said, Lord, I heard it. I heard you say that. No, you haven't heard it.

You need to hear it again, because you people think you can do something. That's your problem. But Jesus is, Lord, I'm concerned.

I can do nothing. And God is seeking to work in all of us proud human beings and proud believers, especially those of us who think we are better than other believers because we've got a purer doctrine. I fear that that danger is there in CFC believers.

Oh, we've got a purer doctrine than others, so we are better than others. And I've seen that type of pride come into CFC believers who look down on Roman Catholics or Marthoma people or other people who are in other groups. I mean, you avoid them for their wrong doctrines, like you hear me speak about the wrong doctrines of the Pentecostals because they deceive people, the prayer preachers.

I'm not talking about that, but don't look down on people there. We must not look down on anyone in any denomination. There are some godly people in the Roman Catholic Church.

I believe that, who are born again. Their doctrine is wrong, but their life is right. Just like in CFC, there are people whose doctrine is right, whose life is wrong.

So it's the life that matters. And the truly spiritual person is the one who recognizes, like Jesus, I can do nothing of myself. That's what Jesus said.

And if I see the Father doing something, I do that. He said, I don't even give an opinion, John 5:30. I don't want to give my opinion about people.

As I hear John 5:30, I judge. That means when the Lord looks into a person or looks at a situation, he's waiting for the Father to tell him. Why does the Father have to tell him? Doesn't Jesus know everything? Nobody came to earth like us.

And he lived on earth like a person, like a child, dependent on the Father for everything. Who else can say I can do nothing? It's a baby who says I can do nothing. What Jesus says in one minute, he says twice, I can do nothing unless I see the Father do it.

I cannot do anything on my own initiative. I have to wait for the Father to tell me and I'll do. That's why he prayed so much.

That's why he sought the Lord, the Father's face frequently. The more confident you are in yourself, let me tell you a law. The more confident you are in yourself, the less you will pray.

Always, that is a rule. You pray less because you don't need God's help. You can manage on your own.

Why do you need to pray? Jesus could not manage on his own. So it's frequently went to pray. Before other people got up, he would get up and get alone somewhere to pray.

Why? Because he couldn't do anything. Why is it Christians are not like that? Because they say we can do a lot of things. But see, what's it done? What is your life accomplished for the Lord? Think of it.

Ask yourself, what has your life accomplished for the Lord? You made a lot of money perhaps and done so many clever things. But what is your life accomplished for the Lord in terms of eternity? You may say, I've got a few people to the Lord here and there. It could have been 10 times more if you are a little more helpless.

If you had, well, you say, I belong to a good church. Is that all God wants you to be? To belong to a good church? No, there's a lot more. I want to say to every one of you, my brothers and sisters, every branch, every part of God's Christ body, he wants to use for his glory.

And I want to say to you, even if you're an ordinary brother in one of the churches there in the Gulf, God wants to use you. Even if you're an insignificant, you're not an elder or a preacher or anything in the church. You're an insignificant brother.

God wants to use you. He wants to use you in your office. He wants to use you in your neighborhood.

He wants to let a light shine through you. That people who encounter you will never forget that they met a man of God. When I was a young Christian, I was only 20, 23 years old when I was working in the Navy.

But I felt, Lord, I'm not a great scholar or anything. I didn't know much of the Bible those days, but I love Jesus. And I said, Lord, all the people I meet with in the ship, they must never forget in their entire life that they met one true Christian in their life.

That's all. Maybe I can't answer all their questions or explain so many things they ask. Maybe I don't know.

But they should never forget that once in their life, they met a true Christian. And that was my goal, not to show myself as a great preacher, because I didn't know so much those days. I was only 23, 24 years old.

I was 26 years old when I left my job in the Navy. And God called me out. But I remember, I was so encouraged.

And 40 years later, I met one of those admirals who was a colleague of mine, a little senior to me in the Cochin Naval Base. And I meet him in Bangalore. He's retired now.

And he comes to me and says, Zach, I can never forget you. He remembered. I was so encouraged that my Christian witness, he did not forget for 40 years.

I did not preach great sermons to him. I just stood up for certain things saying, sir, I cannot do that because that's against my conviction. I remember once, there are a lot of unrighteous things that go on in government offices, even in your offices where you work.

And I remember the Navy once, I was in charge of all the boats appointed to that job. And even the commanding officer takes out a boat, you're not supposed to charge him anything. Even if he takes it out

for a picnic, he's supposed to pay.

But you have to show it in the records as he went for a harbor inspection or something like that. Even though then he doesn't have to pay, because it's official duty. But he didn't go for official duty.

He went for a personal picnic. So what did I do? I sent the captain a bill saying you went for a picnic, here's a bill for the diesel you used in the petrol. And the second in command, the captain is too big a man to talk to me directly.

He sent his second in command to me and that man came to me and said, why did you send the captain a bill? I said, sir, he took the boat out for a picnic. He's supposed to pay for the diesel, just like all of us. He said, didn't the previous boat officer tell you how to show it as a harbor inspection? Or something like that.

I said, sir, I'm a Christian. I can't go against my conscience. You know what happened? In half an hour, they transferred me from that job.

That's just one experience I had. I had some wonderful experiences like that in the Navy. Wonderful experiences.

And the Lord saw that. And I was so encouraged. It deepened my fellowship with the Lord.

And one day the Lord said, I want you to leave the Navy. I want you to carry this witness outside. I was so encouraged.

That is the greatest honor that the Lord gave me. It was like being promoted to be the admiral, more senior most position. But God Almighty looked at my life as a young man and said, I want you to come out and be my servant.

Boy, there's no greater honor in the whole world. But I knew that when I looked back, then I knew that many, I'll just give you one example. There were numerous situations like that, where God tested me to see whether I would stand up for my Christian conviction and for the name of Jesus Christ, or whether I'd be ashamed to say that I'm a disciple of Jesus, that I stand up for the truth.

I want to ask you, dear brothers, if you feel like a helpless branch, you will easily do what the Lord tells you to do. But if you're a clever person and you can plan and scheme and take care of yourself, you won't do it. You'll be always protecting yourself.

Let the Lord protect you. Leave it to the Lord to protect you. I didn't care.

You know, they told me that if you disobeyed senior officers, you'd be locked up in jail. In secular service, they'll dismiss you from the job. In the military, if you disobey a senior officer, you're locked up in jail.

You're not just dismissed. I said, fine. I'd be happy to go to jail for Jesus' sake.

No problem. These are little, little things where God tests us to see whether we'd be faithful to stand up for the truth. I'm not saying that we should, you know, provocatively witness for Christ.

I mean, there are rules in your country that you should not witness on the streets. Don't witness on the streets. That's okay.

But nobody can stop your light from shining through your life and your place of work saying, sorry, sir, I don't do that. I'm a Christian. I can't do it.

It's against my conscience. It's against my conviction. Well, they say you lose your job.

Okay, I'm ready to lose my job. God will give me a better job. Maybe not with a better salary, but he'll give me a better job.

It's very, very important to be willing in these days to stand up for Christ. My example always, I read a lot of books about the first century martyrs, books of the people who died for Christ in the first, second, third century. It's amazing what they say.

They had to face lions and swords and all they were killed. And I said, Lord, they faced so much for you. Can't I face these little, little problems here in my office? Am I afraid of losing my job? When those early Christians were willing to lose their life and be thrown to the lions.

Am I a brother of those Christians or am I a coward? Jesus was always helping. That's why he was so bold because he was only a branch. He didn't have to do anything.

Lord, my father, he was depending on him. I can do nothing. And that's what I see.

This is real poverty of spirit. I can do nothing. As I told you in one minute, he says it twice.

Remember these two verses, John 5, 19 and John 5, 30. Jesus says, I can do nothing of myself. That was the secret of his life.

Whatever the father tells me to do, I do. I don't even form an opinion about someone. I don't judge.

As I hear John 5, 30, I judge. I come into a situation, I judge. You remember that story where the Pharisees brought the woman caught in adultery and Master Moses said, through such people should be stoned.

And Jesus was 30 years of experience knowing God's word. He could have immediately given an answer, but he didn't. He scribbled on the ground.

It's like sometimes we scribble on a piece of paper because we are thinking, what should I say? What should I do? Jesus was human. He scribbled on the ground, scribbled on the ground, scribbled on the ground till it became clear and he was a branch, no? He could do nothing. There's no opinion, no judgment, no answer to give.

Scribbling on the ground and quietly saying, father, father, what shall I do? And the father said, tell them the one who is without sin to throw the first stone. So he got up, said he was without sin, throw the first stone. And he continued scribbling on the ground.

What next father? No, don't do anything now. Just wait. So he waited, waited, scribbling on the ground.

And then one by one, they all go away. And only that adulterous woman is left. Now what father? I already said he was without sin should throw the first stone.

And I'm the only one now without sin. Should I throw a stone? The father says, no. Father says, let her go.

Tell her she's forgiven. Tell her not to sin anymore. So he gets up and says, I don't condemn you.

Go and sin no more. No, I read that story like that, the way I explained to you now. And I said, Lord, make me like that.

Make me like the way you lived on earth in every situation. Not to think I'm so clever and I know the answer to everything. I know nothing.

I can do nothing. I want to listen, listen, listen. The one who's good in spirit is a great listener.

He doesn't think he knows the answer to everything. He's a listener. Very, very important.

So that's something that we have to learn because the more you know in our CFC churches, we know so much truth compared to many other people in other churches that can go to our head that we think we are more spiritual because we know so much truth. It's not true. You're spiritual if you've become the place where you're helplessly dependent like the branch upon the tree.

That is God's will for every one of us. Be helplessly dependent. Because when we are helplessly dependent on that, we will be seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit.

The more I read the Acts of the Apostles, I see these guys, they were such ignorant people, but what a lot they accomplished. There's only one answer to it. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And many people who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit today are not filled with the Holy Spirit. I thank God that I not open my eyes. I remember when I was a young person of 23 years old, I, that's the time I felt the need.

I was in a brethren assembly and they used to teach the word of God is to study the book Bible like you study a book of chemistry. You don't need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to study chemistry. And the way they studied the Bible in the brethren assembly, you don't need to be filled with the Holy Spirit either.

It's all academic knowledge. It was good to study the Bible. I did it.

But I felt a lack of power in my life. And I said, Lord, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit like it says here. I never knew about the Pentecostals those days.

It was way back 1963. I was only 23 years old. And somebody said, you got to go to the Pentecostals.

They'll tell you about being filled with the Spirit. I said, okay, I'm willing to go. And somebody took me to a Pentecostal pastor.

I was a young man. I said, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, okay, just kneel down here.

We'll pray. And he said, now do what I tell you to do. Keep saying hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Keep saying that and suddenly your tongue will trip and then you'll speak in tongues. I said, that's not how the apostles spoke in tongues in the day of Pentecost. Nobody told them to keep saying hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, and then your tongue will trip.

I said, I'm sorry, I'm not going to do that. He got very angry with me. That was the end of our meeting.

And that was the end of my going to a Pentecostal church to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I said, I'll never go there. That's all they have.

They teach people some type of garbage. And the multitudes of people who listen to this garbage and are deceived that they are filled with the Holy Spirit. They're not.

I thank God that many years later, God really filled me with the Holy Spirit and it produced the results in my life. For years, I was defeated by sin. Even though I was born again and I knew the Bible quite a bit and I could preach.

But I was, I used to get angry at home and I used to, could not control my thoughts. But I would confess immediately, oh Lord, I'm sorry I've slipped up and fallen, defeated, defeated. Not, and of course the defeats become less and less, but still defeated.

I said, Lord, I really need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Really, genuinely. And I'm very thankful that one day in God's mercy, when I was at the rock bottom of defeat, God filled me with the Holy Spirit.

I remember so clearly to the 12th of January, 1975. That's what, 47 years ago, I was praying with another brother in my own house, in upper room, and God met with me. I didn't want to be defeated.

I wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And he gave me that assurance. And when he gave me that assurance, he also gave me the gift of tongues, which I did not expect.

That was an added gift. That was not something I had to repeat anything. It was a gift from heaven, which has been a very useful gift for me.

I use it only in private, never in public. But I know what happened in my life after that. Six months later, CFC was born in my house, the first CFC church.

And my home life was changed. My personal life was changed, little by little. It's amazing when God meets with you.

And ever since that time, I've told people, brothers, you need to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what changed the apostles on the day of Pentecost. So not some new teaching.

No, God came down and met with them. And not just once. That's the other thing I said, Lord, this is just once.

I want to be filled with the Spirit again and again and again. Even this morning, as I got up, I said, Lord, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's my constant prayer.

Ephesians 5.18 means be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. And that's the mark of a man who is poor in spirit. I think of an example of, you know, Jesus used illustrations.

So we can compare poor in spirit with poor in money, for example. And in India, those who live in India know, you've seen beggars. In Bangalore, we used to have beggars come to our gate.

They'll come and knock at the gate. And you go and give them something, say you give them a few rupees. And they'll come back the next day.

Where's the money I gave you yesterday? Oh, sir, that was finished yesterday. I need some more. That's a poor man.

That's a really poor man. He's so dependent that he has to come every day and ask, where's the money I gave you yesterday? Oh, that was finished. I need something more.

There I learned from that beggar, from these beggars, what poverty of spirit is. We can learn from beggars, from children. I said, that's how I got to go to God.

Turn to the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a great book. In the book of Proverbs, you read about how we are to seek the Lord.

Proverbs chapter 8. You know, sometimes you read in Proverbs a repeated statement saying, listen to me, heed my instruction, don't neglect it. Isn't saying it once enough? No, no, no. I have to repeat it.

Proverbs 8, 32. Oh, sons, listen to me. You'll be blessed if you keep my ways.

Heed my instruction. Don't neglect it. Yeah, Lord, what are you trying to tell me? You're repeating a number of times.

This is what I'm trying to tell you. Verse 34. This is the man who's blessed.

Who listens to me. Who watches daily at my gates like that beggar. Waiting at my doorposts, waiting at the door.

Just like that beggar. Knocking, knocking, knocking until I come and given something. Because he who finds me will find life and favor from the Lord.

That verse has come to me many, many times. Watching daily. Verse 34.

That beggar comes again next day. Where's the money I gave you yesterday? Oh, sir, that's finished yesterday. That's how I need to go back to God every day.

Lord, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Didn't I do that for you yesterday? Yeah, that was for yesterday. Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit.

I want to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. Because I have a need today to be a witness for you. I want to urge you, my dear brothers.

Even if you're blessed by what you hear in the different messages. You'll never be able to accomplish all that God wants to do through you. Unless you are really filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that can only come if you thirst. Jesus said, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me. And I believe that's what we need.

Lord, I have not understood what poverty of spirit is. You know, you can listen to a message. You can listen to, we've had a whole, I don't know how many sessions you've had so far.

And I'm sure you've heard some wonderful messages from Brother Joji. Great man of God. And, but you can listen to all the great men of God.

That's fine. But if you really want to know poverty of spirit, you've got to go to Jesus. Say, Lord, let me look at your life.

Let me see, let me look at your word, which says I have to come to you daily. To learn a little more of my helpless dependence upon you. Like a branch in a tree.

If you've learned that, you've learned a great secret in the Christian life. That I can do nothing. And even when I try to assess somebody, I know nothing.

I believe it's a great hindrance to our Christian life. When we begin to have high thoughts about ourselves, that we think we know so much. There's a great danger in CFC churches, particularly, that we can look down on others and compare ourselves with others.

And think we know better than them. You are better than them. Your life is radiating more of Christ.

Not if you know so much knowledge. I fear, it's one of the great fears I have of CFC people who listen to so many sermons and go to YouTube and listen to this sermon, that sermon. And their head is crammed full of knowledge.

But their life is not up to the level. You know, when Paul wrote to Timothy, he said this to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 4. 1 Timothy 4 and verse 16. Paul wrote to Timothy and said, there are two things you must pay close attention to.

Pay close attention. That means, take two things very carefully. One is your life.

And the other is your teaching. What you've understood and your life. Your teaching and your life.

Your doctrine and your life. They're like the two legs, we can say. Both your legs must be equal.

If a man has got even a one inch shortage. One inch shortage in one leg compared to the other. You'll detect it immediately from a distance when he walks.

One inch. Our legs may be three feet long. But if the other leg is just one inch less than that.

From a distance, you'll be able to see that man's legs are not equal. One leg is longer. And I'll tell you my observation.

Many CFC brothers and sisters. Their knowledge leg is much longer than their life leg. Knowledge is so huge.

And the life is not just one inch shorter. It's about half the size. And not even how they're limping.

And they don't even realize how awkward it is. Take heed to your life. And your understanding of truth.

Your teaching. Because if you do this. You will save yourself.

That's what it says. Have you ever heard of saving yourself? Yeah, you save yourself. And then you'll also save others around you.

So if I want to save myself, according to this verse. And save others around me. There are two things I must take care of.

That my life is both legs are always equal. That my life is equal to my teaching. That if my teaching is better than the teaching of those people in the Marthoma Church.

My life must also be much better than theirs. If my teaching is better than the people in the Roman Catholic Church. Then my life must also be better than theirs.

It's not just saying my doctrine is better than yours. And my teaching is purer than you. That's not enough.

Very important. So if you're poor in spirit, you'll have no difficulty in understanding that. You say, Lord, I see my need.

So let's turn to John chapter seven. John's Gospel in chapter seven. We read how we can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Which I believe is the most important thing of all. If you are really poor in spirit. It'll be very easy to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And you'll be continuously filled with the Spirit. If you remain poor in spirit. You don't need to know the definition of being poor in spirit.

You have to be poor in spirit. You don't need to know the definition of humility. You've got to be humble.

Let's not be so taken off with, oh, now I can explain that. Forget it. You don't need to explain it.

See, there are a lot of people. There are a lot of doctors who can explain about health who are sick. And there are other people who don't know anything about medicine or physical health who are healthy.

What is important? Not to be able to explain what health is like. But to be healthy. Not even to explain the doctrine of being filled with the Spirit.

But to be filled with the Spirit. To have rivers of living water flowing out of us. And here it says how that can happen.

John 7 and verse 37 and 38. It's very, very simple. Most of the time.

You know that most of the time when Jesus preached, he sat down. He did not stand up. You read that the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus was not standing up. He was sitting down. John chapter 8. You read when he was in the temple.

He was sitting down and preaching. Even in Luke chapter 5. He sat down inside a boat. Jesus sermons were all preached sitting down.

The Old Testament prophets stood up and preached prophetic messages. Yeah, there's nothing wrong with that. All I'm just saying is Jesus would sit down.

Because he was like a father. You know when the father sits at the head of the table with all the children sitting around the table and teaches scripture to them. That is how Jesus taught.

Now a teacher in a classroom. Teacher in a classroom doesn't sit. He stands.

But he's a teacher. Jesus was a father. So most of the time he would sit and talk.

Some people are surprised when they see a sit and talk. And I'm not against people standing or sitting. I say all I say is don't teach like the school teacher in the classroom.

He's like the father who's sitting at the head of the table. Whether you stand or sit. Important thing is the spirit.

But here we read Jesus stood up because he was prophesying. It's one of the rare times you find him standing up and speaking. Something special.

Because almost all the other messages were the two longest sermons Jesus preached are Matthew 5, 6, and 7. He sat down. You read in Matthew 5. And the other longest sermon he preached was John 14, 15, 16, 17 in the Last Supper. He sat down and preached to them at the table.

But here was a very prophetic message. He stood up. Jesus stood and cried out.

Most of the time he didn't cry out. He just spoke gently. And this time he cried out, you who are thirsty, come to me and drink and believe in me.

The two conditions for being filled with the Holy Spirit. If you if you fulfill that, the guarantee is from your innermost being, rivers of living water will flow. In the early days of my preaching, when I was 25, 26, 28 years old, I was preaching 30 years old.

It was a big struggle to preach God's Word. It was like, you know, the hand pumps that we have in the villages in India, where the people come with their buckets to fill water, because there's no running water in their homes. You come to the hand pump and you pump and pump and pump and pump and water keeps coming out as long as you pump.

You stop pumping, the water stops. That's how my preaching was in the early days. And it was a struggle.

And I said, Lord, that's not how you spoke. And he said, if you're thirsty, come to me. I said, Lord, I'm thirsty.

I want to learn how to speak useful. And he said, not only come to me, you've got to believe that I'll do that for you. Two qualifications for rivers of living water to come out from you.

One is you have to have a tremendous thirst. A person who's really poor in spirit will have a tremendous thirst. Like the beggar, he'll not go away from the gate till he gets what he asks for.

Remember what he read in Proverbs 8? Blessed is the man who watches at my gate and does not leave till he gets what he wants. Sometimes God keeps us waiting. Because he sees, wants to find out how eager we are to get it.

Are you really desperate to get it? Or will you be satisfied with a little less? He tests us. But if he sees that you're not satisfied with anything less than the best. Many people, when they go to pray, they pray for something.

They get some type of blessing and they go away. They're happy. But those who are thirsty saying, we'll say, Lord, I won't be happy with trickles coming out by my hand, bump, bumping, bumping, bumping, little comes out of me.

No, I want it to be like a river in my life. River of blessing to others. Whatever my calling is.

You may not be called to be a preacher. I'm not saying you'll be a preacher, but rivers of life. Who pumps a river? God pumps a river.

You don't have to pump a river. It just flows. And I really believe the true Christian life is described here.

Rivers of living water flowing out from us effortlessly. The Christian life is not meant to be a struggle, struggle, struggle. That's the hand pump.

Struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle, and a few drops come out. That's not the Christian life. That's a sick man trying to walk.

You know how a sick man tries to walk, struggle, struggle, struggle, and he's exhausted and he has to sit down. But a healthy person, think of somebody on the football field. What a healthy person.

It's not enough to have life. Jesus said, I've come to give you life and to give you abundant life. Are you satisfied with life? Oh, I'm born again.

I'm going to heaven. That's life. Think of a man who's lying in a hospital bed, not able to get up.

Is he dead? No, he's not dead. Has he got life? He's got life. But he doesn't have abundant life.

No. Somebody has to help and care for him. And many, many believers are like that.

But think of that young fellow on the football field. He's got abundant life. He doesn't need help from anybody.

He's running around and so capable. To me, that is the contrast between life and abundant life. So people are satisfied.

I'm born again. I'm going to heaven when I die. That's life.

But Jesus said, I've come that you might have abundant life. And that's pictured here. And to have this life, you have to thirst.

If anyone is thirsty for this life, and I'll tell you something, I have not met many people who are thirsty for it. One of the greatest griefs in my life is that there are many people in our CFC churches who don't have a thirst to be filled with the Holy Spirit continuously. They seem to be satisfied with a few trickles that are coming out of their life.

A little bit of understanding. I've got a little bit of blessing here. They're happy with that.

They don't seem to have a desperate thirst saying, Lord, this is not enough. Rivers are not flowing through me. I want rivers of life to flow out of me continuously.

I want you to work in me so that rivers and it says, if you come with that type of thirst, I'm willing to pay any price. I use this example sometimes. Supposing you've been going through a desert for many, many days and you're desperately thirsty because there was no water wherever you wandered around for so many days.

And somebody offers you a glass of water finally. But he says, listen, this is going to cost you 1 million rupees or 1 million durhams. You can have it.

You have to give me all your bank account emptied out and I'll give you this glass of water. And you'll say, hey, I'm not that thirsty. Right now, if I were to offer you.

But if you were dying of thirst because you're in the desert for so many days, you'd say, brother, take my whole savings. Give me that. I'm going to die.

What's the use of all my money? Give it to me. That is the thirst spoken of here. Lord, I'm willing to pay any price.

I'm willing to give up anything you tell me to give up. Not only sin. I'm willing to give up even legitimate things.

I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. See, when God told Abraham to give up his relatives and his family and his house and everything, he did that. That was easy.

He just easily came out to Canaan. But then one day he asked him to give up his son. Take your son and kill him.

That was difficult. It wasn't easy. But that was the test.

Are you willing to give up everything in order to have me? And when Abraham did that, you know what the Lord said to him? You read it in Genesis 22. Abraham, I've seen your attitude. There'll be no limit to how much I will bless you from now on.

Multitudes will be blessed through you. I want to say to every one of you, my brothers and sisters, you are not supposed to live the ordinary Christian life you're living till now. God wants to bless many, many, many people through you.

He wants to make you really poor in spirit, helplessly dependent on him, thirsting, thirsting, thirsting for more than you have. I've received much from the Lord, but God is my witness that even today I thirst for more. I thirst for more.

When I get up in the morning, my cry is, Lord, I want more of you. I want more of you every day. That is the Christian life.

And do you think God will disappoint you if you thirst like that? And if you believe, first and second thing is faith. I believe that my heavenly father will give me what I ask him. So my dear brothers, sisters, let's see God like that and say, Lord, I want to come to you like that.

That's a mark of humility and poverty of spirit. I don't have it, but I want it. I want your life to flow through me.

See, we have so much information in CFC now. If you listen to all the messages, we've got so much. There are people who write notes of these messages.

They've got books and books of notes. What's the use of that if it's not working in our life? So let me urge you to seek God with all your heart and say, Lord, I want a thirst that will never be quenched until I see

rivers of living water flowing out from me. Teach me the secret of being helpless, of coming daily like the beggar to the gate, watching at the gates until God meets me and fills me.

Not a spectacular experience, but one that leads to a constant flow of rivers that flow out through us. May that be true in all of our lives. Thank you for your patience and listening these couple of hours.

God bless you. Let's just pray. Our Heavenly Father, I believe with all my heart there are a number of people right now who listen to this, who are aware of their need, who are desperate and thirsty, and I pray that you give them the faith to believe that the future is going to be much, much better than the past, that a freshness will come into their life, that rivers can flow from them, however dry they may be right now.

I pray that you'll give all of us a greater thirst after you for your life to flow through us, not just knowledge, but your life, and help us to believe, Lord, that you will do that. Thank you for hearing us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I want to say one more thing before I finish. One of the things the Lord has been stressing very strongly in my heart nowadays to preach everywhere is the importance of forgiving everybody. We must have an attitude of always being willing, or not just willing, always forgiving anybody who has harmed us immediately.

As soon as they crucified him, Jesus said, Father, forgive them. That's the example. The worst crime ever committed on the earth, the worst sin ever committed on the earth was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and immediately he said, forgive them.

Whatever people may do to you is much less than that. Immediately say, forgive them. Lord, I forgive them.

Keep that attitude always. It's very important. Then you can pray, Father, forgive me as I have forgiven others.

If otherwise, what you're praying is, Lord, I haven't really forgiven him, so don't forgive me, because you're asking God to forgive you as you have forgiven others. Have you forgiven those others? Or you forgive others, but you keep a grudge against them. Then you're praying, Father, forgive me like that.

Forgive me, but keep a grudge against me. You know what you're praying? Forgive me exactly as I forgive others. Think about that for a moment.

Father, I want you to forgive me in exactly the same way as I have forgiven others. What are you asking the Father to do? To keep a grudge against you? We sometimes are not careful about what we say. Make sure you're forgiving everybody completely, and make sure that you ask forgiveness from those you have wronged.

I tell married couples, be quick to ask forgiveness from each other and quick to forgive others. Forgive each other. Quick to say sorry.

Don't ever hesitate to say, I'm sorry. I think of one elder in CFC Church who was backstabbing so badly. He's been with us for years.

He's backstabbing so badly now that we had to put him out of the church. I've never in my life heard him say, I'm sorry. I've known him for more than 30 years.

It's a mark of a proud man. He's always right. Never apologizes.

So I'm not surprised that he ended up where he did. So be careful. Be quick to forgive others and quick to ask forgiveness and never hesitate to say that you're sorry and mean it to your wife, to your children, to everyone.

If we do something wrong, we have to acknowledge it. That is also a very important part of being poor in spirit. God bless you all.

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

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