

Living By Every Word That God Speaks

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of developing a habit of listening to God daily, highlighting examples from the Bible where Jesus demonstrated the power of listening to the Holy Spirit. It encourages believers to prioritize listening to God's voice, meditating on His word, and responding in faith to His leading, even if it means going out of their way to help just one person in need.

Scripture: Colossians 1:9, Luke 10:42, Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 15:21, Isaiah 50:4

Topics: "Listening to God", "Responding in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

First of all, a verse in Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1, you've heard me a number of times, you probably know I read many paraphrases of Scripture, even those which others think are heretical. Because I don't treat a paraphrase like actual Scripture, I treat a paraphrase like a commentary. There are good Bible commentaries, which are not Scripture, but which can give you an insight into a verse which you wouldn't have otherwise.

So I read the Living Bible, and I think that's about the best paraphrase. And others like J.B. Phillips, Weymouth, Message, etc., which give us a highlight on some words which I wouldn't think of. Here's one of those.

Colossians chapter 1, verse 9. For this reason, since the day we heard of it, we don't cease to pray for you and ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all his spiritual wisdom and understanding. So J.B. Phillips' paraphrase says, in the last part of it, that you may see things as it were from God's point of view. It lightens up that verse to me.

More than to be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding. To see things as it were from, to see things from God's point of view. This whole, you know, we speak so much in the church about walking in the footsteps of Jesus, that in the New Covenant we have an example and not exhortations like Old Covenant.

Old Covenant was laws, exhortations. But in the New Covenant, Jesus said, follow me. So the secret of Jesus' life was this.

And to become like Jesus, basically, means that I look at everything from God's point of view. Because Jesus said, if you see me, you've seen the Father. And whenever Jesus looked at a situation or a person, or the future, or anything in the world, he looked at it from God's point of view.

And we have grown up seeing everything from man's point of view, from childhood, and then we go to school and mingle with so many others in the world. And more and more, we are reinforced in looking at things from man's point of view. We look at money from man's point of view.

Very often we look at people from man's point of view. We can be prejudiced against certain people we don't like, or partial towards certain people we like. It's a battle to renew our mind.

And that is very often the reason why we can be uncertain of God's will. The reason why Jesus could say at the end of his life, 33 and a half years, Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do. I believe the reason was that he, every day in his life, as a man, just listened to what the Father had to say and did that.

One of the classic examples of that is in Luke chapter 4. There are many examples. Luke chapter 4 is one of them. This is the place where he went to Simon Peter's house in verse 38 and healed her.

She was immediately healed, Luke 4, 39. And then, at the sunset, verse 40, and at sunset, the whole village was brought, all those who were sick to him, and instead of doing a mass prayer, he laid his hands on every single one of them and he healed them. That must have gone late into the night.

Demons came out, verse 41. And when day came, even though it was late, he got up early in the morning and went along to some place to say, Father, what should I do? Now, from a human standpoint, when there's a revival like this, so many people healed, demons cast out, it's such a tremendous manifestation of God's power where each one of them, verse 40, healed. Every single person in that crowd healed.

And so many demons cast out. It's the ideal opportunity now, their hearts are so open, to know this is the Son of God, this is the Messiah. To take the opportunity to give them the gospel and tell them about what he had come for, to free people from sin.

That's the human, even a spiritually minded man would think like that. That's the common sense thing to do. But he wanted to find out the Father's will.

See, that to me is an indication of how he did not depend on himself, even in such a situation where one would think the spiritual thing to do is this. And by the time he had finished prayer, people came to him. They were searching for him and tried to keep him from going away from them.

In other words, they tried to persuade him. This is the place where we need you. Think of the open doors here.

He said, no, I have to go somewhere else because I was sent for this purpose. And he went. It looked like a missed opportunity.

Yet, at the end of his life, he said, I finished the work. To have our mind renewed like that, it says in Romans 12, is the secret of finishing the will of God in our life. Romans 12, verse 1 and 2 says about offering our body and our mind.

Therefore, verse 12 means in the light of the wonderful explanation of the gospel in Romans 1 to 11 more clearly than in any other book in the Bible. The gospel is explained in verses 1 to 11. In view of this, therefore, what should you do? First of all, present your body as a living sacrifice.

This is the equivalent of the Old Testament tithe. The tithe in the Old Testament, we present our body to God. And since it's more difficult to present our body, most people just pay the tithe.

But this is what God wants. What is acceptable to God is presenting my body, saying, Lord, here's my eyes and here's my tongue, and I never want to use them for myself anymore. You know, it's easier to pay the tithe than to say that I won't use my eyes and tongue as I like for the next 31 days.

And then the mind, verse 2. Conformity to the world is in our mind, not in our dress. I believe, you know, we must be dressed decently, women must be dressed modestly, but essentially, a woman dresses in a certain way, or even a man dresses in a certain way, because of a certain thing in his mind. It's in mind he has certain values, or he does not have certain values, or she does not have certain values.

That's why the dress comes. So you just change a person on the outside. You haven't really changed them.

A lot of people who dress, women who dress very modestly, are very arrogant in their mind. They're not Christ-like inwardly. It's in the mind that you can be conformed to the world.

So our aim is to change people's thinking in their mind. We are born thinking like worldly people from childhood. The things that are important to people in the world are important to us.

Honor of men, money, pleasure, eating good food, sleeping, and not taking study of the scriptures very seriously, at the bare minimum. And to have that all changed, to be renewed in our mind means to think like God thinks, to see things as it were from God's point of view. Thus I can prove what the perfect will of God is, the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Look at the words used to talk about the will of God. It's good, acceptable, and perfect. And I have to prove it.

It's not like in the Old Testament where from outside God spoke, Abraham or Samuel. No. It's the Holy Spirit of God dwells within.

See, with all the hearing of God's word from the outside, they never could think like God thinks. In a moment God said something and they did it, whether it's Abraham or Samuel or anyone. There was no permanent change in their mind to begin to think like God.

That could only be after the Holy Spirit comes within. It's a tremendous privilege to have the Holy Spirit within and fill us so that we begin to think like God thinks and we look at people the way God looks at them and we judge, discern people in the way God discerns people. We don't condemn people.

That is God's will. But we see people from God's point of view. And that happens only if we have this habit of being open to what God has to say to us every day.

Let's turn to a verse in Habakkuk. See, in the world the difference between a wicked person and a righteous person is one who does a lot of evil things is wicked and one who does good things and go to church and read the Bible and pray and a decent believer is a good person. But the real definition of a

wicked and a righteous person is very different in God's eyes.

Here we read Habakkuk 2 in the Living Bible again. It reads like this in verse 4. The wicked person trusts in himself like these Chaldeans or like the worldly people do. But the righteous person lives by trusting in me.

So the definition of wicked and righteous in God's eyes is not doing wicked things, doing good things. It's a question of who you lean upon. You either lean upon yourself, you're a wicked person, whether you know it or not.

You lean upon God, you're a righteous person. The wicked one trusts in himself like the worldly people do. That's the verse.

I like that paraphrase because I believe in the context of this. That's exactly what it means. But it's the righteous person trusts in me.

And that is faith. So when it says you must live by faith or without faith it is impossible to please God, what it means is that without this life of constant dependence on God, you're not really going to please him. You should do a lot of good things.

And essentially, that is the choice that Adam had in the Garden of Eden. If we have knowledge of good and evil, where you partake, I've got it in me now, I know good and evil now. You see, one would think what's wrong in knowing good and evil? To do evil is evil, is bad.

But in the day you get the knowledge of good and evil, you will die. That's what the Lord told Adam. The day you get it, you will die.

The day you have the knowledge of good and evil resident within yourself, you will die. But if you refuse to have it resident within yourself and you go to the tree of life, which is the life of God, I want to live by your life, not by a store of knowledge of good and evil, which is dependence on myself. That's how the death came.

And life is, say, Lord, I don't want to live depending on myself. I could be wrong. There is a way that, you know, Proverbs 14, 27, is it? It's repeated twice in chapter 16 as well.

There is a way that seems right to a man. You know that verse? But the end is death. If you don't know it, let's know it.

It's good to know these verses. You know, if you are young and you remember these verses, it could be... Oh. Verse 12, 14, 12.

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. And that's repeated in chapter 16 also twice. So there's a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

If I really believe that, there are so many things that appear right to me. It's dangerous to go that way. This is why the person who lives in dependence on God and says, Lord, I have no confidence in myself, is really going to be the one who accomplishes the most in his life.

That's what we see in Jesus in that Peter's hometown. It looks right to me to be here now, because it's such a response. And the door of hearts of people are open.

But the Lord says, no, this is not the place for you. You've got to move on. Because God knows the hearts of people.

He knows exactly where we can fulfill his will for us in the one lifetime we have. And I believe this is how Jesus lived from the time he came to an age of understanding as a little child. That it was not just by an academic knowledge of Scripture, even though he knew the Scriptures well enough to even discuss it with the scribes.

Of course, he must know the Scriptures well. But it's not an academic knowledge. It was listening to God that was the way Jesus lived.

See in Isaiah 50 and verse 4. He knew what to say in each situation. Because he says, the Lord has given me the tongue of a disciple, the father, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with one word. And the secret of it was that every morning he woke up and his ear, he allowed the father to wake up his ear in a year to listen.

As a disciple means to listen in order to obey. So he woke up in the morning and said, OK, I've got to hear now what the father is saying to me. And it's not something we can just say, OK, I've read my Bible today.

Because I found that a lot of times when I read the Bible, I wasn't listening to God necessarily. And a lot of other days when I did not necessarily start with the Bible in the morning, I listened. So, you know, 1400 years, Christians never had a printed Bible.

How could they listen to God? How could you follow the good evangelical rule of reading the Bible in the morning? If that was so important, God would have allowed printing to be discovered about 200 years before Christ. So that everybody would have a Bible. I see the wisdom of God.

I don't know. But I see the wisdom of God to allow printing to be discovered in 1450 or 1470 or something. In other words, we have to be dependent more on the Holy Spirit like the early Christians were.

They didn't have a Bible. Imagine coming to a meeting without a Bible. And the preacher coming without a Bible either.

And many of us have read the Bible so much, but I've sometimes thought, I haven't tried it out yet anywhere. Suppose we come to a meeting like the first century Christians. All of us come without a Bible.

And we're all going to prophesy. And you can't say, see what the verse before this says and see what the verse after this says. All that intellectual stuff is gone.

You have to speak what God spoke to your mind. That is how the early Christians, they did hear a scripture. They would probably go to the synagogue and read scriptures.

There were scrolls, but people were not rich enough to afford scrolls. Each of them individually. But this is how God wanted man.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That's what we see here. He listened.

And when he listened, it says, verse 5, the Lord God opened my ear, and I was not disobedient. And when he was like that, he could face any situation, whether people spat on him or hit him, verse 6. It didn't

matter. Whatever situation he faced after that, verse 7, he knew that his father would help him.

And it didn't matter. Therefore, I've set my face like a flint. And I know I will not be ashamed because I'm going the direction which my father told me to go.

You know, it says in John 7 that he told his brothers, no, I'm not coming to Jerusalem. And five minutes later, he went. This is amazing.

He lived by listening to the father all the time. So, verse 9, the Lord God helped me. And if you fear God, verse 10, you're a servant.

Walk like that. And if you think there's no darkness, there'll be light. But don't, verse 11, don't kindle your own fire.

That means your bright ideas. And encircle yourself because you lie down in torment. It's quite an interesting passage, that whole section from verse 4 to 11, teaching us what we read in Habakkuk.

The righteous man is the one who depends on me and listens to what I have to say. This passage I referred to is one that often comes to my mind in John chapter 7. It says he and his brothers, by the way, you know, didn't believe in him. In verse 5, it says his brothers didn't believe in him.

And they told him, verse 3, leave here and go to Judea so you can see what you're doing. Because it's the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, verse 2, and all the Jews had to go to Jerusalem at that feast. And he said, so Jesus told him, my time is not yet here, verse 6. So your time is always opportune.

You can go wherever you like, whenever you like. That's how man is. But I can't do that.

I can only go to the Feast of Tabernacles or no Feast of Tabernacles. I can go only if the Father tells me to go. Not because of a law says do this.

You can do whatever you like. And so you go first to the feast. I won't go because my time has not fully come.

And so they go. And when his brothers had gone, he himself went up secretly, verse 10. Now doesn't it look like he told them a lie? As it were, I don't want to go with you fellows.

So I'll say I'm not going. Now that's the way a man would think. But I understand it completely.

It's like I often compare this to these police people who have these wireless sets in their car. They can't go. Are you going there? No, I'm not going there.

Ten seconds later they get a command from headquarters, go there. And they go. And it looks as if he's told a lie because he said I'm not coming.

And 15 seconds later he's going there. This is how Jesus lived. But the brothers wouldn't understand that.

When they see him in Jerusalem, they say, why? You said you were not coming here, man. You didn't want to walk with us. But one who listens to God is going to be misunderstood by people who don't listen to God.

I'm sure the brothers misunderstood it. Jesus is always misunderstood. He never, one of the wonderful things I see about Jesus is he never tried to explain himself.

See Mark's Gospel. There are many of these things, you know, little, little things that you see in Scripture where Mark chapter 11, where you see, I mean if your passion in life is to walk as Jesus walked, like it says in 1 John 2.6, that's become more and more the passion of my life, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, which Hebrews 11.40 says is the better thing than pulling down the walls of Jericho and splitting the Red Sea and all the wonderful things, shutting the mouths of lions and all the wonderful things that we wish we could do, which Old Testament people did. It says in the last verse of Hebrews 11, God has provided something better.

That better thing is to look unto Jesus and live as he lived or walk as he walked or run as he ran. And when you see that, then you read the Gospels in a completely different way. You read it as it were between the lines.

You don't read just the facts, which is like children's Sunday school. Jesus did this and did that. But you see behind it all.

For example, you read here, Jesus was going to Jerusalem. Verse 12, he left Bethany and he became hungry. And a distance he saw a fig tree, and he came and found nothing in it, and he cursed it.

May no one eat fruit from you again, verse 14, and this is after listening. Now, if you were to judge Jesus from the outside, you would say he got so upset because there were no figs there. He was hungry, it says, verse 12.

And he came there to see if he would find anything on it. Knowing everything, omniscience. He had to come to the fig tree.

He was hungry. A hundred percent a man, you see there. And seeing, oh, there was no figs.

And then why does he curse it? And it's very interesting what Mark writes. His disciples were listening. And this guy is upset that there are no figs.

He's hungry and there are no figs here. But he was not upset. He says he was trying to teach them a lesson in faith.

You see that next morning, verse 20, they saw the fig tree withered. And he said, Rabbi, this thing you cursed is already withered. He says, have faith in God.

That's the reason why he cursed it. There's always a reason why Jesus does something. And like he says in 1 Corinthians 2, the natural man cannot understand the spiritual man.

Why does a spiritual man do certain things in certain ways? If you are not spiritual, you will not understand. You think he got upset. We are not to judge by what our eyes see or our ears hear.

He wanted to teach them faith. Not only this fig tree. If you say to this mountain, be cast into the sea, it will happen.

So when you pray, believe that you receive them. And when you stand praying, forgive. It's because you don't forgive that you can't have faith very often.

And then your father will forgive. There's a close connection between forgiveness and faith as well. Forgiving others.

So important. Jesus stressed that so much. Make sure you're forgiving everybody.

Dear brothers, I really believe many people don't have enough faith because there's someone they haven't forgiven. Something somebody did is always wrangling in their mind. We can't get rid of the memory of it.

But if I don't have an attitude of forgiveness, I always have a way I look at him or think about him. No wonder I find it difficult to believe in times of stress or in a difficult situation. Pray you believe, but if you want to believe, you better forgive everybody.

So that is what Jesus, this amazing section from verse 22 onwards to 26, came up through the cursing of a victory. So it's not because he was upset. So that's the first thing I want to say.

The second thing is because Jesus was listening. I believe he was prompted by the Holy Spirit to curse the tree. And he did it.

I can't imagine. I mean, I wouldn't be upset if I didn't get what I wanted. I went to the store to buy something and ran out of what I wanted.

I found out the upset. And Jesus was way ahead of us. He's not upset about anything.

His life was a perfect rest. He was prompted by the Father. He cursed the tree.

And then he came to Jerusalem. And listen to this. He entered the temple.

But before this, I want you to see verse 11. Just the previous day, Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple. Now what is happening in the temple? That is mentioned in verse 15.

There were people selling tables of money, sellers of doves. They were all there the previous day as well, verse 11. And it says he looked around at everything.

And it was late. And he went away. He saw all these people selling doves, making money, tables of the money changers.

He looked around. Looking around at everything, verse 11. He went away.

Next morning, he comes back to the same temple, just 24 hours later. And he drives off these people. Overturned the tables of the money changers and seats of doves and wouldn't permit anything and says, My house is called a house of prayer.

You made it a robber's den. Wasn't it a robber's den the previous day as well? He would not act until prompted by the Father, even if he sees something terribly wrong. There is a time and a season to everything, like it says in Ecclesiastes.

See, there are people who can see this. Jesus took a whip and chased out these people making money in the name of religion and say, well, God's called me to have a whip. And there are people who, when they preach, every single Sunday they have a whip.

They say, I'm following Jesus. But remember, Jesus used the whip only two days in three and a half years. So many times he went to the temple.

These guys were there. But only twice in three and a half years. See the proportion.

Three and a half years is about a thousand days. Two days out of a thousand is 0.2%. So he didn't do it every day. I don't know whether you know that Jesus did it twice.

This is towards the end of his life. Because very soon after that he goes to the cross. And the other is in John chapter 2. At the beginning of his ministry, right at the beginning, John chapter 2 is the first miracle is at Cana.

And then he went into the temple. John 2.15. And he made a scourge of cords. And he turned the people out and overturned their tables.

John 2.15. And he said, stop making my father's house a place of business. Verse 16, last part. This is the beginning of his ministry.

But in three and a half years, those fellows had all come back. You know, it's something you cleanse even in a church. And after a while, it's all come back again.

That's why sometimes we need to preach the same message again and again and again. Things that you cleanse once come back again pretty soon. So these guys had come back again at this time.

And Jesus didn't get upset every day and keep on chasing them out. He had a time and a season for everything. But notice one difference.

Here, verse 16, it says, you made my father's house a place of business. And in Mark, these are little things that you can see. In Mark 12 or Mark 11, he says in Mark 11.17, you made my father's house a robber's den.

The house of business, it was bad as it was, verse 16, and had become a robber's den. These people who were doing business in God's house were now become thieves. They had descended to a lower level in those three and a half years.

Well, I'm sure after the crucifixion and resurrection, they went back to that business again. But we see it happening all over Christendom today. The money changers are back in the temple.

But Jesus was led by the Father in all of these things. So many things I see in his life. You know, you're familiar with John 12.

I'm just showing you a few instances like this to show the way he lived, to walk as Jesus walked. Sorry, John 11, you read, he got a message, verse 3, when Lazarus was sick, verse 2. John 11, 2 and 3, Lord, he whom you love is sick. That's all.

They know. He'll understand who it is. And, again, his reaction.

Now, we hear somebody seriously sick. We love. We rush.

Jesus heard this. It's interesting. Jesus heard this.

And he stayed, verse 6. When he heard that he was sick, he stayed two days longer. It's so contrary to human reaction. Somebody I love is sick.

Oh, I better stay here two more days. Don't go yet. And not just two days.

By the time he reached, Lazarus was dead for four days. Because that's because Jesus had to walk all that distance. But anyway, there was a, he moved only when he was prompted by the Father.

Once the two days were over, then in verse 7 he said, okay, let's go to Judea now. He went there. He lived according to a timetable that the Father had made for him.

And that's why his life was so effective. Every day he accomplished exactly what the Father wanted him to do. Because he was listening.

Like you read Isaiah 50, verse 4. In the morning you open my ear. And that doesn't mean, like in the early days when I read it, right in the beginning of my Christian life walk, I thought it means in the early morning I would start reading the Bible. Good.

You know, at each stage we live according to the understanding we have that God leads us further. But then I realized that it was the morning, his ears were open, and it was never shut throughout the day. He was just listening the whole day.

So I realized that it's not just a question of reading the Bible in the morning, but listening throughout the day. It's an attitude of listening while I'm doing all my other work. It's not conscious listening, but conscious listening at times, but unconscious listening most of the time.

It's like breathing. Maybe at times when we do some deep breathing exercises, but otherwise we are breathing unconsciously all the time. And that's how we live.

They say physically man should live by breathing all the time. And spiritually man should live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Again, all the time.

See, that's what Jesus said in the temptation in Matthew 4. It's interesting that these are the first words of his public ministry, Matthew 4, for man shall not live bread alone, but every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. The very first words of his public ministry began with his response to Satan in the time of temptation, saying, this is the most important thing, to hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Not that proceeded 1,500 years ago when Moses wrote Genesis and Numbers and Deuteronomy, but proceeds, present, continuous.

Present continuous means something that's happening all the time. So God is speaking all the time. I may not be listening all the time, but God is speaking all the time.

I use the example of, you know, there are voices right now here. All I need is a radio set here to hear those voices. And I can choose which frequency to turn to, which of these voices in this room I want to listen to.

It's like that. The devil is always speaking. God is always speaking.

And if I'm not tuned into that frequency, I don't hear a thing. I don't hear all the music going on or the sermons going on here right now in the air. But I don't hear anything.

I have to be attuned to that frequency, and I believe that's the picture I get of it. In the midst of a world where there's so many voices, so many things that come into our mind, I can, in the midst of it all, listen to the voice of God if I develop that habit. And if God sees in my heart, Lord, I want to hear you.

It's the greatest longing in my heart to hear you, because according to your word, the first word you spoke in your public ministry, all spiritual life is dependent on listening to the word that is proceeding constantly. I want to live spiritually. I don't want spiritual death to come into any part of my life.

Because if I'm living spiritually, I know I'll be a blessing wherever I go. And I'll be a blessing all the time I'm awake. And these other lives fulfill your purpose.

Because I'm attuned to the voice of God. It doesn't come quickly, but over a period of time, you'll be amazed to see how the Holy Spirit works in you, because he sees in you a great passion to live by the word that's continuously proceeding from God's mouth. Think of how much we have missed in our past years.

Be renewed by the spirit of your mind that you may prove the perfect will of God. It means the more God speaks to you and you obey, the more your mind will begin to think like God thinks. That is to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

It means to think like God thinks. Then I can walk like Jesus walked. I begin to think like God thinks.

Then I can walk like Jesus walked. Go into the temple one day and see all the terrible things happening and do nothing. Come back the next day and do something violent.

And people won't understand it. The best part of some of these things is where, you know, after he... They had seen Jesus come to the temple so many times. And they saw all these things.

It was three and a half years it was going on. And he never does anything. One day he... Do you know he made the whip the first time? The second time, I don't know where he got it from.

But in John chapter 2 it says he sat down and made a whip. And he's telling the disciples, get a little cords, a few cords together. They're wondering what he wants.

He sits down there and makes a whip. If you didn't notice that, I'm going to show it to you. These are little, little things.

This is John chapter 2, verse 15. He made a scourge of cords. I don't know where the disciples went and got all those cords from.

But I think they got it. And he sits down there and twists it all together. And they're wondering what in the world he's doing.

And he chases these people out. I don't think he whipped the people. He whipped the sheep and the oxen.

Turned the tables. And the best part of it, at the end of it, is he doesn't tell his disciples, hey, fellas, I didn't lose my temper. I was just prompted by God to do it.

You know, what a lust there is for us to explain to people, I didn't lose my temper there. Just in case you misunderstand, and I want to preserve my testimony before you do it. He couldn't care less for the

testimony of the disciples.

They can think what they like. That's just freedom from the opinion of the people he loved the most. I don't know.

If you know me, you will never misunderstand what I do. So many times like that, you know, once he told his disciples, how long shall I be with you people of unbelief? But afterwards he says, he doesn't say, by the way, I didn't lose my temper. I just wanted to speak something strongly to you.

I really like that. I've learned a few lessons from there myself, through walking with Jesus, what this tremendous desire to explain, lest people think less of me spiritually than they should think. They should think I'm a godly man, and I don't want that opinion to go away, so I don't have to explain so much.

You get into that habit of being a slave to men. But Jesus was so free from that. I love that.

He listened and he spoke. To me, that is actually the message of the first page of the Bible. Genesis 1. What is the message in the first page of the Bible? Let me spiritually read chapter 1 in a spiritual meaning.

In the beginning, God created man perfect. But the devil came in and messed up his life, and man lost the shape of God. Man became empty, verse 2. Man became dark.

But God didn't give up on man. The Holy Spirit immediately started working on this man because God wanted to restore him to his image. And not just the Holy Spirit, but God's word.

Man should live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. And so God speaks. And the first thing he does is bring light.

And 2 Corinthians 4.6 says that is indicating that Christ comes into our life. We're born again. And God examines it, and he says, that's good.

And then, of course, immediately you have to separate the light from the darkness. This born-again person has to be separated from all the be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And what fellowship is like? The darkness is separating himself from everything that's contrary to God's light that he finds in his life.

That is verse 4. Because the light is good, God separated the light from the darkness. He didn't want a sort of a mixture of light and darkness. It's like a dusk type of situation.

He wanted clear light. And if you separate the light from the darkness, it becomes like that. And the next day, God speaks again.

And again, every day, at the end of the day, it says God examined it. Verse 12, God saw it was good. God saw it was good.

Verse 18, he speaks every day. That is the message I get from the Bible. Once God has picked me up from the mess of verse 2, allows the Holy Spirit to move upon me, and speaks God's word.

It's two things, the Holy Spirit and God's word. The Holy Spirit, verse 2. God's word, verse 3. There's two things, and it's always working every day. I'm slowly changed.

Not suddenly. Day by day by day, I'm renewed, like Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4, 16. Our outward man decays day by day, but our inward man is renewed day by day.

And I read that verse in 2 Corinthians 4, 16. I am reminded of Genesis 1, where the renewal of that physical earth, which is corrupted by the fall of Satan, between verse 1 and 2, took place day by day by day. By what? By earth listened to the word of God every day.

And every day a miracle took place. That's the other message I get there. That if I listen to God's word, something miraculous will happen.

Not what the world calls a miracle. It doesn't have to be external. Something within.

A miracle within. Every day. It's an amazing passage.

There's a lot you can meditate on right there in Genesis chapter 1. And if I keep listening to it every day, the end of it is, I come to a life of rest. Genesis 2, verse 2. The final end is, you know, God wants my life to be one of rest. To enter into the rest of God.

It says in Hebrews 4, he who believes has entered into rest. Do you know that God's will for you is that you live a life of rest all the time, no matter what happens around you. It's like Jesus sleeping on a pillow in the boat when there's a storm around him.

It's a perfect picture of how God wants us to live on this earth. There's storms around. But if I listen and listen and listen, I will enter into rest.

That's what I learned from Genesis 1 and 2. And if Adam had continued listening on the eighth day, and Eve had continued listening on the eighth day, they wouldn't have gotten the other tree of knowledge about any of it. But they stopped listening. They were supposed to listen because it was their first day.

For them it was the second day when they went into Eden. But God kept them that first day of their life with him. He said, hey, you've got to listen to me.

Spend this day listening to me. If you work in the garden, you can't wait. The first day after man was created, he was in a saddle.

There's a difference between law and grace. In the law, it says six days you shall work, and the seventh day you shall rest. Under grace, God says, you rest the first day, like Adam, and then go and work six days.

So I learned something from there, that in the new covenant, I have to come to rest first, and then go to work, because I'm following God's original plan for Adam. It's wonderful. There's so many things in Scripture.

I want to see it. It's like the verse that I've often thought of, Proverbs 25, and verse 2. It's the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter. There are a lot of things concealed in Scripture.

And we are kings in Christ, kings and priests. And it's the glory of God to conceal these things in Scripture. They're not on the surface.

You probably saw some things today which are not on the surface. But it's the glory of the king to go and search it out. I believe there are a lot of good things you can get on the surface too, like on the earth, you know, on the surface of the earth, there are apples and oranges and wheat and rice and everything.

But if you go deeper, you get gold and diamonds and a whole lot of other things which are thousands of times more expensive than the apples and oranges you get on the surface. It's like that. I see the Bible like that.

You can get a lot of things on the surface. People are taken up with, Jesus healed the sick, and Jesus did this. That's good.

But a lot of people talk so much about that. There's no healing in their ministry. They're just fooling everybody.

But if you go into the depth of Scripture, you see the principles by which Jesus lived. Then you live a fulfilled life instead of a frustrated life. Otherwise, you pursue after things that God never wants you to do.

So, this habit of listening, I find always, always, always. When I was a very young Christian, soon after I was baptized in 1961, when I was 21 years old, and one of the first things God spoke to me after that was from Luke chapter 10. And I'm very thankful that I heard it way back at the beginning of my Christian life.

It's the story of verse 38 to 42. Martha and Mary know that story. That Martha, as soon as Jesus came, began to go to the kitchen.

It says in verse 40, she was distracted with all her preparations. Or as the margin says, with much work. Distracted with much service.

That's what the margin of my Bible says in Luke 10. And, you know, you can do much service for God and be distracted. Distracted from what? Distracted from the most important thing, which is to listen to what he is trying to tell you.

And we can find a satisfaction. I find a lot of Christians like this. I found this in CFC Bangalore, too.

People who are so helpful after Sunday to clear up things and to do so many things at a conference time, especially when a lot of work has to be done. They do this, they do that. They are distracted with much service, not listening to God in those things.

See, I've got to do this, I've got to do this. Of course, you've got to do it. But in the midst of it all, if I am not listening, I missed out the most important thing.

And if I listen, it doesn't mean I'll do less. In fact, I'll do things more efficiently. And actually, I'll do more for God if I listen first.

I'll listen all the time. And the other thing about distraction is you compare yourself with others and you feel that others are not working as hard as you are. And you begin to complain.

When you listen to God, I'll tell you, you don't complain about others. That's one of the wonderful things. You'll never do what Martha did.

Go to Jesus and say, look at this sister of mine. She's done comparing herself with others. I'm working so hard and this one's not working so hard.

All that is the result of not listening. If you're listening to the Lord, you don't have that complaint. You just do what the Lord tells you to do and you're not worried whether other people are doing things or not.

Sometimes you do what other people are supposed to do. You just do that work and you don't think it's a great thing that you help somebody out. I remember years ago in the early days, we had just built our first building in 1981 or 82.

It's going back 35 years. We were a small group of stays in to clean up the hall and all. We had a lot of different people had to do different things on a particular day of the week.

The guy who was supposed to clean the toilets didn't turn up. I was wondering where he was. Why didn't he come? The Lord said, why are you waiting for somebody? Why don't you go and do it yourself? That's the day the Lord said to me, my house is your house.

You wait for somebody to come to your house to flush the toilet or clean the house? Do you really think this is somebody else's house? Treat my house as your house. I said, Lord, I'll do that. From now on, your house is my house.

There's no difference. It's all the same. I'm not doing a special favor by cleaning the toilet in my house.

I'm not waiting for anybody else from the church to come and clean the toilet in my house. Why should I wait for anybody else to do something? If somebody's not there, I just do it myself. I don't think I've done a great task if I clean up my house.

I don't think I've done a great task if I did something and not much. No, there's no self-congratulation at the end of the day. I did something.

Some of these other fellows didn't turn up, but I turned up. That's the thing that destroys us, this comparison of others. This Martha, what service, what service? Unrest, unrest, unrest.

I come to Jesus and the Lord said, Martha, you're bothered about so many things. Martha could have said, Lord, I'm cooking for you. I'm not cooking for myself.

But you shouldn't be cooking for me if you're distracted and worried and complaining and grumbling. That's not the way to serve me. I don't want that service.

I'd rather go hungry. Let's fast, rather than you getting all distracted and upset. I don't want it.

You see, the Lord's values are so different from our human values. Food is not the most important thing for Him. If I'm going to be at unrest, my service for Him is not what He wants.

Only one thing is necessary, verse 42. This is the word the Lord spoke to me years ago, soon after my baptism. And that is what Mary has chosen.

What she did was listen, verse 39. Sitting at the Lord's feet, apparently doing nothing. Listening.

And when you read about Jesus going and spending hours in prayer, early morning and things like that, He wasn't telling, I don't believe He was talking to the Father. He was listening to the Father. Much more

than talking to most people.

Prayer is telling God this, this, this, this. It's like a laundry list, or a shopping list, rather. This is all I want.

But that's not what prayer is meant to be. And the way God spoke to my heart at that time, and even later, was, if I'm speaking to somebody on a telephone, the other person is a very godly man, much more senior to me, I will listen more than I speak. But if the other person is much younger than me, I will speak more than I listen.

So, how is it that God is at the other end? Ask yourself. Do you listen more than you speak? Or you feel you've got to tell God a few things, which you may not know. Who is at the other end of the phone? Is it someone younger than you? If I hear you on a phone for one hour, I can tell you who is at the other end of the phone.

Whether he's younger than you or older than you. Whether he's a much more godly person at the other end or a young brother. And if I can hear you pray, I can hear, I can tell you whether you believe God younger than you or older than you.

So I, then I understood these words like, pray without ceasing. What it really meant. I used to, as a young Christian, I used to read about these great men of God.

Prayed for two hours, four hours. I used to get discouraged. I was never encouraged reading that.

Somebody prayed all night. I was young, 21, 22 years old, and I said, I'm going to pray all night. So, I was on the ship, and I knelt down.

Because I was an officer, I had a cabin to myself. I knelt down by my bed. Nine o'clock, I'm going to pray all night.

I pray and pray and pray. It's only 9.30. It never seemed to get, every other day, the morning seemed to come pretty quickly. I slept through it.

This day, it came so slowly. Finally, I made it on my knees after six o'clock in the morning. And I had accomplished it.

What did I get? Half the time, I was sleeping, waking myself up. I can say I prayed all night. To impress whom? Myself.

Or somebody else, if I had foolishly testified about it. God was not impressed. I believe what I needed to learn was to listen, the habit of listening.

When you are listening and listening and listening, there are many times when you have to spend more time listening. Even sometimes, you wake up in the middle of the night, and you listen. So, there is where I discovered, and what I have preached, is true prayer.

So, I'm not trying to get into the Guinness Book of Records, of how long I prayed, or any such thing. People ask me, how long do you pray, Brother Zach? And I say, you want me to disobey Matthew 6? It says you shouldn't tell people to pray. And secondly, if you want an answer, the Bible says, Jesus said in Matthew 18, pray always.

And 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 17 and 18 says, pray without ceasing. So, I realized that, how in the world am I going to pray without ceasing? How in the world am I going to pray always? There are only two verses that tell us how long we have to pray for. There are no other verses in the whole Bible to tell us how long we have to pray for.

Luke 18, 1 and 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 17 and 18, pray without ceasing. So, then I examined my own life, and what's the thing I do 24 hours without ceasing? It's breathing. So, I learned from that, that praying must be like breathing.

And most of it is listening. I'm trying to get spiritual oxygen into my system and to get rid of all the spiritual carbon dioxide and other gases from my system. Eliminate all that and get pure oxygen.

That's prayer. Because I thought of, okay, we pray for people, and I do. You know, when somebody is sick, you pray for them.

To me, it is like God giving me the privilege of working with Him in something I'm doing. I'll tell you honestly that when I go anywhere, I write to all the others to pray for me. I'm going to this country, I'm going to this country, I'm going here, please pray for me.

Because I believe there is a power in prayer. It's not that I despise it. There are specific things we need to pray for.

All we need to pray for are the Christians in different churches. There are different complicated situations we have to pray for. We've got to bind Satan's activities.

Resist Satan in prayer as well. And ask God for wisdom in certain situations. So I'm not saying that we don't speak to God.

We do. But we must speak knowing that God already knows, first of all. We're not going to inform God about anything that He doesn't know.

I need to remember that. I don't have to tell God something like, in case you didn't know God, this is happening here. You've got to do something.

No. He knows everything. So I see my telling God and asking Him to do things like God giving me the privilege of doing a little thing to show that I work with Him.

It's like, okay, we've got to feed these 5,000 men and many women and children, 10,000 people. I can just do it by creating bread and fish from nothing. But I won't do it like that.

The Lord says, give me whatever you have. Give me your 5,000 fish and then we'll feed the multitude. It's always like that.

Every miracle is almost like that. A number of miracles. You pour the water into the water pots.

I'll turn it into wine. I'll do the 99% difficult part. You do something.

Otherwise Jesus could have filled those water pots with wine without any water in it at all. Sure. Why didn't He do it that way? Then it would be all His work.

But He came on earth to make us co-workers with Him. So that's the purpose of praying with God. We understand these things.

We know how to pray correctly. We are working with God, but it's a very small part we do. Roll the stone away.

I'll raise the dead. That part I'll do. Jesus could have rolled the stone away with one word.

Why does He ask them to roll the stone away? You do the easy part. I'll do the difficult part. I'll raise the dead.

And after He raised from the dead, He still says, you've got one more thing to do. Take away all this bandage which is around Lazarus. You do the easy part.

But He does want us to do something so that we have the privilege of being co-workers with Him. I see the tremendous lesson there in my serving God. There's a small part I have to do.

It's like the illustration I use. I want to carry my coffee table, small coffee table to the next room. And my little three-year-old son says, Dad, I want to help you.

I won't say, get away. You're going to be a nuisance. You'll cause more problems.

No, I say, sure. Hold that corner of the table. And he holds the corner of the table.

It's not really taking any weight. He has such a thrill that he goes and tells Mom, you know, Mom, Dad and I carry the table to the other room. That's the thing God wants.

We are co-workers with Him. What are we doing? We are holding the corner of the table. That's all we're doing in all the so-called work we're doing for God.

And that's the right way to serve Him. So it all comes out in this habit of listening. One thing is needful.

Do I really believe Luke 10, 42? It's not my service. My service will be affected if I listen. It's not that Mary didn't do anything.

We read in John chapter 12, you know, that she broke the alabaster vial of ointment and the old perfume filled the whole house. So you can have a service that blesses everybody. And Jesus said what this woman has done will be spoken around the world.

For 2,000 years people have been talking about what Mary did. Which is not such a fantastic service in terms of how many souls were saved, but the order of Christ filled the whole room. Because she had the habit of listening.

So I see a lot of spiritual lessons from this. What that good part, Luke 10, 42, where Mary has chosen will not be taken away from her. And many, many times, you know, sometimes I've said, Lord, today is my birthday.

On my birthday. I said, Lord, do you have a word for me? One thing is needful. A few years later I asked the Lord, Lord, do you have a word for me on my birthday? One thing is needful.

So the Lord has reminded me of that so many times in these 57 years since I took my baptism. And it's a wonderful thing. I want to pass on to you.

Man shall not live by bread alone or here by activity or even doing God's work. It's by listening first. Sit at his feet and listen.

You'll accomplish a lot more because the little that you do. Otherwise it's like Philip saying, Lord, 200 pennies of money cannot feed these 10,000 people. And you'll try to do it.

And then each person will get a little crumb. But if you do it God's way, there's 12 baskets left over at the end of it all. Everybody's got plenty and filled in.

I hope you know why he left 12 baskets at the end. So that he could reward the 12 disciples to take something home for serving. Each of you take a basket home.

It wasn't, by the way, it wasn't leftovers. They were, it wasn't sort of fragments that people ate and threw away. It's actual food that was good bread and fish that had not yet been distributed.

Everybody was satisfied. So each disciple could take a basket home to his family. I often say that to people who are serving the Lord.

Remember this, my brothers and sisters, that if you serve God, you'll find at the end of the day God has got a basket for your family. He will never let you down. Anyone who serves God, God takes care of his family abundantly.

They get more than what you distribute. It's wonderful to see these things in Scripture. I want to show you another passage now in Deuteronomy chapter 8. Deuteronomy chapter 8. At the end of the 40 years of wandering, Moses tells the Israelites, you must remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these 40 years to humble you, testing you to know whether you'll keep his commandments or not.

And how did he humble you in these 40 years? By allowing you to be hungry and feeding you with manna which you did not know. Why did he feed you with manna every day? To teach you one lesson. That man, verse 3, does not live by bread alone.

But that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. You had to go every morning and get the manna. That was to teach you that early in the morning you must allow God to open your ears to listen.

Because then only you can live. Man shall live. You guys wouldn't be living in the wilderness.

You would have perished in the wilderness if you hadn't got that manna every day. So you had to go out. And it says they had to do it before the sun became hot because then it would all melt.

They wouldn't get it. It's somewhere else in scripture. It says that.

So they had to be diligent. Otherwise they'd starve. Their families would starve.

So they had to go out and get it. And to teach manna. And that was the food for the whole day.

They lived on that. There was no manna coming in the afternoon. It was in the morning.

So the whole day it was three meals they had. And it was not just, you know, you pick it up and eat it. It's Numbers 11.

Someone pointed it out to me the other day. Which is Numbers 11 verse 7. The manna was like coriander seed. And its appearance was like costly stone, precious stone.

Shiny. And the people would go out and gather it. And look at the amount of work they had to do before they could eat it.

Grind it between two millstones. Or beat it in the mortar. Boil it in the pot.

And make cakes with it. So it wasn't just pick it up and eat it. Share it with everybody.

It's like you buy wheat from the market in India. Grind it, grind it and make it. Powdered wheat and then you make bread.

Something like that here. So there was a lot of work before it became food. So that's what we got to do when we listen to.

When I listen to God, I have to meditate on what he said to me. Blessed is the man who meditates on God's word. Day and night.

You know, let's chew on it. Work hard to grind this and powder it and cook it. And then I can eat it.

So, in other words, there's a lot of work I have to do with what I've heard. From God. To let it sink into my system.

It's not like a command. Go there, go here. The person who is just listening and does, may never become like God.

He just obeys the command. But God is interested in transforming me into his likeness. You know what we read in Romans 12, if you remember.

Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So the renewing of our mind comes through listening to God every day. And that leads to transformation of our character into the likeness of Christ.

It's something like food we eat. The food I eat does not make my body strong. There's a lot of process going on inside the body with that food over a period of hours.

Before the bread, the curry, everything is converted into flesh and blood and bones. There's a process, and that's something I have to do with God's word as well. So listening to God's word every day.

The more I've seen again about the way Jesus walked, you know, to see certain instances where I see, because of this listening habit, one or two instances which I've mentioned before as well, Luke 19. You read that, you know the story of Zacchaeus who climbed up on a tree. And Jesus was going with a huge crowd down the road.

But because he was in this habit of constant touch with the Holy Spirit, as he goes down the road, the Holy Spirit says, stop. And he stops. Look up in the tree.

Jesus was a man, remember, 100% like us. We can walk like he walked. There's a man sitting there.

And just by the way, his name is Zacchaeus. It's amazing what God can do through us if we listen. We need to go to his house.

Never mind what the people say. The people all began to say, verse 7, he's gone to the house of a sinner. There was a man who got salvation in his house that day.

Salvation has come to this house, verse 9. Imagine if he hadn't stopped. Zacchaeus was so reserved, he wouldn't go up to his house. He said, go to hell.

I said, Lord, I don't want to miss out on anybody. I'm supposed to draw to you. Because I was too lazy to listen to you.

I don't want that to happen. It probably happened a lot in my past life. But I want to live listening.

As somebody who has to be blessed through you. You don't have to be a great Bible scholar to do that. You just have to listen.

But it's a habit. I need to be gripped by it. One thing is needful, brothers.

Mary has chosen that book. It will not be taken away. It won't be taken away from you also.

You develop this habit of listening, listening, listening. I think of another place. It's Matthew 15.

Here we read that Jesus was in Galilee. But all of a sudden, you know, he was speaking to Peter in verse 15, Matthew 15, 15. Explaining a certain parable about, you know, you won't get defiled by what you eat, but what comes out of your mouth.

That's what defiles you. And at the end of that, having said all that in verse 19 and 20, it says, Jesus and his disciples went away from there. From Galilee to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

And when I read that, I stop and I go to the back of my Bible. And I say, okay, let me see how far is Tyre and Sidon from Galilee. And I say, wow.

That was a number of miles that he had to walk to go to Tyre and Sidon. About 70 miles from the Sea of Galilee. Okay.

So in a little sentence like that, I see a lot of things happening. How long does it take to walk 70 miles? Two, three miles an hour? 20, 30 hours? Even if you walk 10 hours a day? Remember, no chariot. It took three days.

So what you read there is he walked three days. And I learned something from that just by looking at a map. If you read the scriptures really passionately longing to walk as Jesus walked, a lot of things the Lord has shown you.

He walked three days to go to Tyre and Sidon. Because he was prompted by the Holy Spirit. Now you've got to go to Tyre and Sidon.

That's about the only time he went outside Israel. He often said, I've been sent only to the Lordship of Israel. He said that later on.

But he went outside Israel. And for one woman, and that woman was a Canaanite. One of those Canaanites who were not killed by the Israelites 1,500 years earlier.

They were supposed to finish off all the Canaanites. But they were not all killed. But this Canaanite woman survived and descended as one of those who were not killed.

And she said, have mercy, Lord Son of David. Somehow she knew, this is the Son of David. She's a Canaanite.

She's not an Israelite. My daughter is cruelly dismissed. We did not answer a word.

And the disciples were all there. I said, send her away. She's just shouting at us.

And he said, no. I have been sent only, verse 24, to the Lordship of the House of Israel. Then why in the world have you come to Tyre and Sinai? Prompted by the Holy Spirit.

The natural man does not understand the spirit of the Lord. And he says, Lord, help me. And he says, I can't take the children's bread and give it to the dogs.

It looks as if it's so rude to call a woman a dog. There was the leading of the Holy Spirit even there. And she said, yes, Lord.

And the dogs hit with the trumps. And this is the second time I see Jesus telling someone their faith is great. It is since the Roman centurion.

He never said it to his disciples, even once. The people who had studied the Bible, who had heard the Bible from childhood, they never had faith. But these two people who had never read the Bible, the Roman centurion and the Sarah Phoenician woman, they had faith.

It's not by a lot of Bible study and Bible knowledge that we have faith. It's an attitude of the heart. People who don't know the Bible as much, if you know the Bible, 1% of you may have more faith than me.

That's what I see here. And great is your faith. It was for this reason Jesus called her a dog so that she would respond with that.

I believe, you know, Jesus spoke in the prompting of the Holy Spirit. And even that may look like something just said it like that. No.

He said it under the prompting of the Holy Spirit. As much as he told the Pharisees he was without sin, cast the first stone and the woman caught in adultery, here prompted by the Holy Spirit to say, no, I can't give this to the dogs. And then there will be a response which he will show you and show the disciples.

He was wanting the disciples to see that. To see the faith this woman has. And daughter was healed at once.

And what did he do next? What did he do next? He finished one healing. And he walked 70 miles back, verse 29. He went back to the Sea of Galilee.

As I see he walked six days, three days up, three days down, to help one person. I said, Lord, make me like that. That I'll go six days to help one person.

That I don't count my ministry in terms of statistics. How many people did you reach? With all that effort, one person. And at the end of it, he'll say in John 17, Father, I finished the work you gave me to do.

He never counted by statistics. Sometimes you can think, oh, I wish I could do like that. Great preacher who reaches so many people.

And I tell you honestly, I have absolutely no desire. I want to reach the one here and the one there and the one in the other place. You know, we get so many e-mails at CFC.

Oh, poor, unknown people. Many of them from many other churches whose pastors have no time for them. Because they are poor.

They are not the great contributors to the church. They have serious problems. They're married.

They have children who are sick. And they write to CFC. And I read it, and I say, I don't answer all those e-mails.

There are many fellow elders, senior elders who answer many of them. But I read almost all of them. And I say, boy, what a needy place the world is.

They don't know whom to turn. I often think of that verse which Jesus said in Matthew 9, that Jesus felt compassion in verse 36. Because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

That's exactly how I felt when I get all these e-mails. And I read them. That's one of the reasons many times I go to bed at midnight.

Most of the time, responding to people. Not just the elders, but different people with problems. And you know, I think it's a message paraphrase.

It says, verse 36, people have broken apart. They've broken apart to see people like sheep without anybody to guide them. I feel a lot of Christians today sitting in many churches where pastors are only interested in their money and urging them to give more and more money.

They're like sheep without a shepherd. And you don't have to be a pastor or a full-time worker to be a shepherd. You've just got to have a heart like Jesus.

A heart that breaks when you see the lost condition of people around you. Eyes that are open to see what's happening. A ear that's open to listen to what God is saying.

It will break your heart as well. And the Lord says, the harvest is plentiful for the workers of Judah. He beseeched the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.

And when they did that, in the next verse it says, Jesus summoned the twelve disciples and sent them out. He was in need of people. So this is the way God wants these things are written for our instruction.

All scripture is given for us to become perfect. It says in 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17, that the man of God may be instructed in the way of righteousness and corrected so that we become perfect. And so that we can help the needy people in the world around us.

So, I pray it will be like that for all of us. One of the byproducts of this I found in my life is that, you know, we read in Isaiah 50 verse 4. Let's turn back to that and conclude with that. Isaiah 50, and you listen.

The result of listening. Isaiah 50 verse 4. He awakens me morning by morning. Awakens my ear, the last part of verse 4, to listen.

The result of it is, verse 4, the first part, you get a tongue of a disciple to sustain the weary people you meet with a word. Not necessarily with a long message. I don't condemn you.

Go and sin no more. That's it. A word.

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. Give to God what's God's. That's it.

He was without sin for the first time. That's more than a big one-hour message. And to sustain people in the world.

Be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven. So, I see that you have a word.

This becomes a habit in your life. You have a word for needy people all the time. All the time.

Continuously. In your heart. And not in a day or two.

But if you develop the habit from the time you're young, maybe 20 years from now, with the Lord's grace, not just 20 years, but increasingly, your life will become very effective. To have a word for everybody. Not just to be a popular person who cracks jokes and makes fun.

As they say, the life of the party. Not that type of stuff, but to have a word that sustains the weary one. The world is full of weary people.

You can sustain them by a word that you have heard from God. Because you've developed this habit. So it's a wonderful thing.

A wonderful habit to develop. Thank you, Father, for the amazing things that are in your scriptures. We pray like this psalmist.

Open my eyes. That I may behold wondrous things. Come to the Lord.

Open our eyes to see these wondrous things in the world. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/5CzxydoBvQI.mp4>

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