

Love God And He Will Provide Your Needs

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God over money, highlighting the need to trust in God's provision and seek His kingdom first. It challenges listeners to examine their hearts, avoid the love of money, and focus on accumulating wisdom, knowledge, and joy in their lives. The speaker shares personal testimonies of God's faithfulness in providing for his needs without borrowing or accumulating debt, encouraging a lifestyle of simplicity and trust in God's provision.

Scripture: Matthew 6:24, Ecclesiastes 2:26, Luke 16:13, Matthew 6:33, 1 Timothy 6:10, Philippians 4:19, Proverbs 30:8, Hebrews 13:5, 1 Timothy 6:17

Topics: "Trust in God's Provision", "Prioritizing God over Money"

Description

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Transcript

Brother Victor came from a Hindu family. Many years ago, many many years ago, somebody told me that if you want to be a good Bible teacher, you must grow up in a Christian home. People who come from Hindu homes become evangelists.

You see how God has helped our brother to teach the Word of God so clearly. Do you think that is something that comes just by the Holy Spirit coming upon you? I don't know his private life, but when I listen to a man, I can discern how much he has studied the Bible, and I find most preachers are lazy. Most Christians are lazy.

They don't study the Bible, and they expect to grow spiritually. They neglect the one book God has given us. I've heard Brother Victor many times.

It's always so refreshing every single time, and I praise God that God raises up such brothers in our church. I pray there'll be many more. There are many others who've been in the church longer than him, who are more educated than him, who can speak English.

Why is God not able to use you? He's not a full-time worker. He's a teacher. He's earned his own living.

He lives in a very small house. He's got four sons who've grown up now following the Lord. I pray there'll be many more like him in our midst.

Dear brothers, don't come to the church just to get a benefit. Say, Lord, I want to be useful to you, and I'll tell you, you will never be useful to God if you're not diligent in your study of the Word. That's one of the most important things.

Don't have a casual understanding of the Word of God. If you can read English, I want to ask you whether you have read the commentary we have through the Bible. I even told people, if you can't afford the cost of it, come to me.

I'll give it to you at whatever you can afford. We're not interested in money. We are not interested in making money in this church.

Never been that. Every single one of our books is on the internet. You can listen to it all freely.

We don't operate our ministry like all these other Christian ministries, where everything is for money. They won't put their books on the internet, because then nobody will buy them. They are more interested in profit.

They have to pay royalty to the authors. This is where Christendom has gone. The love of many will become cold, because iniquity will abound, because the love of money will increase.

Remember this. We are living in that time. If you want to endure to the end, make sure you associate with people who do not love money.

There are so many Christian groups I know personally, and that I've studied about, that started out in great simplicity, zeal, pursuing holiness, wanting to overcome sin, and all that. I mean, from the time of John Wesley, holiness has been preached by many, many groups, but in most cases, in almost every case I've seen as I've studied them, that downfall was money. They became rich.

They pursued after wealth. That became the big thing. They had to urge people in their churches, give money, give money, give money.

Is that following in Jesus' footsteps? To say, give money, give money, give money? When did Jesus say that? He said, give it to the poor, don't give me anything. Where did Paul say that? And yet, every group that I know of in Christendom, that I know of, there may be some groups I don't know, but every single group that I know of, they urge their people, come on, give money, give money, give money, and that proves to me that is not a work of God. Maybe it was when it started, in the days of John Wesley and all, but not today.

Beware of that. And I'll tell you why, because, you know, we say endure in love until the end. How can I endure in love for Jesus until the end? There's one competitor, you know, like we read of the bride and the harlot.

The bride is the church and Christ wants the love of the bride exclusively for himself. That's not wrong. All of you who are married, you want the love of your wife only for yourself.

You don't even want your wife to admire another man. Leave alone, go with another man, that's serious. You don't want your wife to look longingly at another man and say, I wish I'd married him.

That is a faithful bride. But if you have a wife who is looking at others and wishing I were married to him, that's a harlot. She may be married to you, but she's got the spirit of a prostitute.

The spirit of the bride is one who's loyal to you. Now apply that to Christ and money in the world. If one is devoted to Christ, Lord, you're everything to me.

There will be no attraction to money. We use it. It won't be attracted.

Now I'll show you this verse. It's very, very important. How shall we preserve ourselves in love? Jesus said in Luke chapter 16, Luke 16 and verse 13.

No servant, this is a very important verse and I'll tell you something, you will almost never hear anybody preach on this verse in the rest of Christendom and explain it the way I'm going to explain to you now. No servant can serve two masters and the two masters are not God and Satan. Nobody imagines that they can serve God and Satan.

The two masters are God and wealth. Read verse 13. See what Jesus said.

There are only two masters. He said not three. Satan is the master for many people in the world, but for a Christian.

He's talking about those who are his disciples. There are only two masters challenging a Christian. You Christians will never serve the devil.

Impossible. But it's very possible that you can try to serve God and money at the same time and it says no servant can serve two masters because he will hate one and love the other. It's not that you love one more than the other.

It's not saying I love God more than money. That sounds so spiritual. Yes, I love Jesus much more than I love money.

It's like a wife telling her husband, I love that man but I love you more. Would you be happy with that, you husbands? You ask your wife, do you love that man also? Yes, I love him also. I love you more.

Harlot, prostitute. You cannot say I love money but I love Jesus more. And all of you who are living like that, I want to say to you in Jesus name, you got the spirit of the harlot.

You won't hear that in another church because they want your money. We don't want it. 45 years in all are nearly a hundred churches.

We have never once taken an offering. Not once in any church. Not in the poorest villages, not in the richest cities.

I'll tell you why. Because we look unto Jesus and run the race and I never see Jesus taking an offering, not even once. I never see Paul passing a bag around saying please support me.

You say then how would the churches continue? Seek the kingdom of God first and these other things will be added to you and we have proved that. I remember when I left the Navy I said Lord I want to prove. I earned a lot of money in the Navy.

I was a very very highly paid naval officer but when I left I gave all my entire life savings away for God's work and started God's work with zero in my bank account and I said I want to prove if God can take care of me with a zero bank account and trust God and somebody may give me a gift. But I was working mostly among students and villages people not among the rich churches and the message I preached was not appealing to all the big denominations. So I got a little bit here and there.

My wife and I when we were married first three four years we were so poor, so poor that we could not rent a house. I had to live in one room in my father's house which he kindly gave us. Not out of choice.

Nobody likes to live with their father-in-law or parents house. What to do when you don't have money what do you do? But I said Lord I'll never love money. If you go let me go through the struggle.

I don't know why you're letting me go this way. It's difficult for my wife but what to do we're going to be faithful. We will not send letters to other places sending reports of our work and all that to get money.

I'll never do it. God tested me for four years and I proved in those years and subsequent years also that he's faithful. Tested me through years to see when you're in need will you go and tell somebody? Will you write a letter describing your work to people so that they'll support you? No.

And then after I proved it in my life we got married. I proved it in my family. Then we could have a church.

Now I proved it in my life. I proved it in my family with two or three children. Now I want to prove it in a church that the same principle will work in a church.

You cannot serve God and money. I proved in my life I can serve God and not bother about money he provides for me. I couldn't buy whatever I wanted.

When my shirt collar tore my wife would remove the collar, turn it, invert it and use the other side of the collar. That's the type of shirts I wore for years because I couldn't afford to buy a shirt. Now today people give me so many shirts I don't know what to do with them.

I have to give it away to other people. Please remember these are old times. I'm not like that today.

But what I say is God was testing me. We couldn't afford washing machines. We washed our hands, washed our clothes the way Jesus washed his clothes.

Is there a better way than that? We can't afford it. What do you mean? We refuse to get into debt. Refuse to.

In 80 years of my life I have never borrowed money, one rupee from anybody else. If I don't have the money I say I won't buy it. If I don't have the money for something I won't go on a vacation.

I won't go on a holiday. I won't travel. It's fine.

I can live without traveling but I'm not going to get into debt. I will not owe one cent to anybody. And I've taught my children that.

Don't ever get into debt. Credit card debt, the worst possible thing. It's an absolutely shameful thing for a Christian child of God to go and buy things on a credit card, credit card and not pay it the next month.

If you're paying it immediately next month, fine. But if you're not able to pay it next month, get rid of your credit card. Can you imagine Jesus buying things in a credit card and not paying it the next month and clearing that debt? Which Jesus are you people following? What are you hearing in the church about Christ manifest in the flesh? Which Christ? One who gets into debt? One who has credit card debt? Shame on you.

That is not the real Jesus Christ. That is another Jesus. And you must be an example.

You must be able to say at least from now on till the end of your life I did not get into debt. I can say that in our entire married life we never borrowed money. When we had little, we lived with little.

God was testing us. I'm absolutely convinced that God tests a man in the area of money before he gives him a ministry. Sure, and I'm sure a brother like Victor, God has tested him.

I don't know how God has tested him, but I'm absolutely sure he must have been tested in the area of money. And I'm absolutely sure the reason why many God does not give a ministry to many of you is because he's tested you in your money and you have failed. You're begged, you're borrowed, and sometimes you're not returned.

I've seen that in CFC. People have borrowed money and never returned it for a long long time. Get into debt and they want to say Christ came in my flesh.

I want to follow him. Another Jesus. Paul says there were times when he didn't have enough to eat.

Why couldn't he borrow? You think people would not loan money to Paul? He wouldn't borrow. Okay, God doesn't give me enough to eat. I'll eat what little there is.

These are the men whom God has used throughout the generations. I want to encourage you. So we proved it in our church.

For years in Bangalore, no offerings. Those who were with us in the early days know that. We never asked, never made any drive, we never sent reports to anybody.

People would sometimes give and I'll tell you one example. After six years in our home we found it was getting a bit crowded. There were about 60 people and we wanted to have a conference.

You know my old house, we put a shamiana there and we had a conference there and all the brothers would sleep one next to the other in our front room. The sisters in different places. And we had our first conference there.

But it was getting crowded and we needed a place and we looked here and there. We couldn't get one. Then my father had paid the advance for a plot of land in Dacosta Square and he said you can have it for the church but you have to pay the balance.

And the balance was quite a lot. He had paid only 20% as in a deposit. We had to pay the 80% balance and after six years we didn't have that money.

From our offering box we had a little and what we had was less than half. It was about one-third of the money we needed that we had and we had to clear the money in about two or three weeks. In six years we did not have collection.

What shall we do? He said we will not send reports to anybody. We will not ask anybody in the world for it. If God wants us to have that land it'll be written across.

It's reserved for CFC. Nobody can touch it. We trusted God.

And I think those who live with us and those who were with us in those days know about it. About two or three weeks before the deadline, if we didn't pay it, the other fellow would take the land back. Somebody sent us a check for the entire amount which we needed to buy the land.

Somebody whom I've never seen in my life till then and somebody whom I've never seen in my life till today. We just sent a thank-you note to him and somebody who never sent any money after that. He's never met me.

I've never met him. He's never come to CFC. Who did that? You believe in God? You believe God honors those who trust him? What did that prove to us? God wants us to have that land and God gave us on the main road with a purpose because there were some Roman Catholic believers who walked by that road once and walked in and got converted.

Thank God we were on the main road. God put us there with a purpose. We couldn't get a land on the main road.

We became the object of jealousy of all the other Christians around there. How did these guys get this land here? And then it got crowded. So anyway, we proved in that church over years.

Then I said, Lord, I proved it in my life. I proved it in my family. I proved it in this local church.

But Bangalore is a city. People earn a lot of money here. I want to prove this in the poorest villages in India that there also we will have a church without offerings.

Let's see whether we can survive because God is the God of cities, villages, poor people, rich people. And so God gave us opportunity to go into the poorest villages of India in two villages where there were no churches for 2,000 years. Same principle.

We will not take an offering. Of course, we'll help one another. That's fine.

But ultimately we want every church to be self-supporting, not supported by other churches. And every one of our churches is self-supporting. No church is supported by another church for their own needs.

We may help them to put up a building or something, but not more than that. And we approved in all the poorest villages in India. We never ask for money.

We never take an offering. All the needs are met. And all our conferences, we give free food, free accommodation.

Come to the villages and see 2,000 people come. No offering. Because we have a Father in heaven who's interested in our work.

And we want to prove to an unbelieving generation of Christians that God is faithful. You cannot serve God and money. You cannot love God and money.

You will love one and hate the other. We are talking about enduring in love until the end. If you want to endure in love to Jesus until the end, you've got to stop loving money.

And you've got to prove it. Don't jump into the big ministry first. Start in your personal life.

God taught me in my personal life first, then in my family life, then in a small church, and then in other churches. Expand it. And then the building we had there became small.

We had to build another floor, people sitting on top with closed circuit television there, and then a top floor. And I thought these poor old people climbing two floors to... And it got crowded. Lord, give us another land.

And where could we get it? To get a land in Bangalore, first of all, you have to have money which is not declared to the tax authorities. Unrighteous money that you keep in cash. And they'll ask for millions like that if you want to get a land.

And we say we don't even have one cent like that. Not even one paisa. Not one rupee like that.

No, no, no. Then we can't sell you the land. The other condition we needed in Bangalore was the neighbors must all agree to have a church building here.

And which neighbors will allow you to have a church building there? They said we don't want all your cars parked over here and the children throwing things across the compound wall. And so everywhere we went we had these two objections. First, people wanted what they called black money.

And second, neighbors must agree. Impossible. There's a saying for a Christian, the word impossible is in a fool's dictionary.

And somebody showed us this land. All the lands surrounding here were given by an old Muslim ruler of India called Tipu Sultan. Gave it to his descendants.

And all the descendants are fighting as to who owns it. So it is all in the courts. So nobody can build anything here.

So we have no neighbors. So we didn't have to get anybody's permission to build the church. God planted from Tipu Sultan's days.

He's got CFC in mind. You don't realize how early God plans everything for us. I'm not telling you stories.

Go and ask Ian. Go and ask our treasurer. He'll tell you.

What about the black money part? The man who owned this was a nominal Christian. He had bought it from a good neighbor there in front who owned this whole land. And he had read one of my books, this Christian man who owned this.

And he was willing to give it to us. And I told him, listen, please give us ten months to pay the full amount. He said, sure.

And we had only one third of the cost of this land. He never told anybody. He never sent out letters asking for money.

And we had spent from 1980 to 2000 or something, to more than 20 years, and we had only one third of that amount. And in six months we got the remaining two-thirds without asking anybody, without telling anyone, not even putting pressure on people in our church. I know what will happen.

If I got up in CFC and said, brothers, we have to buy this land, I know the poor people will give. The rich people will keep their money. It's always like that.

I've seen that when I preach about fasting, all the thin people fast. The fat people never fast. I've seen that regularly.

The fat people remain. That's not for me. So I've learned from that that it's always like that.

You preach about giving, the poor people will give. So I said, I'll never preach about it. We'll trust God to take care of it.

And he provided for us. We came into this property without debt. We have never been in debt in 45 years in any of our churches.

We never go to a bank to borrow money because the bank will say, where's your income? We say, we trust God. Oh, sorry, we can't give you any loan. And then we had to build a hall here.

And we had this nice builder who was a Christian of some sort. And he said, sure. I said, I don't know whether we'll have enough money.

He said, build it. You give us the money when you have it. And we built it.

We paid him. We did not get into debt to him for one rupee. The numbers increased.

The type of people sitting here could not fit downstairs. What to do? Lord, we had to build another floor. Never ask anybody.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you serve God and honor him, it doesn't matter what is your personal need. And I'll tell you something. All this has cost millions of rupees.

And we have never asked a person for one rupee. I'm not telling stories. Our treasurers know it.

Our board members know it. I'm saying that for your encouragement. When you're in dire need, trust God.

Love him. And God will supply your need. God's called us to pursue after righteousness, peace, and joy.

You cannot love God and love money. If you want to endure in love until the end, make sure that love of money is not there in your heart at all. That you don't pursue after it.

You should be able to. This was my desire as a young Christian when I committed myself at the age of 26, 54 years ago. I said, Lord, I want to live for you.

And I will trust you till the end of my life. Money will never be an important factor in my life. And I can say today after 54 years of full-time Christian work, God honors those who honor him.

You should be able to say at the end of your life, I spent my life seeking the kingdom of God. And he added everything for me. He's added everything.

I remember my father was a good man and he gave me some inheritance but it was just enough to sort of make ends meet. Because through the years God has prospered. But when my father died it was very little that I got.

And when he was dying in his deathbed, he called me and he said, see you've got four sons. You don't take any money from anyone. You've got these few people meeting in your house.

How are you going to educate these children? College education is very expensive. I said, Dad, if I stop seeking the kingdom of God, even the small school fees to about a hundred rupees per month school fees which I was paying those days, I will not be able to pay even that. But if I seek God's kingdom first, God will take care of my children's education.

I don't have to beg, borrow or ask anybody for anything. God helped them to get scholarships and they could study in colleges. God does amazing things.

Yeah, he can do amazing things for you if you honor him. But determine. I would rather die than dishonor the principles by which Jesus lived on this earth.

To me that is Christ manifest in the flesh. I am to live like him. I am to see how he lived, particularly in the area of money.

And we have preached that through the years that Christ came in our flesh. That is the secret of godliness. We have preached it for 45 years in this church and in all of our churches.

And in this area of money we must prove it. In Ecclesiastes, let me close with this verse. Ecclesiastes in chapter 2. This is how we can endure in love until the end.

In love for Christ. Ecclesiastes chapter 2 and verse 26. For to a person who is good in his sight, that is a child of God, he gives them the privilege of collecting in his wild life wisdom, knowledge and joy.

Or in New Testament terms, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's the task he has given us believers to accumulate, accumulate, accumulate the knowledge of God, the wisdom of God and the joy of the Lord all through our life. And to the sinners he gives the task of collecting money and money and money and money and money and money.

Which group are you in? And then out of that money God will make sure that the one who is good in God's sight gets enough for his need also. Isn't that amazing how God does it? I like that. Which group are you in? Are you one of those who is good in his sight to whom he has given the task not of collecting money by putting an offering bag in front of every people.

In many places in these big conferences they pass buckets. Offering bag is too small. Buckets to collect money.

Is that what he's given? Are you one of those who is good in God's sight? He's given you the task of collecting wisdom, knowledge and joy in your life? Or are you in the other category of those who gather, collect, collect, collect, collect more and more of yourself. It'll perish with you. Love God with all your heart and please have this testimony that I have at the end of your life.

I spent my life seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness and in what way I could I helped the poor and lived with what is minimum necessary for me. Never buying unnecessary things. Not living like a

beggar, bare necessities.

I mean if you come to my house you'll find it looks nice but I don't waste money. And I thank God that I have a wife who's with me in this. When you get so many people and they say we're planning a marriage for our child and they say even in CFC churches we must get a woman, a girl who's educated, who can earn her own living.

Has she got a college degree? In what subject? Literature? She can't earn anything. Computer science or something like that where she can earn money. That's the type of girl I want to get for my daughter, for my son.

And what family? Do they have a lot of wealth in their family? I thank God that all my four sons, their wives are not working. They didn't marry wives to make them work, to make money. My wife did not work.

She looked after the children. I've seen women who work and I like to see what their children are like. Wayward, leave the home, don't respect the parents because the wife was busy making money.

I thank God my wife did not go that way. And I thank God that all my four sons married into families that could not give them any money. Their parents are not rich.

I'm a living testimony. I don't preach here. I seek to live the life before I speak.

Dear brothers and sisters, examine your life. Why doesn't God anoint you? He sees that you're a hypocrite. You want the honor of belonging to CFC but you don't live by the values of CFC in your life.

You love money more than you love God. You want to live on the border like Brother Victor said. From the border I can sometimes go across the border and collect some good things from there but I want to live this side where it's comfortable.

I hope some of you will wake up now and live at least the rest of your life saying Lord I want to be a living testimony to this world that there's a Father in heaven who cares for his children. Forget the past. God ignores the years of ignorance but he's now commanding all men to repent and say Lord Jesus I want to love you more.

I'm not saying you should not get educated. By all means educate. I educated my children.

They must support themselves. I said Lord I don't want my children to grow up as beggars. They must work hard and support themselves and serve the Lord.

And that's what they're all doing. I'm very thankful. But put God first and he'll honor you and be a living testimony at the end of your life and in your ministry.

Be faithful and I believe that one day God will add to you others wherever you are even if you're lonely now. You'll be able to build a church in your locality that has a similar testimony. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father we do not take any credit for what you have done. All the glory is yours. You're the one who took care of us from day one till today in our life, in our family and in our ministry.

And we give you all the glory for that. Be honored in our midst Lord. Raise up many brothers who can minister your word powerfully backed up by their life and raise up many churches.

That'll be a testimony to your name. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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