

Love That Does Not Seek One's Own

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being broken and crushed by God in various ways to prepare individuals for ministry. It highlights the need to submit to authorities, endure financial struggles without borrowing, and face false accusations with forgiveness. Drawing parallels to Jesus' life, the speaker stresses the significance of denying self-will in ordinary situations at home to please God and be prepared for effective service.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3, Romans 13:8, Proverbs 4:18, Isaiah 53:10, Luke 2:51, Matthew 12:20

Topics: "Brokenness", "Preparation for Ministry"

Description

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Transcript

I want to turn to 1 Corinthians and Chapter 13. In 1 Corinthians, there are three chapters that speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And gifts are not for living the Christian life but for service.

And the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, mentioned in Galatians 5, 22, 23, that's for our life. Everybody must have all those gifts, all those fruit of the Spirit. But the gifts of the Spirit are given for different functions like different parts of the body.

And 1 Corinthians 13 tells us how to exercise them. It must be exercised in love. So there's one characteristic of love which I want to mention, I don't want to go through the whole chapter.

It says here in verse 5, the middle of that verse, love does not seek its own. That's one of the primary characteristics of Divine love. It's the opposite of what human beings call love.

When a boy says, I've fallen in love with a girl, he's seeking his own. He's not seeking the good of that girl, he wants something from that girl, maybe sex. And when a girl says, I'm in love with a boy, she wants something, probably his money.

It's not love, it's a deception. But true love, Divine love, the characteristic of it is it does not seek its own. So the greatest love that the world has seen is when God wants to talk about His love for us.

He does not talk about the love of a boy for a girl or a girl for a boy because that type of love is very selfish. A lot of love that husbands and wives say they have for each other is very selfish and that's why they have so many problems in their married life as well. Selfless love is rare to be seen.

So when... here's the characteristic of Divine love, it does not seek its own. Always keep that in mind and it comes in between two chapters on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Gifts of preaching, healing, speaking in tongues, all types of things and what he's saying is the right way to exercise any gift of the Holy Spirit is by not seeking your own.

If you're seeking your own you cannot exercise a gift of the Holy Spirit in a proper way and unfortunately what we find today is a lot of people with gifts, they're using it to promote themselves, they're using it to show off, I can speak in tongues or I can preach better than you or I've got a gift of healing. It's not... they're not... they're seeking their own through and through and that means it's not being exercised in a Divine way. So a true love does not seek its own and when God wants to describe his love for us, what human example does he take? Turn with me to Isaiah 49.

Isaiah 49, he wants to use a human example of love to describe his love and he does not choose the love of boy for girl or girl for boy because he knows that's thoroughly selfish but he chooses an example which is the one case we can see on earth of totally unselfish love. Isaiah 49 verse 15, can a woman forget her nursing child, have no compassion on the son of her womb, even these may forget but I will not forget you. So when God wants to take the highest example of love on this earth, it is not husband-wife, it's not wife-husband, it's the love of a mother, not for her grown-up rebellious child but for a newborn baby.

That if you want to see the purest example of love on this earth, it's the love of a good mother for a newborn baby, a mother who longed and longed and longed to have a baby for many years and then gets a baby. You see there how she cares for it and never makes any demand on it. That baby can do nothing for its mother, it's making demands on that mother 24 hours a day, she can't even sleep properly at night, has to clean the baby, wash the baby, feed the baby, all types of things and the mother keeps on doing it, keeps on doing it day after day after day after day after day after day and God says, that is the only example I can take on earth to show you My love for you.

It's unending. So whenever you want to understand something about God's love, I mentioned earlier that this love is like that of a father who provides for his children in so many ways but it's also like that of a mother who endlessly cares for a child that's making demands on it throughout the day and there is an example of love that does not seek its own. I told you a boy and a girl love each other, they are seeking their own somewhere or the other and even in marriage there's a lot of seeking one's own but in a mother's love for its child, newly born child, there is zero seeking its own, it doesn't want anything, it just wants to serve and serve and serve that child whatever, the child is sick or the child needs his diapers changed many times a day, it doesn't make a difference, it just keeps on serving and that is Divine love.

So when we think about you know Jesus said, you must love one another in the church, this by the way is the standard and who can reach the standard, it's impossible but that's what the Lord does through the Holy Spirit. When you turn to 1 Corinthians, I'm sorry, Romans in chapter 5, people ask me what is the evidence of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, I say it is not speaking in tongues, this is my understanding of when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, this is what will happen, Romans 5, verse 5, the love of God is

poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We are secure in God's love, that's the first thing, the Holy Spirit fills my heart with an assurance that God loves me immensely, like a mother loves his child.

Have you got that assurance? That's what the fullness of the Holy Spirit does, it assures you deep in your heart like a father provides for his children, everything that it needs, like a mother will care for its newborn baby constantly and never get tired, God is never tired to care for me, I believe that and that's the security I find, that's number one, I have to get that love, the Holy Spirit filling my heart with the love of God. And if you don't allow the Holy Spirit to make that clear to you, your life will always be insecure as I said earlier and you'll have constant problems in your relationships with other people. But if you find yourself secure in God's love, I assure you murmuring and complaining will be eliminated from your life one hundred percent, can you think what your home will be like if there's no murmuring or complaining there about anything? A little bit of heaven, it's exactly what the devil doesn't want and it's exactly what God wants.

So that's why the Holy Spirit first of all assures me, fills my heart, it says here, what's the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit? Here it is, that I'm deeply assured that my heavenly father loves me like a father cares for his child and like a mother cares for his newborn baby, that gives me a deep assurance and security in my life that what is there to complain about, what's there to murmur about, my God will supply all your need according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus, there's nothing He will not provide and even in trial and testing He will take me through triumphantly, He will never allow me to be tempted beyond my ability – 1 Corinthians 10, 13. And even the evil that other people do to me will work for my good, what more do I want? Externally things are going to work for my good, internally the Holy Spirit's working in me. I'm the most blessed person on the face of the earth and so are you if you can understand it.

What are you complaining about? That is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit and if that is not there, it doesn't matter if you speak in tongues from now till eternity, you're not filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the mark of God's love, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and that love then becomes manifest in me, first in the vertical direction that I love God with all my heart and God becomes more important to me than anybody on earth. Very important, if I want to love other people properly, I must love God more than I love them.

I'll tell you this, if you love your wife more than you love Jesus Christ, you will not be able to love her the way God wants you to love her. If you really want to love your wife the way God wants you to love her, you got to love Jesus more. Jesus said, if you want to be my disciple, you got to love me more than you love your father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children.

That is the way you'll be able to love your wife or your husband the way God wants you to, where Christ is supreme in your life, where you love him more than anything else. That's the tree of life. I mentioned that yesterday, how Paul says, I'm afraid, 2nd Corinthians 11 verse 3, that the devil will lead you astray like he led Eve from that simple pure devotion to Jesus Christ.

That's the tree of life. Never forget it. Get to the tree of life, Lord, I want to love you more than anything else.

And as I said yesterday, before sin came into the earth, access to the tree of life was easy and now there's a sword there, a sword that must fall on my self-life before I can access that tree. Yeah, that's the only way, that's why Jesus said, you got to take up the cross if you want to follow me. There's a close connection between the spirit-filled life and walking the way of the cross, which I spoke about yesterday.

Never forget that. If you separate these two, these have been joined together and what God has joined together, let no one put us under, the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the way of the cross. And I tell you, Christendom has separated what God has joined together and that's why there's such a lot of confusion in the lives of many people who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you are really filled with the Holy Spirit and you decide to walk the way of the cross, you'll find your life simply triumphant all the time. Your life will be victorious 24 hours a day. That's the way God wants you to walk, but you can't separate these two.

I had to be filled with the Holy Spirit, assured of God's love for me and walk the way of the cross. Then I'll be able to love God with all my heart and I'll be able to love others as Jesus loved me. So, that's the mark of God's love, this love that does not seek its own.

So, if that is Divine love, the opposite of that is human love is seeking its own, you know, they seek their own and it's possible to be a Christian, a good Christian in many ways in the eyes of the world and yet to be a very self-seeking Christian. In Philippians in chapter 2, I want to show you an example. You know, if you ever got onto Paul's apostolic team, imagine if Paul selected you to be one of his team members, that would be one of the greatest honours in the first century.

It'll be next to Jesus selecting you to be his disciple, that Paul selected you to be one of his team. And so, Paul selected some of the finest Christians to be on his team and among those fine Christians on Paul's team, he says in Philippians 2, when I want to send one of them to Philippi to see the condition of the church there, he said, I can only find Timothy. Among all those team members who were with him at that time, he says in Philippians 2 19, I can only send Timothy because in verse 20, I don't have anyone else of the same spirit who will genuinely be concerned about your welfare because, here's the opposite of love, verse 21, they all seek their own.

What did we say was the primary mark of divine love, it does not seek its own. And here is Paul's co-workers, full-time Christian workers, who were speaking in tongues and so-called filled with the spirit and everything else, who started out so well, were so good when Paul selected them, a few years later they're seeking their own. And I'll tell you something, most of the great preachers I've heard of and met, they all seek their own.

So, it's very sad, they're seeking money, do you know that many of the most famous preachers in America will not go to preach in a place unless they're guaranteed sort of \$10,000 per evening, do you know that? Plus first-class plane travel and five-star hotel accommodation, all that, plus \$10,000 for one meeting in the evening and you got to pay not only for them but you got to pay for all their bodyguards who come with them. Are these followers of Jesus or what? How many bodyguards did Jesus have when he went around? He had the angels, he didn't need human bodyguards. This is the tragedy in Christendom today and these are the people who... the preachers whom so many dumb Christians watch and admire on television, say, wow, what a man of God, he's not a man of God, he's a crook.

But how many people see that? They seek their own and Paul was discerning. These guys were not asking for \$10,000 in the evening to speak but yet Paul said, I can see that they're seeking their own, they're not really servants of God. But Timothy was different, he didn't seek his own, he sought the things that were Christ's, they were not seeking their own interests.

So the thing that we need to ask ourselves, when I spoke yesterday about judging ourselves, the area where we need to judge ourselves is where I... where am I seeking my own interests here or seeking the things of God? What is my motive in the things I do? That determines the value of an action or anything I do or speak, it's the motive. You know in 1 Corinthians in chapter 4 the reason why Paul says we should not judge others and Jesus said in Matthew 7, don't judge anybody but here the reason is given why we should not judge others. Why should you not judge other people? Because you can only see their action, you can only hear their words, you cannot see their motive.

Their motive, sometimes a person can do a good action with a bad motive and what looks like you to an action which you can't understand but with a good motive. What would you have thought of Jesus taking a whip and chasing out the money changers and you know making all the doves fly away into the air and chasing out the sheep and throwing the money on the ground. If you had seen that and you didn't know who was doing it, you say there's a guy who seems to have lost his temper, why can't he go and tell them, will you gentlemen please move your tables away from here and please pack up your money and go.

He didn't do that, which is the Divine way. The Divine way is to turn the tables and let the money fly around and all the children get excited and laugh when they see that and Jesus opens the doors for all the doves and all to fly away and chase out the sheep. Is that the Divine way to discipline? Yes.

Many people can't understand that because they don't know God. There's a human sense of decency there and God is not like that because they were doing it in the house of God, in the house of God even the smallest thing that you do, seeking your own profit and gain, the Lord chases out. He didn't do that in the marketplace in Jerusalem.

In the marketplace you can go and make as much money as you like, God says do what you like but don't you dare come into the house of God to make money and you know that most of today's preachers are in God's house making money for themselves and from poor people. What do you think Jesus would do if he came to today's church? He'd chase them out with a whip and that's one of the ministries of the body of Christ. One ministry in the body of Christ is to chase people, such people out with a whip.

It's not the only ministry. The other ministry is to put your arm around the lepers and to comfort Samaritan women who've been divorced five times. That is another ministry and Jesus did all of it but all of us can't do all of it.

He gives different people a task, each person's got a task. He hasn't called me to care for lepers, he's called me to use the whip, I use it. I don't say everybody should do it, it's one member in the body of Christ does it and that's it but the fundamental principle whichever ministry you do, it must be that I don't seek my own, I seek the glory of God in everything.

So if you can keep that in mind, the motive is what is important. 1 Corinthians 4-5, you should not pass judgment before the time. So those of you who have a lust to judge others and most of us have it, the Lord says, I'll give you an opportunity to judge others, just hang on, hang on, don't be in a hurry, just wait.

When the time comes, you can judge them and the time is after the Lord has returned because when the Lord has returned, he will open the people's hearts and show what is the motive was by with which that person did that thing which you were judging and you may feel ashamed of yourself when you see that that thing you judged, he did with a good motive or that that thing was purely accidental, it was not deliberate and you'll feel ashamed of yourself. So he says, if you don't want to be ashamed of yourself in

the day when God reveals secrets, just don't judge. When the Lord comes and he reveals all the motives, judge as much as you like because then you're judging the motives and you're judging the hidden things, the things in darkness.

Then the hidden things in darkness are the things which nobody sees in your life. I mean how much you pray in secret, who knows? How much you pray in public, everybody can see but how much you pray in secret, who knows that? How much do you pray when you wake up in the morning from bed, who knows that? Only God and that will be revealed in that day. The secret things, the secret ways in which you helped others in a way they don't even know that you are the one who helped them, who knows that? Only God, that will all be revealed in that day and that is the day when many who you think are last will be first and many you think are first here on earth because they did all their works to show others they'll be last.

I mean that's the reason why many will be first and last because a lot of people did their works to show others, I'm a Christian, I'm doing this, I'm doing that and I'm active and you get all your honour here and the Lord says there's nothing left for you in the final day because everything you did was to get honour for men. When those other people who you despised because you thought that they were doing nothing for the Lord, you discover in that day they did such a lot for God, only thing they didn't display and they didn't show off and they didn't advertise to everybody what they were doing and you get a surprise in that day, wow, these people did such a lot for the Lord and I didn't, I thought they were doing nothing. So those are the people who lived before God's face, they didn't seek their own.

This is, you know, think if you can have a church, you're thinking of building a beautiful family where everyone who comes there is determined not to seek their own. Can you imagine what a church that'll be? Where everybody says, I don't want to do anything to impress other people. I have to do it, some of the things I do people will see, what can I do, I can't hide it.

But I'm not doing it for them to see, I'm doing it for the Lord and I don't care whether they see it or not and I'm going to do a lot of things in secret that other people don't see and I want to do a lot of things in the darkness which other people don't ever know about. Think if you have a church like that where brothers and sisters are like that, what a church it'll be. You know where mothers, think of mothers and fathers who do a lot of things that they secretly plan for their children.

See many of you who are here today, your mothers and fathers planned for you when you were a little child. They sought your good, they sacrificed in order to give you an education and to get you where you are today. They did it in secret, they didn't do it to show off to you, they did it in secret and you got the benefit of it and they themselves probably don't get the comfort that you enjoy today.

They sacrificed in order for you to live a comfortable life, in order for you to achieve something. That's the spirit of a true parent. That is what it means not to seek your own.

Can you imagine a church where everybody's like that? That's a real family of God, where everybody's saying, Lord I want to be like that, I want to be like Jesus. He was always thinking ahead of others. You know I love that little passage, one of the last things you read that Jesus did.

You remember one of the last things that Jesus did after his resurrection? John chapter 21, you know that was the day when they went fishing all night and they caught nothing and Jesus came and said to them, have you caught any fish? And they said, no. He said, cast your net on the other side and they cast the net and they drew in such a large number of fish and the net was full, it was in John 21 and verse 8. And they

dragged the net full of fish and, listen to this, have you been excited when you see this? When they came to the land and saw Jesus there, there was already a charcoal fire there and fish based on it and bread. Jesus had already made breakfast for these fishermen.

He said these guys were toiling all night, they need something and he had prepared breakfast for them. I don't know where he got the fish from but he had it and the bread, where did he get it from? I wondered, you know, he had resurrected, he wasn't, you know, because the old days he could just go to the market and buy something but now he's resurrected and moving on, where do you get that fish and bread from? I often wondered, did he create it or, I don't know, but there was the fire and there was the charcoal and where did he get the charcoal from, where did he get the fire and the bread from? I read these verses and I ask such questions, I'm the questioning type, whenever I read the Bible I question, how did that happen? And I discover so many things, I see something about the life of Jesus in these things. I say, Lord I want to be like that, you know, secretly to do something for somebody and when they come, it's already there.

That's the spirit of Christ and he said, and he didn't act as if, this is the other part of it that you want to see, hey fellas, I don't want any of your fish, I already made some. No, no, no, no, he says in verse 10, bring us some of your fish also, let's cook it also. I love that, you know, give the other person also a sense of you participated in making the breakfast, even though he didn't need that fish one bit, he could have produced a thousand fish there if he wanted, but he says, bring some of the fish that you caught just now.

I love that, you know, to make that weak person feel a sense of importance in the church. I think of it like this sometimes, if I'm carrying a table from one room to the other in my house and a little three-year-old son says, daddy let me help you, now I know he'll be more of a hindrance than a help if I allow him to help me, but I say, sure son, just hold that corner and he holds the corner and we go together to the other room and he's so excited that he helped daddy to carry the table to the other room and he'd go and tell mummy, you know, I and daddy carried the table to the other room, that's right, and that's the pleasure God wants us to have, that is Christianity. When we can be in the church like that, where we don't make anybody, another person feel small and say, oh well, your contribution is nothing, you've got no ability here, I've got, I can handle all this, I don't want your help, that's not Christianity, even if that guy is good for nothing, to say, bring some of your fish, sure, let's do it together, I don't want the honour of myself.

These are little, little examples you see of Jesus not seeking his own and if you read through the Gospels like this, I tell you, you can see so many examples and if your passion in life, see ever since my passion in life became to become like Jesus in every possible area. I discover little things like this in the Bible, it's amazing, it's there and you don't see it but when your passion is to become like Jesus, the Holy Spirit will show you. There's a promise in John chapter 16, we read here, John chapter 16 and verse 14, the Holy Spirit, speaking in verse 13 about the Holy Spirit, when He comes, He will guide you into all the truth, John 16, 13 and verse 14, He will glorify me and listen to this, John 16, 14, He will take of mine and will reveal it to you, disclose means reveal, He will take certain things of mine and show it to you which you can't see otherwise.

Now that's not healing the sick, I don't, when I read the Bible and the Gospels, I don't need the Holy Spirit to show me that Jesus healed the sick, it's written plain, even a child can understand, Jesus healed the sick or Jesus raised the dead or Jesus cast out a demon but these are the other hidden things which are not so obvious like I just showed you just now, the Holy Spirit will take that and show it to you and I tell you it's been so exciting for me to see these things, how when everybody went to their home, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and He never talked about it the next day or when they came after catching the fish,

He already had breakfast ready for them and He didn't act selfish, He said you bring your fish too, little, little things, the Holy Spirit will take it and show it to you and He'll make you like that. I tell you it's the most wonderful journey you can take to discover how Jesus lived His earthly life in little, little things. You know, I don't know whether you've noticed that other place where it says when Jesus rose from the dead, the napkin that was tied over his head was folded and put away, it's in one of those resurrection passages.

They went to see the tomb and they found that the napkin that He covered was folded and put there. Do you think the angel folded that? No, angels don't fold clothes, they just roll away the stone and sit there. It was Jesus who when He rose from the dead, He folded it, why? Because that was His habit all through life.

When He got up from home as a little boy in Nazareth, He didn't just leave the sheets and all like that, He did His bed and got up. I learned from that, I said that's how I must be, that's how I must keep my things away and not just throw them around because Jesus was like that. So to become like Jesus is not just going around healing the sick, He's putting your clothes away in the proper place, taking care of these things and teaching our children, things like that.

It's to be like Jesus, small, small things because I'm making life easier for other people, otherwise somebody else has to do it and Jesus never wanted other people to do that. We have to always to seek, not seek our own means, I always think, am I making life a little more difficult for somebody by ignoring this thing, by not doing this? We need to get constant light on the selfishness there is in our life, selfishness is like a huge onion and like I said yesterday, you discover it when you get married, what a lot of selfishness there is in you because before you're married you know we are always acting with others, saying the nice things and doing nice things because you want a reputation. When you get married you don't want a reputation with your wife, she's already married to you, she's stuck with you for life, so you're not seeking for a reputation with her anymore.

And so selfishness comes out in so many ways and if you really want to be like Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to show you, He'll show you layer after layer after layer. How do I know? Guess. I got married, that's how I discovered it in myself, layer after layer and I tell you I'm still discovering it, area after area after area.

If you get close to my wife she may tell you some of the areas but perhaps she won't. We discover both sides you know, there's nobody perfectly like Christ on earth so we discover and as we cleanse ourselves and even in the church, we really become a beautiful family, we'll become a family that Jesus can be proud of. You know where I often think of that passage, the first book of the Bible, you know the first book written in the Bible was the book of Job.

It was written 500 years before Genesis because Job lived 500 years before Moses who wrote Genesis. Perhaps you didn't know that, some of you didn't know it. But the first... Job is put in the middle of the Bible because all the poetic books are put together, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, but they were not all written together.

The Bible has not been put together in the order in which it was written. Even the Gospels, Mark was written long before Matthew and Thessalonians was written before the other epistles, so the letters are not put in this proper order. But if it were put in the proper order, Job would be number one because he lived 500 years before Moses and he wrote that about his experience with God.

And the interesting thing or whoever wrote it was there. The thing that comes to me from that book is that when God wanted to write a book for man called the Bible, the first book he wrote was not about the creation of the heaven and earth. God said that can wait another 500 years.

I want to first write about a man of God whom I was proud of. That's the first book he wrote. That excites me.

Lord, you're more interested in a man of God whom you can be proud of on earth, whom you can point out to the devil and say to the devil, have you seen a man like Job? There's nobody like him on the whole earth. That's the first book of the Bible, not the heaven and earth. Creation of heaven and earth, so many people have arguments about heaven and earth.

What is the gap between verse one and two? I tell you, I'm not interested. I'm interested in the book of Job. The Lord point me out to the devil and say, have you seen a man like him? All these people argue about whether the world was created in six days or millions of years.

I'm not interested. That's not the first book of the Bible for me. It's Job.

Don't get taken up with all these arguments that clever people have. Be like a little child and you'll find that the Lord is interested in a man whom he can point out to Satan, a family, a home that he can point out to Satan. You know, the devil says to God, look at all the hypocrites there are.

Even in Job's time, there were all those preachers who were hypocrites. And God says, yeah, there are a lot of hypocrites, a lot of hypocritical Christians today. There are preachers who are making money.

But have you seen that man who lives on that street in that town? Can God say that about you? Can he say that about you? Can he say that about your church? The devil says, look at all these churches, God. They are seeking their own. They're living for money.

But God says, yeah, that's all true. What you say is true about all these churches. But have you seen this one that meets on this particular street? They don't even have a building of their own.

Have you seen that one? Church is not a building. Have you seen those people who form a church there? That should be our longing, that God should be able to point our church out to the devil. That should be our greatest longing.

It's certainly my greatest longing. I remember when we started our first church, that's exactly what came to my heart. I said, Lord, I don't care what all of Christendom thinks of us, whether we are heretics or whatever they call us.

I want you to be able to point us out to the devil and say, there's a group of people who love one another, who will lay down their lives for one another, who are not seeking their own, who are seeking the glory of God. They're not competing with each other to show that one is greater than the other. No.

They do things in secret without the other people knowing what they did. And they don't want any honor. They don't want any money.

They don't want any honor. They don't want anything for themselves. Have you seen that church and the devil's mouth is shut? I remember as a young man before I ever started, you know, planting churches, when it was just me alone before my marriage also, I read that verse in Job and I said, Lord, can you point

me out to the devil? There's a man who studies the scripture day and night because he wants to know what I'm like.

Not to preach sermons. I said, Lord, I want to study the scriptures. And I started studying the scriptures when I was, from the time I was baptized, I studied the scriptures.

Every spare moment, I studied the scriptures. I didn't know that God was going to give me a teaching ministry in the church. I had no clue about that and I have no interest in that.

I wanted to read the Bible to know what God's mind was like. I said, I want to know God's heart. That's why I read the Bible.

And can God say that about you? There's a young man, there's a young woman there. Have you seen him? He's not like all the others who are more interested in watching television and listening to all those useless stories they have there, who study the Bible and understand my ways and understand my thoughts. If God can't see that in you, my brothers, sisters, know you're sitting here in a conference and listening to all these wonderful things and accumulating more knowledge.

You're just wasting your time. Be a man and a woman whom God can point out to the devil. That is the most important thing.

If you've got a family, you're married, say, Lord, I want you to be able to point out my home to the devil. See, they're not just behaving nicely when other people are around. It makes no difference if nobody's there.

The way they behave with each other, husband and wife, it's as if Jesus is actually living in that home. Look at the way they talk to each other. I'm talking about the devil, God asking the devil, go and watch that husband and wife.

Watch them when nobody's watching them, see how they talk to each other. See how when things go wrong, how they react to it. When there's not enough money, see how they live.

See if they waste their money in their home, how they are frugal and careful with money. See how they bring up their children. See how they discipline their children and teach them God's word, God's ways.

Look at them, learn something from them, see how they are kind to others and good to others. What a testimony. Oh, look at that family, look at that church.

That's what we should long for, that God should be able to say, that's what I learned from the book of Job, the first book when God wrote. And we also see something in that book that a person, God demonstrated in that book that when a man follows me, it doesn't mean he won't face trials. In the entire Bible, there's nobody who faced as many, as great a trial as Job, nobody.

So what do you learn from the first book of the Bible? That people who follow me will go through many trials, imagining losing all your children and all your business in one day. Have you ever heard of anything, it's almost like fiction, that people who say it didn't actually happen. It did happen, because James quotes about Job in James chapter 5, it's true, it's not fiction that a man on earth lost all his 10 children in one day and lost all his business in one day too.

And what did he do at the end of it? He fell down before God and said, God, I have no complaints. I came to this world naked, and when I go out of this world, I'll go naked. All the time on earth you gave me, you have every right to take away what you gave from me.

Where do you find Christians like that? Job puts many of us to shame. He didn't have a Bible, he didn't have conferences, he didn't have the Holy Spirit, he didn't know about Jesus dying for our sins. We know so much, and he never questioned God.

That's how it was in the beginning. We know that later on he did question God, and that's because he didn't have the Holy Spirit. But because I have the Holy Spirit, I never had to get into Job chapter 3 onwards.

I can live in Job chapter 1 and 2 all my life. I never go into Job chapter 3 onwards, which is all questioning, why did this, why that? Because I have the Holy Spirit. I don't ever question whatever God does, I say, God, there must be some purpose.

Job didn't have Romans 8, 28 that told him that everything worked for good. He didn't have 1 Corinthians 10, 13, which says he'll never allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. But I have that.

I have all those promises. And therefore I don't have questions. I don't have to, Job is like a person who's always, why God, why you treated me like this and this, that and the other, and occasionally he'd rise up and I know my Redeemer lives.

That's not the way we're supposed to live, with occasional spurts of faith, continuously. Our life must be one of continuously, the Bible says, the path of the righteous is like the shining light, like the light of the dawn that becomes brighter and brighter and brighter till Jesus comes again. It's a beautiful verse, Proverbs 4, 18.

The way God wants a Christian to live, Proverbs 4, verse 18, the path of the righteous. He says, it's like sunrise, that's when you're born again, it's the dark before that. Sunrise is when you're born again and then the noonday position is Christ's return to the earth.

And from the time you're born again till Christ's coming, it says, it just keeps getting brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter. The sun never backslides, by the way, it never goes back. It's just steadily going up and that is God's perfect plan for every one of us.

Now, I never knew that for so many years of my life. I thought backsliding is a regular part of most Christians' lives. It is not.

When you backslide, you're out of the will of God. I say, Lord, I want to be in the will of God. At least from the time I got light, I want to be in the will of God.

I want every day to be better than the previous one. I want to become better and better with more of this onion of selfishness peeled off, not yet fully like Christ, but growing in faith. So these are the things that we see, you know, as we... and there was a question that was asked about, concerning my speaking about brokenness.

How does God break us? Well, I'll tell you in my life, for many years, God broke me through having to submit to spiritual authorities in a church who did not treat me right. See, God gave me a gift, a

supernatural gift, to teach His Word about two years after I got baptized, when I was 23 years old. I was baptized when I was 21, and in two years, God filled me with the Spirit and gave me the supernatural gift to be able to teach God's Word.

And so, when I was 23 years old, I was preaching to 5,000 people. I don't take any credit for it. When God gives you a gift, if you're Samuel, you're 7 years old and you can be a prophet.

So, when God gives a gift, it's not something you can be proud of, I'm just telling you what God did. But the result of it was that when I went into churches and I was a member of the church and people would love to hear me, some of the elders in the church were jealous of my ministry because they didn't have that gift. I'm telling you the truth, and I experienced it in church after church after church.

And they would suppress me and push me down, and the Lord said, submit to them. Don't judge them. Don't speak evil of them.

They are the elders in the church, you must submit to that authority. So I said, sure, and I never spoke evil of them. I sat there submitting to them, and if I got a chance, I'd go out into the streets and preach there.

You see, you didn't need anybody's permission to preach on the streets about Christ. So I'd go out with another brother and preach on the streets. I remember the town where I was working in the naval base, in two years I covered every street in that town.

I'd drive on my scooter with another brother, stand in a corner, sing a few songs, and a few people would gather around wondering what these two crazy guys are doing. And I'd share the gospel in a few minutes, just five minutes, and that's it. Have a few tracts, if anybody wanted to give it out, get on the scooter and go to the next street corner.

It was a wonderful experience. I learned to preach on the streets, because I was not permitted to preach in churches. But that's where God broke me, and broke me through submission to authorities who were jealous of me.

And the Lord said, love them, don't judge them. Don't run away to some other church where you get a chance to preach. This is the best church in this locality, be here.

Those are ways in which God broke me. And then through other circumstances, through situations where you experience something and somebody makes a mistake and you get upset with that person, and the Lord says, forgive him. I remember once when I had to, this is before my marriage, I had to go to a doctor for a little stitching up a wound and he had put me under anesthesia.

And a few days later, I discovered a severe, this is just about a month before I was getting married. I found a severe pain down my hand, a nerve pain, and I was wondering what happened. So I went to see a neurosurgeon and he asked me, he said, did you have anesthesia or something recently? I said, yes, a few days ago in another hospital.

And he said, ah, that's what happened. You were, you know, anesthesia, you were not conscious. And when they lifted you from that bed, you know, it was a village hospital, small place, and they lifted you off the bed, they didn't hold your head up properly.

And so it fell back at an awkward angle and some nerve there got affected. I don't remember exactly what he said and that's what's caused this. You probably have to live with it for the rest of your life.

And this was one month before I was going to get married. And this doctor who I'd gone to was a Christian. I didn't have victory over sin those days, by the way.

So I wrote a real stinger of a letter to him. I said, you're so careless. Here I am one month before my marriage, I'm stuck with this thing.

And I came back home after posting that letter and the Lord said, that's not the way to write. He didn't do it deliberately. You got to write another letter asking forgiveness.

I knew I was wrong. You know, sometimes in temper we write something and I said, sure Lord, I'm sorry, I'll write it again. And I wrote another letter.

I said, brother, I'm really sorry, the way I wrote, I just was overwhelmed by this pain and everything that made me feel like that. But I want to say, I love you, thank you for taking care of me. It's pure accidental, it can happen to anyone.

I want to tell you, I forgive you and I want you to forgive me for writing that way to you. Please forgive me. And you know what happened? This thing I was supposed to live with for the rest of my life, in a few days it disappeared.

I learned something there. When a doctor makes a mistake and because of which you suffer in your body, you want to be healed, forgive that doctor, you'll be healed. I'll tell you that, it's amazing what God can do.

Forgiveness has such tremendous power and that's one of the first times I discovered it. It's really true. It affects your whole body.

But God had to break me through such situations and different, different situations like that, where he was, brokenness means, you know, it's like taking away all confidence in myself, making me depend upon God for everything, everything, because he was preparing me for a ministry to preach the word and he didn't want me to preach the word depending on my cleverness, he wanted me to preach the word depending on his power and his wisdom. And so he had to teach me through different circumstances, break me and take me away from dependence on man. And then when I left the Navy, I'd saved, I was earning a huge salary as a military officer and all the years I served there for eight years, the Lord said, take it all and give it all away for my work.

So my entire life savings in the eight and a half years I'd earned in the Navy, I gave it all away for God's work. Now I'm not telling anybody else to do that. You should not do it if God doesn't call you to do it.

In my case, it was God specifically told me to do it. You know, God, Jesus never told everybody to sell all that they have. He told one man, one rich young ruler, sell all that you have.

Zacchaeus gave only half his goods to the poor and said, God said, Jesus said, that's fine. Mary and Martha and Lazarus, they didn't have to sell their house, they could keep it. But in some cases, the Lord says, give away all that you have.

And in my case, he said that, give away all that you have. So I gave it all away. I left with zero in my bank account and I came out to serve the Lord.

And then I got, I was single, so it was easy. And then I got married and we were really poor, really poor. And we had a son was born and we had to take care of ourselves.

And those are the situations God broke us through struggling financially. That's another way God breaks us. When you have to struggle financially and you refuse to borrow.

Because the Bible says, owe no man anything. Romans 13, verse 8. Be satisfied with what you have. You don't have to buy new clothes, just take care of them, use the clothes you have.

And if they get torn, stitch them and wear them again. And little, little things like this. And don't worry what people think about you.

So God breaks us through submission to authorities in the church. God breaks us through financial struggles. And in those financial struggles, you refuse to borrow.

And you refuse to buy things which you want, which you can't afford. And you refuse to buy things on credit. These are the ways God breaks you.

If you want God to really break you, I'll tell you this. Just obey everything written in scripture. Owe no man anything.

Determine in your life that you'll never have a credit card debt. Imagine if you take one decision. I've heard that 90% of people in America have credit card debt.

It's an absolute shameful thing for a Christian. To be in debt when Romans 13 says, Owe no man anything. And why do people get into credit card debt? Because they're covetous.

They want what that family has. And they want what that family has. Well, they got it through credit card debt.

Why should you do it? You're a Christian. You can live without it. We discovered in those days, my wife and I, that we could live without many things which other people thought were essential.

How did people live a thousand years ago, two thousand years ago? Many of these things that you see in billboards saying, You need this. You can't have your home without this. It's a lot of rubbish.

Just ask yourself, how did people live a thousand years ago? They didn't have that. And they lived. How did the Christians live so many years ago? It's a lie.

Advertising is a lie. Very often. And if you're a Christian, you've got to resist all that.

That's how God breaks you. God breaks you through poverty. God breaks you.

The other way God broke me was through false accusations. People spread all types of rumors about me. Absolutely false.

I mean, because we were preaching the high standard of victory over sin that offended people. And we were preaching about the gift of tongues in a balanced way, not the extreme anti-Costal way. And people didn't like all that.

Okay. So all types of false accusations. Many strange accusations.

I don't want to list all of them. But God said, keep quiet. Don't ever defend yourself.

I will take care of them. And okay, you become small in other people's eyes. Great.

So there are various ways to answer that question somebody had asked. How did God break you? These are some of the ways in which God break me. And I say, I praise God for it.

I did not realize. And God took me like that for over a period of at least about 10 years. I didn't realize then what God was actually doing.

So when I was 35 years old, we started a church in our home, which has grown into many, many churches now in many places. A new covenant church. So 1975.

Then I knew why God had taken me through that period of breaking for so many years. And then as I began to study the life of Jesus, I saw that in his home, the father must have broken Jesus in so many ways in 30 years. Have you seen this verse in Isaiah 53? Isaiah 53 is speaking about some of the hidden sufferings of Jesus.

You see how Jesus also, for example, it says, He was despised and forsaken of men, verse 3. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Isaiah 53, verse 3. People hid their face from him. He was despised and not esteemed, etc., etc.

And it goes on to say in verse 10, The Lord was pleased to crush him. Wow. That's the brokenness I'm talking about.

The father was pleased to crush Jesus. I say, Lord, how is that? His will was crushed. For example, I used to think that when he's at home, Mark chapter 6 tells us that he had four younger brothers and at least two sisters.

I don't know how many, but at least two. So he had six siblings. And Joseph had probably died and his mother was widowed.

And he was the eldest brother in that home. And the responsibility of earning a living as a carpenter fell on him. And he had to earn his living.

And he had these four brothers, younger to him. And John chapter 7 says, None of his brothers believed in him, even when he was 30 years old. Even though the mother must have told those four brothers, Do you know that this is the son of God, your older brother? Do you know he was not born naturally? It was a supernatural birth I had.

The Holy Spirit came on me. And before I married Joseph, the Holy Spirit came on me. And this, he's not like all of you.

He's special. He's the son of God. They said, rubbish, mom.

Don't tell us all those stories. They didn't believe in him. You read that in John chapter 7. So can you imagine these four people teasing Jesus? Oh, you know how young people, younger brothers, siblings can gang up on their older one.

They think he's very special. And I mean, I've seen that in homes. I'm sure they ganged up on Jesus and irritated him and troubled him.

And when you see a brother never getting irritated, you really take it as a challenge not to irritate him some way or the other. I can imagine how they tried and tried and tried and tried. And they never succeeded for 30 years.

That's how Jesus lived. He was crushed, crushed, crushed, crushed, crushed. How is it he didn't get irritated back? How is it he didn't answer back? He denied himself.

I said, thank you, Lord. You're giving me an example. I see in you the way you lived at home all those years.

I see other examples like, you know, I imagine situations he must have been in. For example, he was out playing games with his friends. And in the middle of the time, say something like baseball.

I'm sure every game in the history of humanity was a bat and a ball, whether it's cricket in India or baseball here or whatever they had in Nazareth 2,000 years ago. It must have included a bat and a ball. So it comes the time for Jesus to bat.

And Mary says, Jesus, come here. I want some help. The time when you don't want mommy to call you is when it's your time to bat.

At least that's how it is in cricket anyway. And what did he do? What did today's boy say? Hang on, Mom, I'll just come. Just five minutes.

You know, five minutes means 45 minutes. You know what Jesus did? He denied himself and dropped the bat and went. And his mom wanted him to go and get some water from the well.

He did it. He was crushed. You know what it means to a 12-year-old boy while he's in the middle of a game to be called away from it and to do some task at home for his mother.

These are the little, little things. And you can use your imagination. Think of all the things that little children face at home where their will is crossed.

And Jesus never sinned. Just in that one sentence, he was tempted in all points as we are, like a little boy. And he never sinned.

You can use your imagination. You can imagine all the type of situations he faced and he never sinned. That's how he was broken.

And there's our example. And at the end of it, the father says from heaven, this is my beloved son whom I'm well pleased. Had he done any miracles? No.

Had he cast out any demons? No. Had he preached a sermon? No. What happened in those 30 years that pleased the father? He submitted and denied his will, never sinning with his younger brothers or his sisters, always obeying Mary and Joseph.

And the father said, I'm delighted. Do you want to delight the father's heart? You don't have to preach sermons. You don't have to cast out demons.

You've got to just deny your will in those home situations, ordinary situations at home. That is how God breaks us. And when he breaks us, it's like the breaking of the alabaster by a vial of perfume.

The whole house will be filled with the fragrance of the perfume. It's like the breaking of the atom that releases power to produce electricity for a whole city. It's amazing what God can do when he succeeds in breaking a man.

And as I told you, when we started our church, that's when I realized why God had taken me through this long period of breaking in different ways. Because he is now going to give me authority. And I've seen through the years in the last 42 years in different churches, authority in the hands of an unbroken man will make him a dictator.

And God didn't want me to be a dictator. He wanted me to be a servant. And so that could not be fulfilled if he hadn't broken me.

And so I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, if God is breaking you, it's with a purpose. He's got a ministry for you. But if you fail in the spirit of breaking, he will not be able to accomplish the ministry he has for you.

So if you want to be a useful servant of God, and I believe God wants all of you to be useful servants of his, even girls. Mary must have been about 18 or 19 years old when she got married. You girls, ask yourself, if you were living in Nazareth 2,000 years ago, would God have selected you to be the mother of Jesus? It's a good question to ask yourself.

Do you think God just picked anyone there? He must have observed all the girls. Every girl in Israel wanted to be the mother of the Messiah. They knew the Messiah was going to be born.

And it would be born through a woman. It's written in Isaiah 7, 700 years before. And every young girl knew about that prophecy.

And I'm sure they all wanted to be the mother of the Messiah. Why did God choose Mary? Because he saw something in Mary that was a brokenness and a humility. I'm sure an obedience to her parents.

And all those qualities he saw in her that he looked all over Israel and said, that's the one who's going to be the mother of Jesus. And you young girls have got an example in her. You see, unfortunately, the Roman Catholics worship Mary so much that we are scared to talk about Mary.

But she's an outstanding example for young girls as to how to be a disciple of Jesus. So there's a ministry for girls and boys, but it's always through a crushing and a brokenness. May God do that in our lives.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you help us not just to understand these things, but to be gripped by them and to live by these principles, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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