

Loving God Supremely

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of loving God above all else, highlighting the need to remember the depth of God's forgiveness in our lives, the choice between serving God or material wealth, and the impact of prioritizing God in our relationships and decisions. It encourages a deep reflection on personal sins, the value of family and spiritual upbringing, and the significance of serving God wholeheartedly.

Scripture: Luke 16:13, Luke 7:47, 2 Peter 1:9, Hebrews 3:13, James 4:17, Matthew 6:24, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Romans 8:28, Matthew 22:36

Topics: "Loving God Above All", "Prioritizing Spiritual Values"

Description

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Transcript

Someone asked Jesus once, what is the great commandment in the law? And you know for the Pharisees that was keeping the Sabbath. Now the Pharisees, their doctrines were all correct. Because they were not like the Sadducees who did not believe in angels and resurrection and all that.

With all the criticism that Jesus made of the Pharisees, there were two good things he said about them. Do you know what they were? Do you know what they were? I will give you a new Bible. In Matthew 23, their doctrines were all correct.

In Matthew 23, he is speaking to his disciples. And he says all that they tell you to do, do. Will Jesus tell you all that the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses tell you to do, do? Or will he tell you all the Roman Catholic priests tell you to do, do? When Jesus says, this group of people, whatever they tell you to do, do.

That proves that their doctrine was right. Jesus had examined it. Only thing he said, they themselves don't do what they say, so don't look at their lives.

But what they are saying is correct. So the Pharisees are not a picture of nominal Christians. Nominal Christians don't tell you, you must be born again.

Pharisees are a picture of people who got their doctrines right. And here is one more good certificate that Jesus gave about the Pharisees. In verse 25, you clean the outside of the cup and the dish.

That means their external life was good. Isn't that a good thing if our external life is good? They were not like the robbers and the thieves. Their problem was their inside was all dirty.

So, who do you think are today's Pharisees? Those whose doctrines are all correct. And those whose external life is good. Are you in danger of that? You are proud that you are in a church where all the doctrines are right.

The outside of your cup and dish everybody admires because it is so clean. But the inside, that's what God looks at. And so, for the Pharisees, it was the ritual that was most important.

They would ask questions like, do you light a fire on your house on the Sabbath day? Those are the important things. What do you think today's Pharisees will ask? Do you wear ornaments? Small, small, unimportant things. Not, have you stopped gossiping at home? Have you stopped getting angry with each other at home? That you can do as much as you like, but take off your ornaments.

These are the type of Pharisees of today. Small, small rituals. Do you break bread every week? It doesn't matter if you fight and quarrel during the week, but Sunday you must break bread.

So they asked, what is the great commandment? I think all Pharisees today should ask Jesus, what is the great commandment? All the Pharisees will ask Jesus, what is the greatest commandment of the day? In Matthew 22, verse 36, when Jesus asked that question, he replied. You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment.

To humble the Pharisees. They thought Jesus would say something that, he silenced both of them. He said the great commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul and mind.

And he says, I can't show you just one side of the coin, there is another side to that coin too. The two are together, you can't separate them. You must love your neighbor as yourself.

What do we see on the cross of Calvary? We often think that on the cross of Calvary, we see how much Jesus loved us. We often think that on the cross of Calvary, we see how much Jesus loved us. Let's look at John chapter 14.

This is just the night before his crucifixion. And he is talking to them and he is telling them, now I have to go to the cross. He is coming.

That is with all his agents to crucify him. What am I going to do? Am I going to run away and hide somewhere? Earlier he used to do that. We read in John chapter 7, that when the people tried to kill him in Judea, he wouldn't go there.

We read in John chapter 7, that when the people tried to kill him in Judea, he wouldn't go there. But now we read, his time has come. So he says, let's go.

But, what is the reason? Why am I going to the cross? Very important verse, verse 31. So that the world may know, not that I love them, but that I love the Father. So that the world may know, not that I love them, but that I love the Father.

If you love me, keep my commandments. Jesus loved the Father and kept his commandments. So, what was he showing on the cross? I love my Father.

Whatever he tells me to do, I do. And also, he showed his love for us. He says in John 15 and 13.

Greater love has no man than this, he lays down his life for his people. So, when you put both these verses together. You see the two arms of the cross.

Vertical, he loves his Father with all his heart. And horizontally, he loves us as he loved himself. He laid down his life for us.

This is true Christianity. It's not just keeping little rituals here and there. It's not how well you can clap.

Those who clap can despise those who don't clap. Those who shout can despise those who don't shout. And the brethren people who don't shout will despise the Pentecostals who shout.

That is like, I said, putting a dead lizard into a good chicken curry. You do something good and then spoil it by judging somebody else. Which does God prefer? Which is the great commandment? Clapping your hands? Breaking bread every Sunday? Removing ornaments? There are so many little, little things like this.

If you don't love God with all your heart. If you don't love others as you love yourself. All these things are useless.

They are just cleaning the outside of the cup. And I tell you, most Christians and most denominations only clean the outside of the cup. So, I want to try and help you to be ready to meet the Lord in the final day.

And when Jesus comes in the final day. What is he going to expose? It says in 1 Corinthians 4. He says, there is a reason why I am telling you not to judge others. Because you know only 1% of their life.

Supposing in a mathematics question paper there are 100 questions. And a teacher looks at the answer to the first question only in one answer paper. And if it is right, he gives 100% for the whole paper.

Or if that is wrong, he gives 0 for the whole paper. Don't you think such a teacher will be sacked from the school? See, how can you judge a student on the basis of one right answer or one wrong answer when there are 100 questions? But if you judge another person, you are actually able to see only 1% of his life. There are so many things in his private life you know nothing about.

You may say he is good. But there may be so many things wrong. You may say he is bad.

But there are 99% of his life he may be good. What do I mean by that? 1% is what you see on the outside. That also you see maybe once or twice a week.

Even your husband and wife you have lived with so many years. I think maximum you know about 10% of each other. You tell me, you married men.

Do you think your wife knows what all you are thinking in your thoughts? Even though you are married 20-30 years. You don't know what's going on in her thoughts either. Even though you lived so many years.

Thousands of thoughts, you don't know even one of them. Even the wife you have married for 30 years, you know only 10% of her. So when we judge people by what we see, we are pretending to be God.

The Bible says there is only one judge, God. It says that in James 4. There is only one law giver, only one judge. When you try to be a judge, you are trying to be God.

And in 2 Thessalonians 2, it says the one who tries to be God, is the Antichrist. I don't want to judge others because I am not God. So 1 Corinthians 4. Verse 5. He says, don't judge before the time.

That means you can judge but wait for the right time. All of you who have got a great lust to judge other people. And most of us have it.

Wait for the right time. When is the right time? The right time is after Jesus comes. And he exposes the inner life of everybody.

Then you will see 100% of that person's life. Then you can judge. Whatever you want to judge, you can judge in that day.

But before that, don't judge. See that's the difference between God and man. In that day, God will, it says in this verse, reveal all the things hidden in the darkness.

The things that were going on in your wife's or husband's thoughts, which you can't see now. That brother you thought was very bad, actually he was very good in private. That sister you thought was very good, is actually very bad in private.

All these things will be revealed in that day. Then pass as much judgment as you like about everybody. Because your judgment will be right then.

Because the Lord will expose everything. And the Lord will also expose the motives, it says here, with which people did things. This preacher you thought was a great preacher, God will show you that day the fellow was only after money.

He was only after his own honor. He took your money to build his own house. He told you he was building a church.

All these things will be exposed. Don't judge a person just because he claps and shouts and sings. All that can be a deception.

See we are influenced so much by what we see on the outside. About 35 years ago, I was in a meeting in Bombay. It was a charismatic meeting and they invited me to speak there.

And they asked me to sit on the platform. I don't normally like to sit on the platform. But they asked me to sit there.

So when I was sitting there and everybody was singing, I could see everybody singing. And there was one man who was singing better than anybody else. He was smiling and happy and clapping.

He was more charismatic than anybody. I said this is a wonderful brother. I must go and meet him.

So I went to see him. Within about 10 feet I could smell the alcohol. Then my eyes were opened.

Why this man was so happy and cheerful? It was another spirit, not the Holy Spirit. So I saw there, you don't need Holy Spirit to clap and shout and sing. A few glasses of whisky will do the job.

But real holiness is much more than that. Whisky won't do it. To love God with all your heart and to love others like Jesus loved us.

You can try, you will only produce an Ishmael. But when the Holy Spirit does it in your heart, it will be an Isaac. Because it says in Romans 5 verse 5 that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, he fills our hearts with the love of God.

You know for many years, the Pentecostals have quoted Acts 2.4 as the mark of being filled with the Spirit. They say they all spoke in tongues. You know we select the people and we select the words we like.

I tell them, in the same chapter, why don't you take Acts 2.44, not 4. They all had everything in common. They shared their bank account with everybody. Same Acts 2 only.

After they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they all had common bank account and money and everything. This is what I mean by selective reading of Scripture according to your convenience. I say, I don't speak about Acts 2.4 or Acts 2.44 because Acts of the Apostles is not a book of doctrine, it's a book of history.

There are so many things there which we don't have to do. Paul circumcised Timothy. I'm not going to do that.

Paul fought with Barnabas. What doctrine do you get from that? Paul shaved his head to keep a vow. You have to copy that.

Paul shouted at the high priest. These are all Acts of the Apostles. It's a book.

We are not to get doctrine from historical sections of Scripture. After 52 years of studying the Bible, let me teach you a simple principle. Never get a doctrine from the historical sections of Scripture.

Don't get a doctrine everybody will be healed by some verse which says Jesus healed everybody. No, therefore you shouldn't preach that everybody can be healed today. That verse is written in Scripture.

Jesus healed everybody. But that is history. If you want to get a doctrine, you must get it from the teaching of Jesus or the historical, or the epistles.

Epistles. That is teaching. Otherwise you will go wrong.

So many wrong doctrines come from this. Everybody knows that all believers are not healed in any church. But it is written in Scripture Jesus healed everybody.

Somebody once asked me, Brother Jack, why don't you preach on physical healing? I said, you show me one sermon Jesus preached on physical healing, I will preach it. You show me one sermon that the apostles preached on healing, I will preach it. You are trying to tell me to do something which Jesus and the apostles never did.

What did they do? They healed thousands. They did not preach even one sermon on healing. Today it is the reverse.

Thousands of sermons on healing, hardly anybody really healed. All the preachers will tell you about somebody who was healed in Nigeria or South Africa or Argentina but not here. Do you find Jesus ever getting up and saying when I was down in Galilee or in Judea or some other place I healed somebody.

Did he find one verse like that? What I want to ask you is I don't want to despise you my brothers and sisters. You are all very clever people when it comes to worldly things and computers and money and all that. Don't you use that common sense to compare every preacher with Jesus Christ.

At least from now onwards please use your intelligence to compare every preacher with Jesus Christ. Is he preaching what Jesus preached? Did Jesus go around collecting money from people? Did the apostles go around collecting money from people? Who are you comparing these people with? And I tell people this if you know how to read and you have a bible and you don't read it and study it then you deserve to be deceived. Because God has given you a book and you despise it.

So I tell people fullness of the Holy Spirit what is the mark? I will not go to Acts I will go to the epistles the teaching of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is poured out what happens? Romans 5.5 The love of God is poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. We begin to love people God and people.

And of course the Holy Spirit controls our tongue. As I told you yesterday I used to get angry but when God filled me with the Holy Spirit He began to control my mother tongue and not just give me other tongues. If you got other tongues but you cannot control your mother tongue I seriously doubt that it is the Holy Spirit.

I am not saying it is an evil spirit it may be your own human spirit. I could not control my tongue mother tongue that's what happened when I was filled with the Holy Spirit. Now I can control my mother tongue and I also speak in other tongues.

But the proof it is other tongues is genuine is that I can control my mother tongue. Because the Holy Spirit fills my heart with love and when you have love you cannot speak evil to other people. So much of confusion has come because people have got an admonition from the Holy Spirit Look at this baptism in the name of Jesus only where did they get it from? Which has led to the denial of the Trinity.

It has come to that because they don't take the plain teaching of Jesus baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But they say why does it say they baptize in the name of Jesus Christ? Because they identified the Son as Jesus Christ. I know in a country like India if I baptize a Hindu person in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit his parents will say there is no problem.

What he means is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. That is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So don't worry you are still a Hindu.

Do you know how I baptize? When I baptize a person I say I baptize you in the name of the Father and the name of the Son the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit. Sorry it is not Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

It is Jesus Christ the Son. That is why the meaning of being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. But it is obeying Jesus command to baptize in the name of the whole Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There is no contradiction in scripture. If you read it carelessly there are so many contradictions. But when you read it carefully you will find there is no contradiction.

So it is the love of God that has to be said abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to love God with all of our heart. Whole heart.

And our neighbor is our self. Our fellow Christians and Jesus loved us. So how can we love God with all our heart? Because so many things are dependent on this.

We saw that in the last session. All things work together for good only for certain people. Those who love God with all their heart.

Not for everybody. All things work together for good for those who love God. So it is very important to love God with all my heart.

Because if I do that every single thing that happens in my life will work for my good. The evil that people do to me, the good that people do to me everything will work for my good. Romans 8.28 is an amazing verse.

You cannot defeat a person who is living in that verse. Whatever evil you do to him it will work for his good. You take the story of Joseph.

He was not even in the new covenant. But all the evil people did to him worked for his good. His brothers sold him off to Egypt.

That is the place God wanted him to go. Party for his wife put him in jail. But that is where he met Pharaoh's butler.

They were all doing good to him. But it looked like bad. But finally it brought him to the throne.

Much more in the new testament. There will be only an earthly blessing in the old covenant. But the principle applies to us today.

If you love God everything that people do will work for your good. If you love God everything that people do will work for your good. In India we have a water filter called aqua guard.

And these people who sell it will come and demonstrate it to you. They say see now. You pour this dirty water here.

See this clean water comes out here. You pour this good water here. No pour the clean water here.

Clean water comes out. Whatever you pour. Dirty water, clean water, clean water comes out.

So I say Romans 8.28 is like the aqua guard of our Christian life. Somebody does something good to me. It comes out good.

Somebody does something evil to me. That also comes out good. What a wonderful life.

There is only one thing that must be inside this machine. You ought to love God with all your heart. What a wonderful life yours will be if you just fulfill this one condition.

So many Christians are missing it. I tell you honestly most believers I have met do not love God with all their I am not fooled by all their clapping and shouting and yelling and all that. I want to see if they keep the commandments.

If you love me keep my commandments. Now I find there are two or three things that will help us to love God with all our heart. So let me just mention three things.

Easy to remember. How to love God with all my heart. So that all the promises in scripture which are for such people will come to me.

And I want to tell you almost all the promises in the new testament are for those who love God with all their heart. If you have prayed and tried to claim some promises it did not work for you because you did not fulfill the condition. Romans 8 28 is only for those who love God with all their heart.

And then you will never grumble or complain. You will give thanks for everything. You will rejoice always.

It all depends on this thing finally you must love God with all your heart. Okay here is the number one way by which we can grow in our love for the Lord. 1 John chapter 4 and verse 19 We love or we love him because he first loved us.

1 John 4 19 So how can love come in our heart? The more I understand how much he loved me the more I will love him. The less I understand how much he loved me the less I will love the Lord. So the Lord may have loved us a fantastic amount.

But if I know only small portion of that I love the Lord only that small bit. I heard a beautiful story once. I am sure you probably have heard that.

It is a very well known story. Of a little girl who looked at her mother and said mummy I love everything about you. Your face is so beautiful.

You are so kind. But your hands are so ugly and black. They are full of scars and dirty and black.

That is one part of your body I don't like. I don't like you touching me with your hands. Then mummy said I will tell you a story.

When you were a little girl one day you went near the fire and your clothes caught fire. In the kitchen. And you screamed.

And I ran. And I had nothing else with which to put out the flame except my hands. And I beat the flame down.

And your body did not get scarred. But my hands got scarred. The whole attitude of that girl changed.

She kissed her mother's hands. She said mummy I love your hands more than any other part of your body. But she didn't know it till then.

That is how many Christians are. They don't know how much Jesus loved them. That's why they love him but just a little bit.

You know because most of us we have only seen pictures and been told of his hanging on the cross. And that's also a great demonstration of love. You know to die there to be put to shame publicly.

In my early days when I was 22-23 years old that's what really moved me. That Lord how much you love me. You were not ashamed to hang in an underwear there in public everybody laughing at you.

If you were not ashamed of me I will not be ashamed of you. That is why in my place of work when I was in the Navy I decided to go to the Navy and to be a bold witness for Jesus Christ. Because of that I lost promotions and I lost many things.

Many inconveniences they would transfer me away from one place. I said okay you can do all that but I'm not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I was not ashamed to have verses written on my scooter.

I was not ashamed to stand outside the naval base and preach the gospel. Even though all my junior sailors senior officers would laugh at me. There's only one thing that helped me.

I said Lord Jesus you were not ashamed to hang there in an underwear on the cross. For me. I will never never be ashamed of you.

I will love you. And you know I used to meditate on how the nails must have hurt him. And the crown of thorns.

And the wound. I said Lord that was all for me. I used to think it was not the nails it was my sin that put him on the cross.

And I used to think it was I who was nailing those nails into his hands. My sin. I mean it's easy to say he died for the sins of the world but I made it personal.

And I said Lord you sacrificed so much for me. I give you my word all of my life I will sacrifice anything for you. I'm willing to quit my job.

I'm willing to give up my convenience. I will never seek for anything. I want to love you and serve you.

And I feel like that even today. Even after 52 years. But as I grew in the Christian life.

The Lord began to show me more aspects of his love for me. That's an amazing thing. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will take of mine and show it to you.

And it's one of the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's why I tell everybody you must be filled with the Holy Spirit. And let the love of God fill your heart.

What does that mean? That means he will give you a revelation of the love of God in your heart. That's what happened to me. Before I was filled with the Holy Spirit I did not know the love of God so much.

I knew only this outward love where he died and hung on a shame for me and all that. But the deep inner love he had for me I never knew. Till I myself was filled with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit began to show me.

And then the Lord began to show me this. Why did Jesus struggle for one hour in Gethsemane? Oh Father take this cup away from me. Take it away from me.

Matthew 26 39 you know that verse. 39. If it is possible.

Let this cup pass from me. And verse 40 says he was doing that for one hour. One hour he was struggling with should I drink this cup or not drink this cup.

And I began to meditate on that cup. I said Spirit of God show me what was this cup that Jesus wanted to avoid. And I knew he's not afraid of physical death.

So many thousands of martyrs have gone to the cross and fire and lions never been afraid of dying for Jesus. He's not afraid of dying on the cross. He was not ashamed of the shame.

I know he would have died on Calvary a thousand times for me if needed. But there was something else he wanted to avoid. And there are so many theories that people have spun about this cup.

You cannot understand it unless the Holy Spirit shows you the love of God. In the Bible schools they teach Jesus was afraid he would die before his time so he was trying to say oh don't save me till I die on the cross. He was never afraid of He was never afraid of He didn't have any such fear.

I'll tell you what that cup was. What was the thing that Jesus valued most in his life? It was not his physical life. It was not his honor.

So we know he was not afraid of shame or dishonor or death. Jesus valued something tremendously which you and I don't value enough. It was fellowship with his father.

Which he had from all eternity. We don't understand when I say that because we don't value fellowship with the father so much. Why do I say that? Because you sometimes commit a sin and you don't confess it immediately.

You get angry with somebody. Husband, wife, neighbor anyone. You don't restore fellowship within one minute.

How many of you restore fellowship within one minute after you get angry with somebody? Do you know if you have sinned when you get angry, you get sinned. Fellowship with the father is broken at that time whether you know it or not. But you take your own cool time.

Sometimes you never apologize for days. Until you apologize to that person whom you have hurt, your fellowship with the father is not restored. If you take six months to apologize to your wife, for six months you don't have fellowship with the father.

You can imagine it that you have it. You can be an elder and clap and sing and shout and preach as much as you like. But I tell you in Jesus name you don't have fellowship with God.

Because you have to walk in the light. John says to have fellowship with God. And in him there is no darkness.

And he said when you come with your offering to God and you remember you hurt somebody, go and settle that first. Stop praying. He will not even accept the money you put in the offering box.

I told you we don't take an offering in our churches, we don't take it in any of our churches. Because people must give secretly and cheerfully and you can't do that when you stick a bag in front of them. So we keep a box at the back.

And for many years we had this verse on that box. First be reconciled to your brother and sister and then give your offering. That means when the chap is trying to put fifty rupees inside, he sees that verse and he puts it back in his pocket.

I say praise the Lord. We are more interested in your reconciling with your brother than your fifty rupees. That is the mark of true godliness.

That's the mark of a true church of Jesus Christ. Who is more interested in relationships being settled than money in the box. So it's very important.

Fellowship is broken and then fellowship with man is broken and fellowship is broken with God also. But we don't value that so we can carry on for days. We don't value fellowship with God at all.

Even in my earlier life it was like that. But not now. As I have come closer to God.

I value fellowship with God more than anything else. I say Lord I will do anything but I must have fellowship with you. I am ready to go and apologize to a beggar or a child or anybody in the world.

Because I am not perfect. I may make a mistake and I accidentally say something. But I will restore fellowship immediately.

Jesus valued fellowship with the father more than anything else. He never sinned. There was never any break of fellowship.

33 and a half years. He never sinned because he never wanted to break fellowship with the father. But now he was nearing the cross.

And he knew it is not just the physical hanging on the cross. It's not just the physical death on the cross. There was something more deeper than that that he would suffer on the cross.

And that was a break of fellowship with the father for three hours. For six hours he hung on that cross. But during the last three hours, when there was pitch darkness, that was an indication that the fellowship between father and son was broken which had been there from all eternity.

That is the meaning of that. And he knew it was coming. And he dreaded it.

Oh father, isn't there some other way? Do I have to face that? I imagine the conversation going on between the father and son in Gethsemane. Father, one hour they were talking. Isn't there some other way? Let me physically suffer anything but break of fellowship.

I don't care if you let all the demons in hell come and torture me. But I don't want to break fellowship with you. The father says, yeah, you have never sinned.

You can come straight up to heaven right now from Gethsemane. But Zakpunin will go to hell. Oh.

Oh then Jesus thought of me. I'm making it personal. It applies to you also.

Jesus said, Zakpunin will go to hell. Okay. Then I'll go to the cross.

The day the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to that, I wept. I said, Lord, so many years I saw your love for me on Calvary. Now you have led me inside your heart.

I've seen how much you love me. That you were willing to face eternal hell on the cross. You know what it means to be forsaken by God? The only place in the universe which you can say is forsaken by God is hell.

And that is the punishment for our sins. We say Christ died for our sins. It's correct.

But in the beginning we think only of physical death. What Jesus endured on the cross was a spiritual death for three hours. And it was for my sins.

That was what made him take that decision. Okay, I'll drink the cup. That cup of breaking fellowship with the Father.

You know the Bible says God is the head of Christ in 1 Corinthians 11. So break of fellowship was like the head being wrenched off. And he was willing to do it for me.

Have you ever thought of this? What is the punishment for your sin? Is it physical death? Supposing you witness to an intelligent Hindu who knows the Bible and you say we are sinners. Jesus took the punishment for our sins. He says how? He says he died on the cross.

This is a very sharp Hindu person. He says so you are saying that physical death is the punishment for my sin. You say Jesus physically died for me on the cross.

So that physical death is the punishment for my sin. Why should he take it? When I die physically I have taken the punishment for my sin. Why should somebody else die for me? What is your answer? Tell me.

If physical death is the punishment for sin then every man when he dies physically has taken the punishment. You have no answer for that man's question. But if I were to ask you supposing you die in your sin where will you go? You should go to hell.

That is the punishment for sin. It is a spiritual death and physical death. It is a cutting off of fellowship from the father for eternity.

That is the only God forsaken place in the universe, hell. So the thing is not just the physical place called hell. There is a place like that but that is not the main thing.

There is a place like that but that is not the main thing. The main thing is being forsaken by God. Just like I told you wherever Jesus is that is hell.

Jesus Christ is here and there and that is heaven. Wherever God forsakes somebody that is hell, wherever he is. So when Jesus cried out my God, my God why have you forsaken me? You know what he was experiencing those three hours? The hell that you and I should experience.

Think of all the agony of suffering in hell for eternity. Think of anyone who suffers in hell for You take all that suffering and concentrate it into three hours. That is what Jesus suffered on the cross.

It was not just a physical death. The physical death was less than 1% of his suffering. The crown of thorns and the nails and all were nothing compared to what he really went through.

And he suffered because he was God he could suffer in three hours what human beings suffer in eternity. Because he was an infinite being he could suffer it in three hours. When I saw that I wept and I said Lord now I know how much you love me.

And I still have to see more. When I see him face to face one day I believe the greatest thing that will hit me is how much he loved me. And how little I loved him.

There is a song that I often sing to myself by and by when I look at his face one day and I see his hands I wish I had given him more of my life. I wish I had given more than I ever gave. I sang it 30 years ago I sing it today.

I sang it 40 years ago I sing it today. I wish I had given him more. He doesn't demand it of me.

It's love. The Holy Spirit shows me the love of Jesus. And I love him because he first loved me.

If you don't love him that much it's because you haven't seen his love. I can explain it to you maybe you've heard something in your head but you've got to see it in your heart. Love is not a thing of the head.

You ask a young man and woman who are madly in love with each other it's not a head thing it's a heart thing. They are deeply in love with each other. It's a heart thing you can't explain it.

You can understand in your head what I said and be moved. But it will only be temporary it will disappear by tomorrow. But when it becomes a heart thing for you like it became for me it will change the whole direction of your life.

You'll be lifted up to a heavenly plane and you will no longer live this third rate Christian life you're living right now. And the Christian life will not be a burden to you like it is now. Avoiding sin will be easy.

Because you saw what sin did to Jesus. You will hate sin. You know I like to think in pictures.

Many things in the bible I like to think in pictures. And Jesus also liked to think in pictures like flowers and trees and birds he always spoke about those things. And I used to think how much should I hate sin? I must hate sin as much as I hate going and licking the toilet bowl.

I must hate sin as much as I hate going and licking the toilet Somebody said I'll give you money just lick that toilet bowl. I don't want it. I hate it.

Lord I want to hate every sin like that. Every sin. Sexual sin.

Thought sin. Bitterness. Jealousy.

Everything. When you see what sin did for your savior on the cross. He took the punishment for our sin on the cross that eternal separation.

The second thing that helps me to love Jesus. One we love him because we see how much he loved us. The second is from Luke chapter 7. We read here.

Luke chapter 7. Verse 47. 7.47 He who has been forgiven little loves little. He who has been forgiven much loves much.

And he who has been forgiven much loves much. And he who has forgiven little loves little. It's a principle.

How to love the lord more? Who is the one who loves more? The one who has been forgiven much. So you say then you say you mean we have to sin more in order to love the lord more? No no no no. We have all sinned enough in our lifetime.

We have to be aware of how much we have been forgiven. Most of us have committed millions and millions of sins. Because even things that we should have done which we did not do are also sin.

Many people think only of the sins they have committed. Shall I tell you it says in James chapter 4 about one type of sin which most people never think about. They never even confess it.

James 4 17 The one who knows what is the right thing to do and does not do it, it is sin. Shall I tell you a sin that many of us are doing regularly? According to this verse, not something you commit but some right thing you should have done but did not do. You know the story of the good samaritan? There is that beaten man on the road.

The Levite and the priest passed by him. What was their sin? Did they kick him? Did they spit on him? What was their sin in that story? What is it? They did nothing. Do you know doing nothing can be a sin sometimes? Have you ever heard of that? Have you ever heard a preacher tell you that doing nothing can be a sin? That is the sin of the Levite and the priest.

They walked by and did nothing. When you could have done something and you did not do it, it is a sin. Here is something we could have done and should be doing every day.

Hebrews 3 This is a command of God. Verse 13 In English it is very clear in the NASB. I do not think it is so clear in Malayalam.

Encourage one another every day. How is it there? In Malayalam This Prabodhikana is very easy to do. We all like to Prabodhika each other.

To give exhortations to each other. Encourage the Greek word. I looked up the Greek word.

It has not been translated correctly in Malayalam. NASB is one of the most accurate English translations. Encourage one another every day.

So that people do not sin. Did you encourage your wife yesterday? Did you encourage your husband yesterday? No. You sinned.

When was the last time you spoke a word of encouragement to your husband or wife? And you scratch your head and say I remember 15 years ago I did tell her a word of encouragement. What does it say here? Encourage one another every day. It may not be with words.

It may be with a smile. When was the last time you smiled at your wife or husband? We Indian people are so reserved. Even in the photographs the photographers say don't show your teeth.

I remember when my wife and I went to take our wedding photograph in 1968. We were absolutely thrilled that we were married. We loved each other.

We sat in the photograph studio to smile and he said close your mouth. And like a fool I obeyed him. I did not have the courage to say no I'm going to smile.

So till today my wedding photograph is like this. You young people don't make that mistake. But later on we took photographs where we smiled.

If you go to our website you'll see both those photographs. You'll see the difference that happens in a marriage. So encourage one another.

We don't do it. We sin. So when it says we have sinned much it's a question of being aware how many millions of sins I've sinned.

The things I did and the things I did not do. And when I realized that and you can realize that as you read the bible. So many things the holy spirit shows this is sin, this is sin, this is sin.

And like Paul I say oh wretched man. I'll tell you honestly many times I've seen the light of God I said Lord I'm the chiefest of sinners. That makes me love the Lord more.

Because he was forgiven much loves much. So that's the second thing I do. I meditate on all the sins that I can remember in my entire life.

I'm sure they're all forgiven. Lord Jesus has cleansed me thoroughly I don't even have one bit of doubt about it. And I also am absolutely sure what he said I will not remember them anymore God said.

But I still remember them. For one reason. Because the bible tells me to do it.

Let me give you one more verse in this new bible you're getting today. Second Peter chapter one. Verse nine.

Second Peter one nine I want to paraphrase it like this. If you forget the sins you were purified from then you will become blind and short-sighted. I don't want to be spiritually blind.

I don't want to be spiritually short-sighted. Then I must never forget all the sins I committed in my life. No if you're not sure that Jesus has forgiven you then don't try to remember it.

You confessed your sin and you're absolutely sure God has forgiven it all. And that God will not remember it anymore. Having come there then look back and remember all your sins.

It will increase your love for the Lord. Because you will see how much you've been forgiven. And he was forgiven much, loves much.

And another by-product of that is you'll be merciful with other people who have sinned. So many Christians are so hard on other people who sin. Because they've forgotten how much they've sinned themselves.

We're so hard on our children. Because we forget what we're like. I agree we must be strict with our children.

Because they've got a bad nature. But we must be merciful to them because they got that bad nature from you. You can't blame them for that bad nature, they got it from you.

So you have to be merciful and kind. And strict. So that's the second thing.

Remember your past sins. Not for condemnation. So that you see how much God has forgiven you.

And so that you can be merciful to others. Then a third thing which helps us to love the Lord more. Luke 16.

Many people don't know this verse. And no preacher would ever tell you about it. Luke 16.13 No servant can serve two masters.

Who are the two masters? Not God and the devil. It says you're God and mammon. Mammon means all money, property, gold, all material things.

Job. All the things that bring material wealth in the world. You cannot serve both.

You have to make a choice. If you love one, read it, read it in verse 13. Read it in your bible.

He will hate the one and love the other. Let's put words to that. He will hate money and love God.

Or he will hate God. He will hate money and love God or he will hate God and love money. So if you love material things, your love for God is going to decrease.

I'm not talking about earning money. You earn as much as you like. Without cheating.

Without telling lies. And without neglecting the kingdom of God. And without sacrificing your family and your soul to make money.

That's not worth it. Because that way you will lose your family. My wife is a medical doctor.

She graduated from Vellore. About two years before we got married. She had a bond to the medical college so she served for one year after our marriage.

Then our son was born. I was very poor those days. I was serving the Lord, working among the villages and students.

But we decided one thing. We will put our family above money. If we have one son, we didn't know how many children we would get then.

But God has given us one. We're not going to neglect him. If he gets less money, we'll give him less things but at least we'll show him our love and seek to bring him up in a godly way.

So we decided to live very, very simply. We never bought any new clothes. Shirts were torn.

We just stitch it and use it again. And we decided we're going to bring up our child in a godly way. That requires a mother at home.

Because I'm traveling so much preaching the word here and there. She also goes to work. The child will be like an orphan.

Or some ayah will have to bring it up. But the bible doesn't say ayahs bring up children in the fear of God. No, it's the responsibility of parents.

And I say I'm not here to judge anybody else. They can do what they like with their children but my children are a sacred trust God has given me. So all these 43 years, 42 years, my wife never worked.

Well, she didn't work for money. But she has served thousands of poor people treating them medically freely. Whenever we get time.

What is the result? We have four sons today. All four of them are disciples of Jesus. Serving the Lord, preaching the gospel.

And like Paul, supporting themselves and like me. If you go to our website, you can even listen to some of their messages. Now I have thought of this after all these years.

Supposing my wife had worked as a doctor for 40 years. How much would she have earned? Maybe one crore? I put that on the balance on one side. And I put four sons who are following the Lord on the other side.

I say, which is heavier? I have no doubt in my mind. This is a million times heavier than one crore. Don't place money above God.

Don't place money above your family. Don't regret in eternity. I have no regrets today.

Maybe my wife could have got some big position as a doctor somewhere. And even if one of my children went wayward, I would have never forgiven myself for that. No one can serve two masters.

You want to love God? Jesus said, you've got to have a hatred towards these material things. You read Luke 16.13 and tell me if there are some strange doctrines that Aquinas is preaching or what Jesus preached. I will never preach what I have not practiced.

The devil shuts the mouths of people in this area. You cannot serve God and mammon. It's clear.

How to find out who I am serving? Supposing there is a man here. I say he is my servant. Shibu says no, he is my servant.

How will you find out whose servant he is? Very easy. Brother Zach, you give him a command saying, come here. And Shibu, you call him to come here.

You'll know immediately whose servant he is. Right or wrong? Right. Okay.

Now here's God and money. God says to you, come here. Money says come here.

You'll find out very quickly whose servant you are. You don't have to even think about it. You know the answer immediately.

I hope you got a new bible. That'll change your life for all eternity. Dear brothers and sisters, if I've spoken strongly, it's because I love you all.

A doctor gives strong injections and medicines because he loves that patient, he wants to heal. So, take it from God. Let us love Jesus with all of our hearts.

Heavenly Father, we pray that you will help us to remember the things we heard. That here in Kuwait there'll be those who love you more than they love money. Whose lifestyle shows they love you more than anything else.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/AmmPhGs1huE.mp4>
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