

Manifesting Jesus Life As We Die To Our Self Life

by Zac Poonen

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Scripture: Matthew 3:16, Romans 6:6, 2 Corinthians 4:7, John 12:24, Isaiah 30:15, Hebrews 4:9, Colossians 3:15

Description

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Transcript

I was born again 63 years ago and I went to a church from the beginning, a church that emphasized the study of the Bible and I was very thankful and I got baptized in water. But after three or four years of that, I found a great lack of power in my life. I had a lot of information in my head and that's what that church majored on, teaching, teaching and get a lot of information from scripture, but not the power to live an overcoming life.

And I feel that is the condition of many Christians who go to churches and some more information, truths, but the test is in our daily life. Do we have the power to live the way Jesus wants us to live? So then I, as I read the scriptures, I read of the being filled with the Holy Spirit and the church I was going to did not emphasize that at all, the immersion in the Holy Spirit. So I began to seek God for that and somebody told me to go to a Pentecostal church and I went there and quite frankly, I was very disappointed with what I saw.

I heard a lot of noise. I saw the pastors running out of money. I said, this can't be it.

So I sought God in my own. I had a room of my own. I was working in the Navy those days and I would seek the Lord and the Lord showed me something which I'd never heard anywhere.

Think of when Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. And as I knew from the scriptures that Jesus was anointed, if so, I must also be anointed too. But when was he anointed with the Holy Spirit? When he submitted to John the Baptist, immersing him in baptism.

So when John, when he submitted to John, pushing him into the water and lifting him up, then the Spirit came upon him, you read in Matthew chapter 3. So the meaning of baptism is, Romans 6 says, a submitting to death, to my self-life. It's, I'm, my old man was crucified with Christ, so I submit. It's, you know, that's, you allow a person to put you under the water.

It's a symbol, just like breaking a bread, it's a symbol. So here's a symbol of your submitting to somebody who's pushing you down in the water. It's the surest way to die.

If you keep him there, he'll definitely die. It's just a matter of minutes before he's dead. But why do you submit to somebody in baptism? Because you know he's not going to leave you there, he's going to lift you up.

And the meaning there is, if you submit to being put to death in your self-life, God Almighty will raise you up. And the power of the Spirit came upon Jesus then. And so right from that time, this is 1963, I remember it very clearly.

I was seeking God for anointing to preach God's Word and to serve Him. And the Lord said to me very clearly that time, if you choose this way of death to self, I've never heard, never heard it in any of my, in the church I was going to, my power will rest upon you always. But the day you decide to move away from this path, my power will depart from you.

So I learned something that day. If I want God's power to rest in my life and in my ministry, I have to choose the way of death to self. He won't force me.

You know, when somebody baptizes you, you can resist it. Say, no, I don't want to go under the water. And I decided, because that was 59 years ago.

And I said, Lord, I want to know more and more of it. And through the years, I've learned more and more. So I want to show you a verse in 2 Corinthians 4, which became very precious to me through these years.

In the Old Testament, the mark of God's blessing was prosperity. Defeat of one's enemies, that was a mark God's blessing you. Everything going well in your life.

You're getting a promotion on time in your job, earning plenty of money. That's a mark of old covenant blessing. New covenant blessing, God may give you money or not give you money.

That's not the important thing. It is secondary. The amount of money you earn, whether you're a billionaire or just earn enough to survive, these things are insignificant.

There's no virtue or evil in either. The important thing is whether we have the life of Jesus being manifested in our body. And these verses tell us how that happens.

It says in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 7, we have a treasure in this earthen vessel. That treasure is Christ. And for that life of Christ that came into you when you were born again, into me and you, for it's there, but for it to be manifest, our self-life, which covers it up, must be crushed.

That's what Jesus meant when he said a grain of wheat remains alone, but it falls into the ground and dies. It brings forth much fruit. I mean, we know how wheat is grown.

You take a grain of wheat. There's a life inside that grain of wheat, but it's encased in that casing that God has made around it. But life can never come forth.

There's life inside. That's why when you sow it into the ground, that shell of that grain of wheat cracks open and the life comes forth. That's how you get wheat.

But if you take that grain of wheat and never allow that outer shell to be cracked open and keep it in a glass case in your sitting room, after a hundred years, it'll be one grain of wheat. But if that's sown into the ground, it multiplies, it becomes hundreds, and through the years, it becomes again sown and again comes up, becomes millions of grains of wheat. What is the secret? It allows that outer shell to be cracked open.

That's what Jesus said. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will never bring forth much fruit. My dear brothers and sisters, God wants to bring forth much fruit from every one of us, but that's hidden inside a shell, which we call our self-life.

We want to protect our dignity, our reputation, our self. I want my way. As long as you keep that attitude, there's life inside.

Christ has come into your heart, but it'll never be manifest. And you can live all your life and discover when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ that you wasted your earthly life just making money, getting a good name, going regularly to church, getting a good reputation as a decent Christian. You'll discover that your life did not count for God.

I don't want to be known as a decent Christian. In fact, I don't want to be known by other people at all. I want my life to count for God in such a way that when I stand before the Lord in the final day, I will have no regret when my entire life is played on a videotape and I saw the choices I made in life.

And I see in each situation that because I made the right choice, the life of Jesus became manifest. That is my greatest longing. So here it says, in order this treasure in the earthen vessel, like the life inside the grain of wheat, how will it be manifested? That outer shell has to be cracked.

And so the Apostle Paul says, this is how God cracked it in his case. We're saying he was afflicted in every way. Now, affliction can be physical.

It's not always physical. People can irritate us. That's a form of affliction.

People can abuse us. People can speak evil of us. These are all various ways in which our self-life is afflicted.

Somebody's speaking evil about me. I hear about it. Somebody's putting me down or treating me badly or so many things or cheating me perhaps in every possible way.

Why? God's trying to crack that outer shell. You know what most men do, even most Christians? Resist it. Complain.

Look at what that guy is saying about me. Look what that person is trying to do to me. And the shell of that grain of wheat remains like that.

If you live like that all your life, I want to say to you, my dear brother and sister, you would have wasted your Christian life even if you sat in this church for 30, 40 years. Like we heard today, it's not hearing the messages and have being burning in our heart. The life of Jesus must be manifest.

Perplexed. That's another way God breaks open this verse 8, this outer shell. We'd like to have clarity, but God gives us perplexity.

Clarity and all is for little babies. The more we mature, you think the more we mature, things should be clear. It's quite the opposite.

Perplexity. This is the greatest apostle at that time saying, I was perplexed. You're seeking God and you're perplexed.

And you bow before God and say, Lord, I don't understand why you're doing this to me. I'm perplexed, but I submit. When I'm afflicted, I submit.

When I'm perplexed, I submit. Verse 9, persecuted. Persecution also in the early days, it was physical, that they were tortured and their heads were cut off.

But you can be persecuted in your office because you stand up for Christ. I found that when I was in the Navy, I found in numerous situations where my senior officers would trouble me, write bad reports about me because I stood up for Christ. And I said, I will not do some of those unrighteous things.

I refuse to do it. And you know, in the Navy, you do something like that, you can be in prison. I say, well, it's fine.

I'm prepared to face imprisonment, but I will not do something unrighteous. No matter which senior officer tells me to do it, you may lose your job. But do you think if you lose your job for the Lord's sake, he'll let you suffer? He'll give you a better one, where you can glorify him more.

Persecuted, struck down. These are the ways in which that outer shell is being broken. And then he sums it all up in this expression.

There's a beautiful expression, verse 10 and 11 and 12. Always carrying about in my body, the dying of Jesus. There's a dying of Jesus on the cross where he died for my sins.

I have no part in that. I cannot die for my sins. He died.

Nobody else could die. Almighty God had to come as a man and die. But the Bible says that I was crucified with him.

And in that way, there's a dying of Jesus that I have to live with every single day. Dying to the self-life that covers up the life of Jesus as it's coming to me, for it to come forth, for that life inside the grain of wheat. Wherever you see a man from whom life, much fruit is coming, you can be absolutely sure that in his

secret life, he has died numerous times.

To many things, died to ambition, died to opportunities to make something out of his own life in this world and saying, Lord, I only want to live for you. You will discover in the final day that all that you accomplish in this world has got no value if Christ was not manifested in your life. And it says here, if I accept this dying, look at this wonderful promise.

This is the thing that challenges me. The life of Jesus, 2 Corinthians 4.10, will be manifested in my body. You tell me, brother, sister, is there anything greater than you could do in life than to have the life of Jesus manifested in your body? That's greater than being a greatest Olympic athlete or the king of president or anything.

For the life of Jesus, you young people, I wish you'd be gripped by this, that the life of Jesus must be manifested in your body. There should be a longing every day, the life of Jesus. Then he goes on to say in verse 11, similar words.

And therefore, we who are alive are constantly, 24-7, delivered over to death for Jesus' sake. Somebody may insult you, keep your mouth shut, die. Somebody praises you, die.

Don't get excited with that. And the life of Jesus will be manifested in us. Again, the same emphasis.

And not only that, if I go this way of death to myself, verse 12, the life of Jesus will be through me, begin to be manifested in other people. So verse 10 and 11 is referring to myself. And verse 12, it is going to be manifested in others.

So now, how do I know that I have really died to myself? There is one way. You know what is written on a coffin? R-I-P, rest in peace. Rest is the proof of death.

Complete rest, like if you were hearing a little while ago. If there is any unrest in my heart, the Holy Spirit is telling me, you haven't died. A dead person is not in unrest, not at all.

If he is in unrest, you better don't put him in the coffin. He is not dead yet. When a person has died, it is exactly like it says on the coffin, rest in peace.

There is rest and there is peace. So I can easily find out whether I have died to myself or not. I use this test for myself in different situations.

If I find an unrest in me, it happens. I say, Lord, I want to die. And sometimes it is a struggle to die.

Honestly, it is a struggle to die. But I have chosen that way and I say, Lord, I don't care how long it takes. I am going to enter into rest.

It is very, very important. And the Lord emphasized this so much in the Old Testament. For example, we read that God created the earth in six days and Adam was created on the sixth day.

And he was created to be a servant, a gardener in the Garden of Eden. There was a lot of work to be done in the Garden of Eden. God didn't create Adam to be a lazy man, lazing around.

No, he had to work from day one in the garden. But God told him, hang on, before you go to work in the garden, I got something to teach you. So Adam's first day, remember, he was created at the end of the

sixth day.

The first part of the sixth day, God made the animals. You read that in Genesis 1. Then towards the later part of the sixth day, he made Adam. So Adam's first day was the seventh day.

And we read in Genesis 2, it was a day of rest. God called it the Sabbath. So what was God trying to teach Adam? Adam, there's a lot of work to be done in the garden, but you can't do it properly unless you come to rest.

You have to learn to come to rest in God before you work for me. If you're in unrest, sorry, you can't do my work. That's the lesson from the seventh day, Sabbath.

Adam, I don't know whether he understood it fully, but rest and peace, I don't think he understood it. That's why he went and sinned the next day. So whenever there's unrest, for example, if Adam had understood that lesson fully, he had a conscience, a very sensitive conscience.

Remember, he had the most sensitive conscience, better than all of us, because he had never sinned. And with that very sensitive conscience, where he had been taught on the seventh day, you must always be at rest in your conscience. He went into the garden, both Adam and Eve.

And here was a serpent tempting him to eat from that tree. And I'm absolutely sure, without a doubt, that Eve felt an unrest in her heart. Hey, this is not what God wants me to do.

He told me not to eat of this. But Eve told that voice to shut up and took the tree from the tree. That's how sin came.

And you and I have many times told that voice of unrest to shut up. I'm still going to do it. It's the same sin that Adam and Eve did.

I would say to you, at least from now on, listen to that voice of unrest in your heart. Don't tell it to shut up. It's the voice of God telling you, you are not in a fit state.

You need to die. That's the meaning of the Sabbath. But you want to be busy.

Adam wants to be busy in the garden. All your work for God will be useless. If you learn, if you don't work from a place of rest.

See this in Exodus chapter 31. Exodus 31. It's amazing how God made this law of the Sabbath so strict.

It's unbelievable. The Lord told Moses in verse 12, Exodus 31, 12 to 17. The Sabbath is a sign between me and you.

Verse 14, Exodus 31, 14. You must observe the Sabbath. It is holy.

If you profane it, you will surely be put to death. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be cut off. Six days you can work as much as you like.

Work morning till night if you like. But the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete 100% rest. And if anybody does any work on the Sabbath day, he must be surely put to death.

There's we read later on in Numbers chapter 16 that a man went out to collect sticks. He didn't light a fire just to collect sticks on the Sabbath day. And he was put to death.

He was not supposed to do any work on the Sabbath day. Why? What was God trying to teach Israel through this? The Sabbath rest is very important. Not the day, not the Saturday like the seven day Adventists teach.

This is a picture. It was all a picture of this inner rest. And inner rest, you know what unrest is? Some thought comes into your mind about somebody who is disturbing you in some way and you're in unrest.

How would you feel at that moment if you died? You wouldn't be disturbed by what that man is doing or saying or anything. This is the way of liberation. We get into so many situations where usually dealing with other people, unrest, unrest.

And we live in a world where there's plenty of it to cause unrest. Something in the office, something in the home, some relative did something, somebody did something or the other. And if you are taking the place of Jesus, like going under the water of baptism, to take that place, that won't disturb you.

As long as it's disturbing you, you're preserving that outer shell of the grain of wheat. The life of Jesus will never come forth. You can understand everything.

You can get up here and preach. And the life of Jesus will not be manifest in you in that moment of temptation. I'll tell you something.

Some of you may wish, oh, I wish I could preach like these brothers who get up here and preach. I'll tell you, that's not the great thing. Something greater than that is to manifest the life of Jesus, even if you never come here to preach.

I would any day manifest the life of Jesus rather than be a preacher. Because in eternity, you'll find that is the important thing. Whether you're preaching as a gift, God gives to some people.

If you have it, God gives it, you use it. But that's not the great thing. In the world, in churches, they appreciate that so much.

But in heaven, you'll discover many preachers are not there. Like you heard, they're in hell. But a person who's died to himself or herself every day in order to manifest the life of Jesus is going to be the greatest person in the kingdom of God.

See what it says in Isaiah chapter 30. Isaiah chapter 30 and verse 15, the Lord says, in repentance and rest, you will be saved. Again, it's about rest, the Sabbath rest.

Repentance means turning around. In turning around from that way you're going right now, and coming to a place of rest, you will be saved. You'll be saved from your self-life, you'll be saved from so many problems in your life if you learn to live this life of rest.

In quiet, in repentance and rest, you'll be saved in quietness and trusting in God, your strength will come but you are not willing. You say, no, I'll handle it myself. And you try to handle it yourself and you get more and more unrest.

He said, no, we'll flee on horses. We'll ride on swift horses and solve that problem. Yes, what will happen? 1000 of you will flee at the threat of one man.

And therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, verse 18. He waits. He keeps on telling you, come to rest, die to yourself.

He waits, he waits, he waits. And it says here, your ears, verse 21, will hear a word behind you. And I'll tell you this, those of you who heard this message, today, tomorrow, in the coming days, your ears will hear a word in your spirit, saying, remember what you heard on Sunday.

Die to yourself, enter into rest. This is the way, verse 21, walk in it. When you turn to the, when you're slipping away and going out, the meaning there is when you slip away and turn to the right or left, instead of going that straight pathway of death to self.

This is the meaning of what we read in Hebrews earlier. In Hebrews it says, there remains a rest for the people of God. Hebrews 4, 9. There remains a Sabbath rest for God's people, for you and me.

And verse 1, let us fear. With such a promise of entering his rest being given to us by God, you seem to come short of it. Don't miss it, it says.

This is the meaning of the New Testament Sabbath, of the Sabbath in New Testament terms. It's very easy to keep it physically, like some people do. They don't do any work on Saturday and things like that.

That's not the answer. It is all a picture of an inner rest where I stop struggling. It's a secret of a victorious life.

It's a secret of overcoming anger. It's a secret of overcoming jealousy, bitterness, complaining, grumbling. It's a secret of overcoming discouragement and condemnation and being constantly irritated with somebody.

The problem may remain, but you will be at rest. That evil person may remain evil, but you'll be at rest. It's a wonderful life.

This is the life God prepared for his people. The land of Canaan, where the children of Israel were supposed to go, picture this rest. That's what it says in Hebrews chapter 3. They're 40 years, they wandered in the wilderness and they did not enter into the rest, it says in verse 16 to 19 of chapter 3. That land of Canaan was a picture of rest, symbolic.

It says, now we are to come into that. Another verse in Colossians 3, which has been a great guide in my life, Colossians chapter 3. A word similar to rest found in the New Testament is the word peace. I don't have time to show it to you, but sometimes you read in John chapter 20, whenever Jesus appeared on the resurrection day to anybody, his first words were peace.

Peace be to you. And that is how God wants it to be in our life. Now, so Colossians in chapter 3, we read, Colossians chapter 3, verse 15.

Let this piece of Christ, the margin of my Bible says, be the referee in your hearts. There is a referee with a whistle inside your heart. When he blows the whistle, stop the game.

Nothing you do after that will be counted. You can run with the ball, kick the ball. It will not be counted.

You can throw it into the basket or kick it into the goal. It will not be counted. When the referee has blown the whistle after that, nothing is counted.

You must stop. Set it right. There's a foul being committed.

And here it says, God has put a referee in our hearts. It's peace or rest. So whenever you find unrest in your heart, in any situation, don't blame somebody else.

Don't blame your children. Don't blame that neighbor. Don't blame that other guy in the office.

Don't blame your relatives. Say, Lord, the referee has blown the whistle in my heart. I'm going to stop.

I can't change him. I can't change the people around me. I can do something about myself.

I am going to enter into the dying of Jesus. I'm going to die to myself. Yeah, in the beginning, it's a little difficult.

But over a period of time, as we get used to it, we'd be amazed to see the result of the life of Jesus being manifested more and more in your life. And your wife will be surprised as to what happened to you. Your husband will be surprised.

People who work with and live with you will be surprised. What happened to this guy? He entered into the dying of Jesus. Yeah, it's something only the Holy Spirit can fully explain.

So I'll leave it at that.

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