

# Manifesting the Holiness and Compassion of God

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of aligning our goals with God's goal for us, which is to become more like Jesus Christ. It highlights the need for a balance between truth and grace, compassion and conviction, humility, and standing firm in holiness. The speaker stresses the significance of being quick to apologize, seek forgiveness, and acknowledge shortcomings while maintaining unwavering convictions in the church. The message encourages a continual reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance and course corrections in our journey towards Christlikeness.*

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**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28, Luke 19:41, 2 Peter 1:4, Proverbs 11:25, Psalms 18:25, Luke 19:41

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## Description

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## Transcript

Something that is well known to those of us who have heard the message here through the years is what is the goal of the Christian life and what is the goal of the individual Christian. It's very important to know that because there are many people who feel our goal in life is just to bring more people to Christ. Evangelism, evangelism there are people who feel it must go out everywhere and bring people to Christ.

There's nothing against that. That's taught in the scriptures. There are others who feel that the great thing is to help the poor because Jesus said in the final day all nations will come before him and he will say to some I was hungry and you never gave me anything to eat and I was sick and you never visited me and I was naked and you never clothed me and I was homeless and you never invited me into your home and they'll be rejected and the others who did all those things were accepted and so many people feel that social work that's the main thing to help those who are homeless and poor and sick and there are many verses like this which can confuse a person as to what exactly is the goal of the individual Christian.

Now I'm not talking about the whole church. The whole church is a worldwide body and what the God wants the whole church to do is not what God wants each individual Christian to do. God has given different gifts to different parts of the body and if you think of the whole church yeah then there are some people called to do social work to help the poor to run orphanages and hospitals and care for the poor and many people do that and some God-fearing Roman Catholics probably do it better than anybody else but Jesus also did it.

He healed the sick and cleansed the lepers but that was not the main thing he came for. It doesn't say in Matthew 121 you shall call his name Jesus because he will help the poor or he will feed the hungry. That's not the meaning of that name.

That's not what he primarily came for. A lot of secondary things he did which is this. You shall call his name Jesus Matthew 121 because he will save his people from I would say all their sins.

That's the main meaning of the name Jesus. So the destination God has made for us it's very important verse for all of us to remember and I hope those who don't know it should know it Romans 8 29. It says God has predestined us.

Predestined means a destination determined beforehand. Pre means beforehand. It's like you get a flight ticket on the flight ticket so it's written beforehand where you're gonna go and I say when you go to the airport you go into the plane which is going to take you there.

You don't look for the biggest plane or the most beautiful plane or the airline you like which is the plane going to take me to this destination. We always do that. So if our destination Romans 8 29 Jesus he predestined us to be conformed to the image of his son.

Now when it says in the beginning of the Bible Genesis 1 God made Adam in his image. Does it mean he was like Jesus Christ? Not at all. If he was he wouldn't have sinned.

So I don't understand fully what that means that he made him in his image. I think it's just my understanding of that verse is he made him with the capacity to receive the life of God. The angels were not made like that.

See like the bulb here has got a capacity to receive electricity and give light. This table doesn't have that capacity. So we can say Adam was made like that.

Not light but the capacity to receive that light and become light to become like Christ. The angels were not made like that. They cannot have the life of God in them.

But here when it says God has predestined us to become conformed to the image of his son that means this capacity that we have has to fully receive the life of Jesus Christ. So that's a very very important verse that everything in my life must be determined by where am I headed. It's just like a journey you take you know if you take a journey long journey from here to some other part of the United States you will want to get there by the shortest route and you will not be sidetracked by any diversions on the way.

There may be many interesting things on the way but you say hey I've got to get there. Now if you see clearly my goal in life God has determined for me before I He saved me. His plan is I have to become totally like Christ.

I will evaluate everything in my life by is this going to help me to get to that destination. What about my earthly job? I need to find an earthly job to support myself and my family so that I don't become a beggar so that I don't become dependent on others. In fact Paul as an apostle was so careful that he himself didn't want to be dependent on others and that's what we taught all the elders in our churches.

Don't be dependent on people. We don't want anything that would distract us from the goal that we have to become like Christ. Now if you have other goals which you say well I want that also and this you'll ultimately find that that other goal takes over whether you want to be a great person in the world or a something else.

You have to decide and very often the test is this. We have children. Many of us married we have children.

I want to ask you what is your ambition for your children? That's a pretty good test of what you value. If your ambition for your children is that they should be very rich or they should be highly educated, number one, and number two also become Christ-like, I don't believe you yourself have seen the goal. What we see as the goal if we feel that is the main thing God created us for, that's what we long for our children.

And all of you parents need to ask yourself, especially those of you who've got children that are growing up, what is your goal? I'm not saying that they should not have an education but is that your primary goal? Because if that is your primary goal you will raise a Pharisee. I can prophesy that right now. Be careful that you don't raise a Pharisee who's got all the right language but his goal in life is not to become Christ-like but to become something else in the world.

And it's possible that you may lose your child one day to the world and to the devil. It's my duty to warn you, if God has given predestined a goal for his children and I have some other goal for myself or any member in my family, God is not going to support that. You got to be sure of that.

He's going to support me if I'm determined to go to that goal and I got to be honest before God. It's not a question of me convincing you or you convincing me. God must see my heart and say that's the goal.

That's the goal I have. It's the only goal I have in my life and everything is designed for that goal and God must see that's the only goal I have for my children. Other things must all come subservient to that.

So that's a very very important verse Romans 8 verse 29. And thereby Jesus becomes, it says in that verse, the elder brother of many brothers. Another very important verse that we must all know is what is the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit? Now there are many people who have different ideas of what being baptized in the Holy Spirit is.

You go to the Brethren, the Plymouth Brethren Assemblies, they'll say when you're born again you're baptized in the Holy Spirit. Well it has happened to some people. I think Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit as soon as he was born again.

It does happen to some but doesn't happen to everyone. Mainly I think because people haven't understood the word baptism. It's a Greek word which has been imported into the English language.

There are some Indian words, like there's an Indian word called dobi. You know what a dobi means? Indians know it. It's a washerman.

It's been imported. It's in some dictionaries, English dictionaries. But if you don't know the origin of that word, you get some mystical idea of what baptism is.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, some amazing people speak about being baptized in the Holy Spirit, baptized in the Holy Spirit. A lot of people don't know what it means. You're talking about a word you haven't understood the meaning of.

But if you go to the meaning of that word in Greek, it means just like immersed. If you put a bucket, a hand in a bucket of water, the Greeks would say, I baptize my hand in water. And that's what happens in water baptism.

You're put into a water and you're immersed in water. And baptism is immersion in the Holy Spirit. You stand under a waterfall, you're immersed in the Holy Spirit.

In other words, every part of you is drenched. When you're immersed, it's like standing under the shower and every part of you is drenched. That is a picture of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Every part of you is controlled by the Holy Spirit. And we must not go... I want to tell you a simple principle of understanding the Scriptures. If you want to understand New Testament doctrine, don't go to the historical sections of Scripture to get a doctrine.

That means you go to the Acts of the Apostles, you can't get a doctrine from there. It's history. You go to the history of Jesus' life, you can't get a doctrine from there.

Because if you do that, I'll tell you what, you become dishonest. And I'll give you a classical example of that. It is important for you to understand that so as you don't get confused by all the teaching that goes on in the world.

I was in a group of people some years ago who believed that people should have everything in common. They must not earn their own income, all Christians must have everything in common. And they based it on Acts 2.44. It says all those believers had everything, they were together and had everything in common.

And so in these communities called the Hutterites, there are a number of them in northern United States, they would stay in a community of about hundred people. One man would control the purse for the whole community. They would work all types of work and all the income would come to this one man and you go to him if you want to buy a cube of toothpaste or you want to buy anything, you get money from him.

Because they had all things in common and they had a verse for it, Acts 2.44. So when I visited them, but you know they didn't believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They were a hundred percent against baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues and all that. So I had an opportunity to go and share God's Word with one group there and one of those who didn't accept what I taught, one of their leaders gathered some of their young people at once in the living room and asked me a question to sort of humiliate me as a Bible teacher.

He said Brother Zak, why don't you teach Acts 2.44 to all your churches that everybody has all things in common? Why do you ignore it? We do it. I said hang on, before you go to Acts 2.44, why don't you go to Acts 2.4? 4 comes before 44, right? It says in Acts 2.4, they all spoke in tongues. What about that? That was the end of the discussion.

There's nothing more they had to say because they were against it. Then I explained to them, I don't go by Acts 2.4 or Acts 2.44 because it's history. It's not a doctrine telling me what I should do.

Because if you go to Acts, other chapters like Acts 9 and 10, you'll find Peter raised the dead. So what am I supposed to do? Go around raising the dead? Like that in history in the Gospels, you find Jesus walked on the water. It's history.

Absolutely true. But have I got to following Jesus? Does it mean walking on the water? Does it mean turning water into wine? Does it mean going to some grave where somebody's dead three days ago like Lazarus and raising from the dead? What does it actually mean to follow Jesus, to be like him? You go to the historical sections of the Gospels or the Acts, you'll be thoroughly confused. And you'll be inconsistent.

Now if I go to a Pentecostal Church and they say, why don't you teach? They know I speak in tongues, but I don't teach that everybody should. They say, why don't you teach Acts 2.4 like we Pentecostals teach? They all speak in tongues. I'll tell them, why don't you take Acts 2.44 and have all things in common, you Pentecostals? Why do you keep your own money? End of discussion.

Then I have to tell them, you cannot get a doctrine from the historical sections of Scripture. All this teaching that Jesus healed all the sick, so they have meetings to heal all the sick, and you know then not even 10 people are healed in such meetings. There can be 10,000 people there.

It's deception. Because they haven't understood the principle of Bible study, you cannot go to history and try to repeat that. Elijah called fire from heaven to bring people to God.

Are you going to do that? You've got to go to the doctrinal sections of Scripture, which is the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the Apostles, which is the teaching of the Holy Spirit. So from those sections, you must find out what is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the safest way to find out.

Not whether you have all things in common or whether you speak in tongues. So when you go to the teaching sections of Scripture, you see what Jesus said in Acts 1.8. Number one, I say this so that you'll never for the rest of your life be confused about how to know whether you're filled with the Holy Spirit. I think many of you are confused, but here you can know.

Acts 1.8. Jesus said you will receive power when the Holy Spirit's come upon you. I mean, you can't go beyond that. Jesus said this is the mark.

He didn't say you'll receive tongues when the Holy Spirit's come upon you. This is doctrinal. The teaching of Jesus is doctrinal.

The history is historical. This is the teaching of Jesus. In the Gospels, you have the teachings of Jesus.

That you have to take. So what is the mark of being filled with the Spirit? Power. Power for what? Be careful when you read.

Power to be my witnesses. Now do you know the difference between being a witness and bearing witness? Bearing witness is telling what you know. Like you stand in a court and say, I'm a witness.

I saw this happen or like that to bear witness to what Jesus taught or something like that. It's not bearing witness. It's being a witness.

Being means by my life first and my words. So when the Holy Spirit fills you, you will have power from God to be like Christ and to speak the words of Christ. To be his witness by your life and your words.

So one more verse from the doctrinal teaching sections of Scripture. Romans 5 verse 5. It says here in the last part of that verse, the love of God is poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. So when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, he's filled with the love of God.

Multitudes of people have been filled with the Holy Spirit who have never spoken in tongues in their whole life. We're not against it. It's one of the gifts.

But if a person is really filled with the Holy Spirit, his heart can be filled with love, fervent love for Jesus Christ and fervent love for other people. If you don't have it, just say to yourself you're not filled with the Holy Spirit and ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. You cannot produce this.

There's a human type of love we can have for one another, which just like you're studying that book Congregation Club and Church, it will make you into a club. It's a nice club. Everybody loves one another.

But this is the love of God poured in our hearts which is first of all a fervent love for Jesus Christ and then love for one another. That is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit. And when I love God, I may do many things.

God gives me gifts, like a bridegroom will give gifts to his bride. He gives me gifts. He gives you gifts.

And those gifts are meant to glorify him. So if God gives me a gift of tongues, for example, that is to speak to him. I call it a love language between the bride and the bridegroom.

It's not meant for other people to hear. When a bride speaks to a bridegroom, she doesn't want anybody else to hear it. And I don't want anybody else to hear when I speak in tongues.

It's between me and my bridegroom. And it is a power to reflect Christ in the same way God may give a person the gift of preaching, it is to glorify Christ. He may give a gift of evangelism, not to just bring people to Christ, but to glorify Christ by bringing that person to Christ and bringing them into the church.

Such a person will not seek anything for himself. The tragedy with a lot of evangelism today is you bring a person to Christ, the great evangelist goes and preaches to 10,000 people in some country and says, reports that so many people accepted Christ. In this place, this place, this, I traveled here, here, here, so many people accept Christ.

And you go and ask that evangelist after 25 years, where are these people? Say, I don't know. I told them to go to some church. But if you went to the apostle Paul, who was the greatest evangelist of all, and say, how did you do evangelism, Paul? He says, well, I went to Philippi and brought some people to Christ.

Where are they, Paul? Come, I'll show you. He'll take you to the church in Philippi and say, this, this, this, this, this, these are the people I brought to Christ. And he says, I went to Thessalonica and brought people to Christ.

You ask, Paul, where are they? Come, I'll show you. Take you to Thessalonica and show you the church where these are the people. Now, that is not the way evangelism is done today.

It's so different. Many, many things. Or the way the church is built, for example.

If you give the Bible to a non-Christian who has never seen Christianity anywhere, doesn't know anything about Christian churches or how Christian churches are built, ask him to, he gets converted, ask him not, don't go to any Christian church, just read the Bible and tell me from Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles how we should plant churches. That man will come with only one answer. He'll say, God has to equip somebody, call somebody to a church planning ministry, he'll go and plant churches, he'll appoint elders, and then he'll come back and visit them, and he'll appoint elders, and if there's a problem there, he'll correct them, etc.

That's what he says in the Bible. And then who should lead these churches? He'll say, well, you've got to appoint elders. You never get him to teach that a church should have a pastor.

Where did all these things come from? I'm just showing you how so much of what we call Christianity has drifted away from the plain teaching of the New Testament and people accept it. Now, we are thankful that God has given us light on all these things, but I'll tell you a danger that we face as a church, not only this church, but all CFC churches. About, I don't know the exact time, but about two, three hundred years before Christ, I think somewhere around the time of Malachi, you know it says in the book of Malachi, the Jews drifted away from God and they were offering blind and lame animals for sacrifice.

There was a group of people who were concerned about this, just like some of you were concerned about the, like I was concerned about the drift in Christianity and they say, hey, we got to bring the people back to the truth of God. There was a group of people about two, three hundred years before Christ who said, we're concerned about the Jews drifting away from God. We must bring them back to the teaching of the Scriptures.

And you know what their name was? Pharisees. Now, today that's got a bad name. But that's not how they started.

They were separatists who separated from others because they wanted to preserve God's standards. But 300 years later, they kept the letter of the law and killed Jesus Christ. You see how a group that started in order to preserve the truth of God killed the Son of God when he came.

That is how far the Christian can drift away if he doesn't understand that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to have the love for God and love for one another. And then the Pharisees kept themselves apart from others, saying we are holy and that's true. They had a lot of things that were very, very correct.

And if you want to know how accurate they were, you just got to turn to Matthew chapter 23. In Matthew 23, we read there these amazing words of Jesus in verse 2 and 3. The scribes and Pharisees sit in the seat chair of Moses. Everything that they tell you to do, you must do.

And I've often asked people, do you think Jesus would say everything the Roman Catholics tell you to do, do? Everything? No. Would he say everything that the Episcopal Church or Anglican Church or CSI Church tell you to do, do? No. Will he say everything that the Methodist Church tells you to do, do? They practice infant baptism, for example.

If Jesus says about any group, everything they tell you to do, you can do, it means he is certifying that their doctrine is 100% right. There was another group there called the Sadducees. And he would never say everything that the Sadducees tell you to do, do.

Because they didn't believe in the resurrection. They didn't believe in angels. But the Pharisees, when he said that, it proved that Jesus said the doctrine of the Pharisees is 100% right.

But don't do like their deeds. Don't follow their actions. Their teaching is correct, but their actions are a bit proud and self-righteous.

Now, you know, we have also come together in a sense like the Pharisees 300 years before Christ. Because we are concerned that Christendom is drifting away from God. And we want to come together to have a pure testimony for Christ.

And be very careful with our doctrines. And the Lord can look at our church and say, everything that they tell you to do, do. But does he have to say, but don't have the attitude that some of them have to other people? Does he have to say that about you or me? Because in one place, it says in Matthew chapter 9, that Jesus went to the house of Matthew.

And he was having a meal there. And a lot of sinners, sinful people, crooked, cheating tax collectors, that all come there. And they were dining with him.

Now, Jesus was a friend of sinners, by the way. He was known as a friend of sinners. He did not agree with them, but he loved them because he wanted to save them.

And the Pharisees said, hey, how's this? He asked the disciples in Matthew 9, verse 11, how is your teachers are eating with sinners, with these sinful people? And Jesus heard this. He said, it's not the healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But that doesn't mean he sat with the sick people and allowed them to remain sick.

No. He sat with the sick people to heal them. Some people use this verse and say, I'm friendly with sinners.

But are you saving any of them? Are you giving those sinners the gospel? Or you just want to say, Jesus is a friend of sinners, so I'm a friend of sinners. Jesus saved lots of sinners. He saved tax collectors like Zacchaeus.

So that's a silly excuse to go and mingle with sinners and you don't save even one of them when you say, I'm a friend of sinners. Then you're not fit to be among them. You're not fit to be.

You just compromise and spoil your own testimony and your convictions. But what did he say when he said those who are sick need a physician? He wasn't saying that the Pharisees are healthy. He was saying, you guys think you're healthy, but they were the sickest of the lot.

He said, you think you're healthy, so I won't come to you. Anybody who thinks he's healthy, Jesus doesn't go to him. That's the meaning of that verse.

It's not the healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. And he said that to the Pharisees, you guys think you're healthy, and I don't need to come to you. But these other people, they know they're sinners.

And then he said to them, the Pharisees, a great word for us to learn as well. Go and learn what this means. I desire compassion and not sacrifice.

One of the dangers the Pharisees had was they lacked compassion because they were so righteous. And one of the dangers we can face in pursuing righteousness is to lack compassion. For sinners, I mean, for backsliders and sinners and evil people and compromisers and all that.

We don't have to compromise with them. Jesus sat among sinners. There was no sin in him.

He went there and he told them the truth. So we should not make our compassion such that we act with a lot of compassion to a lot of people who are backsliders or who don't agree with the truth and leave them in that condition. Then that's not your ministry.

You better say that I'm not called to do that. But Jesus could go in the midst and save them. And he said here, I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

In another passage it says to repentance. So when Jesus sat as a friend of sinners, he called them to repentance. But he had compassion.

It's very, very important because, you know, we look around at a lot of Christendom, which is drifting away from God and disobeying God. And it's a delicate balance to stand for the truth without compromise and yet to be loving. It's one of the most difficult balances to find.

Loving towards sinners, compromisers, and yet completely uncompromising in the truth. And that's why we've got to look at Jesus' example. The only way to become like Christ, if that's our goal, is to ask the Holy Spirit to show us the glory of Jesus more and more and more and more and change us into that image.

Like it says in 2 Corinthians 3.18, in the word, he shows us the glory of the Lord and changes us into that likeness. That's the only way we can become like him. Otherwise, we can be imbalanced like the Pharisees or like the worldly Herodians.

So I thought of this couple of verses in 2 Peter, one of them, 2 Peter chapter 3. It says in 2 Peter 3, verse 9, the Lord is not slow about his promise. Some come slowness, but he's patient. That's why he's not come yet.

He said, don't say, why the Lord? Why hasn't the Lord come? That is the question. Verse 4, where's the promise of his coming? 2 Peter 3, 4, everything is going on as it was from the beginning of creation. But he said, there's a reason why the Lord hasn't come.

The reason is, he does not want, verse 9, anybody to perish, but for all to come to repentance. That's Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus, verse 9, does not want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

So what does it mean to become like Jesus Christ? One thing is, I will not want anybody to perish. I want everybody to come to repentance. What about that guy who did so much evil to you, harmed you or hurt your family or your reputation or hurt your children very badly, did some terrible evil to you, that teacher or that boss or someone? Do you want them to come to repentance? Do you want them to perish? You're not like Christ.

Jesus didn't want anybody to perish. That's a very revealing test. Because, you know, in this pursuit of righteousness, we can become so zealous for righteousness that we become against the sinner, not

against the sin, but against the sinner and against the compromiser.

And we don't want him to be saved. We want him to perish, especially if he's harmed us in a very bad way. We're quite happy to let him perish.

Then I have to say to myself, I'm not like Christ at that point. He doesn't want anybody to perish. He wants all to come to repentance.

I'm telling you what God spoke to my own heart, because I found that tendency in me. And I'm sure it is in some of you at least, especially when you're trying to stand up for the truth of God without compromise. And especially if you've been hurt badly by somebody, to honestly say, I don't want that man to perish.

I want him to come to repentance. I may not be able to do it, but let me be available to the Lord if the Lord wants to use me to bring him to repentance. Who? This guy who hurt you so badly, who hurt your family, who cheated you, your mother-in-law or whoever.

I hope you don't want them to perish. And the other verse which came to my mind was 1 Timothy and chapter 2 and verse 4 says about God, our Savior, verse 3. Again, our Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ, who wants all men to be saved. Wow! That person whom you can't stand the sight of, Jesus wants him to be saved.

That compromiser in the other denomination who calls you a heretic, Jesus wants him to be saved. Think of it. He thinks you CFC people are all heretics, but Jesus wants him to be saved.

Your unconverted parents or relatives who despise you, Jesus wants them to be saved. That's God's nature. And not only saved, He wants them to come to the knowledge of the truths that you have understood.

What is the truth? You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free from sin. He wants them not only to be saved, but to be brought to the truth, etc. I'll tell you these are some of the most, for myself, these are some of the most challenging verses you can think of, to find the balance between grace and truth, to stand for truth and to be full of grace.

I'll turn to John chapter 1 and verse 14, where it says the glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. John chapter 1 and verse 14. The word became flesh, that is Jesus Christ.

As we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So the glory of God is full of grace and truth. Or as it says in Romans 11, 22, behold the kindness and the severity of God, that God is kind and He's severe, He's strict and He's kind.

It's a very difficult balance. Parents, for example, very difficult to find. I find some parents are all kindness, are all strictness.

It's not God. God's not like that and no parent should be like that. That's why He gives a balance between Father and Mother.

Since no one can be perfectly himself, there's a balance in the Father and Mother together should be kind and strict. That's a good set of parents. Whoever is strict, whoever is kind, but there must be that balance because God is like that.

And so grace and truth in our reflecting the nature of Christ, the glory of God, when it says in 2 Corinthians 3, 18, He shows us the glory in the scriptures and changes us into that likeness. What is that likeness? The glory is defined here as grace and truth. In other words, in my words, for example, there must be graciousness and there must be truth.

I cannot compromise on the truth, but there must be grace as well. And I'll tell you this, you can try and manufacture it yourself, you cannot. That's why it says the Holy Spirit who shows you that glory, 2 Corinthians 3, 18, will change you.

I have to humble myself and say, Lord, change me. Now that will happen only if you have a desperate passion to become like Christ. You've seen that as your goal.

Some of you who migrated to the United States, think of all the effort you took to come here. You knew this is a better place to go to. It'll be better for my children.

I learned more money, can live more comfortably, whatever the reason is. And then what all efforts you took, how much money you spent, all because you had a goal, I must get there. Think if you have that type of goal to become like Jesus Christ, that your destination is not just USA, but Jesus Christ, Christ likeness.

If that passion is there, I'm willing to spend any amount of money, do anything to get to that goal. Just compare it with the passion you have to come to the United States and say, Lord, do I have that same passion to become like Jesus Christ in my life? Or is it a sort of a side extra, not the main goal in my life? You can sit in NCCF or any church and you can be a backslider. You can be just like a Christian in a dead group that doesn't believe the things we believe.

You can even sit in this church and not even be born again. I've said that, you know, particularly as numbers increase in a church, somebody brings their uncle and brother and sister and say, this is a good church, CFC is a good church, come and join it. We find that in Bangalore and we can't tell that person don't come.

They have some experience of being born again and how can I reject somebody who says they're born again? They come and they sit there, no passion to become like Christ and very often they backslide. So I have often said in my own church in Bangalore, number of you sitting here are going to hell and I want to tell you that because you're not serious about sin in your life. You haven't repented.

You sit here thinking I'm a member of CFC, I'll be in the kingdom of God. One day Christ will come and you'll get a big surprise, you will not be there and I want to say that to you now so that your blood is not on my hands. I would say that here too.

If you're not serious in your personal life, my brother, sister, if you're not serious about sin, turning away from sin, if your goal is not Christlikeness, I want to tell you in Jesus' name, you will be a backslider one of these days. If not today, maybe in the next year and you'll keep on accumulating knowledge. Every Bible study group and everything will be wonderful for you.

You'll even get up and share things. Wow! And yet your passion in your life is not to become more and more like Jesus Christ. I want to say you're in danger.

Very important. How seriously, for example, do you take studying the Bible? I'm amazed at it. How little, a lot of people in CFC churches take time to study the Bible.

One of the reasons I wrote the commentary through the Bible is because a lot of people said the Bible is difficult to understand. I said, okay, I agree. Some parts are difficult to understand.

I myself found it difficult when I was a young Christian. So why don't you take this commentary through the Bible? I even offered it free to some people in our church. I said, if you can't afford the money, come to me.

I'll give it to you. I'm interested in you becoming like Christ. We don't want the money.

I don't get a cent from that in any case. But I say, can you read three pages of this every day and finish it in one year? You know more of the Bible than a lot of people go to Bible school. And you know who tell me they have done it? A lot of people who are in other churches.

A lot of people in other churches tell me when I travel to different parts of the world, Brother Zach, I've read through the Bible and it's blessed me. I've listened to the entire 70 hours and through the Bible and I'm traveling to work, coming back from work. A lot of people have been listening to it from other churches.

You know, that's what Jesus told the people in Nazareth. You guys think that you're the only ones whom God has chosen. I tell you, we are in that danger.

And you know what Jesus told them? Let me tell you something. You remember those days when Elijah, the great prophet was there and he was in need of food. There were so many widows in Israel, but God did not send Elijah to any of them.

He sent Elijah to a person in Zarephath, who's outside Israel, another country, to feed an Israeli prophet. Boy, what did that show about the nation of Israel at that time? And then he said, I'll give you another example. There were so many lepers in the time of Elijah, not one of them was healed in Israel, but a Syrian leper, he got healed.

And that is what infuriated the Jews in Nazareth when they heard that, oh, you mean to say that God's going to care for those people and not us Jews? And they took Jesus to the cliff to try and throw him down and kill him. That's what infuriated them. How dare you say that God cares for the others? We get a big surprise.

You know, Jesus is always exposing the holiness of the Pharisees like this. For example, there was a man beaten down. Do you know where he was traveling from? From Jerusalem to Jericho.

So the Levite and the priest, the other holy people of those days, walked by and their attitude was you shouldn't be traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, you should be going towards Jerusalem because that's where the temple is. Why are you leaving the temple and going the other way? So then you deserve to be beaten. Sorry, bye.

They leave him alone. Who? The Levite and the priest supposed to be the holiest people in Israel. And then comes along a man who's from another denomination, Samaritans.

They are not the people who got the right doctrine. Doctrine is wrong, life is wrong, everything is wrong. But he has compassion on this poor man.

He doesn't know about doctrine and all that, but he says, I need to help this guy. And he helps him and he takes him to a hotel or to someplace where they can be treated and pays from his own pocket, saying,

please take care of him. This guy is dying.

When I come back this way, I'll pay anything extra you spend. Boy, I'm not talking, saying that social service is the answer, but apply that spiritually. What was Jesus trying to say? You people who think that you're the only ones whom God has chosen, you don't have this compassion that these people have.

I looked at some of these stories in the Gospels and I feel challenged myself. He goes to Samaritan village. It says he had to go through Samaria because the Samaritans were a despised group by the Jews.

The Jews would always bypass Samaria when they go from Galilee to Jerusalem. If you look at a map, it meant traveling more miles. They would do that.

But Jesus said, no, today we're going through Samaria. And he goes and helps this Samaritan woman who's been divorced five times and sleeping with a man who's not even her husband. I've often thought, how would you feel if a woman like that comes into your church? Divorced five times and sleeping now with some man who's not her husband.

Jesus was concerned about her salvation. I say, Lord, give me your compassion. I want to not only have truth.

We've got plenty of truth now in our churches. We need more grace, not compromise. Very often people hear this and they begin to compromise.

That's because they do it in a human way. Ah, we've got to be nice and loving to all these people who don't believe the truth and you are in other groups and go and mingle with them, go and visit them, visit their churches. That is the human way of doing it.

And you don't become a bigger backslider than everything. Jesus didn't go and sit with the Pharisees, but he was compassionate towards them. And I think of particularly one area of forgiveness.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 18. Matthew 18, Jesus said in verse 23, there's a kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. Matthew 18, 23.

And there was one man who owed him 10,000 talents. That's a huge amount of money. In the margin of my Bible, it says it's the wages or salary for 15 years.

What is your salary? One year. Multiply that by 15. That is how much debt this man had.

15 years. For some of you, that's \$1 million. 15 years salary.

And he can't pay it. He said, no, I can't. But he told a lie saying, I'll pay it.

And the king knew that he could not pay it. So it says here, verse 27, he had compassion on him and released him. And then that slave went out and met another slave who owed him just a little bit of money.

Three months salary. Where's three months and where's 15 years? He owed him 100 denarii. Three months salary.

It's not like \$10. It's a little more than that. He said, hey, you got to pay up.

If it were \$10, I'd let you go. But three months salary, brother, you better pay up. And when he couldn't pay up, he locked him up in jail.

And when the king heard it, he called him back. And this is the part I want you to see. Talking about compassion.

He said, you wicked slave, verse 32, I forgive you all the debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slaves in the same way I had mercy on you? See, in India, a lot of families have servants. Like you have people have maids.

Only the rich people can have maids here. But there, because there are so many poor people and if you don't employ them, they'll starve. So out of necessity, you have to employ people and for their sake.

And of course, it's a help in your home too. And I tell them, I say, if you're a believer and you employ a maid or a servant in your house, are you very strict and exact in paying that person the eye? I said, I'll only give you so much. I'll give you so much.

Think if your boss in your office was like that. Aren't you happy if the boss gives you a bonus at the end of a year or increases your salary next year? Do you ever do that to your servant in your house, increase their salary and give them an unexpected bonus? Are you like God or not? I tell you, I've seen believers who are so strict with the servants who work in their house. They'd always be happy if they get a little extra from their boss in their work.

I don't judge others. I've had such people work in my house and I say, Lord, I want to treat them exactly like you have treated me. Amazingly with grace and goodness.

If I'm not like that with them, all my Christianity is just a lot of garbage. I have to treat others like the way God treated me. That's what the meaning of the story is.

Have I forgiven you so much and been so good to you? Can't you be good to this person who treated you badly? Can't you forgive this person who did something wrong? You don't forgive him, okay, I'll teach you a lesson. And the Lord says in verse 34, it's very interesting. He was angry.

Do you know that God is angry with anyone sitting here who has not forgiven somebody? I don't know who, I don't care who you are. Even if you're an elder, you haven't forgiven someone? God is angry with you. Number one.

And it says here, he handed him over to the torturers, not just put him in prison, which would have been bad enough, but put him in that torture cell where he has to be tortured every day until he paid back everything. And that to me is the Lord handing over certain people to demons. Do you know that a believer can be handed over to Satan? Yeah.

You read that in haven't read it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, there was a man in that church, the doctrine was all right, this guy's doctrine was perfect. But he was living in sexual sin with his stepmother.

And the church didn't do anything about it. And Paul said, as an apostle who planted that church, he had the authority there. He said, I've decided, verse 5, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh.

A believer, so that in the day the Lord comes, his spirit will be saved. So he's a believer. But right now he's going to be handed over to Satan to be tortured so that he repents and get saved when the Lord comes.

We need to ask ourselves sometimes, Lord, are you treating me now the way I treated some people in the past? Is that why I'm having all these problems? Let me show you a verse in Psalm 18. Psalm 18, verse 25. Those who are kind, God shows himself kind.

I believe it's true. If you're kind to others, God will be kind to you. I'm not talking about compromising.

I'll never compromise in my life on any of the things of the truth of God. I will stand for the truth and I'll say those who are in Babylonian Christianity are part of Babylon. There are hypocrites.

There are people like Pharisees among Christians who are a generation of vipers who will not escape the damnation of hell. These are the words of Jesus. And he was full of compassion.

He had grace and truth. But with the crooked, verse 26, the last part, you will show yourself astute. It means God will deal with you as you deal with other people.

Sometimes believers face that problem because they're treating other people in a certain way. And here's the opposite of that. With the kind, he shows himself kind.

It says in Proverbs 11 and verse 25, the last part, he who waters others will be watered himself. You water other people's dry plants. God will water your dryness.

So one of the desires I've had in my life, I'll tell you honestly, is I never want a single day in my life not to be fresh. I don't want to be like a dried plant a single day of my life. Every day of my life, I want to be fresh.

A fresh Christian, fervent in love for Christ, fresh in my cheerful and happy, not grumpy and sour and complaining and grumbling and gossiping. No, I want to be fresh in touch with God every single day. And I say, you please water other people.

God will water your dry plant. And if God's not watering you, it's because you're very stingy and miserly and doing something good to others. Now, how shall you find this balance? Now, I can hear, you know, the great temptation for all Christians is what I call pendulumitis.

You know, a pendulum. Now, you've been very strict in so many things. And now, today, you heard a message on compassion.

Now, for the next few years, you're going to go this way. That's not the answer. It's like driving a car and you've gone off to the right now from the main track.

And you turn the steering wheel to the left. I've got to get back on track and keep steering, steering, steering and go to the other side. How can we preserve ourselves in the narrow way? There's a cliff this side, there's a cliff this side.

I'll tell you, there's no way to preserve yourself unless you humble yourself and say, Lord, I can't make it. Without you, I can do nothing. I want to depend on you, your Holy Spirit.

I want to listen to the Holy Spirit every day when he tells me slightly to the left here. Now, you're going too much, slightly to the right. I don't want you to compromise on a single point, but I want you to be full of

compassion.

I cannot produce it. I cannot. That's why it says in 2nd Peter, chapter 1, that the greatest promise of all, the greatest promise of all, 2nd Peter 1, the purpose of all God's precious, magnificent promises, 2nd Peter 1.4, he's given us these precious, magnificent promises so that we can partake of the divine nature, not imitate.

There's a book written by a Roman Catholic man called The Imitation of Christ. I read it years ago. It can sound very nice, you know, you look at Christ, Mahatma Gandhi tried to do that.

Imitate Christ? No. That'd be like a robot imitating a man. No.

Divine nature is something that comes from within, not imitation. It's not teaching a pig to act like a cat or teaching a dog to meow like a cat. It'll meow for a little while and then when it gets really angry, it'll bark again.

You've seen that, you know, how you try to act Christlike in different situations, some real strong provocation comes and the old nature comes out again. This imitation doesn't work. It's partaking, not imitating, but partaking.

How does that come? Humble yourself. Say, Lord, He gives grace to the humble. That's why I've always said the three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility.

Jesus humbled himself, became man, number one. He became a slave, number two. Died as if he were a criminal on a cross, three.

Humility, humility, humility. If I go that way, grace will always be there. It's the only way I can find this balance.

Otherwise, I'll be in pendulum sometimes here, sometimes there. But if I say, Lord, my goal in life is your goal for me. I want to be like Jesus Christ more and more every day.

I want to be quick to apologize to someone I hurt, quick to ask forgiveness, quick to set matters right wherever I've slipped up, quick to acknowledge. If I got angry, don't say, how can I confess that when I spoke about victory over anger? Forget it. Say you spoke about victory over anger, but you got angry.

Acknowledge it, ask forgiveness and move on. But if you try to cover up something, it'll never go well. Say, I slipped up.

I'm sorry, I slipped up. I fell off the bicycle like we had that picture, this week's verse. I acknowledge it and never compromise on our convictions in the church.

I was listening to Santosh's message in RLCF this morning. Wow. I said, I told him this is a message after the Lord's own heart and a message out of my own heart.

It was so hard and strict down the line of what it means to be a true disciple. It delighted me to hear it. And I'm not surprised that as he preached that in the past 10 years, a lot of people got offended and left that church.

I'm not at all surprised as I keep preaching it that we will never change our stand on holiness. What is he preaching about? Holiness, that's all. Listen to it sometime.

We never compromise on that. Never. And I will never compromise on it.

I'll keep on preaching it. But along with that must be that compassion. In fact, you know, in that church, the person who left who was one of the leaders said to me, I will stay in this church only if you ask Santosh to step down as an elder because he's too strong.

Really? That's exactly what the Lord wants. A wishy-washy church. Get rid of the strong elders who speak against sin.

That's the Old Testament prophets. A lot of people went to the said, don't preach all this hard stuff to us. We don't want it.

It's not a new message I heard in Loveland. I heard, I read it in the Old Testament, the way went to the prophets and said, don't preach all this hard stuff to us. We will.

Let me show you finally Luke's gospel and chapter 19. I don't know whether you've seen this connection here. Luke 19, verse 41.

When Jesus approached Jerusalem, he wept over it. He didn't only weep at the grave of Lazarus. He wept over Jerusalem, over the city, that city that was going to kill him in a few days.

The leaders, the people, all you people, if you had known the things that make for your peace, how often I wanted to gather you like a hen gathers its chicken under its wings. He wept over it. That's compassion, grace.

Okay, go four verses down. He went into the same city and now it was the whip and he drove out all those who were selling. Do you see grace and truth? He wept and he whipped.

That's the balance we need and we cannot produce it. But if you submit yourself to the Holy Spirit little by little, as he gives you those little course corrections, just like you follow the GPS exactly. There's a fork in the road there, take the left one, another fork, take the right one.

How exactly we follow it and we get to our destination. That GPS is a perfect example to me of the Holy Spirit. And when you disobey the GPS and turn left, what does it say? It doesn't say, why in the world did you turn? No, course correction.

Okay, let me correct your course. That's how the Holy Spirit speaks. I love that when I disobey him.

So, okay, I'll bring you back on track because you have set your goal. I want to take you there. Dear brothers and sisters, set the goal in your life.

Lord, I want to be Christ-like. I cannot be. I want my children to be Christ-like.

I cannot make them, but I'm determined. I want this in my life. Do what you like with me.

I'm going to listen to you every day. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, correcting us all the time. God bless you all.

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