

Obedience and the Way of the Cross

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience, faithfulness, and being a blessing to others, highlighting the true riches as revelation, anointing, and likeness to Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:09:00

Scripture: Proverbs 14:14, Isaiah 53:12, John 7:37, John 12:24, John 12:27, John 15:2, John 15:5, John 15:8, John 15:16, Romans 14:22, 2 Corinthians 8:12, 1 John 2:6

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Obedience"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of falling into the ground and dying to bear much fruit, following the way of the cross, and being filled with the Holy Spirit continuously. It encourages believers to choose the path of self-denial, faithfulness, and obedience to God's will, even in times of pressure and trouble, to experience spiritual growth and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Transcript

We must be witnesses for Christ. I have proved the Lord for 57 years as his child, never been disappointed. I'm not selling anything and I'm not trying to sell Christ by saying that, but it's the absolute truth.

I have never in these 57 years found a problem for which there is no answer in the Word of God. There is an answer for every problem I have faced in 57 years. Exactly 50 years ago in May 1966, God took me out of my job in the Navy and the last 50 years I have been serving the Lord full-time and I don't do that for money.

I support myself like all our workers and 41 years ago we started a church in our home. The reason for that was after I left my job I went around, I didn't know much, I was only 26 years old and I did what I thought was Christian work, preaching on the streets and the buses and trains and whenever I got an opportunity and I'd be invited here and there and God gave me a gift to speak and I was preaching, traveling here and there, just as an itinerant visiting preacher and I found that there was no lasting result. You know I'd go to some place, I remember one place where I went for 23 days of meetings and it was like a revival.

So many people testified and all that but I went back to the same place one year later and they were having court cases against each other and I saw this in so many places and I said Lord this is not what I

want to do. I don't want to spend my life having temporary boosts of revival and then you go back next year there's nothing there. So I resigned from every Christian organization I was in.

I did not go for any more travel preaching internationally or in India or anywhere. I was invited to places and I started meeting in my home. We started as two families 41 years ago.

I said I want to build something that lasts forever. You know if I were living in Noah's time, I wouldn't be building my house. I'd be building the ark because I know that that's the thing that I live in a rented house and build the ark because I want to spend my time with that's gonna last forever.

If I was convinced what God said about the ark and today Jesus has said I will build my church. 1 John 2:17 says he who does the will of God will remain forever and the things of the world will pass away and say Lord well I want to do something that's gonna last forever and so I wanted to build a local expression of the body of Christ and there were certain promises like if you seek the kingdom of God first and his righteousness all the other things will be added to you. We wanted to prove that initially for two years when I was single without ever expressing my needs to anyone without sending reports anywhere that I would trust God and God would take care of my needs.

When we got married and we had a child we had to prove God as a family. We were very poor. I couldn't even afford house rent but we decided we'd never get into debt.

That would be a disgrace to God. I'll tell you why. To walk as Jesus walked means for me anyway I don't judge any of you who borrow but for me it was I wouldn't get into debt because I can't imagine Jesus going to someone hey to someone say hey can you lend me some money my heavenly father let me down so please let me borrow something from you I'll return it.

Does that sound right? I can't imagine Jesus ever saying that so I said Lord I'm not gonna go to somebody and say my heavenly father let me down. Is Jesus heavenly father my heavenly father too? You know if the richest man in the world whoever it is now if his son came to me and said hey brother Zach can you lend me some money I said you asking me for money and your dad is the richest man in the world your father must have disinherited you that's why you're begging now right otherwise why would he ask me for money and here my father is the richest person in the universe the only reason why I'd go asking for somebody else's money is my heavenly father disinherited me. He has not disinherited me.

I hope he hasn't disinherited you. So these were some principles that my wife and I followed of course we live very simply and God taught us to live extremely simply those days that is a very good discipline for us and those lessons we learned in those early years we practice even today that we live simply even now it's a very important thing the Bible says godliness with contentment is great gain and in another translation of that is a very beautiful translation of that in one European language which says godliness with frugality is great gain. Frugality means living very simply I believe that is the difference between being righteous in money matters and faithful in money matters there is a world of difference Jesus was not just righteous in money matters he was faithful in money matters so when we think of having the mind of Christ one major area where we must have the mind of Christ is to be faithful with money.

Jesus said in Luke and chapter 16 and verse 11 if you have not been faithful now read carefully not right it's not talking about being righteous I think lots of believers are righteous in money matters righteous in money matters means I don't steal I don't tell lies to make money I don't borrow and not return it's permitted to borrow the Bible doesn't say you shall not borrow the Bible says don't be in debt to anybody

God recognizes that in certain situations some believers have to borrow now in my case God gave me faith not to but I would not put that burden on any of you live according to your faith you know in Romans 14 says one man has faith for this another man has faith for only this you live according to your faith and I want to tell you the Bible does not say don't borrow the

Bible says in Romans 13 8 don't owe anybody anything that means if you do borrow in an emergency suddenly some sudden hospital bill or some unexpected emergency and you need to borrow go ahead and borrow but don't remain in debt paid off as soon as possible very very important I remember a man from India a very poor man when he was converted he said brother Zach what shall I do I am so poor and I owe thirty thousand rupees to people I borrowed in my own converted days and I want to pay it all back and I'm such a poor man how can I pay back thirty thousand rupees it's a lot of money for a poor Indian and I said can you pay back ten rupees a month oh he said sure I said you know how long it'll take you to pay back thirty thousand rupees only 250 years you'll be able to pay it back you're

not going to live 250 years but if you keep paying it back paying it back and you die in 10 years God will accept it as if you paid the whole thing because he saw your heart because there's a beautiful verse in 2nd Corinthians 8 verse 12 you must all remember this verse I have the habit of jumping from one verse to another but it's very important to know God's Word 2nd Corinthians 8 verse 12 says if there is a willing mind then if the readiness is present then God accepts you according to what you have and not according to what you don't have so in other words this is a very liberating verse you know supposing your willingness to set something right but you don't have the ability God will accept you according to that willingness it's a liberating word because some of you may be in

situations where you want to do something and you can't do it for example maybe you cheated somebody years ago you don't even know where the guy is today how in the world can you return it do you have a willing mind to do it forget about returning it put that money in the offering box that's what I suggest you can't keep it you know that's why Zacchaeus he he said Lord half my money I give to the poor and I wondered why in the world he did that I think it's because a lot of people he borrowed money from he didn't know where they were now but he said I can't keep it it's not righteously earned money I don't know where these people are how can I be glad to return it to them but I don't even know their address I don't know where they live I can't keep it so I'll give it to the poor and today

I would say put in the offering box because all because there's a verse that supports it one Corinthians 10 it says verse 26 I think everything that the earth that is in the Lord on the earth belongs to the Lord so if I don't know if you find money on the street you don't know whose it is put in the offering box because everything ultimately belongs to the Lord so I see that is why I say if there's a willingness to be to do it if you don't have it doesn't matter so coming back to Luke 16 11 if you're not faithful with unrighteous mammon that is money how we entrust the true riches to you and I want to explain to you what the true riches are the true riches are basically as I see it three things one revelation on the Word of God that means I read scripture and I don't just understand it I

get revelation that changes my life not bright ideas revelation secondly the anointing of the Holy Spirit those are the true riches we cannot really serve God without the anointing of the Holy Spirit I'll tell you this however gifted you may be however much of the Bible you you have if you don't have the fire of the Holy Spirit all you have is a painted fire that impresses people but it won't set them on fire it won't warm them it won't give them light a painted fire can look like a fire from a distance but it doesn't give any light and it doesn't you know warm people the third is likeness to Jesus Christ so true riches as I see it I say Lord I

want revelation on your word I want my eyes to be open to see things that will change my life I want the anointing of the Holy Spirit not just in

a once-for-all experience but a continuous experience of the anointing upon my life I seek for it every day when I get up to speak I say Lord give me the gift of prophecy I believe you give it to me because the Bible says covet to prophesy like people covet for earthly things and third likeness to Jesus Christ because that is the ultimate purpose of God for all of us that we might be conformed to his likeness those are the true riches and if you want them Jesus says you have to be faithful with money and material things and Jesus was very faithful with material things the mind of Christ in relation to money was faithfulness not just righteousness of course Jesus was perfectly righteous with money which means he didn't steal it didn't do anything unrighteous with money never earned any

money unrighteously he never sold a table as a carpenter that was not perfectly done he didn't cover up bad jobs if a table was slightly defective you tell the customer this is a little defective there's a crack in the wood here and if you like you can pay a little less because this is not it's not perfect if you don't want it I'll make another one for you but if you are happy with slightly defective table pay less he was absolutely righteous and money matters and faithfulness is more than that faithfulness means that even if I have plenty I don't think that's all mine ah I got so much now I can do what I like with it no you can't it's God's why do you have to raise your living standard every time you get more money I didn't do it my wife and I didn't do it we acquired what was necessary

for living but there was so many things that we didn't need we could live very simply then we'd have a lot more money to be used for other things to bless people with to support ourselves so that we are not a burden on society so that we're not a burden on our church so that we could serve our church in Bangalore for 40 years without taking one cent from them you say we if we are faithful now if we were extravagant in our expenditure we wouldn't have been possible you know always looking we always be looking for handouts or waiting for people to give us gifts or things like that so being faithful means more than being righteous please remember just because you have a lot of money doesn't mean you can spend it all on yourself if you do you're not sinning you're not sinning if you raise

your standard of living but I'll tell you you may not get revelation on God's Word as you should you will get secondhand revelation that means other people who have revelation will tell you things and you understand it but it won't be your own and it may not change your life secondly you may not have the anointing of the Holy Spirit the real anointing which can make your ministry whatever it is blessed for example I had a great burden that I said Lord I should never in my life preach a boring sermon not even once I'm not happy with sort of 90% sermons that are anointed no why should it be 90% was Jesus sermons only 90% anointed every one of them he never opened his mouth without an anointing I said Lord can't I walk like you what's he what's the use you're telling me in 1 John 2 6 he who

abides in him must walk as he walked if that is impossible it is possible the same anointing there is upon him can be upon us but it says in Hebrews 1 9 he loved righteousness and hated iniquity therefore God is God is anointed him with the oil of gladness so if we seek to love righteousness and hate iniquity why will God not anoint you and me we must have boldness all one said to the Romans an amazing word he said I know that when I come to you Romans 15 verse 29 I know absolute certainty it's a great words I've used it myself many times particularly when I'm feeling a bit down I don't allow myself to feel discouraged but pressures can become so much that can press you down and I say I refuse to get discouraged here I praise the Lord because he's on the throne I never allowed the devil

to discourage me temptations come try to put me down I say God is on the throne Christ died for my sins my sins are all forgiven the devil's been defeated 2,000 years ago Christ is coming back the main things are okay some of these secondary things are not okay it doesn't matter I will only praise the Lord and I and sometimes in some situations I have to go and speak and you know sometimes you are very tired and exhausted and I claim this verse if Paul can say I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ if Paul can say that why can't you say that those of you who you know even if you're visiting a home to bless somebody or you're taking a small little house group meeting or invited to speak somewhere why can't you say that if your conscience is

clear and you've confessed every known sin and your heart is right with God and with men your conscience is clear you can say I know I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ but you've got to be faithful with money then you'll get the true riches not otherwise and you've got to be faithful with your mouth I remember when seeking God for the anointing to minister the word God said be faithful with money and be faithful with your mouth just two things so I'd advise that and give you the same advice God gave me anybody here even your sisters you're not called to preach or teach but do you know the Bible says the sisters can prophesy women can prophesy with their head covered as we just heard but prophecy is not just in a church service no you can prophesy over the telephone have

you ever prophesied over the cell phone talking to somebody and giving a word that will encourage and edify and build the other person took the whole thing took about one minute but it was prophecy because it encouraged the person at the other end of the phone and then and lifted him up and lifted her up or blessed her in some way did you know that you prophesied at that time when the rest of the even the so called Christian world gossips over those cell phones and gossips in their emails why not you do something else why not you prophesy in your emails I don't mean to give a full sermon you're not a preacher but after you conveyed your message add one two or three sentence paragraph at the end here's something that blessed my heart and share that share with them don't don't preach they

won't want to get your emails after that if you keep preaching to them in every email two or three sentence they'll be so happy they look forward to an email from you every time you can prophesy with two three sentences in an email over the cell phone sisters you can do it be different from all those other sisters who gossip and backbite and tell stories about others why not start that practice from now Jeremiah 15 19 that's what the Lord spoke to me we saw Luke 16 11 be faithful with money the mind of Christ he was very careful with what he spoke you know some people have asked me can you why don't you name the false preachers of today you know the people who are deceiving others deceiving false prophets the people who are television evangelists who are deceiving others why don't you

name them I said I'm following Jesus who never named anybody in any sermon he never said Caiaphas I warn you about Caiaphas or I warn you about some Anna's he never said that not even once he would always use a general term Pharisees scribes hypocrites but never named anybody I said I follow Jesus I've studied the Bible exactly and in his sermons he never mentioned anybody's name and you can listen to 1,000 sermons of mine on YouTube you'll never manage find anybody's name mentioned because I want to follow Jesus in my the way I preach but general references to deceiving evangelists and warnings about how to detect them that's Jesus said be careful about wolves and all that he warned people like that so we got to be careful in Jeremiah 15 and verse 19 the Lord said to Jeremiah if you

return to me I will restore you and you will stand before me it's very important to stand before the Lord if you want to hear from him and if you extract listen to this oh let me paraphrase it extract means if you take

out only the precious and throw away the worthless from all your conversation I will make you my mouth the margin here says I will make you my mouth I said wow you can make me your mouth Lord your spokesman that means when you speak and you can have that verses in your Bible also right if you take out the precious and speak that and throw away all the worthless you will be like my mouth it's like when people dig for gold they go 10,000 feet into the ground and what they bring up is a lot of muck and this wash it all off all the dirt and then you get an alloy it's still not

gold and then they put it in the fire and burn out all the other stuff and then they get a little bit of gold of all that tons of muck they get a little bit of gold and this is worth it that's what I mean by throwing away all the rubbish the worthless and keeping the precious that's what those people do who dig for gold and if you refine your conversation like it says in Colossians 4:6 let your speech always be with grace that's a great verse let your speech always be with grace seasoned as it were with salt when you eat food in a few seconds you know whether there's salt in that food or not immediately and over a period of time people will begin to see there's grace in your speech isn't that a wonderful testimony to have why do you so many sisters have a great lust to preach you I wish I

were a man I could preach in the pulpit you don't have to be God decided what you should be and made you a woman but you can be a blessing to others think of this woman in Proverbs 31 it says about her in Proverbs 31 verse 26 the law of kindness is on her tongue the law of kindness is on her tongue she works very hard with her hands says earlier on you know all those verses are about she's working with her hands and working in the field and working with a spindle and cooking and all types of things the virtuous woman mentioned in Proverbs 31 has got rough hands and a soft tongue many of today's girls have got a rough tongue and soft hands means they don't do much work the tongue is rough don't be like that be one about whom it can be said people have known you for a few years the law of

kindness is on her tongue throw away the worthless and keep the precious and the Lord says I will make you my mouth I had such a fantastic desire I'll tell you honestly to be God's mouthpiece because I went to so many churches in my life and most of the time I sat in those churches thoroughly bored with what I heard every preacher almost there were a few exceptions but most of the preachers I heard were so boring when I was young Christian and I went to the church what else could I do I had to go somewhere I go to some other church it was the same old thing a lot of emotion and excitement but there was not a fire in the anointing of the Holy Spirit that drew me challenged me to get closer to God and to overcome sin I said Lord I don't want to be like that I want to be your mouth it takes

me years and it did take me years it took me years but I said Lord I'm going to work on my speech I want to work on my attitude to money if that's all that's required be faithful with money and be faithful with your mouth and I'll make you my mouth who can't do it there's no partiality with God I want to encourage all of you be faithful with money be faithful with your mouth and be one of those anointed spokesman for God you may never in your life sit and stand in a pulpit but you can be a blessing it's a wonderful thing you know I think the story of the talents the man with ten talents is the man with fantastic gifts was always getting up in the in the pulpit and preaching he's got so many gifts like the Apostle Paul here he was an apostle prophet shepherd teacher evangelist everything

but most of us in our life are not like that we are like people with one talent but the sad thing in the churches is people bury that talent you know that eleven people with one talent can do more with one person with ten talent those eleven people have buried their talents so you don't have to preach in a pulpit to be God's mouthpiece you can be God's mouthpiece to encourage discouraged sisters every one of us

can be that faithfulness and little things I think of Jesus example one of the passages where I see the mind of Christ is here in Matthew's gospel chapter 3 in Matthew's gospel chapter 3 I see that Jesus came to be baptized it's all is the first public appearance of Christ the very first puppy that the last time he heard of him was when he was 12 years old and going to the temple

discussing with the scribes over there the next thing we read is after 18 years of silence when he was faithful working as a carpenter taking care of his younger brothers and sisters he appears to be baptized there were a lot of people can you picture this in your mind that the River Jordan the whole line of people standing to be baptized and John had said I proclaim a baptism of repentance it's a baptism of repentance that means if you have repented of your sin come here in fact some people who came to him the Pharisees John said to them in verse 7 you scry you brood of vipers what do you want to come here let me see some repentance in your life verse 8 and so all those people standing there were people who are publicly acknowledging I have sinned and I've repented John I want you to

baptize me and Jesus was going to go and stand in that line and can you imagine what the devil told him or thoughts that would have been put into his mind people will misunderstand you if you stand in the line where people are confessing their sin even though people haven't seen you sin publicly in your home they will think there must be some secret sin in your life that's why you're standing in that line because you're repenting he rejected all those arguments he wouldn't listen to it the father had told him go and stand in line identify yourself with sinners even though you're not a sinner even though you never sinned in your life go and stand there identify yourself with them he started his ministry identifying himself with repentant sinners in a line where everybody was a repentant

sinner he stood there he was the only one who was not a sinner he stood there he ended his life considered as a criminal crucified between two criminals he identified with sinners in the beginning and with criminals at the end of his life he was not ashamed he was no criminal it doesn't matter what people thought of him he was crucified now God could have arranged in such a way that on that day Jesus will be crucified alone it was not necessary that there should be three people crucified there's only one criminal to be crucified it's like hanging you don't have to hang three people there's only one person to be hanged or executed one person but God didn't do it like that God it says he was numbered with the criminals Isaiah 53 he had to come to the lowest level and so he stands in line

and he comes to be baptized and John recognizes him and Lord I'm not gonna baptize you I need you to baptize me Matthew 3 14 and Jesus said permitted verse 15 at this time for in this way it is fitting for us read this verse Matthew 3 15 the first spoken words of Jesus ministry the first spoken words of Jesus ministry permit us at this time for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness you say Lord baptism is only a symbol it's not a great thing I mean even today we know people ask do you need to get baptized to go to heaven I say no you need to speak in tongues to go to heaven no do you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to go to heaven no do you need to break bread to go to heaven no salvation is by repentance from your sin and faith in Jesus Christ that he died for you

and rose again from the dead that's it baptism is a symbol breaking your bread is a symbol you don't have to do it to go to heaven and those arguments could have come into Jesus mind why are you making such a big issue of a symbol and you know what Jesus called it fulfilling righteousness do you believe that taking part in a symbol is fulfilling righteousness I had a lot of people argue with me about baptism Oh what does it matter it's not so important whether we are baptized as a child or as an adult it's only a symbol what does it matter whether you break bread in this way the way the Bible says or have wafers

and and the priest swipes the wine well it's a symbol what does it matter I say it's a matter of fulfilling all righteousness that's exactly what some sisters say what does it

matter whether we veil our head or not it's only a symbol okay but Jesus didn't think like you thought he thought of a symbol as fulfilling righteousness and that's the very first word he spoke when he started his ministry we are pretty arrogant to think that we know better than him you say oh it's only a symbol boy what arrogance to take God's Word and say it's only a symbol we slighted no wonder there's no spiritual growth in your life because you don't understand what it is to fulfill all righteousness take the little things seriously I'm not saying that baptism or breaking of bread or reeling the head is important to go to heaven not at all but I do believe it's important to fulfill all righteousness there was something that God had planned for Jesus which would not have been

completed if he left out one thing there were little little things planned in Jesus life and he wanted to fulfill it all and I believe that in all of our lives God has planned little little things and sometimes he tests us through them sometimes through a little little thing like you know we just heard about reeling the head if you go to our CFC India website there are two articles there on head covering I invite you to read them and see for yourself have an open mind when it comes to scriptures we follow the same principle in our church we teach baptism by immersion after you're born again like Jesus we teach breaking of bread because Jesus instituted it and said do this in remembrance of me he never told us how often we should do it some people have made a law thou shalt do it every

week that is adding to scripture Jesus never said it he said as often as you do it but people have changed that and do it every week some people say do it every day well in the Acts of the Apostles Acts chapter 2 they did it every day Acts chapter 20 they did it once a week that's not a law Acts of the Apostles is was is a book of history the commandments are in the teaching of Jesus and in the Epistles it never tells us how often we should do it that's up to you but we have to do it sometimes do this in remembrance of me the same way we teach head covering not as compulsory people come to our breaking of bread meeting we don't force them to partake if you don't want to partake welcome don't partake if you don't want to be baptized we don't force anybody to be baptized we don't force

anyone to veil the head we say you can come for the next 50 years till the Lord comes you can come to our church service and sit every Sunday without veiling your head we will never treat you like a second-class citizen we will never ask you to veil your head no but if you want to get up and pray in our church or if you want to get up and share a word in our church we will insist sister that you veil your head because we have certain laws and I tell people in many Indian homes and many other homes when you walk into a home the rule in that home is take off your shoes don't dirty the carpet take off your shoes I don't have that rule in my house because we don't have carpets in our home you're welcome to walk in with your shoes but I don't say when I go to somebody else's home hey listen I

don't I wear shoes in my home so why can't I wear it in your home I follow the rule of that house that's not a great self denial and I asked sisters who go to churches where they veil their head why are you so stubborn about not veiling your head in a church where everybody does that would you walk into your home into a home where they remove their shoes and you say no in my home I don't remove my shoes so I'm standing for my rights I'll walk into your shoes into this house with your shoes you got to be crazy you are considerate about something in a person's house but you're not considerate when you go to the house of the Lord seek to follow what everybody else in that church does that shows something of your character and your stubbornness and your arrogance and your pride and I want to

say to you in Jesus name there is some measure of God's grace that you will lose and when you lose it your children will also lose it I'm not threatening you I'm just trying to tell you God's Word it's my duty as a shepherd to warn the sheep I can't force them I remember when my other son Sunday he started a church in California started in his home and I was there in the beginning as well and there were a number of sisters who you know from the locality some very fine born again sisters who did not veil their heads and I remember Sunday began to teach about veiling the head and half the church walked out those sisters took their husbands and went out and I told Sunday I think those sisters were right in that they did not build their heads because they were the bosses in their house and

they took their husbands and let them out of the church so they were right and not willing there is they were telling the truth I'm not I'm the head in my house so I don't build my head and they walked out nice told Sunday this is the best possible thing that happened here it happened in this church half the church walked out at one time I remember when it started I said this is the best possible thing that happened we're now left with a small group that we can work with and establish scriptural standards and invite people to come in who want to obey not who want to live according to their own whims and fancies and according to their traditions and their legalism and all that so I said let them go you start a small group and let's learn to teach all of God's word I said we practiced for

40 years in India and not only in India and over 70 churches worldwide and we've seen it works if you honor God God will honor you and he has found that God honors him so what I want to say is something we can learn from the example of Jesus in a small thing like baptism supposing Jesus had not got baptized you think he'd have been less holy you think he'd have been less anointed only thing one part of God's will he would have missed and at the end of his life in John 17 for he could not have said father I glorified you by finishing the work you gave me to do John 17 for how did he glorify his father by finishing the work the father gave him to do and part of that work and one of the first things in his work was get baptized a symbol so I've learned something from that the mind of Christ

was to always do what the father told him to do even if it is a very small trivial little thing I want to say to you my brothers and sisters don't neglect those trivial promptings that the father gives to you yeah there are sometimes trivial promptings that the father has given to me and I've obeyed it and I've been protected I really have been protected I could tell you instances about that you're missing something when you disobey those trivial promptings don't let your reason come in reason would have told Jesus don't stand in a line where everybody's a sinner they'll misunderstand you you know when it comes to God's Word there's a word of advice I would give to you and that is from Proverbs chapter 3 Proverbs chapter 3 what is the greatest enemy of faith faith is a very important

thing in the Christian life what is the greatest enemy of faith it's not unbelief it's your reason Proverbs 3 speaks about faith trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your reason don't lean on your understanding don't listen to your understanding when God tells you something don't listen to your understanding you'll go astray the greatest enemy of faith is reason and that's why many people don't climb you can't climb to great heights in the Christian life with understanding you climb to great heights by faith Jesus always emphasized faith he always said to his disciples all you have little faith there were people of little understanding they were not clever they never went past middle school those fishermen Peter was probably way down at the bottom of his class in terms

of marks and all that Jesus never said to know you have little understanding never he was not bothered about that he always said oh you have little faith how long shall I be with you Jesus is not impressed by

our reason and our understanding he's always impressed by faith you know there was once a Roman military man I don't know how many people he must have killed as a military man I'm sure he killed many people as a Roman soldier but he came once to Jesus and said my servant is sick can you please come and Jesus said I'll come to your house and he said no no Lord I'm too small a man for you to come to my house look at his humility you can't come to my house humility is another thing which is always connected with faith just stand here Lord and speak and my servant there ten miles away

he'll be alright Jesus looked at all the Israelites were great Bible scholars and he said I've not seen such faith in all of Israel see how he appreciated faith always you find that he appreciated faith a Syro-Phoenician Canaanite woman who had a demon-possessed daughter in her house three four miles away came to Jesus said please cast the demon out of my daughter and Jesus said no I haven't come for the Gentiles I can't give children's bread to the dogs you're at the foot of the table and you know what she said she didn't get offended say I'm not a dog how dare you call me that are you the Son of God calling me a dog no yeah I'm a Gentile I'm not part of the chosen people nation of Israel but can't the dog get the crumbs that fall from the table you see humility and just give me a crumb

one crumb Lord is enough to cast the demon out of my daughter and she said woman great is your faith your daughter's healed the two people whose faith Jesus appreciated were both people who knew nothing of the Bible their reason level was very low the understanding was very low but that faith was great can you imagine appreciating a military man would you appreciate a military man who's killed people in the past you see he may get puffed up he's not even a believer Jesus was not afraid of those things we are so cautious I've seen one thing that many Christians are very miserly when it comes to appreciating people I've seen that many are miserly with their money but they're also miserly with expressing appreciation Jesus was never miserly not even with unbelievers he would say to Peter

blessed are you Simon son of Jonah that's revelation from heaven do you want the mind of Christ learn to appreciate people learn to appreciate don't just criticize your children ask yourself all of you who got little children ask yourself how much you have corrected them and ask yourself how much you have appreciated them when was the time last time you told one of your children that was great the way you helped that person that was great the way you did that that was so much like the Spirit of Jesus I'm so proud of you my son my girl you ever say that or you say why did you do that how many times have I told you not to do that yeah we need to correct them but we appreciation can do wonders and Jesus did it to unbelievers think of Nathaniel it says in John chapter 1 Philip he met Jesus

and found the Messiah and he told Nathaniel that's a beautiful passage I like that you must see it to believe it John chapter 1 I don't have time to turn to these references that's why I don't always turn to it but if you listen to this video sometime please look up the references John chapter 1 Philip was one of the people who found Jesus it says in verse 44 Philip verse 45 John 1 45 found Nathaniel and said to him we have found the Messiah the one who Moses and the prophets and all spoke about and that is Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph the carpenter and Nathaniel said to him can any good thing come out of Nazareth you know how certain areas even in the United States have a reputation for crime certain ghettos you hear that somebody came out of that ghetto and you say ah he came

from there is it how can anybody come from there I mean you all may be knowing of certain places in this country and Nathaniel said Nazareth that's got such a bad reputation can anything good come out of Nazareth and those are the last words he spoke and the next thing he sees Jesus and Jesus heard that how do you know he heard that because later on he says Nathaniel I even saw you under the fig tree a

few hours ago praying Jesus knew a lot more about Nathaniel than he realized and as soon as Nathaniel comes what's the first thing that he says about Nathaniel there not there's a perfect man or a man who saved or any such thing there is an Israelite in whom there's no hypocrisy he believes Nazareth is useless and he says so there's absolutely no hypocrisy in him he's not you know saying

nice words I read those words you know here is a man in whom there is zero hypocrisy I say Lord if you ever said that about me I'd frame it up and put in my house here's a man in whom there is no hypocrisy he's not perfect he's got a lot of mistakes in his life but he's not a hypocrite can you imagine what it did to Nathaniel he'd never have forgotten it for the rest of his life that when I was unconverted Jesus said about me there's no hypocrisy in me can Jesus say that about you you don't have to be holy for that Nathaniel was not holy he was not even converted he hadn't even become a disciple can a prostitute be free from hypocrisy sure what does it mean to be a hypocrite hypocrite means an actor if a prostitute says I'm just a prostitute I earn my living by prostitution there's no

hypocrisy in that person he's absolutely honest you know the word hypocrite is a Greek word it's not an English word unfortunately it's I feel sorry about these words that have not been translated baptism is not an English word at all it's a Greek word baptizer which means immerse that's a plain meaning if they are translated it going to immerse people in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit that never have been any child baptism in two thousand years but they didn't translate it hypocrite the Greek word hypocrite means actor if you had gone to Greece two thousand years ago and said where all the hypocrites they said go to the theater plenty of them there today if you ask where the hypocrites they say go to the churches you'll find it's very different but people don't understand

what hypocrites are hypocrites are people are pretending that means they come to the church and say all to Jesus I surrender and they haven't done it take my silver and my gold not a mite would I withhold you anything to mean it this is hypocrisy to sing these wonderful songs and you don't mean it in your life there's a man without hypocrisy covet that what I was trying to say is there was a spirit of appreciation that Jesus had he wasn't afraid that Nathaniel's head would get puffed up or the Roman centurion said would get puffed up we are so miserly when it comes to appreciating people because we think oh he'll get puffed up Jesus didn't have that fear he believed in encouraging people and that encouragement led people to be his disciples so I believe we need to develop that habit but

coming this back to this matter of being faithful in little things Jesus was faithful when he went to that baptism to stand in line didn't go according to his reason there's something more in that baptism I remember about two three years after I was converted I took baptism I was baptized as a little baby or they called it baptism it was christening because I grew up in an Orthodox Church my parents took me to the priest to sprinkle water on my head to give me a name and all that but then years later I was converted and I realized that I must take baptism and I got baptized and then I found I went to a church where they studied the Bible just like you study a chemistry book or a history book very accurately but there was no power and they were very anti Pentecostal they said all this

business of the Holy Spirit is all heresy and I found something missing in my life I studied the scriptures but I felt a power was missing I don't know whether you were felt like that I found a power missing in my life which I saw in the early Apostles and there was a power in their life I don't mean power to do miracles that's a matter of ministry but power to live the Christian life and I found I was defeated and I saw that John the Baptist said he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire and I couldn't say that that I'd experienced that and I said Lord if somebody were to ask me have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire John

the Baptist said in Matthew 311 Jesus will baptize you immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire Jesus John the Baptist told people I can immerse you in

water Matthew 311 but I can't immerse you in fire you got to go to Jesus I can immerse you in water and people come to me and say brother Zach please lay your hands on me I said putting my empty hands on your head will give you nothing I can immerse you in water go to Jesus he can immerse you in fire so I decided I said Lord I got to seek you for this baptism on fire and I'm not against the Pentecostals I think there's some very godly people in many Pentecostal churches and I have some very good friends there and there are many godly people there but the particular church I went to was just a lot of noise and I came away disappointed and I said Lord I don't need that and I came home and I said Lord can't you do it for me here in my room can't you fill me with the Holy Spirit and I

searched the scriptures and I searched and said Lord what do I have to do and I opened my life and I said Lord you can have every area of my life and the Lord pointed me to Jesus baptism and this is what the father showed me that when Jesus went to the waters of that's when he was anointed he submitted to John the Baptist putting him in the water he didn't resist it he submitted and he was raised up and the Spirit came upon him and from that God gave me a message when Jesus was doing that he was submitting to the way of death and burial that's what baptism symbolizes he was saying I am willing to let other people kill me bury me my father will raise me up that is the testimony in baptism that's why it's so important and that was a testimony of how he was going to live for the rest of his

life and how he had already lived for 30 years I'm willing to let other people push me down kill me spiritually and bury me my father will raise me up I have absolute faith in that and the Lord spoke to me saying there's a close connection between the way of the cross and the real power of the Holy Spirit and this is what God spoke to me I was a very young Christian 23 years old and this is what God spoke to me if you will choose the way of the cross all your life you will have my power resting upon you always but the day you decide to move away from that way thinking you graduated from it or something else in that day my power will depart from you this is the word the Lord spoke to me I got it from Jesus baptism and I found the answer and then as I looked around at so many people who

claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and I didn't see the fire of God either in a life of holiness in their life or even in their ministry there was no holiness in their life there was no power in their ministry and I saw that what was missing was the Holy Spirit's power was not linked up with the way of the cross they had not chosen the way of the cross and so they came to a stagnation maybe they were genuinely filled I don't question that but what the Lord began to show me from then was the fullness of the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience it's very important my dear brothers and sisters that every one of you seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit you must be filled with the Holy Spirit this is not an optional extra this is not a symbol like baptism of the Lord's table or

wailing the head fullness of the Holy Spirit is something essential if you don't have it you miss something in your life and if you're going to live all through your life on earth without being baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire I want to tell you you missed something and I did not want to miss that even though I was in an assembly which didn't teach that which is anti Pentecostal so I found the truth of the baptism in the Holy Spirit not from the church I was attending which is a brethren assembly but from the scriptures I saw Jesus was baptized Jesus is anointed I say I'm baptized and I want to be anointed I'm not better than Jesus if Jesus had lived a holy life for 30 years and he still needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit where am I what arrogance to think that I don't need

what Jesus needed even though he'd lived a holy life for 30 years I said I need it and I saw that because the baptism in the Holy Spirit as it taught today has been delinked from the way of the cross that's why the power is missing and what the Lord began to show me is that when I'm baptized when I'm born again the capacity in my heart is like a little cup you know the psalmist says I will lift up the cup of salvation think Psalm 118 so when God fills me it's a cup or a glass it's full you can't fill it more than that it's full but if I walk the way of the cross from that day onwards consistently this cup will become like a bucket my capacity will increase now if I pour this water in the cup into a bucket hardly any water in it it's need to be filled again I need to be filled with the

Holy Spirit again you read about Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit at least three times in the Acts of the Apostles not just on the day of Pentecost at least three distinct occasions where he was filled with the Holy Spirit so I learned that the Holy Spirit filling is not a once-for-all thing as your capacity increases and your capacity will never increase if you don't walk the way of the cross your fullness of the Spirit yeah you'll be filled but it'll be a cup all your life but if you walk with the Lord and the way of the cross that is the way of self-denial as I showed you the rent the way of the rent veil where you say no to your own will where self is dethroned and Christ is Lord where you through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body every day like it says in Romans 8

13 the cup will become a bucket and then I say Lord I need to be filled again and I continue to walk the way of the cross the bucket will become a tub you pour a bucket of water into a tub it says hardly anything there is need to be filled again and you walk the way of the cross the tub will become a lake can you imagine that and that's filled again and you walk the way of the cross the lake will become a river Wow and that gets filled again and you will continue to like the way of the cross and it becomes many rivers.

Then is fulfilled that verse in John 7 37. He who believes in me out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

That's the place Paul came to towards the end of his life, filled with the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul was filled with the Spirit first when Ananias came to him in Acts chapter 9. It was like a cup filled. But because he consistently walked the way of the cross, it was rivers by the time he came to the end of his life.

Now I want to say to you brothers and sisters, if some of you have had a once genuine experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, baptized in the Holy Spirit, you're satisfied with that. That's why your life is in stagnation. And if you are honest, if you are absolutely honest, many of you will have to say to me, I'm a bit frustrated with my Christian experience.

Many Christians, if they were asked honestly, tell me the honest truth. They'll say, it's true brother, I'm a bit frustrated with my Christian experience. It's not all that it should be.

I stand before God and I'll tell you the truth. I am not frustrated with my Christian experience. To me, I believe in what it says in the Living Bible paraphrase of Proverbs 14 14, the godly man's life is exciting.

It really is exciting. And I'm not frustrated at all. I'm excited every day of my life.

By the grace of God, I'm never in a bad mood. Never means never. 24 hours a day.

Not because I don't have pressures. I have pressures from so many churches and other things and aches and pains in my body. That's fine.

It's okay. But I'm not frustrated because God continuously fills me with the Spirit. And I really long that every one of you, my brothers and sisters, whoever you are, whether you're part of this church or some other church, be open to the Lord in this area.

Jesus was filled with the Spirit all the time. And He walked the way of the cross right from the beginning as He accepted the baptism. You see towards the end of His life in John chapter 12, John's Gospel chapter 12.

You see what He says. He was nearing the cross now. In the next chapter you see the Last Supper.

Chapter 13 is the Last Supper and then the cross. From 13 onwards is the day before His crucifixion. John 12 is just towards the end of His life.

And it says here in verse 20, John 12 20, there were certain Greeks who were going up to worship at the feast. And they came to Philip. Now the Greeks were the greatly respected philosophers and highly educated.

You know they were like the postgraduate PhDs of today. Highly respected, highly educated, very clever people. And these Greeks said, we want to see Jesus.

Verse 21, this humble carpenter from Nazareth. And Philip came and told Andrew. And Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

Now do you think Jesus was excited? Like a lot of preachers are excited today if the governor of the state wants to meet them. Wow! The governor wants to meet me. And I'm the pastor of this church.

They'll be really excited. Jesus was not at all excited. He wasn't keen to meet them at all.

He said, you guys want to see my physical face. Do you really want to see me? Go and tell them how you can really see me. Verse 24, you've got to fall into the earth and die.

He was answering a question of people who wanted to see him. Remember that. We want to see Jesus was the statement in verse 21.

Go and tell them. If you fall into the ground and die, you will bear much fruit. Sometimes Jesus answers looks as if it has got nothing to do with the question.

It does have everything to do with the question if you have a mind to understand. I discovered when I was a young man of 30 years old that the greatest work of 35, that the greatest work I could do for God in India was to fall into the ground and die. So I decided I'm going to do that.

I'm going to fall into the ground and die. To all my reputation as a speaker and traveling here and there and all, I'm going to die. And that's how our church CFC was born.

It says if you fall into the ground and die, there'll be much fruit. But otherwise it will remain, what it says in verse 24, alone. I want to ask some of your brothers who've been coming here for conferences for many years.

I don't want you to feel condemned. So please remember, I'm only trying to encourage you. Are you alone in your hometown? Alone? Is it because you're unwilling to fall into the ground and die? If a grain of wheat

does not fall into the ground and die, it will remain, verse 24, by itself alone, without fellowship.

I was like that. And I decided I don't want to be like that all my life. I mean, there were a lot of people who wanted to go to heaven, who believed in Jesus.

But I wasn't interested in being with them. I said, Lord, I don't want to gather people who want to go to heaven when they die. I want to gather people who want to follow Jesus on earth, who want to show their gratitude to Jesus by living for Him and taking up the cross every day.

Not just go to heaven when they die. There's a bunch of selfish Christians who want to live for themselves on earth and go to heaven when they die. I don't want to fellowship with them.

I want to fellowship with those who are along that narrow way of taking up the cross every day, falling to the ground and dying. That may be very few. Jesus said there'd be very few.

That's fine. But you won't be alone. That's for sure.

If it dies, here is a promise, it will bear much fruit. There was another thing that Jesus said, that a way to bear much fruit. John 15.

He said, if you abide in me, John 15 5, and I in you, you will bear much fruit. And not only that, my Father will prune you, verse 2, so that you can bear more fruit. Are you willing to let your heavenly Father prune you? Pruning means take a sharp knife and cut away certain things from your life, excesses, your way of speaking, and certain ways that you have.

Can you allow the Father to prune you and break you, crush you? Think of a grain of wheat that falls into the ground. It's so beautiful when you look at that grain of wheat. But when it falls into the ground and it's buried, nobody sees it.

It's mixed up with the muck and the dirt under the ground. And if you could look under the ground, what's happening? It cracks open. His beauty is gone.

On the other hand, if you put it in a glass case, that nice golden grain of wheat, it looks so beautiful. You come back after 20 years, it's there, one grain of wheat. But you look at this other grain of wheat that allowed itself to be broken and cracked open after 20 years.

It's a field of wheat. How did that happen? It's a law which God has put into nature for us to learn from. If you fall into the ground and die, there'll be much fruit.

This is the way it has been with all of God's greatest servants in history. And I want to say to you, there's no partiality with God. What He did for others, He'll do for you.

Jesus had to go this way. He was the first grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died. Look at the fruit.

And He went through a tremendous pressure at that time. And He says here, He's very honest. I like that about Jesus.

When He was under pressure, He said that. It's not a sin to be under pressure. It's not a sin for your soul to be troubled.

Whenever your soul is troubled, don't feel guilty. Jesus Himself said in John 12, 27, My soul is troubled. Some Christians who have built up a reputation for spirituality, they're afraid to say, My soul is troubled.

People will think I'm not spiritual. My soul is troubled. You must be more spiritual than Jesus then.

Because Jesus said His soul was troubled. There can be pressures on our soul, but He didn't sin. Pressures that we face.

His spirit rejoiced in the Father, but His soul was under pressure. His mind, His emotions were under pressure. And He says, My soul is troubled.

What shall I say now? Under this time of pressure, it's becoming so much, Oh, Father, save me from this hour. Get me out of this. In some way or the other, no, I will not say, Father, get me out of this.

I will say, glorify Thy name. If this is the way you want me to go, I'll go glorify Your name. That is the word that you need to say when God has come to break you.

It pleased the Lord, it says in Isaiah 53, 12, to bruise Him, to crush Jesus. And that's the way which many have missed out on. And that's why their capacity doesn't increase.

Twenty years later, they are filled with the spirit to the same size they were twenty years ago. Okay, they're filled with the spirit, they're not committing any gross sin. And maybe meeting with a few people and satisfying themselves, but are they fulfilling God's will? I don't know.

Have they died? Have they, when they come into a time of pressure, do they say, Oh, Father, save me from this hour? Save me from this hour? Or glorify Thy name? Jesus had the option. Save me from this hour, verse 27, or verse 28, glorify Thy name. He said, No, I will not pray, save me from this hour.

Now I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, the way of the cross is the way of glory, is the way of constant spiritual growth and greater infilling. Choose that way. It may be painful, but you'll come to the end of your life and you'll be able to say with the Apostle Paul, I have finished my course.

I have fought a good fight. I've kept the faith. Henceforth, there's laid up for me a crown of glory, a crown of righteousness.

He who has years to hear, let him hear. She who has years to hear, let her hear. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we really want to have the mind of Christ. I believe there are a number of brothers and sisters here, absolutely 100% sincere. They've come here with that desire.

They've taken that trouble to travel this long distance to come here because they want to glorify Your name. I believe that. I believe many of them are willing to pay that price.

I pray You'll keep them steadfast, that they'll never lose the vision You're trying to give them right now. As You have disclosed to them the secrets of their hearts in this meeting, and they have met with You, I pray that they will never forget what You spoke to them in this meeting. Lead them on, we pray, from glory to glory.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. I told you we're family.

I just want to take a moment to bless you all who have come here. I remember as I was listening to Zach end the message, years when I went to conferences and the longing and the burning of my heart to be a part of a local church and to experience what I heard taught and what I saw lived out in different churches. Like I shared in my testimony this morning, after years of wandering in the desert, I found the oasis.

It has nothing to do with a specific group of people or even, in my case it was here in Loveland, but I pray in your case the Lord will lead you to it. And I pray that you'll never lose hope and lose sight of the fact that God wants that for your life. He wants you to be a part of a local church and to be committed, not to be a wanderer, to be plugged in and to be rooted and grounded in love.

And it's messy, as much as family is messy, but you know that there's a love and a connection that you feel in a family that you don't have otherwise. And we're not perfect people here in the church, but my personal testimony is it's been the greatest joy of my life to be planted here among these dear brothers and sisters and I won't trade it for the world. I pray that you'll find it.

I just wanted to get up here and say that it is possible, that God's purpose, God's plan is for you to have it and keep that vision in front of you all the days of your life. I believe you'll find it. Amen.

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