

Overcoming Temptation

by Zac Poonen

Understanding the difference between temptation and sin is crucial to resisting temptation and living a victorious life.

Duration: 1:28:23

Scripture: Exodus 2:23-25, Matthew 4:1-11, Galatians 3:13-14, Hebrews 4:15-16, James 1:14-15

Topics: "Temptation", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the difference between temptation and sin, highlighting Jesus' ability to resist temptation without sinning. It discusses how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and how the devil puts thoughts into our minds to tempt us. The sermon explains the importance of understanding the difference between being attracted to sin and accepting it, using examples from the Bible to illustrate how Jesus overcame temptation through prayer and reliance on God's grace. It encourages believers to seek victory over sin by following Jesus' example in resisting temptation and living in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

The difference between temptation and sin because many people condemn themselves because they don't know the difference. Jesus was tempted but he did not sin. Jesus was tempted but he did not sin.

How was Jesus tempted? Turn with me to Matthew 4 and see what happened. So, his temptation was in the wilderness. All the three temptations.

And the devil said to him, if you are the son of God, turn these stones into bread. If you are the son of God, turn these stones into bread. The devil is the soul.

The devil does not have a body. The devil does not have a mouth or a tongue. How did he speak to Jesus? He put a thought into his mind.

That's how he tempts us also. Why don't you go and do this? That is a thought. That is how the devil put a thought into Jesus' mind.

That is how the devil put a thought into Jesus' mind. You are hungry now. Why don't you turn these stones into bread? He said no.

Then the devil took him, verse 5, to the holy city and made him stand on the pinnacle of the temple. Verse 5 and 6, if you throw it, cast yourself down, God will protect you. So, again, it says here, he took him to the holy city and made him stand on the top of the temple.

He took him to the holy city and made him stand on the pinnacle of the temple. Remember, he was in the wilderness. What did the devil do? He said, follow me, we are going to Jerusalem.

Do you think Jesus meekly followed behind the devil and went to the top of the temple? Do you think Jesus meekly followed behind the devil and went to the top of the temple? All this happened in the mind. The devil said, you are on top of the temple now, why don't you jump down from there? In the mind. He was tempting him, go to the top of the temple and jump down.

He said no. Then verse 8, the devil took him to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, their glory. Then the devil took him to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, their glory.

There is no mountain anywhere in the world that is high enough to see all the kingdoms of the world. Even if you stand on Mount Everest, you will not be able to see all the parts of the world. Even if you stand on Mount Everest, you will not be able to see only the snow around you.

You will not even be able to see the whole mountain. This also happened in the mind. See all the kingdoms of the world, I will give this to you.

If you worship me, I will give this to you. So, all these temptations were in the wilderness. But in his mind, he took him to the temple, took him to the shore in the kingdoms of the world.

No, you see, this is how the devil tempts us. You know, puts various thoughts into our mind to go here or do there. If you say no, you have not sinned.

So, even if you are sitting in a meeting like this, a very wicked thought comes into your mind. Right now, some horrible, wicked, evil thought comes to your mind now. And you say, oh, my mind is so dirty.

No, no, no, your mind is not dirty. The devil was trying to put a thought into your mind, you rejected. You say no.

There is no sin. Turn to James in chapter 1. James chapter 1. It says here, verse 14, everyone is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. So, the devil puts a thought into my mind and my desire to go up agrees with that.

And I say yes. Then, verse 15, the lust conceives and gives birth to sin. So, the picture here is of a baby being born.

A woman has the capacity to have a baby. But she cannot have a baby until she unites with a man. So, however much ability she has to produce a child, she cannot produce it.

But when the man unites with her, then she agrees to it, then the child is born. So, think of that in relation to temptation. In the Bible, we are pictured like a woman, bride of Christ.

So, here is a girl who is a bride of Christ walking down the road. And there is a very handsome man there. Symbolizing the world.

And he invites her. Come, come to me. And she looks at him and he is very handsome, very attracted to him.

Yes, I am attracted to him. But I say no, I will not listen. She does not go to him.

There is no baby. Even though she was attracted. Because she did not give her will and say yes, you can have me.

So, sometimes when you see something and you are attracted, that is only a temptation. You say no. You don't sin.

It is very important to understand this. Otherwise the devil will harass us saying, oh, you got attracted, then you have sinned. The fact that you were attracted proves the temptation was strong.

It doesn't mean you were sinned. Some temptations, the attraction is not so strong. Some temptations, the attraction is very strong.

But if you don't yield, there is no sin. So, for example, money is a very attractive thing. And if you are attracted to money, there is nothing wrong in it.

But if you don't yield to that, you say, I am not going to run after that and do something wrong. If you don't do that, you don't sin. So, please remember this.

Temptation is the devil trying to put a thought into your mind which can even attract you. Think of this girl again. Very attracted to this man.

Her heart is pulling her. But with her will, she says, no, I will not go there. No baby is born.

There is no sin. Lust has to conceive in order to give birth to sin. Lust has to conceive in order to give birth to sin.

And so, in my mind, if I yield to that temptation, then only a sin is born. So, you ask yourself, did your mind agree with that temptation? Did your mind agree with that temptation? Not whether you are attracted. That doesn't matter.

Did you say yes to it? I want it. And your mind unites with that. No, a sin is born.

Then we have to repent and confess it and ask the Lord to cleanse us. So, we don't have to live in unnecessary condemnation. That oh, I got tempted, I got tempted and I was attracted.

Because the devil tries to harass us like that. Because the devil tries to harass us like that. So, ask yourself, did a conception take place in my mind? Did I agree with it and accept it? So, I am trying to tell you the difference between being attracted and accepting it.

If Eve was attracted to that tree, that is not a sin. In fact, God allows us to be attracted because then only we are tempted. So, for a temptation to be strong, it must be attractive.

So, that's why you are not tempted by garbage. We are tempted by something valuable that we can get. So, once we understand this difference, the devil will not be able to harass us and say, Oh, you sinned, you sinned, you sinned, you sinned.

Now the question is, why does God allow us to be tempted? Because God has made us in such a way that we can never become strong without resisting temptation. Why does God allow the devil to exist? That's a very important question. It comes in many people's minds.

I was quite surprised when my 8 year old grandson asked me that question. He said, Grandpa, why does God allow the devil to exist? Why doesn't he just destroy him? I said, wow, even a little child wants to know that. So, I told him, see, if we want to build our muscles, we must subject our muscles to some resistance.

That's why they have springs to pull, to subject these muscles to resistance. When you move, run, your legs are subject to resistance, the leg muscles become strong. The strengthening of all muscles in the body is by subjecting it to some resistance.

So, that God allows the devil to exist so that he can resist us and we can become strong. So, I told him, see, the devil will tell you, don't listen to daddy and mummy. The devil will tell you, don't listen to daddy and mummy.

If you resist that, I will listen to daddy and mummy. You become strong. Very simple.

He was so happy to hear that and he said, I'm going to listen to daddy and mummy all the time. So, you can become strong if you resist the devil. That is one reason why God allows the devil to exist and to tempt you.

So, we can even say God is using the devil to sanctify us. Because if we were not tempted at all, we would never be strong. That's why even in that perfect world which God created, he allowed the devil to enter the garden of Eden.

In a perfect world, God allows Satan to come to make his man and his woman stronger. And so, one more thing I want to say, in temptation, there is a choice given us. What is the temptation that came to Eve? Will you choose God or will you choose what God has created? What God has created is this tree.

So beautiful. It will make you wise, it will taste so nice, look so good. But God has said, don't eat it.

So, the choice is between God and this beautiful thing he has created. And she said, I will choose this beautiful thing God has created. That was sin.

Now today, you and I are also tempted in the same way. Will you choose God or will you choose this beautiful thing he has created? Which God says, you must not look at or lust after. Why did God make that tree so beautiful? Supposing that tree of knowledge of good and evil, God had made very ugly and smelly and filthy and full of thorns.

God says, don't go to that tree. Adam says, I am not even interested in going there. There is no temptation.

Same way. If every woman in the world was old and ugly and long like with beard and all that. Woman with beard.

God says, don't lust after that old woman. If every woman in the world was old and ugly and long like with beard and all that. Will you feel tempted to lust after that woman? Don't tell me God, I don't feel any attraction.

Why has God made so many pretty girls in the world? Then only can he test you. Why has he made gold so attractive? Money so attractive. Otherwise there would be no temptation.

Everything which is attractive. For example, position in the world. Everybody is fighting to be minister, cabinet minister.

It's attractive. Position. Honor.

Even in the church, to be an elder. It's something attractive. And if you say no.

I am not going to yield to that temptation. You will become a stronger person. So that is why God has made so many attractive things in the world.

So that is why God has made so many attractive things in the world. Whether you are God or the creation of God. Every temptation is God or his creation.

Jesus always chose God. Even in a situation where he was about to die of starvation. He didn't eat anything for 40 days.

He must have drunk something, but he didn't eat anything. If you go without eating for 40 days. You will have a strong desire to eat something.

At that time you are very weak. Today the desire for food is more than what you have right now. So the attraction was very strong.

Jesus chose God. Man will live by what proceeds from God's mouth, not with food. To say that now is very easy because even though we are hungry, we are not so desperately hungry.

To say that now is very easy because even though we are hungry, we are not so desperately hungry. Jesus Christ, who came as a man to become our savior, had to face very tough trials. And we read something interesting in Luke chapter 4. Luke chapter 4, immediately after his baptism.

It says in verse 1, he was full of the Holy Spirit. And he went into the wilderness for 40 days and was tempted. And at the end, after overcoming 40 days of temptation.

He came back, verse 14, in the power of the Spirit. Did you notice the difference? He went full of the Spirit, verse 1, came back in the power of the Spirit. How did that happen? Verse 2, 40 days he was tempted.

Probably hundreds of temptations. The last three temptations are recorded here. But before that, it says in verse 2, 40 days he was being tempted by so many other things.

So it's not that he was only tempted with three things. Those are the last three at the end of the 40 days. But the result of 40 days of temptation was he came in the power of the Spirit.

So, even Jesus had to be tempted and overcome before he could serve in his ministry for the Father. He is our forerunner. If you want God to use you, you must be faithful in temptation.

If you want God to use you, you must be faithful in temptation. You must be faithful in secrecy. Nobody could see Jesus in the wilderness.

Nobody knew whether he was faithful or not in the wilderness. But God could see. But God could see.

Similarly, God allows you to be tempted in secrecy. In secrecy. And if you pass that, you return in the power of the Holy Spirit for a great ministry.

We are very thankful for the Pentecostal movement which taught about being filled with the Holy Spirit. We are very thankful for the Pentecostal movement which taught about being filled with the Holy Spirit. They led you up to Luke 4 verse 1. But the Pentecostal movement did not teach people how to overcome all temptations.

So, they could not come to Luke 4 verse 14. The power of the Spirit in their life. I am not talking about exercising gifts.

Because false prophets also exercised gifts. Do you know that Belam, who is a false prophet, he prophesied about the coming of Jesus Christ. You read that in Numbers 23, 24.

He prophesied about the coming of Christ to earth. So, false prophets sometimes can say some correct things. But the power of the Holy Spirit is something different.

For that, you must be full of the Holy Spirit and you must overcome temptation. For that, you must be full of the Holy Spirit and you must overcome temptation. That is why in our churches from the beginning we have taught the fullness of the Spirit that leads on to how to overcome temptation.

That is why in our churches from the beginning we have taught the fullness of the Spirit that leads on to how to overcome temptation. Like Jesus Christ was tempted and overcame, we have always held up Jesus as our example in temptation. That is the secret of a godly life.

It is a secret that Jesus came to earth as a man. He was tempted exactly like us. He was tempted to sin here.

It says here that the devil told him to bow down to him. Tell me, is that a sin or not? Definitely a sin. Jesus was tempted to sin.

But he did not bow down. Or to jump off the roof of the temple and commit suicide. Is that a sin or not? It is definitely a sin.

He was tempted to sin but he said no. Now let us turn to Hebrews chapter 4. Now let us turn to Hebrews chapter 4. Remember, Jesus Christ was full of the Spirit and went to be tempted. After being tempted, he returned in the power of the Spirit.

So, praise the Lord if you are filled with the Spirit. Now you need to overcome in temptation to have the power of the Spirit. Not the gifts of the Spirit.

Gifts of the Spirit, even if you fail in temptation, you get. The power of the Spirit for a godly life. Now we read in Hebrews 4. We don't have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but one who is tempted in all points as we are yet without sin.

Now did you read it in Malayalam? Did you read it in Malayalam? It is written here that sin is gone. He was tested equally in everything. What does that mean? That means he was tempted in everything except to sin.

So what is that? Is that a sin or not? So how does it say sin is gone here without sin? Jump down from the temple and commit suicide, is that a sin or not? Jump down from the temple and commit suicide, is that a sin or not? Then how does it say here except to sin? This is a fantastic work that the devil has done in the Malayalam translation of this verse. This is a fantastic work that the devil has done in the Malayalam translation of this verse. Jesus Christ was tested to sin in everything like us.

But the devil's plan is to keep people from understanding that he has not sinned. People use this Malayalam Bible to argue with me. In English it is very clear.

In all the other languages in the world it is clear. I don't know why the devil only hit at the Malayalam. Even Tamil it is clear, right? Very clear.

So I ask such people. You say Jesus was not tempted to sin. Was he tempted to bow down to the devil? Tell me.

It is written he was tempted. Is it a sin to bow down to the devil? Is it a sin to bow down to the devil? Yes. Then how do you say he was not tempted to sin? They are not willing to face up to the truth.

And this is a great truth because it leads a person to a godly life. I was born again when I was nineteen and a half. And in the beginning I started out my Christian life well.

But as I grew older, temptation became so strong. I couldn't control my thoughts. I couldn't control my anger.

I loved money. And by the time I was thirty five years old, even though I was a great preacher, and my external testimony was very good before people. I didn't drink.

I didn't smoke. I didn't cheat anybody. I was not running after women.

Everything was good. But inwardly, the inside of the cup was dirty. Thoroughly defeated.

And I came to such a place where I said, Lord, I will not preach anymore. I'll give up this full time work. I'll go and do some other work and sit at the back of a church and never preach again.

Because I'm a hypocrite. I'm preaching what I'm not practicing. And I prayed and I cried and I wept and I fasted for many, many weeks.

I said, Lord, I'm defeated. I'm defeated. I don't know what to do.

I've tried everything. I've tried to resist again, I fall. I want you to do something for me.

I asked only for one thing, I said. Make my inner life equal to what I'm preaching. The victorious life I preach must be true in my inner life.

But I was preaching the victorious life, but my inner life was defeated. One day, I was preaching those days in a Baptist church. One Sunday morning, I remember the date, January 12, 1975.

The Lord said to me before I went to the church that morning, This is long before CFC started. It was a Baptist church. The Lord said, Will you stand up in that church and say, I am a big hypocrite.

I have preached to you, but I do not live according to that in my life. I said, Yes, Lord, I'll do anything. I'm fed up of my defeated life.

You know, it's very humiliating for a preacher of respected international, and I was traveling many countries, preacher to get up and say, I am a hypocrite. But I said, Lord, I don't care. I'll do anything you say.

I have discovered that God has to break us before he can fill us. And before he can use us. It's not enough that God blesses us.

He has to break us. You remember the five loads? Jesus blessed it. It was still five loads.

Only one person could have eaten. But when he broke it, that became thousands of loads that 5000 people could eat. Remember this.

When he blessed it, it was still five loads. When he broke it, it became 25,000. 25,000 loads.

God may bless you. Many people say, Lord, bless me, bless me, bless me. And he blesses you.

But you have then to pray, Lord, break me. Break my pride. Humble me.

Break me and feed the multitudes through me. That is what God had to do. He had to break me by making me publicly say, I am a hypocrite.

And that day, God met with me and filled me with the Holy Spirit. And changed my life. Turned my life around.

I didn't become perfect in one day. But from that day, my life started going up and up and up. All these 40 years, it's been going that way.

And that is the time God began to show me, Jesus came like you. Christ tempted like you. Tempted like you in every point and did not sin.

Follow him. Then I understood how to get victory over sin. It says here, Jesus was tempted in all points as we are but did not sin.

So what? So verse 16, let us therefore do something. What shall we do? Since he was tempted and did not sin, let us also go to the throne of grace and first of all get mercy for all our past failure. And then get grace to help us in our time of need which is our time of temptation.

So, if you don't already know it, there is a different two words here, mercy and grace. It's good for all of you to know it. Mercy is for my past life, verse 16.

For all our past failures. Jesus never needed mercy because he never sinned. But we need mercy because we have failed so many times.

Grace is for the future. Today when I am tempted, I need grace. Not mercy.

Mercy is forgiveness. Grace is for victory. People remember this.

Mercy is to forgive your sin. Grace is to give you victory over sin. since Jesus was tempted like us and did not sin, let us also come to the throne of grace and get grace to help us in our time of temptation.

So, come to Romans 6 and 14. What happens to us when grace comes upon us? If grace is over me like an umbrella, the rain of sin cannot even touch me. If you don't have the umbrella, then sin will just fall on you all the time.

So, grace is like an umbrella. If I am under this umbrella, sin cannot touch me. If I don't have the umbrella, all my effort and all, sin will overcome me.

In the old covenant, nobody could get grace. John chapter 1, verse 17, the law came through Moses. Grace came through Jesus Christ.

Do you know, there was no grace in this world till Jesus came? Only when Jesus came, grace came. Now we can get grace. Now we must ask one question.

Who was the first person who came under this umbrella of grace? Who do you think it was? Was it Peter? Or James? Or John? None of them. It was Jesus. He needed grace.

Many people don't know that. Why did he not sin? Because he was under grace. Even Jesus.

I'll show it to you. Don't ever believe any preacher unless he can show it to you in the Bible. Luke chapter 2, verse 40.

The child Jesus, referring to Jesus as a child, continued to grow, become strong, and increased in wisdom and the grace of God was upon him like an umbrella. Over him means he was under grace. And when you're under grace, sin cannot have dominion over you.

So, from childhood, the grace was upon him. And he never went outside that umbrella. So he never, never sinned.

Wherever he went, he was under this big umbrella of grace. That's how he started his life. Let's see how he ended his life.

You know that most difficult temptation when he went to the cross. How did he go to the cross to face such a painful death? For Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 9, we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. And then it says, that he tasted death for everyone.

How? By the grace of God. You say, Lord, how did you taste this terrible death? You say, by the grace of God. So we saw in Luke 2.40, he began with the grace of God.

We see in Hebrews 2.9, he ended with the grace of God. That is from birth to death, he was under the grace of God, he never sinned. And he has shown us that we can also live under that grace all the time.

That's why it says in Hebrews 4.16, let us now go to the throne of grace boldly. God, give me the same grace that you gave to Jesus. He was tempted like me.

So, what I did when I understood this truth when I was about 36 years old, nearly 40 years ago, I was still a young man, 36 years old. You know, tempted with all the things 36 years old people can be tempted by.

Whenever I was tempted, I would say, Lord Jesus, when you were in Nazareth, you were tempted exactly like I am being tempted now.

I used to shut my eyes and think, how did Jesus face this temptation when he was in Nazareth? And I would try to understand, what did he do? I want to do the same thing. If he overcame, I can also overcome. I am told to go to the throne of grace and pray for grace.

Did he also pray like that? So, I read in Hebrews chapter 5, and verse 7, in the days of his flesh, that means 33 and a half years, 33 and a half years, this is not talking about the last day of his flesh in Gethsemane. In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications. See, prayer is general.

Bless me, help me, but supplication means specifically this particular sin that is tempting me now, I want to overcome it. And how did he pray? With loud crying and tears. Can you imagine Jesus, the son of God, praying, Oh father, help me.

Keep me under grace. With tears coming down his eyes. And loud crying.

That's why he used to go to the wilderness to pray so that he didn't disturb anybody. And what was he praying? Father, you are able to save me from death. Now, there are two types of death.

Physical death, spiritual death. Was Jesus praying to be saved from physical death or spiritual death? Very easy to find out. It says his prayer was heard.

Then we know it's not physical death because he died physically. I cannot imagine Jesus being such a coward saying, Oh, please don't let me die. Even the Christian martyrs would go singing when they were thrown to the lions.

So, Jesus was not a coward. He never prayed to be saved from physical death. Then, spiritual death, which is the result of sin.

Oh father, I don't even want the smell of that in my life. You know how Jesus hated sin? You know how Jesus hated sin? Sometimes, when I travel by bus in the villages of India, Tamil Nadu, night bus, and some bus stops, there is a public latrine. So, I want to go there.

So, I get down from the bus and go there. And the place is so filthy and so smelly. So, thank you, I'll go and sit in the bus.

I'll wait till I reach my destination and then go to the bathroom. I want to go. But, such a revulsion.

That is how Jesus hated sin. I don't want to do it. I don't want to go there.

And I said, Lord, the way I hated to go to that public toilet, I want to hate sin like that. You know, think if you go to a public toilet all full of muck, you don't feel like sitting there. How you just want to go away, that's the way you must turn away from sin.

Father, I don't want the smell of that in my body. And when the temptation was strong, because sometimes temptation can become very attractive. It doesn't look so smelly.

Lord, protect me. This is a strong temptation. Please protect me.

I don't even want to smell it or touch it. I realized that is how Jesus did not sin. Then I looked at my past life and I saw how I prayed.

Lord, please give me some victory. Didn't happen. Okay, Lord, yesterday I fell.

Try and give me some victory today. Nothing happened. I'll pray a little bit tomorrow.

Nothing will happen. I said, Lord, I'm not serious. That's why.

Think if your only child is in the hospital and the doctors have given up hope he's going to die. How will you pray? You won't pray, Lord, will you please heal my child? You'll forget about food, you'll forget about everything and cry out, God, please heal my child. You'll forget about food, you'll forget about everything and cry out, God, please heal my child.

In that way, when you pray to overcome your sins, I'm telling you you'll get victory. Jesus Christ is my predecessor, my model. Lord, as I'm being tested now, when I go to Nazareth, I'm being tested.

Let me give an example from the old testament. Exodus chapter 2. Here we read a picture of the Israelites in bondage. They were in bondage for 400 years.

In bondage for 430 years. Sick and tired of their slavery. Now see what it says here.

Exodus chapter 2 verse 23. This is how we can also pray for victory over sin. The sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage.

You understand that, Malayalam? What is the correct translation of that in English? Oh, longing. And they cried out. And they cried for help because their bondage rose up to God.

And God heard their groaning. And God remembered His covenant. And God took notice of them.

And next verse, He sent Moses. I thought of that in relation to our sinful lives. Some of us are in terrible bondage to some sins.

You know that. Secret sins. You are exactly like those Israelites in slavery to the Egyptians.

You are in slavery to some sin. But do you cry like this? Do you sigh because of your bondage? Do you cry out? If you did, God would have heard you. We read in Hebrews chapter 5, that when Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears, Israelites prayed with loud crying and tears.

When do you cry? Normal prayers we don't cry. What type of prayers do you cry and pray? Lord, my only child is dying. The doctors have given up hope.

I see that child struggling, struggling, can't even breathe. Please Lord, please heal that child. You can heal that child now.

The tears are coming down. Because you want it so much. You want it so much.

Nobody has to tell you to fast. You have no interest in food now. I have been through times like that when I prayed for my own children.

And I realized I must pray like that to overcome sin. With loud crying and tears because I hate sin. I am praying to save that child from death.

And when I am praying against sin, I am praying to save myself from death, spiritual death. But we are more serious about that physical death than the spiritual death in us. And so God sees.

He is not serious. It's a casual prayer. Lord, if you can give me some victory.

But I have lived quite comfortably as a good believer in CFC for many years, even committing many sins. Maybe I am an elder in CFC also, even though I am defeated in so many areas. Well, I believe I can continue like this for many years also without any problem.

God says, okay, continue. Things will never change in your life. Till you see how Jesus lived, you very emptily say I want to be a disciple of Jesus.

Do you really want to follow him? Do you really want to follow him? Hear how he prayed with loud crying and tears that he might never sin? Will you weep if you sin? I used to do that. At night I used to weep and wet my pillow with my tears because some bad thought came into my mind. I didn't harm other people.

But Lord, I hurt you. This thing which crucified you, I am doing it again. I want complete victory.

Over all dirty thoughts. All anger. All murmuring and complaining.

All anxiety. I want 100% freedom from the love of money. I want freedom from bitterness and jealousy.

I want freedom from everything that is displeasing you in my life. I want to tell you God answered my prayer. He will do the same for you.

When I understood this wonderful truth John 17.23 that God loves me just like he loved Jesus Christ. The prayer of Jesus here is that the world may know that you love them just as you love me. This was an absolute revelation in my life.

The father loves me just as much as he loved Jesus. He is my father. Then he will do everything for me that he did for Jesus.

If he helped Jesus, he will help me. Because I am a younger brother of Jesus. My eyes got opened to see that I am a younger brother of Jesus Christ.

Have you seen that that you are a younger brother and sister of Jesus Christ? Romans 8.29 It says whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son that Jesus might be the first among many brothers. When Jesus came to earth, he was the only begotten son, John 3.16. Only begotten. On the day he rose from the dead, he became the first born.

Now he is not only begotten. He is never called only begotten after the resurrection. He is the first born.

When I had only one son, he was my only son. When I got other sons, then he became my first born. So, when did Jesus become first born? On the day of resurrection when he told Mary Magdalene, tell my brothers that I have risen.

His disciples became his brothers. And I became a brother. You are a brother of Jesus Christ.

If you have received Christ as your Lord. You are a sister of Jesus if you received Christ as your Lord. That's why the highest title we can give to one another is brother.

That is why I tell people don't give me these low down titles. Pastor. Reverend.

Right Reverend. Reverend Doctor. All low down titles.

Call me brother. Because when you call me brother, you are calling me brother of Jesus Christ. I don't like anybody calling me any other title.

Because this is the highest title you can get. Tell me which title is better than brother of Jesus Christ. But because I am his brother, my father will do everything for me that he did for Jesus.

I have four sons. I did everything for my youngest son that I did for my oldest son. And God is a better father than me.

Everything he did for Jesus, he will do for me. If he kept Jesus under grace all his life, he will keep me also under grace. If he protected Jesus from Herod's soldiers, he will protect me also from my enemies.

If he protected Jesus from being drowned in the sea with a storm, he will protect me also. And when the time comes for Jesus to be killed, God allows that. And when the time comes for me to die, God will allow that also.

So, it's a wonderful thing to know that I am a younger brother of Jesus Christ. This is what we teach in CFC. That we can follow Jesus in temptation and overcome and return in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Not just be filled with the Holy Spirit, but live in the power of the Holy Spirit in our life. And in addition, he also, like I said earlier, gives us the gifts of the spirit to serve one another. Especially the gift of prophecy.

Prophecy means to speak to people exactly according to their need. I always pray for that gift when I get up to speak. And even if somebody comes to see me in my house for few minutes, I say, Lord, I don't know his need.

Give me the gift of prophecy for one minute. To give him exactly what he needs. Why don't all of you pray that prayer? Lord, give me the gift of prophecy.

But before you do that, there is something else you have to do. 1 Corinthians 14. Read it.

Before you earnestly desire to prophesy, what should you do? What is written there? Pursue after love. Lord, this needy person has come to me, let give me a love for him. It's when you love him that God will give you the gift of prophecy.

That's what the Lord said to me in relation to ministry in the church also. If your heart is filled with my word, and if your heart is filled with love for my people, I will always give you a word for them. And I have experienced that for many years.

I say, Lord, whenever I stand before people, I want to sit before people, I want to love them. I don't want to hit them on the head with I love them because many of them are needy people. They should be kings but they are slaves.

They should be conquering but they are bound. Give me the gift of prophecy that will set them free. You can pray that prayer.

Even when somebody comes to visit you in your house. Or you visit somebody in their house. Lord, give me one sentence that will set them free.

God will give you the words that will deliver them and set them free. Let's do that in the days to come. What he did for Jesus, he will do for you.

You know, for example, how he liberated one poor woman caught in adultery. The Pharisees came with stones to stone that woman, John chapter 8. Jesus did not give an immediate answer there. He was just scribbling on the ground.

Father, give me a word. And he got a word. Tell them, whoever is without sin, to throw the first stone.

That is a word of prophecy. One sentence. He who is without sin, throw the first stone.

No big lecture or sermon on you must be kind or gracious or anything. One sentence. And it says, from the eldest down to the youngest, they all left.

Why do you think they all left? If one person had stood there, he knew that Jesus would expose all his private sins. This man knows too much. He will expose my private sins.

They all went away. With one word of prophecy, he set that woman free. This father is our father also.

He can use you and me to set people free. So seek to follow Jesus in temptation. Say Lord, I want to overcome like you overcame.

I never want to sin consciously in any area. One by one, I want to bring the giants of Canaan down in my life. And give me words to bless everybody I meet.

Ok, I will give you your last promise and close. Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. Two things to see here. One, verse 13.

Christ became a curse for us. So there is no more curse for me. Don't let anybody fool you that any curse can come upon you.

Now there is a foolish thing they say. Some generational curse can come. Impossible.

Because once upon a time I was in a tree called Adam. I had my ancestors and all the curse down there. But one day the Holy Spirit cut me off from there.

And put me into another tree called Jesus Christ. What is my generational curse here? I don't have any of those ancestors now. I am in another tree.

There is no curse for me. There is no curse for you. But there is something else.

The blessing of Abraham, verse 14, can come upon us through the promise of the Holy Spirit. You know what the blessing of Abraham was? Genesis chapter 12. It's a tremendous blessing.

Verse 2, I will bless you. And you will be a blessing. Two things.

I will bless you. And you will be a blessing. And verse 3, last part, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

So, this is the blessing of the Holy Spirit. I will bless you. This is God saying.

I will put my blessing upon you. And I will make you a blessing to every family you meet on this earth. I say, Lord, I claim this as my inheritance through the Holy Spirit.

You will bless me. And every family I meet will be blessed through me. Why is it not happening in your life? You don't claim it.

This is a check in your name. Go to the bank and take it. It is for you.

I will bless you. And I will bless every family through you. As you were a curse in the past, you will be a blessing in the future.

What a wonderful life all of you can live in the days to come. This is the only way I want to live. From now till Jesus comes, this is the way I want to live.

Every day, blessed by God, and a blessing to everybody I meet. Imagine if all of us become like that. What will happen to our surroundings in Kerala? That even those who curse us, we are going to bless them.

We can bless people who call us all types of bad names. They can call us Beelzebub, or cult like Jehovah's Witness. Call us what you like.

We will bless you. Because God has called us to be a blessing to everybody. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I pray that everybody here will have the faith to claim this blessing for themselves. To be serious Christians and not half-hearted Christians. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. I thank God for the brotherhood and the prophetic ministry God has given to the people of Kerala. Amen.

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