

Partaking of the Glory of Christ

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ to partake in His glory throughout our lives.

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Scripture: Matthew 11:25

Topics: "Worship And Reverence", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a balanced worshipper of God, focusing on growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It highlights the need to destroy any idols in our hearts that hinder our relationship with God and to maintain a reverence for God as both Father and Lord of heaven and earth. The message encourages humility, seeking a balance between kindness and strictness, and becoming true worshippers who offer everything to God.

Transcript

I want to turn to 2nd Peter chapter 3. In an earlier study we considered how eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ and to lay hold of eternal life is to get to know God and Jesus better and better all the time. And Peter says in chapter 3 verse 18, it's the last verse of his letter, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory now and forever.

One of my concerns is for good brothers and sisters who are not growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's not something for me to judge you in. But having been a believer for 56 years, there's a certain amount of discernment that I've grown in to be able to see that.

But you can judge yourself and ask yourself whether you have grown in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. When you see that grace is given only to the humble, it means you've grown in humility. That's the only way to grow in grace.

It's impossible to grow in grace if you don't grow in humility. It's a good question for all of you to ask yourself, compare yourself with how it was a year ago. It's easy to deceive ourselves here, to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the ways in which we know is by increasing in the reverence we have for God. If you're not growing in a greater reverence for God or what the Old Testament calls the fear of God, that would be one

indication that we're not really growing in the knowledge of Jesus. Let me show you a verse in 2 Thessalonians now in chapter 1, where the gospel is 2 Thessalonians, and we read here that we are called to, 2 Thessalonians 2, sorry, 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 14.

It was for this that he called you through our gospel that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please remember that. I believe this is one of the big differences between the gospel that is preached in many other churches and the gospel that we preach.

The gospel preached in many other churches is that we can gain the forgiveness of sins or that we can gain heaven when we die. But Paul speaks here about gaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is another gospel altogether.

Forgiveness of sins is just like cleaning up the vessel. What do you clean up the vessel for? It's to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So that is why I call that an incomplete gospel that just saves you from hell, forgives your sins, and you're sure you're going to heaven.

You're going to live your whole life with an empty vessel and stand before God with an empty vessel. When you were supposed to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ during your entire life on earth, to compare it, it would be like you sent your son or daughter to college and you got admission. It was very difficult to get admission in some good colleges, but your son or daughter got admission but never did any of the courses.

Spent four years there studying nothing, just glorying in the fact that I belong to this top college, to IIT or something like that. But what did you study there? Nothing. Four years, six years, ten years, you're still sitting there.

Glorying that you got admission into the IIT but studying nothing, getting no degree. That is what it means to have the gospel of forgiveness of sins and you've become a child of God, but you've not gained anything of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have to beware of this, brothers and sisters.

I mean, how would a parent feel? You'd be excited when your child got admission into IIT or something like that, some top university, but they didn't study there, didn't gain anything. What's the use? You might as well have joined a third-rate, useless college and studied something. That is the picture I get.

So it's very important that we gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ year by year by year by year, like Peter also said, to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And as I said, one of those areas is to learn the reverence of God. Now turn with me to 2 Corinthians in chapter 4. See, like I've often urged you to read the Bible slowly, some of these verses I just pointed out to you, you may have completely missed.

Because you didn't read slowly, you missed growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ or the gospel of gaining the glory of Jesus Christ. I'm sure you've read these letters many, many times, but it's so easy to miss it. And I'll tell you why we miss it.

Please listen to this. 2 Corinthians 4 speaks about how Satan blinds the minds of the unbelieving. Not unbelievers.

There are many unbelieving among believers. And unbelieving believers, it's a terrible state to be in. He blinds the minds of the unbelieving, and let me paraphrase it, that they may see the gospel of the

forgiveness of sins, but they do not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

Do you get it? Now you see how believers can be unbelieving. You would have seen it yourself if you had read the Bible slowly instead of rushing past. There's a lot of difference between the gospel of the forgiveness of sins and the gospel by which we gain the glory of Jesus Christ.

We've always felt, oh, the devil's blinded those minds of those unbelievers. No, he hasn't. Maybe he has blinded their eyes from the gospel of forgiveness of sins, but it's your eyes that he has blinded from gaining the glory, the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God that we can partake of.

That's an amazing gospel. That's the only gospel that will keep you from backsliding. That's the only gospel that will keep you from going up and down, up and down Christian life, sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated.

Make it your passion to gain the gospel of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. So when we think of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, it's wonderful to compare scripture with scripture, because the answer for one verse is in another verse. And it's wonderful that we have a Bible in our own language.

To me, it's one of the greatest blessings that I have a Bible in my own language, that I'm literate enough to read it. And I feel sorry for anyone who can read, and there's a Bible in your language, and you haven't read it through yet. I really believe you've got to hang your head in shame and say to yourself, this is what you've got to say to yourself, I do not believe that the Bible is the word of God.

Say that to yourself. Every person here who's been a believer for at least two years, and you've not read the Bible yet, this is what you must confess. I do not believe that the Bible is the word of God.

Because even if you don't say it with your mouth, that's what you're saying by your life. It's impossible. It is impossible for a man to say that he believes the Bible is the only book God has written for man.

And he's known Jesus for two years, and he hasn't even read through the Bible even once yet. I'm not saying slowly, read through it fast, get through the whole thing once, it's what I did. As soon as I was converted, I read through the whole Bible in six months.

Then I went into it slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly, studying chapter by chapter. So I'd encourage you, first of all, read through the whole Bible. It takes only six months, and I did it in the midst of my secular job.

So in two years, if you haven't read it, I can without any doubt tell you, you do not believe the whole Bible is the word of God. Maybe you believe the Gospel of John is the word of God. Or maybe you believe the Philippians or Ephesians, those are the word of God.

But you don't believe the whole Bible is the word of God. No, you don't. Be honest.

If you did, you wouldn't throw those things away. I mean, if you have fake currency notes, you'll throw them away. You won't throw away real currency notes.

Why is it you treat some parts of the Bible as you believe God's word and some parts are not? Be honest and say, I don't believe that's the word of God. So that's why we miss out on something. So here is a verse which tells us about the glory of Jesus Christ.

John chapter 1, verse 14. The word became flesh. The word is, you know, you know what our words are.

The Bible is written in very simple language, really. It's not very complicated. John was not a philosopher.

He was an unlearned fisherman. And an unlearned fisherman, when he writes, you don't have to think of complicated meanings. You think, what is a word? When you speak words, what is it? Words are an expression, an audible expression.

Or if you write it, a visible expression of your unseen thoughts. You can put it like that. Your written words are a visible expression of your unseen thoughts.

And so when Jesus Christ is called the word of God, it's a visible expression of the unseen God. That's all there is to it. It's an unlearned fisherman writing.

So if you don't come to it with great complicated high thoughts in your mind, and just come in simple way, you understand it. The word was with God, verse 1, and the word was God. He came to earth in flesh, so that we have a visible manifestation of what God is like.

That's why Jesus could say, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. And you know, when he said that, by the way, he said that in John 14, after washing the disciples' feet, in John 13, it's after that that he said in John 14, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. So what he's saying is, did you see me wash your feet just now? The job of a slave? The Father is like that.

Do you believe that? Do you believe God the Father is the type of person who will come and wash our feet? Has your earthly father ever washed your feet? I won't do that. It's beneath their dignity. You go and wash your father's feet.

God is so different from what we imagine he is. A visible manifestation of the unseen God came and washed his disciples' feet and said, if you've seen me, you've seen what God is like. It humbles me that my heavenly father is like that.

He wants to wash my feet. So can you imagine how conceited any believer, any of you, can be to think, to even think, that you should have a greater ministry in the church than washing other people's feet? That you're a bigger man than the slave that Jesus was. I tell you, most believers are like those disciples who sat at the table in the Last Supper and they knew that in every Jewish home, when you walk in with dirty sandals and dirty feet, there's always a slave, if it's a rich home, with a bucket of water at the door to wash your feet before you sit down for your meal.

But because Jesus had specifically said that night to that man who loaned him that upper room, said, I don't want anybody there. I don't want any slaves. I don't want anybody there because this is a private gathering of me and my disciples.

So the owner of that house did it like that. He kept the bucket of water, he kept the food on the table, and there was no slave. So they all walked in, and they saw the bucket there.

They knew what is normally to be done. No slave around. They all go and sit down.

Feet are dirty. Who's going to clean it? Everybody is pretty big. Peter is the leader, and John is a relative of the high priest, and Matthew is a chartered accountant, and somebody else is an equivalent of a college graduate, or whatever it is.

Judas is scared, I think. And so Jesus says, I'm the only one here who's just a nobody, so I'll pick up the bucket. That was the spirit.

And he said, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. Grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the scriptures, the Holy Spirit shows us the glory of Jesus Christ.

And if you really see the glory, you'll be humbled. You'll put your face in your hands and say, Lord, I'm not like that. You'll weep many, many times.

I've wept when I've seen the glory of Jesus in the scriptures, and I've said, Lord, I'm not like that. But I want to be like that. I'm willing to pay any price to be like that.

Spirit of God, you showed me that glory. I want you to make me like that. It's so important, my brothers, when you read the scriptures, to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

So important. See, I grew up in the early days, after I was born again 56 years ago, in a church which had zero emphasis on the Holy Spirit. They were very strong on the Word of God.

I'm thankful for that, because I was a new Christian, and I studied, studied, studied the Word, but it was all so dry and something missing. And I said, Lord, this is not the way it should be. And so I had to seek God myself for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I was not taught that in a church. I didn't even know about the Pentecostals. I went to the Pentecostals, and I was disappointed with what I saw there.

They told me to repeat some words, and I said, I'm not going to do that. So I left them, I left this other group, and I went to my room, and I said, Lord, I want you to fill me with the Holy Spirit. That's where God met with me first, when I was just about 23 years old.

And that was the beginning, where I began to understand the scriptures. You know, the difference between God's Word and God's Word enlightened by the Holy Spirit is like good, clean meat hanging in the shop. Not dirty, freshly cut, and the same meat cooked on the fire.

Think of a chicken curry cooked in the fire, and a chicken freshly, you know, with all the feathers, de-feathered, taken off. You don't feel like eating that chicken, which has just been feathered and cleaned. It's clean.

You don't have any appetite to put one piece of it in your mouth. But when it's put in the fire, and cooked, what a difference. That is the difference between an academic knowledge of the Word of God and the same Word, the same Word, set on fire by the Holy Spirit.

The world of difference. I remember about two great men of God who lived in America in the 19th century. One was D.L. Moody.

He was a preacher. And in his preaching, many times in public meetings, he used to always see two old ladies sitting on two chairs and praying. He was so happy.

He went up to them and said, Thank you very much for praying for all these unconverted people. And they said, No, Mr. Moody, we are praying for you. He said, Praying for me? What are you praying for? We are praying that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That spoke to him, you know. Here he thought he was a great preacher and he needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. And he sought God and the Lord baptized him with the Holy Spirit.

It changed his life. I remember reading that story as a young man. And I said, Lord, do that for me.

I have so much knowledge of the Word. The touch of the Spirit is missing. There is a lot of difference.

There was another man there in the 19th century called A.B. Simpson. Another great man of God. He is the one who wrote this song, Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord.

And many other songs, Jesus only is our message. Some wonderful hymns. He was a great hymn writer.

But he wasn't like that in the beginning. As a young man, he was a defeated Presbyterian pastor, sick. And he went to the coast somewhere to refresh his health.

And he heard somebody singing there about Jesus saying no man can work like Him. And just that little song gripped him that he really needed the power of Jesus in his body. And he began to seek for the Holy Spirit.

And he was baptized in the Holy Spirit. And it changed him completely. He was such an anointed speaker that D.L. Moody said this about A.B. Simpson.

He says, whatever that man speaks always goes to my heart. See this is not an ordinary person saying. D.L. Moody said that about A.B. Simpson.

My brothers and sisters, does God have favorites? No. All are the same to Him. If you are humble, God will give you the same spirit of grace that He has given others.

He may not give you the same ministry. He may not have you be called to stand in pulpits and preach to great crowds. But even in ordinary conversation with people, imagine if someone can have this testimony about you.

You are not a preacher. You never stand in a pulpit. But you all of us speak to one another.

And if you can have this testimony that whatever that sister says always speaks to my heart. So many sisters, they are so curious. Their conversation is all about curiosity, about so many details about your life.

I know young sisters are fed up with some older sisters being curious about their life. So I tell those young sisters, tell that older sister, Sister, how will that knowledge help you in your spiritual life? Just ask them that question. They'll never ask you again all those curious details that they want to know.

How will that help you, sister, in your spiritual life? A lot of people, you know, we have to be very careful. Just like we don't walk into somebody's house without knocking at the door. Don't be curious about people's affairs.

It's exactly like walking into people's houses and bedrooms without getting permission. Leave it. Don't.

You don't have to go around. You know, I sometimes go to some people who have built a new house and they say, Brother Zak, I want to show you this new house. I say, no, I'm not interested in seeing it.

I don't want to go and see your bedrooms and your bathrooms. I have no interest. I'm not even curious about that.

I want to spend that time edifying them spiritually. We are so curious about so many things when we could have spent our life in a more profitable way. Have you heard that proverb in English that the curiosity killed the cat? You know, the cat put its head into the dog's kennel to see if the dog was there and the head got bitten off.

Why do you want to put your head in the dog's kennel to find out if it is there? If it's there, let it be there. If it's not there, let it not be there. So many unnecessary things grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus told the Samaritan woman, You've had five husbands and the one you're living with is not your husband. She immediately changed the subject. She said, Lord, I want to talk about worship.

Look at the glory of Jesus there. He never said, no, no, no, hang on. We've got to clear this matter about your husbands first.

That's what we would do. That's what curious, stupid people would do. Jesus said, OK, you want to talk about worship? Let's talk about worship.

He did not want to embarrass her. Have you seen the glory of Jesus? Do you want to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ? Pursue it. People will love to be with you.

People will love to hear you. I'm not talking about pulpit speaking. They love to just talk to you.

Because they know that one sentence from your life will bless their hearts. And lift them up and keep them going. You write the two-sentence email and they'll be delighted.

Don't you want to be a brother sister like that? You may never in your life preach in a pulpit. But you can manifest the glory of Jesus. Sisters, brothers, just stop being curious.

Stop walking into people's lives and houses without knocking at the door. These are little examples. So here we see, the word became flesh.

John 1.14 And we beheld his glory. The glory as of the only begotten from the Father. Full of grace and truth.

The glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ in an earthly form. Full of grace and truth. I don't know whether you've seen this verse in the Old Testament.

It's good. Whenever we read the New Testament. If you've read the Old Testament, verses come back to your mind.

Hey, that reminds me of something I've read in the Old Testament. Exodus chapter 33. Exodus 33.

You know, the children of Israel had disobeyed God by worshipping a golden calf. And God was so angry with them. And he told them, I am not going to lead you anymore.

But I won't forsake you. I'll send my angel with you. And Moses says to the Lord in Exodus 33.

He says, Father, verse 15. Exodus 33. If your presence does not go with us, don't lead us from here.

I don't want to read the whole passage. He said, I don't want an angel. I don't want an angel.

Lord, if you're not going to go with us, I don't want to move from here. That is always the word of a man of God. Lord, if you don't go with me, I don't want to go from here.

I heard of a great preacher who was invited to speak in a public tent meeting. In the olden days, they used to have big public tent meetings. And he was staying in a small room.

And the time had come. The singing was over. And the time had come for him to speak.

And he was not there. So they went to his room. And before they knocked at the door, they heard him praying.

Lord, if you don't go with me, I'm not going. He didn't want to enter that pulpit. Without being sure that the Lord was with him.

Boy, I read that, I think, 50 years ago. And I've never forgotten it. I said, Lord, I want to be like that.

I never want to get into a pulpit. Thinking that I've got so much experience or I've got so much knowledge. If you don't go with me, don't take me.

I don't want to go in and let the meeting be cancelled. It's okay. What am I going to get up there and waste people's time? I wish every preacher in the world were like that.

What a difference it would make. If your presence does not go with us, don't lead us from here. My brothers and sisters, I plead with you.

Remember Exodus 33, verse 15. If your presence doesn't go with us, don't take us from here. Say that about every move of yours.

Not just when you're to preach, but anything. Even when you go on a vacation. I want the Lord to go with me when I go on a vacation.

I don't want to go alone anywhere. If your presence does not go with me, don't take us from here. I'll stay here for the rest of my life.

And then the Lord said, okay, I will do this thing. Verse 17, which you have spoken. What a wonderful thing.

He first said, I won't come with you. I'll send an angel. But see the difference that prayer makes.

Some people say prayer accomplishes nothing. If Moses had not prayed there, it would have been an angel that led Israel. You know why the Lord led Israel? Because Moses prayed.

It made all the difference. Can you imagine the difference between an angel leading you and God leading you? And it happened because of one righteous man's prayer. Some people think that, oh, if we get a hundred people to the prayer meeting, God will hear.

Rubbish. James 5.16 says, one righteous man's prayer, fervent prayer, accomplishes more than a million people praying. It's a question of righteousness.

Moses, one righteous man. All those two million Israelites praying would have accomplished nothing. But one Moses, those people didn't realize what a blessing it was to have a man of God like Moses in their midst.

His prayer changed things. Changed it from an angel to God himself leading them. He said, I've granted you.

Okay. I will do this thing. Then see Moses.

This is always the mark of a man of God. He's never satisfied. Never satisfied.

I mean, satisfied materially. He doesn't want anything. I'm content with all things, whether I'm poor or rich.

A man of God is always satisfied with his material, earthly condition, even if he lives in a hut. He doesn't want Naaman's gold or clothes and all like Elisha. He doesn't want all that.

The little hut I live in is okay. But spiritually, he's never satisfied. So Moses is not satisfied with God's presence going with them.

Isn't that enough, Moses? No, no, no. He says, one more thing, Lord. Show me your glory.

Verse 18. And the Lord says, Verse 20. You cannot see my face and live.

You've asked for too much. I mean, my presence going with you is okay, but to see my glory. Sorry.

You won't be able to live. But there's a place. Go and hide yourself in the rock.

Verse 21. And when my glory is passing by, you will see. Verse 23.

You'll see my back. But you will not see my face. You won't be able to live.

Is this the God you worship? Now turn to John 1.14. Where John says, We beheld his glory. We beheld his glory. And where was that glory seen? Turn again to 2nd Corinthians 4. Verse 6. For God who said, Light shall shine out of darkness.

2nd Corinthians 4.6. He is the one who is shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God told Moses, You cannot see my face and live. And yet the disciples saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It's not just a bright light. It's his life. And that is our calling.

Grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In the knowledge of that glory. That's the glory we are supposed to gain.

And that glory we read in John 1.14. Turn back to John 1.14. Has got a balance full of grace and truth. God has created this world with a perfect balance. And the glory of God is balanced.

It's not only grace. It's not only truth. It's not only truth.

It's not only grace. The glory of God is balanced. It's not 50% grace, 50% truth.

No. It is 100% grace and 100% truth. If you can't understand that, well, that's because divine things are a bit complicated.

It's not 50-50. It's 100-100. Like we say in a good Christian marriage, it's not 50-50.

It's 100-100. So, this is the balance that we see in Jesus Christ. The grace that could speak with compassion to an adulterous woman or to a five times divorced Samaritan woman.

And the truth that would turn the tables of the money changers and let the coins fly around everywhere and turn them out and saying don't make my father's house a den of robbers. The grace that could tell people don't fear little flock. It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Come to me, I'll give you rest. And the truth that from the same lips could say you Pharisees, you generation of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of hell? See, that is the glory of God, full of grace and truth. And the more we become like Jesus Christ, the more we will have this balance of grace and truth in our life.

When we are initially converted, all of us, you and I, are imbalanced. That's why if an imbalanced person tries to build the body of Christ, he will build an imbalanced body. And that's why Jesus always sent his disciples two by two.

So that there is a balance. That was not true in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament it was all one alone, one by one.

Starting with Noah, first prophet. Enoch, he was the first prophet. And then Noah.

And then all the way down, Isaiah, Elijah, Elisha, Malachi, John the Baptist. One, one, one, one. Always one.

You never see two prophets working together. Even Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai was a much older man.

Zechariah was a young man who came in much later. But once it comes to the New Testament, Jesus sends it two by two. His disciples.

You read that in Luke chapter 10. And then in Acts chapter 13, the first great missionary outreach of the church from Antioch, the Holy Spirit said, separate me Paul and Barnabas. Saul and Barnabas.

Paul's name was Saul then. Why not just Saul? Why not just Barnabas, son of encouragement? No. They will be imbalanced.

Paul is the man who is strict. Barnabas is the man who is an encourager. And together they could manifest truth and grace.

And as long as they respected and valued one another they could do a great work. And that's why the devil came and separated them. Then the Lord had to give Paul another young man called Timothy, who was like Barnabas.

But this is the mistake that single pastors, however gifted they may be, who think they can build the body of Christ. This is the mistake they made. No human being was perfectly balanced.

Jesus Christ was the only one who walked on this earth perfectly balanced. As we grow in grace and the knowledge we become closer and closer to be balanced, but we're still slightly imbalanced. We should be growing even if very strong on truth once, very low on grace as you grow, grace will become more and more and more, but still it doesn't become perfect.

Some people are very gracious and not so strong on truth. Over a period of time truth increases in their life, but they're still not perfectly balanced. If you can acknowledge that in your life you're not perfectly balanced, and you need other members of the body of Christ, the input from them, in order to be balanced, it'll help you.

And it doesn't have to be from an older person always. Sometimes we think we can grow only if we spend time talking to very great men of God. Not necessarily.

I've been blessed sometimes talking to young people. I'm blessed often sitting at the Wednesday meeting, listening to young people. If you're not blessed, something must be wrong with you.

You know, we can be deaf. We can be deaf when we don't keep a good conscience. We can be deaf when we have high thoughts about ourselves, that we think we're so big that nobody can teach us.

Then we become deaf. Then even if Jesus spoke, we couldn't hear it. There were people in Israel who couldn't even hear Jesus speaking.

That's why Jesus had to say to them, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And even in Revelation, that word comes down to churches. To the seven churches.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Why do you have to tell people in a church who are born-again people, do you have ears to hear? Born-again people can have a bad conscience. They become deaf.

Born-again people can become proud. Then they become deaf. I think that could have happened to many of you sitting here.

That you're not able to hear Jesus speaking to you. You know, the Bible says in Revelation 1 that when John heard Jesus' voice, it was like a trumpet. But a deaf man cannot even hear a trumpet.

But a person whose ears are absolutely clear because he's kept a good conscience and he's so humble that he falls on his ground with his face in the dust like John fell at Jesus' feet. If you're like that, you'll hear God's voice like a trumpet. But very few believers keep their face in the dust.

Do you know what I tell all, we work with about 120 elders in all our churches, and I tell all of them one thing. I say, brothers, keep your face in the dust. I don't know how many of them listen to me.

My duty is to exhort them. But if they listen to me, it'll go extremely well with them. I know.

The anointing of God is always upon people who keep their face in the dust. Who are worshippers. That's why I've always said to you, brothers, be a worshipper, more than a preacher.

Always seek to be a worshipper. And worship, please, let me explain again. Worship is not praise and thanksgiving.

It's not shouting and praising and lifting our hands. I agree with all that. I want to raise my hands.

I want to shout. I want to praise. And I want that.

But that is not worship. Worship is something completely different. Let me show you.

The first man in the Bible who is said to have worshipped God. The book of Job. Just in case you did not know.

Out of the 66 books of the Bible, the first book written was Job. But because it's a poetical book, the people who arranged the Bible put all the poetical books together. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

They lumped it all together. Even though they were not, you know, even the New Testament books are not written in, placed in order. The first book written was James.

And so, Job is the first book. The book Genesis is placed first in the Bible because it describes the creation of the earth and the heavens. But it was written by Moses.

In many other language versions of the Bible, it's called the first book of Moses. It's written by Moses. And Moses lived about 500 years after Job.

So Job is the first book of the Bible. And the first chapter, you read about a man worshipping God. He wasn't a preacher.

But he was a worshipper. And when God pointed him out to Satan, he didn't say, have you seen what a fantastic preacher Job is? Today we admire people with fantastic gifts. But God appreciated Job because he said, there's a man who fears me.

Job 1 verse 8. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him on the earth. A blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. You know that Job had fantastic wealth.

You read about that in verse 3. 7,000 sheep, 3,000. The wealth of a man in those days was in cattle. But God doesn't even mention one thing about that to Satan.

Because that doesn't interest God. God is not interested in how many camels and sheep and your bank account and how much property you have. That doesn't interest God at all.

You may have all that. It can be recorded about you. You had this, this, this, this, this.

But when God speaks to Satan, he says two things. He fears God and he turns away from evil. And therefore he's a blameless and an upright man.

You know the difference between blameless and perfect. I mentioned that once. Perfect is completely perfect like Christ.

Blameless means up to your level of your understanding, your conscience is clear. It's like saying in second standard that student got 100% in mathematics. That's blameless.

Is he perfect in mathematics? Oh no. He's got to go to PhD and post PhD, still won't be perfect. But that's all he can go in second standard.

100%. You don't get 101. Blameless.

So that means, blameless means according to your present level of conscience, you may have been born again yesterday, blameless. You're not perfect. But that guy who's been born again 50 years ago, his level is much higher.

He's in maybe BSC class or something. He's got, his 100% means a lot more. So there's a difference between blameless and perfect.

Now all of us can be blameless. It'd be tragic even at your level of conscience you don't get 100%. Blameless and upright man.

And the reason was he feared God. He had reverence for God. And he turned away from evil.

And Satan wanted to test him and took away all his property and his 10 children, 7 sons and 3 daughters all died in one day. That's never happened as far as I know to any other human being that I know of who lost all his property and his children all in one day. Gone.

And it says when Job heard that news his immediate reaction he just heard the news that verse 19 it fell and all your sons and daughters died. Verse 20, Job 120 he tore his robe because that was a sign of sorrow. There is sorrow.

If you hear that all your children died and you don't have sorrow, you must be a heartless man. He's in sorrow that all his children died. I don't think he cared so much for his property but his children died.

He tore his clothes. That was sorrow. But in his sorrow he fell on his ground and worshipped.

This is the first man about whom you read in the Bible. He worshipped God. He wasn't singing songs of praise.

No. I don't think he was singing at all. This whole teaching that this is praise and worship is a deception in Christendom.

You say, what does it matter if you call it by another name? You've heard me use the illustration. Supposing you go to the shop to buy a Honda car and somebody gives you a bicycle and says this is a Honda car. Name doesn't matter.

This is the Honda car and you pay whatever is it, 15 lakhs or something and come home with a bicycle. Tell me, were you cheated or not? That's what I mean. You sing praise and thanksgiving to God and you call it worship.

You're cheated. You missed out on something. Praise and thanksgiving is good.

A bicycle is good but that's not a Honda car. Praise and thanksgiving is good but that's not worship. That's what I'm saying.

Don't let the devil cheat you. Worship is to say Lord, you are everything to me. More than my property, more than my children, more than my family members, more than life itself.

I bow down and I worship you. See it is so opposite. He fell to the ground.

The first man in the Bible. In the last book of the Bible you see John the Apostle doing the same thing. Falling to the ground and worshipping Jesus.

That's how the Bible begins and ends. In Job and in Revelation. Job 1, Revelation 1. See two men of God falling on their face and worshipping God.

I say Lord, I want to be like that all my life. Do it. Sometimes turn around on your bed and you don't have to go on the ground.

You can be on your bed. Fall on your face before God and be a worshipper. Father of Jesus loves reward.

What rapture will it be? Prostrate before thy throne to lie and gaze and gaze on thee. David said there's only one thing I've desired of the Lord. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord to behold his beauty all the days of my life.

You know it's like coming into the Lord's presence. Do you know that verse? If you don't know it, please look at it. It's a very good verse.

One thing. Psalm 27 verse 4. One thing I have asked from the Lord that I will seek. It's a very good thing.

It gripped my heart. I remember the first book I wrote was a book called The Supreme Priorities. And there I wrote about four places in the Bible where you read about one thing.

And one of those was this verse. One of those chapters is on one thing. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

In other words, all my life I'm going to ask God for one thing. And what is that? Just to see the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in his temple. In other words, you come before the Lord and you sit there.

And the Lord says, what do you want? I say, Lord, I don't want anything. I haven't come here with a prayer. I just want to see you.

I just want to sit here. You're sitting so long. The Lord says, you don't want anything? No, no, I don't want anything.

I just want to look at you and prostrate before your throne to lie and gaze and gaze on thee. If you can do that, you have found worship. Where you're not praying.

You're not even thanking. All that is good. We can pray.

We can thank the Lord. But this is worship. We have nothing to ask for.

Lord, I don't want anything. I just want to see your glory. Okay, I lost my property.

My bank account was wiped out. Somebody cheated me. My children all died, Job says.

Okay, fine. But you are there. One thing I have asked from the Lord.

And what Job said was in Job 1.21. The Lord gave. The Lord has taken away. I came from a mother's womb naked.

I'll return to the earth naked one day. Job says, when I was born as a little baby. I think Job must have been 130 years old then.

I came to this earth 130 years ago as a little baby. I had nothing. I didn't even have a stitch of clothing on me.

No money, no knowledge, no intelligence, no ability. No spirituality. Nothing.

And one day, he says, my life on earth will be over. And they'll put me in the grave. There won't be any money in my pockets.

I'll have nothing when I leave this earth. In between, God, you allowed me to have children. You allowed me to have property.

You allowed me to have money. You allowed me to know the Bible, to preach, to share, so many things. But, you can take it away.

You can take it away before I die. Sure. You gave it to me all freely.

You can take it away. You know, it's like the landlord of your house. You rented a house from someone.

And when you write an agreement, you say, well, with one month's notice or three months notice, he can ask you to vacate. And when you vacate your rented house, you're not doing the landlord a great favor. No.

Do you recognize that you're living a rented life on earth? That your property may be in your name, but it's rented? It belongs to God? The sale deed is in your name, I know, but if you're a disciple, you recognize it's a rented house. I had that house in my name, and where the church began to meet, and I always felt, this is a rented house. I wasn't doing the church a favor by letting them meet in my house for six years.

Far from it. Far from it. It was a rented house.

And the father said, I want some of my other children to come here. I said, sure. We used to have conferences in that house where people would sleep in the front room.

And I said, Lord, it's a rented house. I don't believe anything I have is mine. That's the way to live.

You're a worshipper. You recognize nothing is yours. God allows you to use these things on earth.

Even your health, my dear brother, sister. Some of you are proud of your good health. It's a gift from God.

Say, Lord, if you want, you can take it away. In the next chapter, you read God took away Job's health as well. This is worship, where I don't even feel I have a right to health in my body.

Lord, it's your gift. One day it will go. When you die, how much health have you got? Lord, I have no rights in my life.

Do you know that's how Jesus lived? He lived on earth without any rights. He owned heaven and earth. In that one hymn that I often sing to myself, when I see Jesus bleeding on the cross, that the Lord of my sins upon him was far heavier for him to bear.

He who could bear the universe on his shoulders, that was to him who bears the world a load that he could scarcely bear. The Lord of my sin. He owned the universe, but he lived on earth as if he owned nothing.

He never fought for his rights. People would spit on him, call him the devil, even steal his money like Judas Iscariot. Have you grown in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my brothers and sisters? Have you become a worshipper? Have you learned reverence for God? See, I've often mentioned this, that when I see the quality of most of the hymns written in the 20th century or particularly in the last 30-40 years, I find them so shallow.

I mean, there are a few exceptions. A few, maybe 4 or 5%. But 95% of the hymns written in the last 40-50 years are so shallow.

They're, you know, a frothy emotional type of love for Jesus with no reverence for God. The old hymn writers, they never wrote these type of frothy love songs to Jesus. They were worshippers.

And they were more serious Christians. I believe in the 19th century, in the early part of the 20th century, there were more serious Christians in the world than today. They were not running after money like today's preachers.

Most of those preachers, those days were very poor. Whereas today, it's so shallow, everything, because everything is around money. Even the songwriters become millionaires writing a few songs.

Christian authors become millionaires writing a few books. This is the Christian world we're living in, and in the midst of it, God has called us to be a witness. We need to study God's word and see the glory of Jesus Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit so that that glory can be manifest in us.

Dear brothers and sisters, it's very very important. Be a worshipper. Learn to know God not only as Father, but as God.

It's one of the things that came home to my heart as I was meditating this morning. You know, I'm... Jesus taught us to pray, Our Father who art in heaven. Not just Our Father.

Our Father who is God. Both. Then we pray, Hallowed be thy name, etc.

So we need to see God as our Father and as God in heaven. And I want to correct a mistake that I made when I said once that Jesus always called God Father. I discovered that it was not only on the cross He said, My God.

I discovered earlier that He prayed like this. See Matthew 11, 25. One of those things.

Imagine I read it for so many years and I didn't notice it till it suddenly struck me that Jesus called His Father Lord of heaven and earth. That's how He prayed to Him. Matthew 11, 25.

I praise Thee, O Father Lord of heaven and earth. So, you know, the mistake I made was I said that Jesus never in His earthly life prayed to the Father calling Him Lord. He did.

I see that here. Father Lord of heaven and earth. And I see, Oh God.

Jesus. If you prayed like that who am I to pray always saying Daddy. You know some of us because we are so, we never knew about the fatherhood of God.

I didn't know about it for years even after I was born again. It is so exciting to know God as my father and it certainly is. The Holy Spirit cries out from us Father, Abba, Daddy.

And we should never lose that. I never want to lose it. I often want to picture myself like a little two year old sitting in my Heavenly Father's lap and looking up to Him and saying Daddy.

Even now. I like that song which says even though you're old you'll still be a child in my eyes God says. That's what we are.

So but you know the danger with all of us is the danger of imbalance like grace and truth. We can get so taken up with, Hey, I never knew He was my Daddy. Now I only know Him as Daddy.

And then I have so many complications when I know Him as Daddy because if I go and ask my earthly father for something I get it immediately. But why is it I don't get it from my Heavenly Father? Because He's not only Daddy. He's Lord of Heaven and Earth.

I mean, let's be honest. I think of so many believers who have got sicknesses. And I know that God can heal it like that.

If I go to my earthly father and ask him for something he can do like that. Would he hesitate if he knows it's for my good? Never. Why is it so many of God's children are still sick? Why do we have to wear glasses? You know it's a sickness by the way.

It's faulty eyesight. It's because we have to say our Father who is God Lord of Heaven and Earth. I have to know Him as Father and then don't get so imbalanced that you know Him only as Daddy and forget that He's our Father who is in Heaven.

Lord of Heaven and Earth. And as Almighty God He has a wisdom that goes way beyond our wisdom and sometimes decides like even in the case of His Apostle Paul that thorn in the flesh, that messenger of Satan is good for you to keep you humble. Yeah.

That is God. So I see there's a balance we need always. Don't get so taken up with one side of truth that you back away from another truth that you miss out completely.

The narrow way is a very narrow path with a cliff on either side and you back away from one truth to find one truth. You can follow the cliff this side or you can follow the cliff that side. So it's very important to be balanced.

See Romans in chapter 11 and verse 22. You see the balance here? If you look for it you'll find it in many places in the New Testament especially. In the Old Testament there was not so much emphasis on knowing God in a balanced way.

But in the New Testament there's a great emphasis on it. Behold then. Behold means look carefully.

Whenever you read the word behold look carefully. What should I look carefully at? Two things. The kindness of God and the severity of God.

The kindness of God and the strictness of God. That is grace and truth. It's the same thing.

That God is kind with me and he's strict with me. Yeah. I know he's been very strict with me sometimes for small teeny weeny slip up he punishes me and I'm very thankful that he pulls me up in some way and I wake up and I say thank you Lord.

I'm so glad you keep such a strict watch on me that you don't even let me go one degree away from the truth. If you want God to treat you like that that do you want God to treat you like that? That if you speak one wrong word he'll give you a fever or you become curious about somebody and he'll punish you in some way with some sickness. Do you want it? I want it.

Because I want to be absolutely on the straight path and if you but if you have a complaint about this thing that thing Lord why did you do this to me why did you do this to me why haven't you done this to me God will leave you alone. It's a very dangerous thing. He'll leave you alone and he won't correct you anymore and then you're doomed.

Say Lord please correct me for the smallest little mistake I may make in my life. I want to be on the straight and narrow path. I want you to be kind with me and I want you to be strict with me.

You know a good father good parents are kind and strict. Parents who are only kind will have useless children and parents who are only strict will also have useless children. And the children will become run away from home and become legalists.

You have to be kind and strict and there must be a balance between father and mother where there's a kindness and strictness because God is like that. And in our home parents are supposed to represent God. That's why in the New Testament it says fathers bring up your children in the instruction and the discipline of the Lord.

They must know in a father the kindness and the strictness of God. And if you slip up on one of these things, your children suffer loss. Definitely.

That's why fathers have to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God so that they can be balanced in their kindness and strictness with their children. Very very important. If you're not growing, your children will suffer.

So seek to grow in the knowledge of God in knowing his kindness and his strictness and say, Lord, how shall I manifest this balance in my own home? How shall I manifest this balance? If you have a responsibility in a home or in an office, you're an overseer of something. Or if you're an elder in a church, same thing. How shall I manifest this balance over those with whom I have responsibility? Kindness and strictness.

Everybody will appreciate a kind elder who always says nice things, never corrects you. But he's not a good elder. I'd say he's a useless elder.

And another elder who's always very strict and hard and everything, he's also a useless elder. A good elder brother is one who's kind and strict, knows when to be kind and when to be strict. A good father is

one who's kind and strict.

A good mother is one who's kind and strict. Because we learn from God. And if you're humble enough to say, Lord, I am imbalanced.

I want to be balanced. I want to grow in the knowledge of Jesus. I want to be a worshipper.

You get to know God as you worship Him. You will not get to know God just by praising and thanking Him. I'll tell you that.

That's good. I believe in prayer, step one. Thanksgiving, step two.

Praising, step three. Worship, step four. That's what I believe in.

And we must come to the highest height to be worshippers, to worship God. Okay, in closing, Job was the first person who worshipped God. The second person is Genesis 22.

Genesis 22 is Abraham. He's the second person we read in the Bible who specifically is written when they went to worship God. You know, Abraham in Genesis 22 is taking his son to Mount Moriah.

You know the well-known story. God asked him to kill his son. Not because God wanted his son killed, but because Isaac was becoming such an idol.

You know, when a man has no children for a hundred years and then gets a son through his own wife, boy, he'll really be an idol after some time. And by the time Abraham was 125, Isaac was his idol. And God said, whenever an idol comes between you and me, Abraham, I have to kill it.

Just like he told the Israelites, destroy your idols! He said, kill Isaac. It's the same word. And Abraham said, yes Lord, I realize.

And you know, God spoke to Abraham at night. Most of the time you find that God speaks to his people at night, Abraham at night. Because early next morning, he got up, he didn't even talk to Sarah.

He took Isaac and went three days. And the reason why God gave him a mountain three days away, so that he could think about it. Is it worth worshipping a God like this who asked me to kill my son? He thought about it for three days and said yes.

And as he reached the mountain with all his servants, read this verse. Genesis 22, 5. Abraham told the young man, you stay here with the donkey. I and Isaac will go to the top of the mountain and both of us will come, we will worship there.

What are we going to do? I am going to worship. What is worship? Destroying every idol in my heart that has come between me and God. When he was 75, when he left Ur of the Chaldees, he had destroyed every idol.

His father, mother, not his father, initially his father came along with him for some time, but he had given up everything else. And Abraham, I was a worshipper, but then when Isaac came along, sometimes you know when you are born again, you are really devoted, but after a little while some idols come into your heart. Your ministry can be your idol.

Something else can be your idol. Yourself, your job, your money, your house. So many things that you learned, which you never had when you were first born again.

It was just God you had then. But now some other things have come and they have become an idol. And God says, destroy them, kill them.

Like the rich young ruler. He had an idol, his money. God said, give it all away.

It's the same thing. If you want to be a worshipper, give it all away. Rich young ruler said, no.

Okay, goodbye. I am not going to force you. God never forces anyone to be a worshipper.

Abraham said, I will go and worship For him, worship was giving up everything and saying to God, you are the only one. It's like falling on your face and saying, God, nothing is important in my life but you. Not my children.

Your children can be your idols. I tell you, there are many parents whose children are their idols. They don't allow them to grow up in the way they should, in a godly way.

They control them so much. You must do this. You must study this.

You must do this. You must do that. The way I tell you.

Guide them graciously, gently. Don't make them your idols. There are many parents who wanted to accomplish something in life.

They could not accomplish it. So they want their children to accomplish it. They are all idol worshippers.

I believe our relationship with God is affected. In Abraham's case, it is his son who was the idol. Your son can be an idol.

Your daughter can be an idol. Your job can be an idol. Anything can be an idol.

And you are not a worshipper. You are not a worshipper until you have laid that on the altar and said, God, I am finished with it. I remember in the early days, I had a wife and four children.

I loved them greatly. But I was so scared that they would be my idols. Believe it or not, I used to picture in my mind, this is going back about thirty years or more, I used to picture in my mind my standing in the church building with five coffins, my wife's coffin and four coffins of my children.

I used to picture me conducting the funeral of my family. I said, Lord, they will not be my idols. I remember in 1972, we got that house we lived in and I said, Lord, I never dreamt in my life that I would have a house of my own.

I thought I would live in a rented house and here you have given me a house. I used to pray that if that was an idol, God would burn up that house. Many times when I took that turning in the corner, I used to think the house would be in flames.

But it had gone from my life. Anything that you get suddenly which you don't expect, a new job or something, it can be an idol. Immediately you have to offer it up to God.

Preserve yourself from idols. The last verse in 1 John. Some people say 1 John is the last letter written even after Revelation.

What is the last verse? Little children, keep yourself from idols. Now if it is true that 1 John is the last book of the Bible, then that is the last verse. Little children, keep yourself from idols.

Anyway, it is the last letter. Even if Revelation is the last book. 1 John is probably written even after 2 and 3 John.

Little children, keep yourself from idols. Why does John have to write something like that? After writing such a fantastic letter. Walking in the light and walking as Jesus walked.

You know, being made perfect in love and as Jesus is, so are we in this world. All these fantastic things and in the last verse he says, keep yourself from idols. Because that is the greatest danger.

That we don't become worshippers. So it is very important that we learn to worship God and become worshippers in our life. I want to encourage all of you to pursue this.

Lord, help me to be balanced. Help me not to be so taken up with knowing you as daddy that I forget that you are God. That I must have no idol in my life between me and you.

I must reverence you. I must call you like Jesus called you, Lord of heaven and earth. Help me to reverence you and respect you all the days of my life.

If you do that, I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, it will go exceptionally well with you. Because God delights greatly in those who worship him and his greatest gifts are reserved for those who worship him. Let's pray.

Our Father, these are just words and my words can help nobody. But like you took the five loaves and two fish and blessed them and fed the multitude, I pray you'll take these words and the Holy Spirit will anoint them to people's hearts and make us worshippers, Lord. Save us from glorying in our Bible knowledge and our upright lives and all the stupid things we glory in just because we happen to be a little better than other Christians around us or we know a little more than them.

Forgive us our pride and our arrogance which has hindered us from growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. Break us and humble us so that we live and dwell in small thoughts about ourselves and see ourselves as nothing so that you can be everything. To see ourselves as zeros all the days of our life.

Never comparing ourselves with any other believer or even any other human being. Help us to be worshippers, Lord every one of us. For we know this is what will stand us in good stead in the long run.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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