

# Personal Testimony

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen shares his journey of faith, emphasizing the importance of assurance, the Holy Spirit, and community in spiritual growth.*

**Duration:** 9:35

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 4:4

**Topics:** "Assurance Of Salvation", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

This sermon shares a personal journey of faith, highlighting the process of seeking assurance of salvation, the pursuit of spiritual power through the Holy Spirit, the importance of embracing the way of the cross, and the ongoing desire for deeper devotion to Jesus while acknowledging the need for continuous spiritual growth and progress.

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## Transcript

The first question I want to ask you is how did you become a Christian? Well, my father was a believer before I was born. And so, even though technically we belong to what is known as the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, in which I was baptized when I was a baby, my dad never sent us to that church. He sent us to a brethren assembly Sunday school.

So, from a very young age, I grew up in Delhi, the capital city of India. From a very young age, I heard the gospel. I knew about Christ dying for my sins.

We used to have preachers visiting our home. And I can't remember the first time I asked Jesus to come into my heart, probably when I was 12 or 13 years old. But I was never sure whether He had come, because I never had a spectacular experience.

I never heard a voice or saw a light or any such thing. And there was nothing radical to be changed in my life. I mean, I was brought up in a protected Christian atmosphere.

So, I was never sure. So, over the period of the next 5-6 years, I would have probably asked Jesus to come into my heart 500 times or more. And never sure, one of the things I discovered was that when you are never sure of your salvation, you gradually backslide.

Then, you lose interest. And then I joined the Navy. And in a month, I became a naval officer.

July, 1959. I was one day reading the Bible. And I read John 6.37, where Jesus says, Him that cometh to me, I will never cast out.

And I can't say what happened. I said, Lord, I've come to you many times. He said, I never cast you out.

And I somehow believed it. I believe faith is a gift of God. Because I probably read that verse many times.

But that day, I believed it. It was like an anchor that I had dropped in my life that day. It's held for 50 years.

That's how I became a Christian. I don't know when I was really saved. But I know that's when I got assurance of my salvation.

And do you remember the date of that? I don't remember the date either. You were in the Navy. I was in the Navy.

It was around July, 1959. That's all I can say. I don't even remember the date.

The date wasn't important to me at that time. Because I wasn't thinking of giving a testimony. I was just so happy that I was in Jesus' midst.

What is the most important thing God did in you after your conversion? Well, I can't say one single thing. I'm very happy that as soon as I was converted, I went to an assembly of believers. It was a brethren assembly near the naval base I worked in.

And they had a strong emphasis on the study of the scriptures. So, I'm very thankful that from the beginning, I was baptized about a year and a half after I was converted. And I started studying the scriptures.

And I really got into the word. And spent hours and hours and hours studying the scriptures. So, that was one thing.

But I found a lack of power in my life to overcome sin. Even though I was studying the scriptures. And I read the testimony of people like D.L. Moody and Charles Finney.

How they received what is called a baptism in the Holy Spirit. And I felt there was something here that I lacked. Because the brethren assembly was not teaching me that.

So, I studied the scriptures and I read these testimonies and I began to seek it. And then people told me that you must go to a Pentecostal church to hear that. So, I didn't know anything about what was a Pentecostal church.

I was a new believer. So, another person who knew a Pentecostal church took me there. But quite frankly, I was disappointed in what I saw.

Because a lot of noise and emotionalism didn't seem to meet my need. I just went a few times and I came back to my room in the naval base. And I said, Lord, I don't want that.

What I want is the power that Peter, James and John got at the day of Pentecost. That's what I wanted. However long it takes me to get it, I want it.

And again, I never had a spectacular experience. But I felt a liberty, an anointing, a boldness to preach the word of God. And at that time, the Lord also showed me one other thing.

And that was the way of the cross. Way back right there at the beginning, the Lord linked that with the power of the Holy Spirit in my life by the example of Jesus. That Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit when He went into the waters of Babylon.

And that, the Lord showed me, symbolized Jesus accepting the way of death to self. And way back there in 1963, the Lord said to me, As long as you choose the way of the cross in your life, you'll have my power upon you. And if you go away from it any day, you'll lose my power.

But you know, that wasn't enough. Years later, I became more famous, more gifted, more accepted. And I was lonely without fellowship.

I backslid. My inner life began to not at all correspond with my outer life. And I really came to a point in 1974 where I thought of giving up the ministry.

But I said, No, I'm not giving up. I began to seek God again. And the Lord met with me again and filled me with the Holy Spirit.

At that time, He gave me the gift of tongues as well. And it was from then onwards that my life really began to progress. Do you have any sin in your life now or anything that you do not like about yourself that you cannot fix or you can't overcome? I want to be absolutely frank before God.

And I can say by the grace of God that I don't know. You know, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4, verse 4, I'm conscious of nothing against myself, yet I'm not acquitted, but he who judges me is the Lord. So I can say the same thing today by the grace of God.

I'm not conscious of any habit I have right now which I'd like to give up. I keep feeling I'm not wholehearted enough. And I want to have a greater passion to be devoted to Jesus.

And keep thinking, Lord, I'm not disciplined enough. I don't want to be so lazy. I want to be more wholehearted.

Those desires are there, but I think the Christian life to me is like a sort of a dissatisfied satisfaction. I'm satisfied with what the Lord has done in me. At the same time, I'm longing to know Him more, to know the power of His resurrection more.

I believe that I see only 10% of my life. There's a whole lot of unconscious areas of my life that are not Christ-like. As God shows me, little by little as I walk with Him, I cleanse myself from that and progress.

To me, this is spiritual progress. Becoming like Christ is like climbing a mountain. I just want to be a little higher up that mountain every year.

I know there's a long way to go. Those who call themselves Christians are divided into many different factions and denominations. What denomination or group do you consider yourself in and why? I've been through denominations like Brethren, Charismatic, Pentecostal, all that.

We decided when we started our church in Bangalore about 30-40 years ago that we would be non-denominational and inter-denominational. We just called ourselves Christian Fellowship Church and

welcome all who are part of the body of Christ. But we would have our convictions.

We preach salvation by faith. We proclaim water baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We preach the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We're open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We pray for healing of the sick. But we would use means, doctors, medicines as well.

But our primary emphasis is making disciples. We want to follow Jesus. We preach an overcoming life.

Sin shall not have dominion over you. If you're under grace and you come out of love. And that we are to be built together.

We're not to live individual holy lives. We're to be built together with others pursuing the same faith as one body. So these are our primary emphasis.

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