

# Preserving Ourselves in God's Paths

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon calls for believers to preserve their faith and integrity in a world that is increasingly drifting from God's truth.*

**Duration:** 56:53

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4:7, Proverbs 4:18, Matthew 16:24, John 14:26, Ephesians 6:12, James 1:22

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a living demonstration of the truth of the Bible and the reality of a risen Christ. He highlights three key qualities that Jesus exemplified: humility, love, and sacrifice. Jesus' obedience to the point of death on the cross is highlighted as the ultimate act of sacrifice. The speaker challenges listeners to examine their own lives and consider if they have made similar sacrifices for the sake of serving others in Christ's name.

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## Transcript

I'm very happy to be back home. And as we think of God's goodness to us through 32 years since he planted the church here, you know, most movements in the history of Christianity in all these 2000 years have always declined in spirituality, in zeal, in devotion to Christ, and lost sight of the goal that those who founded those movements set before the people. And when we look at a lot of denominations today in Christendom, we mustn't forget that almost all of them started in purity and zeal.

And I think as each new movement started, they all said, you know, what happened to others won't happen to us. And that's why they fell away and lost out. So, I never say that and I hope none of us will ever say that.

Humility requires us to say that we're no better than anybody else. But there are laws given us in God's Word, and if we follow those laws, then we need never fall away. It's the same with Christian workers in the history of Christianity and even in my own lifetime.

I've seen a lot of people who decided to serve the Lord full time and who, at a very young age, came out to serve the Lord with great zeal and sincerity. But as time went on, they became famous and rich, and they slackened off in their devotion to Christ, and things which were primary for them in the early days became secondary, and they fell away. There are so many.

In fact, the vast majority of Christian workers who started out well have fallen away in our country. The vast majority. But I also thank God for examples of godly men and women that I've seen and known who have retained the sweet aroma of Christ right through to the end of their lives.

They are very few, very rare, but there are a few. And the reason they retained that aroma of Christ, the fragrance of Christ, till the end, in fact it became better and better, was because they understood the laws of God and followed them literally, and did not look at others around them. The tragedy for a lot of young people in our generation is that there are very few role models for them to follow.

When they look at Christian leaders today, they see people who are more like film stars, or like rich businessmen, or like political leaders. Most Christian leaders are like film stars, businessmen, or political leaders. Those are the only people I can compare them to.

If you looked at Jesus or Paul, you could never think that they were like film stars, or businessmen, or political leaders. So Christianity has drifted a lot from the message of Jesus and Paul. And these young people see these big people up on the platform, and they think, well, one day if I'm faithful, I'll also be like that.

What? Like a rich businessman? Like a film star? And like a political leader? That's a sad thing. Now you can't blame those young people because they don't have better role models. I mean, if you go into the slums, those children in the slums are not aiming to be software engineers, they're just aiming to be masons, or something like that.

Their role models are that. If you become a mason, it's better than being a brick carrier. That's the only comparison they have.

How is it many of you sitting here do not have a goal to be a mason? Because you have some role models. But those children are just like you, born at the same time. The only reason they don't have any higher goals in life is because they don't have role models.

I believe the great need in Christendom is for role models, people who can say, like the Apostle Paul, follow me as I follow Christ. I've hardly ever heard anybody in my life say those words. You can take up the challenge.

Follow me as I follow Christ. There is no church in the world which is a perfect church. In every church in the world, there are hypocrites.

And if people ask me, are there hypocrites in your churches, Zach? I say, sure. I have no doubt about it. I know some of them myself.

I don't go and tell them that. I mean, they've got the Bible, they've got the Holy Spirit. If they don't listen to them, where are they going to listen to me? And there are carnal people in every church.

I say, in our churches too? Sure. There are people who live for the world and whose lives are influenced by worldly values. In our churches, yes.

The thing we need to fight all the time, however, is that that spirit does not get into the leadership. As long as you can preserve two or three strong leaders in a church who are determined that all these worldly, carnal hypocrites will have no power in the church, then the church is okay. But once those leaders are

gone, in every church in the history of Christianity, decline started.

When people began to feel that Jesus is always so merciful and so mild and so compassionate. And you know, that's the picture. Every picture of Jesus that we see, painting, is one of the most common pictures of paintings of Jesus that you've seen.

In a manger, there's a helpless baby who can't do anything to you. Or in Gethsemane, praying like that, helpless. Or hanging on a cross, helpless.

Those are the most famous paintings of Jesus. And there's a work the devil has done through that, in portraying even to Christians, a helpless sort of Jesus who is just meek and mild. Have you ever seen a painting of Jesus driving people out of the temple, turning their tables? You may see it in children's Bible storybooks, but nowhere else.

You won't see a man hanging up a picture of that on his wall. Or have you seen a picture of Jesus coming out of the grave, alive? And also in Bible storybooks. And yet, that is the greatest event in the history of the world, not the crucifixion of Christ.

The greatest event in the history of the world is the resurrection of Christ. And that's why we have an empty cross outside this building with the words, Jesus Christ is alive. To tell people, he's not on the cross, he's alive.

It's the most important message we have to convey to other people. You know what is our calling as a church? It is to demonstrate to the world around, by our life conversation and our attitudes, that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, and he's alive. I mean, people who look at my life must feel, hey, there must be something in this.

I was talking a little while ago to someone who wasn't sure whether there was a God or not, whether God existed or not, but who knew me very well for many, many years, and who had a lot of respect for me. I said to him, do you think I wasted 48 years of my life living for someone who doesn't exist? Do you think I wasted my life by quitting my job and giving away everything and starting out 41 years ago to serve a God or someone who doesn't exist? And is it someone who doesn't exist who has taken care of me all these 41 years when I tried to follow the principles of scripture? You know, that really set him thinking. We must be a living demonstration to the world around us, that this world is passing away, and only he who does the will of God will remain forever.

People who know you closely, who observe you, must be able to see that you have certain goals and ambitions for which there is no explanation, unless there is a risen Christ, and unless the Bible is true. But if they see that your life, okay, you're a little more hardworking, you're upright, you don't tell lies, and you don't cheat, you're kind and helpful, that doesn't really prove anything, because you can be all that and still live for the world. There are a lot of people in non-Christian religions who are very kind and helpful, and they don't cheat, they don't tell lies, they're very hardworking, but their values are in this world.

One of my great heroes, as I've often said, is Noah. And Noah, once he realized that the world is doomed, God said to him, he said it to him just like he said it to us. 1 John 2.17 says, the world is passing away.

The Lord told Noah, the world is passing away. And I'll tell you, Noah had 120 years, we got much less than that. But he didn't know how long, and we also don't know how long.

But once he realized, and believed with all of his heart, what God said is right, the world is passing away. I think initially only he believed, because it says, God was so disappointed with man in those days, that he felt sorry that he had created man. I want to show you that verse, because you know, it's one of those sad verses in Genesis 6. And it's a verse that we need to ask ourselves, is God ever sorry when he looks at my life? Is he sorry when he looks at your life? Genesis 6 verse 5, when the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was very great on the first, on the earth, and every intent, every thought was evil, evil, evil, from morning till night.

God was sorry that he had made the human race in the first place. It broke his heart. And you ever broken God's heart? Has God ever been sorry that he ever brought you into this world? Has God ever been sorry that he saved you? Is God sorry that he planted a church here 32 years ago? Is there anything in our life, our witness, that breaks his heart? I don't want to break his heart, after all that he's done for me.

I don't want to break his heart. And the thing is, God is so gentle, so good, that he won't come and shout at us, hey, you broke my heart. You know, like when children break the heart of their parents, and very, most children don't even realize it.

And I think it's like that in our relationship with God. And I want to be very sensitive, because I live in the midst of a Christendom, which according to my conviction, according to my opinion, most of Christendom is breaking God's heart, by the things they preach today, the things they do, the way they live. And if it says here God was sorry that he made man, I think he's sorry for the lot of people that he created today, who claim to be believers, who don't seem to see the tremendous price that Jesus paid to purchase them, the tremendous agony.

He actually experienced hell on the cross for three hours, so that we might never experience hell for eternity. I just need to think of that one thing. Lord, you experienced hell for three hours on the cross, and I might never experience hell for eternity.

That's enough to keep me going for the rest of my life. Just that one thought. But you know, the devil won't make you think of that.

You think the devil is making all of Christendom today, and all the preachers who preach today, are they making the believers think of that? No. It's another Jesus being preached today. Come to Jesus, and you'll be wealthy, and you'll be healthy, and all that.

Whereas Jesus, when he was on earth, he said, come to me and die. How many of you want to die, while you're still alive? To all your ambitions, to desires, plans, lusts, selfishness, pride, everything, come, follow, be my disciple. We don't hear that message today.

Now I want to say that God raised up this church 32 years ago to preach that message. And you can't preach it just with one man, or two people, or three people, or four people. It's got to be preached by a church.

And we need to ask ourselves whether we're preaching that message today. Of discipleship, of wholeheartedly following the Lord, of changing our value system so that it's not the value system of the world anymore. Because the world is directly opposed to God.

I don't know how many of you believe that. The ruler of this world today is Satan. All authority in heaven and earth is given to the Lord Jesus, so Satan can only operate under his control.

It's like a lion on a chain. But the lion can move, there's a certain amount of radius in which the lion can move. But there's a chain held by Jesus.

And one day he'll pull up that chain and finish with the devil, but that day has not yet come. For many reasons he has allowed the devil to remain on the chain and not destroy him. And I think part of the reason is to make you and me strong.

When we encounter the devil, we become strong. I remember the days when, as a believer, I was afraid of the devil. I was afraid of what he could do to me.

Things have changed so much today. The devil is afraid of me. I believe that with all my heart.

I believe wherever I go, the devil is afraid of me. Afraid of what I will do, what I will say, to disturb his kingdom, to destroy his kingdom. What a work the devil has done.

What a work the Lord has done to turn the tables on the devil like that. You know, some people are even afraid to say that. But they say, oh, the devil will attack me tomorrow.

They're so scared. They're supposed to be born again. But theoretically they believe that Satan was defeated on the cross, but not actually.

Has the Lord done that work in you, so that the devil is scared of you? That wherever you go, he's scared of what you might do to disturb his kingdom. The Bible says, 1 John chapter 4, As Jesus is, so are we in this world. Verse 16, 17.

As Jesus is, so are we in this world. How was he on earth? The devil was scared of him. You know, demons, demon-possessed people who sat quietly in a synagogue for years listening to the Pharisees.

As soon as Jesus got up and spoke for two minutes, they got all worked up. That's why in the synagogues he was casting out demons. Wherever he went, the demons were disturbed.

They say, oh, he's coming, he's coming. You know, the demons should say that about you and me. He's coming here now.

Watch out. But you've got to have a clean life to be like that. You don't have to be perfect.

No one is perfect. Paul and Peter who cast out demons and had authority over Satan, they were not perfect. But they kept their conscience absolutely clean.

That means as soon as they fell, they got up. Do you have that habit? Paul never said, I'm perfect. He said, but I keep my conscience absolutely clear before God and men at all times.

We can be perfect in our conscience, which means as soon as you are aware that you have slipped up in thought or word, you will immediately apologize to God, apologize to the human being's concern. Your conscience is clean again, cleansed by the blood of Christ. That's how we must live every day.

The world is passing away and no one knew that the world is passing away. He after that time, he had only one goal in life. He was not a full-time worker.

I mean, who would have paid him? He was convinced himself, it says here in Genesis 6, that but in the midst of all this, there was one man. Noah, we're safe. Noah was different and God liked what he saw in

Noah.

You know, if that can be said about you, but so and so was different and God liked. God was happy with what he saw. In a world where millions of people were going the wrong direction, there was one man who decided to be different.

It's not easy. It's not at all easy in an office where everybody is corrupt and evil to be different. In a college where every student is rotten, spiritually no interest to be different.

In a church where there are worldly influences to be different. Among young people in a church who are more interested in movies and worldly fashions to be different. It's not easy.

If it can be said about you, but you were different and God liked what he saw in you. You're a blessed man, a blessed woman, whatever your age. And because of that one man, we're all alive today.

One of the first people I want to meet in heaven after I meet the Lord Jesus is Noah. I want to give him a big hug and say, thank you brother for standing true. Because of you, I'm in heaven today.

Because of you, I was born. Otherwise the whole human race would have been wiped out then. It's true.

One man. And because he stood and his life at home was the same as what he believed outside and preached outside, his wife was convinced. He had three sons, they were convinced.

They got married to three girls who were also convinced. And so he had a church of eight people. But it all started with one man who decided the world is passing away.

I'm not going to live for this world anymore. It's amazing what God can do through one man. The whole human race is preserved because of one man's faithfulness.

You can be a person like that. When 600,000 Israelites were going astray worshipping the golden calf. You know why it happened? Because Moses had gone away for just six weeks.

Imagine the whole nation that had experienced the miracle working power of God and who were experiencing the manna falling every day of those 40 days, getting water those 40 days, miraculously in the desert, would still turn away from God? Where did they think the manna was coming from? From some golden calf up there? It was because one man had gone away for 40 days. And when he came back, things were different. Israel changed.

You can be a man like that or a woman like that, to influence people around you in your home, in your college, in your office, in your surroundings, in your church. If you are convinced the world is passing away, that's how Noah was convinced. Paul was like that, one man.

He kept the wolves outside the church in Ephesus for three years. How would he dare put his head inside the church and follow us there? The moment he left, they all came in and destroyed the church. That's been the history of Christianity through the years.

I want to say it need not be like that. God can raise up men and women who are convinced with all of their heart. The only thing worth living for is to do the will of God.

And don't say you're young. Jesus, when he chose people, he didn't choose the 60,000 Israelites. He chose the 70-year-old Pharisees to be his disciples.

Every disciple he chose was under the age of 30. They were 27, 28, 29. Are you that age? Those are the type of people Jesus called to be his disciples, not just in the New Testament.

He called Joseph and gave him visions of heaven when he was 17, and prepared him for the next 13 years to be his servant in Egypt, in a very high position. He chose David when he was around 20, prepared him for the next 10 years to be the ruler of his nation. He chose Ezekiel when he was a young man and prepared him so that when he was 30 he was a prophet.

He chose Jeremiah, who when he called him, he said, Oh Lord, I'm too young. He said, Don't ever say you're a young man. I called you before you were born.

I chose you to be my prophet in your mother's womb. I prepared you with the gifts you need to serve me. They responded.

He chose Daniel when he was a young man. He chose Paul as a young man. Every one of these people.

He chose Samuel when he was even younger, a little child. The whole Bible is full of examples of people whom God chose when they were very, very young. Don't let the devil tell you you've got to be an old, experienced man before you serve God.

I thank God I started serving the Lord when I was 22. And two years later the Lord told me to quit my job and serve him full time. I'm absolutely convinced that God calls young people.

But the devil can say, Oh, you're not qualified, you're not qualified. When will we be qualified? I don't believe I'm qualified even today. God needs men and women to keep the church pure and strong.

Who are absolutely convinced that the world is passing away. And who will use the world but not be taken up by the world. We have to use the world.

Do you think Noah and his wife cooked meals and ate? Do you think they needed to have a bath and take a shower and whatever? They need to do everything that every other worldly person did. They worked. Noah had vineyards and he was a farmer.

He had to work every day to earn his living. When God told him to build an ark, God didn't tell him where he'd get the money from. There was no America those days.

And if he had asked, Lord, what about the money? He'd say, who's going to pay for it? He'd say, you of course, who else? He didn't need to ask, he knew. He knew way back in those days without a bible, without any fellowship, without any preacher, that when you serve God, you serve him at your own expense. That God's work is your work.

Those are the only people whom God uses. Those who believe God's house is their house. God's work is my work.

God's house is my house. God's people are my people. God's bank account is mine.

My bank account is God's. Noah believed that. So he didn't go around asking anybody for money to build the ark.

That would have been shameful. He chopped down trees and he sold part of his property. I don't know what all he did.

He probably lived in a small little area and sold all his property so he'd have money to build the ark. I wonder if there's been another man like him who's given away so much and lived very, very simply so that he'd have money to build the ark. What a contrast to people who call themselves Christian workers today.

They'll never spend anything out of their own pocket for God's work. It all has to be given. It all has to be begged for.

I remember years ago when the Lord told me, as long as you have even one rupee left in your bank account, don't ever ask anybody for money for my work. My work is your work. And if you have money to pay for your children's education, you have money to do my work.

I thank God I followed that word the Lord spoke to me. Maybe the Lord hasn't spoken to you like that. He did to me.

The Lord will only tell you as much as you want to hear. He won't tell you more. They don't teach calculus in the second standard.

If you're happy with second standard mathematics, that's all you'll know. But if you press on and press on and press on, you learn things and you hear things from God that other ordinary mortals don't hear, because you're getting close to Him. They teach things in the higher classes that they don't teach in the lower classes.

It's the same with God. I believe so many of God's people are dropping out at certain levels because they see they're better than others around them. Everybody else is dropping out in second standard.

I'm in fourth standard. I'm okay. I believe one of the greatest reasons why many people don't go on with God is because they're looking at other believers around them.

When I was 21 years old, the Lord told me, don't ever look at any believer around you. Look at me. I tried to follow that exhortation for 46 years.

Look at Jesus. He's the only one I'll follow. That enables me to constantly be challenged, because I see I haven't come anywhere near His devotion.

It challenges me. Not only challenges me, it keeps me humble all the time. It's impossible to be proud when you look at Jesus.

It is impossible. You're not even tempted. It's when you turn your eyes away from Him that you sink, like Peter in the sea, into pride and selfishness and lust and every other wretched thing.

Otherwise, as he walked on the waters of sin and overcame, we can also walk overcoming without being dragged down and pulled down. In Philippians, in chapter 2, there is a word that I believe we can take heed to as a church. Verse 5, Philippians 2, have this attitude in yourself which is in Christ Jesus.

That's all. Have the attitude that Jesus had all through your life. Towards the world, towards the devil, towards other believers, towards failing believers like His disciples were.

You know, there's one thing those disciples had, despite all their failures. One or two things. One, they had given up everything for Jesus.

Given up their jobs, given up their profession. I'm sure Peter and all lived much more simply after he gave up his job. Traveled around.

He got a wife. I don't know whether he had children, but suddenly he had a wife back home and traveling around with Christ. I don't know how many of the other apostles were married, but that was something they gave up.

They really forsook everything to follow Him. The other was, they were absolutely loyal to Him. I mean, Peter slipped up and denied the Lord, that is because he was under such pressure, but they were loyal to Him, despite their weaknesses.

I praise God for brothers and sisters in CFC who are loyal to the church. They're not even tempted by other things that attract them elsewhere. They've benefited, they've received something, they're deeply grateful and they're loyal.

And you can't win them away with a million rupees or any amount. Have the same mind in you, which was in Christ Jesus. Have the same attitude that Jesus had.

And there are three areas I want to mention here, which I've mentioned here. First of all, in humility, it says he humbled himself in verse 8. And the message translation says, think of yourself the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. Think of yourself the way Jesus thought of himself.

What a word. Think of yourself the way Jesus thought of himself. How did he think of himself? It says here, he emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant.

And I want to translate that the way I understand it. In Philippians 2.7, he took the form of a bondservant because he was made in the likeness of men. And that's how I see it.

In some translations it's like that. That he knew that the only proper place for a human being to take is the place of a servant. Have you seen that? The only proper place for a human being to take is the place of a servant of God and of others.

A servant is not one who demands that other people should serve him. He serves them. God made, I mean Jesus is the perfect example of a servant.

He was a leader. How can a leader be a servant? Jesus is a classic example. He had authority but he was a servant.

The tragedy with a lot of Christian leaders today is they don't have that spirit of a servant. Think of yourself the way Jesus thought of himself. You know a very common expression that Jesus used to refer to himself when you know how he thought of himself is the phrase the son of man.

Very often instead of saying I, he would say the son of man, the son of man, the son of man. In Matthew chapter 12 there is a place where they called him Beelzebul, prince of devils. And he turned around and

said to them, well, I'm just the son of man so it's verse 32 of Matthew 12, you're forgiven.

And my own translation of son of man is an ordinary man. What is the son of man? That means someone, everybody on earth is born to some man. That's I think what it means.

He was saying, did you call me the devil? That's okay. I'm just an ordinary man. You're forgiven.

Don't speak against the Holy Spirit. Think of yourself the way Jesus thought of himself. That's been such a revelation to me.

I never read it anywhere. I don't think anybody else has ever seen it that way but I saw it that way. That when Jesus said he was the son of man, he was saying I'm an ordinary man.

Do you know what a difference it will make in your life? When your husbands realize you're an ordinary man and not a king in the house. When your sisters realize you're an ordinary woman and not a queen. When your brothers realize you're an ordinary man not to be respected by those younger to you.

We live in a world where young people have no respect for older people. It never disturbs me because I'm an ordinary man. It will disturb other gray haired people because hey look at this generation.

They don't respect older people like me. They're not ordinary people. That's their problem.

Well they suffer. You know I believe that everybody in the world is deceiving himself. Almost everybody anyway 99.9999 percent.

And almost all believers. Because of one reason. I want to read that to you.

In Galatians chapter 6 says the mark of a man who has deceived himself. It's on this basis that I'm saying it. Galatians 6 in verse 3 says if anyone thinks he's a somebody when he's a nobody he deceives himself.

That's what I mean. We're all nobodies. Does that surprise you? Well let me give you a revelation.

You're a nobody. But you think you're somebody. Don't you think you're somebody? At least in relation to some people.

Perhaps not in relation to some of the older more mature godly people. But in relation to some of the others you are somebody right? That's your problem. You deceive yourself.

It was a great day in my life when I discovered that I was a nobody. That my savior walked on earth saying I'm an ordinary man. And I said Lord what right have I ever to take any other title to myself than that.

He spoke against people calling you rabbi, father, leader. If he were today here on earth he would say don't let anybody call you pastor, senior pastor, reverend or any such thing. You are an ordinary man.

It's delivered me from so many temptations. Leave alone sins. I'm not even tempted.

You're tempted when you begin to think you're somebody. You may have to battle it, battle it and humble yourself and overcome it. But you're not even tempted when you realize you're an ordinary man.

Which is better? Not even to be tempted or to be tempted and overcome. And sometimes fail. Often fail.

I'll tell you this. If you think you're somebody, you're going to have tremendous problems living in this world. You're going to have problems living in the church.

All those problems will disappear. People say all types of things against me. They've written articles against me.

They've written books against me. They've written things against me on the Internet. It doesn't bother me because what am I? Nobody.

Ordinary man. That is your salvation. Be an ordinary man, an ordinary woman.

Think of yourself the way Jesus thought of himself. He knew if I'm a human being, I must be a servant. Full stop.

Many people haven't realized that. They're always waiting on other people to serve them. They're disappointed when those people don't serve them.

I'm not saying we shouldn't ask one another to help us. We help one another. But I'll tell you this.

If there's any human being whom you ask to help you, whom you are not willing to serve, there's something wrong with you. There are many brothers who serve me in many ways in this church. God is my witness.

I will do exactly the same for them and even more. So then of course there's nothing wrong because we serve one another. But if you expect people to serve you because you're somebody, you don't think you can serve them because you're somebody.

You're deceiving yourself according to this verse. That's what I say. Most of the Christian leaders, I'd say 95% of them, are deceiving themselves according to this verse.

But they think they're somebody. The way they talk about themselves, the way they testify to what God has done for them, etc., we must give a testimony. Paul gave his testimony.

But he never thought he was somebody. Paul very often compared himself with other preachers. He said, I'm not like those other fellows.

They all want your money. I don't. He wasn't comparing himself.

He said, I want to cut the ground from under the feet of these people who say they are serving the Lord like we are. 2 Corinthians 11. Very good translation in the Living Bible.

But he didn't think he was somebody. He said, God, God, God did it. He's everything.

You know one of the things I frequently meditate on is heaven. It's a good place to meditate on. Think of heaven.

We used our imagination for all types of filthy things in our past years. Why not use our imagination for something good? I picture myself in heaven. I shut my eyes and I think of heaven.

Jesus is there in the center. And millions and millions of people are praising him and saying, worthy is the Lamb. And I'm just in the middle of that crowd.

And nobody knows who Zach Poonen is. Nobody knows who Paul is. Nobody knows who Peter is.

It's Jesus. I frequently meditate on that. It brings me down to earth in a world where people appreciate me and say nice things to me.

Also, I say, Lord, I know what I am. And I know what I'll be when I get into eternity. There won't be any special seat for me, I'll tell you that.

We're going to be saints redeemed by the blood of Christ. That's all. I praise God for that.

I'm looking forward to it. Think of yourself the way Jesus thought in humility. He never thought that he deserved something or people should respect him.

People should do this or that or anything for him. Never. Never.

He was not offended by what people said. He was not offended if people didn't say anything. He was not offended if somebody didn't appreciate him.

And the people shouted crucify him, crucify him, that crowd. I'm sure, I'm absolutely sure among that crowd were some people whom he had healed. Imagine people whom he had healed who are alive today, who are now shouting out crucify him.

I've had that experience, not crucifixion, but people whom we have helped tremendously, who are what they are today because of our help, some of whom are alive because of our praying for them, who have taken me to court and tried to harm me in so many ways. That's okay, I'm an orderly man. I bless them, I pray God will forgive them.

But Jesus experienced that and he didn't get offended with those fellows. Hey you, don't you remember I healed you? You're shouting crucify me. Not a word.

He never said that. I'm an ordinary man. God gave me the opportunity to serve you and heal you.

I'm happy you're healthy. If you want to shout crucify me, that's fine. I'm an ordinary man.

What a restful life when you think the way Jesus thought about himself. The second thing in Philippians 2 is, his love was manifested in total unselfishness. When we talk about love, it can be a misty type of thing, which is not like vapor, you know, you don't know what love is.

I'll explain it to you. The opposite of love is selfishness. Then you understand what love is.

You know, if I show you where South is, you know where North is. So the opposite of love is selfishness. When I act in selfishness and if you look at your life, you may find 99% of the things you do are tainted by selfishness.

So you have a lot of scope to improve and becoming more loving. A lot of things that you say, the way you behave at home, if you really examine yourself in the light of Jesus, you'll find there's a selfishness there. There's a selfishness in perhaps you're coming to this church.

I don't know. But if you examine your life, you'll find it. And if you're not free from it, it's a little bit of the devil that's clinging on to you.

Selfishness is like an onion. It's a huge onion. You can only peel off one layer at a time.

We'll never be totally free from it, but we can make that onion as thin as possible before Christ comes again. And the thinner it becomes, the greater a blessing you'll be to other people. Because you don't think of yourself only, what you can gain, what you can get, what you can experience.

No, no, no, no. You think of how can this bless other people? How can this glorify God? You don't think of self. In other words, self is not in the center.

Self is not on the throne. Like they say, there's only one throne in your heart. It's either Christ or you on that throne.

I'm sorry to say, in the life of many believers, it's self on the throne and Christ on the cross. We've got to reverse positions and put self on the cross and Christ on the throne. It'll change your life completely.

It'll change the way you speak. It'll change the way you speak to your wife. You'll start saying thank you for that morning cup of tea, which you don't say nowadays, because you got used to it for 20 years.

Little things. You'll think of her problems. You'll think of others in the church more.

And you'll think above all of God and his work, because you're not so occupied with self and its interests. And I'll tell you something wonderful. When you take care of God's interests and the interests of others, God will wonderfully take care of yours and your family.

I've experienced that for nearly 40 years. I never lived for my family. God is my witness.

I live for God. And I hope you'll have that testimony at the end of your life, that you didn't live for your family. You lived for God and he took care of your family.

That's how we prove to the world that there is a God in heaven. If you live for your family and it goes well with your family, well, that's not a great thing. There are a lot of people in the world who can testify for that.

I don't mean full-time work. I mean your mind, where it is set. If you can say your mind is set on the things above.

If we can build a church where people's minds are set on the things above and not on self. I'll tell you this, God will take much better care of your family than you're doing right now. What a fool you are, not to put him first.

When we stand before Jesus and we see everybody's life as it really is, we will discover the wisest people on the earth, they are very few, are the ones who decided to put God first in everything. And put others next and self-lust in everything. They were the wisest people on the face of the earth.

The wisest people on the face of the earth were those who never gossiped about others, never spoke evil about others, but lived in a judgment of themselves. You will discover what a fool and an idiot you were for going around speaking evil about others. In your home, to your children, about other people in the church.

You may not discover it today. You discover it today already because you're not growing spiritually. But you'll discover it much more when you stand before the Lord.

What a mess you made of your life, a life that could have accomplished so much for God on this earth, did not accomplish it because you were so selfish. You were disturbed, you were not an ordinary man, you were not an ordinary woman. Put God first.

The third thing I want to say is, Jesus was humble, he was loving and the third, he lived in a life of sacrifice. Three words, humility, love and sacrifice. It says here, Jesus became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

He said, no one can take away my life from me, I laid down myself. No one can take your life from you. You can choose to die to yourself or choose not to.

David said in 2nd Samuel 24 verse 24, I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. That's a word the Lord gave to me more than 45 years ago. 2nd Samuel 24 verse 24, I will never offer to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing.

Sacrifice. Do you know that God is running this world on the principle of sacrifice? Love and humility were there in eternity and will be there in eternity future. But sacrifice, there's not going to be any sacrifice in heaven.

There wasn't any sacrifice in eternity past. Sacrifice is only in a sin-cursed earth. Because we have a flesh, because there's sin in the world.

That's why we need to live. Jesus once said in John 5, they asked him, why are you working on the Sabbath day? He said, my father has no Sabbath. He's working and I'm also working.

Do you know that the last Sabbath that God had is the one mentioned in Genesis 2? God rested. Next chapter, man sinned, after that God has not rested. What Jesus was saying, my father has never had a Sabbath after that.

There is going to be a Sabbath in the future when Christ comes again and everything is set right. But in between this period, God hasn't had any Sabbath. Jesus had no Sabbath.

He intercedes day and night. It says for his saints, I have decided, I'm not going to have a Sabbath. The other day somebody asked me, when are you going to retire? I said, I'm looking forward to it when I get to heaven.

Not before that. No retirement for me. I don't have a retirement age.

When I get to heaven, I tell you, I'm going to rest. I'm going to lay my burdens down and rest. Not before that.

There's a lot of work to be done. God runs this world on the principle of sacrifice. If you understand that, you'll be in fellowship with God.

Jesus understood that. I have to sacrifice. There were days when he went without food.

So many times that his relatives thought he was mad. Serving people without eating. He's not just skipping one meal.

How many meals have you ever skipped in your life because you had to serve others? I don't mean you skipped meals to make money somewhere. I'm not talking about that type of rubbish. But because you had to serve somebody and bless somebody and help somebody in Christ's name.

Have you missed even one meal in your life for doing that? Or missed one night's sleep because you had to do something for God? Yeah, there are some brothers here who have done that in conference time. The principle of sacrifice must be found in our life always. In terms of time, money, energy.

I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. I live in a Christendom where people have gone to the other extreme. They are going to Christ to get something.

I'm going to Christ to sacrifice. That's why I say this health, wealth, prosperity gospel is a false gospel. Because God is not running the world on that principle.

When you get to heaven, there will be plenty of prosperity. But on this world, it's only sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice till Jesus comes again. He was obedient to death.

And if our church is going to be characterized by these principles, I believe God will accomplish a tremendous thing even in the days to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

No word ever spoken here is a word of condemnation. Every word is a word to challenge, lift up, encourage, to lift you to the life of the highest possibility for you. For you, so that you may be wise.

Like it says in Proverbs, my son listen to me, so that you can be wise, so that you can spend your days in wisdom. And not for the foolish empty things that a lot of people are living for, even among Christians. Don't look around at them.

Look at Jesus the way he lived. Think of yourself the way Jesus thought of himself. Live for the things Jesus lived for.

And respond to what God spoke to you this morning. Respond in specific areas. Don't be general.

These general surrenders accomplish nothing. You generally surrendered numerous times, nothing happened. Respond and be specific this morning and say, Lord this particular area, I'm really going to take that seriously from today.

And please give me the power of your Holy Spirit. You can't do this without the power of the Spirit. Lord give me the power of your Holy Spirit to live this life.

And believe that he'll do it. Thank you Father. For those who are responding today, to preserve this church, in the direction you set for it, when you started, and to even greater heights, in the days to come, for the path of the righteous, and the path of the righteous church, to be like a shining light that shines brighter and brighter and brighter, until the perfect day.

Thank you Father. In Jesus name, Amen.

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