

Retaining the Anointing

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of humility and the prophetic word in retaining God's anointing amidst spiritual decline.

Duration: 56:57

Topics: "Humility", "Resurrection Power"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being humble servants of God, focusing on the need to keep our faces in the dust, to see the glory of Jesus in Scripture, and to believe in the resurrection power of God. It highlights the challenges faced by believers, the dying of self, and the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our lives through faith and submission to God's will.

Transcript

This is the day the Lord has made and we will rejoice and be glad in it. The only day where you are permitted not to rejoice is the day you think that the Lord did not make. There is no such day.

If there is a day the Lord has made, it's not the devil who makes the sun to rise, it's not anyone but our Heavenly Father. And therefore we will rejoice. And rejoicing is an act of the will.

It's got nothing to do whether there are clouds or rains or whether you've got a backache or headache. It's got nothing to do with feelings. It's got to do with eternal facts that Christ has forgiven our sin.

He has said he will not remember our sins anymore. That he defeated Satan 2,000 years ago and Satan has got no authority over us. It's good to tell the devil that he was defeated on the cross and that he cannot touch you and to live in that victory.

So we want to turn again to 2nd Corinthians and chapter 3 and 4 where we have been seeing what we believe is a word for our time. We believe that what we are sharing is a word for the time in which we live because of the degenerate state of Christendom, because of the spiritual decline, the spiritual decline and backsliding of even Christian groups that God raised up even in the last century. Many different groups in many countries that God raised up that started off with great power and with a vision to bring back the truth of God but that declined over a period of time.

That's not abnormal. That has been the history of the human race. You read in the time of Joshua, Israel entered the land with great power and in one generation decline started.

The elders that outlived Joshua, we read in the book of Judges, continued for some time but by the time the third generation came, it was chaos. It says in Judges, every man did what was right in his own eyes and there was no king in Israel. God was not their king.

And then some years later, God raised up a prophet called Samuel. For many hundreds of years, there was no word from the Lord. You know, when you read all this, you've got to think of Christendom.

It's been like that. And then suddenly God would raise up a man called Samuel and he would speak the word of God and through Samuel came forth David, a king. And Israel rose up again.

You know, it's like if you were to draw a graph in Joshua's time, it was way up in a mountain peak and then slowly decline came. By the time of Judges, they were down in the pit. And then Samuel came up.

It was always the prophetic word, the prophetic word that lifted God's people out of the pit. And that is why I believe that in all of our churches, we must seek for the prophetic word. And prophetic word doesn't mean getting excited and getting emotional and shouting and yelling and condemning people and telling them how wrong they are.

That's not the prophetic word. Any stupid fool can speak like that. The prophetic word requires that you live before God's face like Samuel and say, speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

You've got to hear him. You've got to be free from the love of money. You've got to be free from seeking the honor of men.

You've got to, Jesus must be everything for you. Then you have prophetic word. And Samuel came with the prophetic word.

And from that pit and gutter, he lifted Israel up. And then David came, you know, first was Saul and he sort of fell away and God found, said, I finally found a man after my own heart. And you know, when God finds a man after his own heart.

And David was a young boy. Do you know that he was 25 years old when he was writing scripture? How many of you are sitting here 25 years old? David was 25 years old when he was writing scripture. You read the top of the Psalms, some of the Psalms written by David when he was running away from Saul, when he was hiding in the cave.

You know, he became king when he was 30. When was he running away from Saul? When he was 25. And he was writing scripture.

What do you think he was doing in the caves? He was sitting there in the caves and writing scripture. He wasn't sitting in an easy chair writing scripture. It was in a cave running for his life.

What problems do we have compared to what David had? That was his training. Joseph's training was in prison. From the age of 20 to 30, God trained Joseph in a prison.

From the age of 20 to 30, God trained David in the wilderness and in the caves. That's where he heard God. Don't think you hear God in comfort and ease.

And no, God speaks to us in times of pressure. Maybe when you're running for your life, when people are against you. Small, small things we complain about.

Some promotion you didn't get is what people call persecution today. Shame on us. Those Christians face lions.

We complain about mosquito bites. No wonder we don't hear God. If you complain about mosquito bites and little problems, something here, something there, I'll tell you, you'll never hear God in a hundred years.

You have to determine that you are not interested in anything other than Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. You're not interested in comfort or ease or help or anything except Christ. If you've got Christ, you've got everything.

You will hear God speak to you and you'll have a prophetic word for your church. God is looking like in the days of David when Saul failed. God raised up Saul.

Many of the churches we see today, once upon a time, if you go back into their history, it was God who raised up the church. I don't want to name them, but there are so many churches. Without a doubt, the founders were men of God.

They knew God, just like Joshua, just like David, like, and God raised up Saul. And we can say that, and Saul was a very humble person when he started out. He was so humble that when they wanted to make him a king, he went and hid himself.

Can you imagine a man who's being appointed king, anointed by Samuel, going and hiding himself? He was so humble. But in a short time, in about two years, he became proud because God had blessed him. I've seen that happen in our midst.

I've seen brothers who come out of rock bottom poverty and will come into the church and God has blessed them spiritually. He's blessed them financially, and it's gone to their heads. I've seen people who come living in sin.

God saved them and changed them, giving them gifts and blessed them in fellowship and giving them honor in the church, and it's gone to their heads. I've seen people who are nobodies become elders in a church, and God's blessed their work, and God's prospered them, and the churches are blessed, and God's given them a ministry, and it's gone to their heads, and their heads are swollen. And just like Saul, God has taken away the anointing and set them aside.

They don't realize it themselves. Do you think when Saul sat on the throne for all those 20, 30 years, he had a clue that God had left him? No. He thought God was with him.

God had forsaken him long ago. Don't be like that, brothers. Sisters, humble yourself and keep your mouth in the dust all the time, and you'll be all right.

And that's why God was looking around for a man after his own heart. Do you know that David was born, if you look at the timeline, David was born after Saul was rejected, not before. It was after God rejected Saul that he looked around and said, I don't find anybody.

And he allowed David to be born. Saul reigned for 40 years, and David was 30 years when he was a king. So we know that David was born when Saul had already been king for 10 years.

And by that time, Saul was a failure. That's how we know that David was born after. It was not that God already planned for David.

No, God planned for Saul to do his work. God may plan for you to do his work, but if you fail him, he'll look for somebody else. You know, even to this wonderful church in Philadelphia, which is one of the best churches in the first century, I want you to read something here, which is a real warning to us.

The church in Philadelphia, in Revelation 3, verse 7, to the elder of the church in Philadelphia. And if you read the messages to the seven elders in seven churches, you find the elder in the Philadelphia was the most spiritual, the most wholehearted, the best church in that area. And what was God's message to the best church? Listen to this, many good things, but listen to this warning.

A warning, even if you're the most wholehearted brother sitting here today, I want to say to you in Jesus name, verse 11, the Lord is coming quickly. Hold fast what you have so that no one takes the crown that is meant for you. There is a crown meant for you, but if you don't hold fast to what God has given you and spoken to you, that crown will be taken away from you.

Your ministry, which you were supposed to fulfill, will be given to somebody else. That guy will get his own crown, but he'll get your crown also. He'll get two crowns because he fulfilled his ministry and your ministry because you were a failure.

Why were you a failure? God anointed you, lifted you up, but you got puffed up. You thought you were somebody when you should have remained a nobody till the end of your life. Paul remained a nobody till the end of your life.

My dear elder brothers, tell me honestly, tell me, do you really believe you're a nobody? Answer that to yourself. Do you really believe that you are a nobody? That you're nothing? I know the right answer is yes, I believe that, but do you behave like that? Do you behave like that with your fellow brothers and sisters? As a nobody, as a nothing. That's why many of us are losing the anointing of God.

We're becoming like Saul. It's not because we slip up and fall. If you slip up and fall and that brings you lower into the dust, you're okay.

But when you slip up and fall and you cover it up and act as though you're a great anointed servant of God, that's when God recognizes something and withdraws the anointing. I have seen it happen before my eyes. I've seen brothers who, I remember the early days when they spoke, there was such a grace upon their life.

Today, dead as a doornail. They don't realize it. That's what happened to Saul.

And then God had to set aside Saul. Hold fast what you have. You may be the most wholehearted brother, you elder in Philadelphia, but if you don't hold fast to what you have, just because yours is the best church and you're the finest elder in that whole of Asia Minor, you brother in Philadelphia, I'm speaking to you.

Don't compare yourself with Ephesus and Pyatira and Pergamos and Laodicea, all those backslidden churches. Not even with Smyrna. Yes, you're better than all of them.

But if you don't hold fast to what you have, you will lose your crown. I want to take it seriously. I don't believe I'm the best elder in Bangalore or India, or I see tremendous need in my life.

But I want to take it seriously, that if this was spoken to the best elder, where am I? I say, Lord, have mercy on me. I'll keep my face in the dust till the end of my life, and I'll hold fast to what you've given me.

Not because I want a crown, but because I want to show my gratitude to Jesus who died for me on the cross, to save me.

Dear brothers and sisters, take these things seriously. If the crown which is meant to remain on Saul's head, God's crown, not that earthly crown over there, but there was another crown, an invisible crown called the anointing of God. There's an earthly crown that you can have as an elder of a church, and your name is in the elders list.

But there's another invisible crown called the anointing of God. I'm more interested in that, than in my name being in some elders list. I couldn't care less for that elders list.

Throw it in the trash can. I want this invisible anointing of God, and you don't have to be an elder to get that. Your name doesn't have to be on any list for you to have the anointing of God upon your life.

That invisible anointing, the crown of God, don't lose that. Don't be satisfied with some earthly crown that somebody gives you. Somebody thinks you're a great brother.

Somebody invites you for meetings and you think you're special. Forget it, brother. That's all earthly crowns.

Think of that invisible anointing of God that God puts upon your head. Don't lose that. Saul had this earthly crown where he had a great following of people who admired him.

God had removed the anointing. He didn't hold fast. You know the word that God spoke to Saul through Samuel? It's an amazing word.

Let me show that to you. When he first met Samuel, we read that Samuel told Saul like this in 1 Samuel chapter 10. Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him and said, has not the Lord anointed you a ruler over his inheritance? And he said, after a while, verse 6, he told him, this is Samuel speaking this fall, the spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily and you shall prophesy and you will be changed into another man.

I've never forgotten those words. The spirit of God will come upon you mightily and you will be changed in a moment, not a gradual growth over 20 years. Immediately you will be changed into another man.

You will receive the anointing of God to prophesy, to lead God's people, to build his kingdom, today to build his church. That's how he started. When pride came into him, pride.

Saul didn't commit adultery. He didn't steal anybody's money. He just became proud that God was using him, that people were admiring him and the devil changed him into another man again.

It's a sad thing when God changes you into another man, then you become proud and the devil changes you again, back into a worse state than before. Seven demons come in and the latter man's, the man's latter condition becomes worse than his first condition because the devil changes him into another man. I have seen this happen before my eyes with wonderful brothers and sisters in our churches.

So there's where we need to learn. God is looking for a man and a woman after his own heart. I hope you will be one of those.

It doesn't matter if you're a young 18, 20 year old like David or an 18, 19 year old like Mary, the mother of Jesus. Young 18, 19, 20 year old people whom God lays a hold off and says, I want you. I want you for a certain purpose.

That's what he told Mary. That's what he told David when he was 20 years old. He was the most despised among all the sons that his father had.

It doesn't matter what people think about you. When Samuel came to the house of Jesse, David's father and said, call all your sons and Jesse didn't even bother to call David. He knew that one of his sons is going to be anointed king.

And he called his seven sons and he didn't call David. Imagine David was so despised that his father thought, ah, that fellow, he's good for nothing. He's failed in a few subjects in school.

We sent him to look after sheep. Where's he going to be the king? But that is the one God chose. He doesn't value your, what marks you got in school or college.

It doesn't matter. He doesn't care for your degrees. I'll tell you that.

He looks for humility, brokenness. And when Samuel looked through all of them and said, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. He said, did I make a mistake? Are these all your sons? And Jesse, the father said, oh yeah, there's another one.

We don't think much about him. Samuel says, call him here. And the Lord says, this is the one, the one whom man despises.

That's the one I've chosen. So that's hope for every one of us. It doesn't matter if everybody in your church despises you.

It doesn't matter if your community, your relatives, everybody despises you. God's chosen you. Nobody will be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

Nobody could stand before David. Goliath or 10,000 Goliaths couldn't stand before him. Be a man or a woman like that in these last days, my dear brother, sister, that's the only thing worth living for.

It's the only thing worth living for. I've been a believer nearly 50 years, and I'll tell you this is the only thing worth living for is to live totally for Jesus Christ every day. And especially as we approach this last minute, as the second hand is clicking towards midnight and the Lord is coming, be ready.

Well, let's turn to 2 Corinthians 3. We were looking at this ministry, which many people have forgotten in our day. There are two words that are very popular in these days in Christendom, ministry and the gospel. We must preach the gospel.

We must have a ministry. What is Paul's ministry? Can you have a greater ministry than Paul? Let me repeat what I said yesterday. We who have received this ministry, chapter 4, verse 1, what is this ministry? That is in chapter 3, verse 18, to look at the glory of the Lord, to see his image, to see his likeness in scripture, and to be changed by the Holy Spirit into that likeness.

All your ministry of being eldership is a drop in the bucket compared to this ocean of ministry of seeing the glory of Jesus and becoming like him. That is open to everybody. You sisters, are you disturbed that you

can never be an elder in a church? You can't have that 1% ministry.

Can you have this 100% ministry of becoming like Jesus, seeing his glory? There's nothing stopping you from that. I have seen in my life a few brothers and sisters whose very face, I'm telling you honestly, there's some rare Christians I have met like this in my life, whose very face has spoken to me about humility. Just their face.

I look at them and I'm convicted. Lord, there's still some pride in me. Please, let me be like this person.

You know, your face, and the person never spoke a word, and even sisters. Now, I meet people from many countries. I'm not necessarily talking about people in our churches.

Some of these people are not in our churches. And it's just, there's something about them. You know, when God does a tremendous work in your heart, it changes the way you look.

It changes even your eyes. The Bible says in Proverbs 6, what are seven things the Lord hates? One is haughty eyes. You say, I thought pride was in the heart.

That's right. But when pride is in the heart, it gradually finds its way up to the eyes and the face. If a man's got lust in his heart, lust, lust, lust, lust, it comes forth in his eyes.

And women can pick it out sooner than men. A pure woman will look at a man's eyes and say, immediately, there's lust there. I'm telling you, you can hide it.

You can pretend to be a secret life, lusting, lusting, watching pornography, this, that, and the other. It's in your eyes, and you don't know it. And a pure woman can see it immediately and will shy away from you.

I'm talking about believers in our churches, young and old, and even older married people. My wife has told me, I look at them, and I feel there's something impure there. And I agree with it.

You can't hide it. What is in your heart, God has made it like. Now, because 99% of believers are dumb, undiscerning, blind spiritually, they see nothing.

They think you're a wonderful brother. But those who are walking in the purity of God can see things in your face which nobody else can see. They can see lust.

They can see pride. And they can see a lot of other things. And even among sisters, there's not so much lust in the eyes of sisters, but pride.

Oh boy, there's a tremendous amount of pride in some of the older sisters. But they don't know it. They think they're pretty humble.

This is the great deception. The devil is a great deceiver. Our heart is a great deceiver.

So, let's remain humble and broken before God. If you look into the face of Jesus, I remember a man telling me, he's dead now. But way back, about nearly 48 years ago, a brother, he was a very old man then, he said, in my younger days, he said, I actually saw Sadhu Sundar Singh.

When I was a young man, I saw Sadhu Sundar Singh in the early 1920s. And he says, the thing that has remained with me for 40 years, or 30 years, is the purity I saw in his eyes. I've never seen eyes like that.

Pure eyes. And Sadhu Sundar Singh was about 35 years old at that time. A 35-year-old man with the same flesh and lust in the flesh that any other man has, age 35.

And there was such purity in his eyes that another young man who saw it, it struck him, and it remained with him for more than 30 years. And he told me about it. I've never forgotten it.

That's more powerful than any message you can hear. What is in your heart comes out through your expression. It's like body odor.

Why are deodorants so popular? Because we all have body odor. Sometimes we are not aware of it. There's perspiration that comes out of our body.

Everything that comes out of our body has got a bad smell, just by the way. It's just another proof that we are full of sin. Everything, physical, spiritual, everything that comes out of our mouth, whether it's our breath or our words, is corrupt.

And unless it's cleansed, it's better to have a bath than to put deodorant. I hope you know that. Deodorant is a cover-up.

A bath is much better. So cleansing is better than hypocritical covering up and then pretending to be spiritual. Spiritual deodorants, it's no use.

Physical deodorants are okay, but spiritual deodorants, get rid of them. Take a bath. Be cleansed in the blood of Jesus.

Let the Holy Spirit purify you. What is in your heart will come out. It is coming out right now through your eyes, through your expression.

Even if you speak, I can listen to a man speak for five minutes and I can say whether he's judging. Let's get a man to speak up here for five minutes and I can tell you whether he's judging himself or not. I mean, my physical nose is not very sensitive.

I thankfully don't pick up any smells, but spiritually, over the years, I've begun to discern now. I don't know anything about his private life, but I can tell you whether he's judging himself or not. That's pretty clear.

But 99% of people are not like that, and so you can fool them in your church. Don't be happy with it, brother. That's what I'm trying to say.

Don't be happy that 99% of dumb people in your church admire you. It means nothing. It's like a whole lot of blind people saying, oh, you're a very handsome, good-looking person.

Are you excited? A hundred blind people said, I'm so beautiful. Are you crazy? This is the stupidity of believers. Be a man after God's own heart.

Let that be your passion. For that, you have to see the glory of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit will make you like that. You know, David had one desire.

He said, like Paul said, one thing I do. You remember? Like Jesus told Mary, one thing is needful. David, the man after God's own heart.

You know what he said in Psalm 27? I want you to look at this verse. A Psalm of David, Psalm 27. I think he wrote this in the caves.

Maybe he was 25, 27 years old. Why do I say that? You read the first verses and you'll see. He's talking about danger.

He's not talking about being in the palace. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life.

Whom shall I be afraid of? Evil doers came upon me to kill me. My adversaries and my enemies, and they stumbled and fell. A host of enemies encamped around me.

This is Saul. David is sitting in a cave, and he's got a little bit. The armies of Saul have gone away, and he's got a few minutes, and he writes something, and it is scripture.

My heart will not fear. The war rise against me. In spite of all this, shall I be confident? What shall I ask the Lord for? Shall I ask the Lord to kill Saul? Kill my enemies? No! There is only one thing I have asked from the Lord, and that I will seek all the days of my life.

Verse four, O Lord, that I may dwell in your house and see your beauty. And right now your house is this cave. It's all dark around me, but this is your house.

There was no temple in those days, by the way. No, the temple was built in Solomon's time. This is the house of the Lord, was that cave.

He said, I want to see the beauty of the Lord here and to meditate in his temple. Which was the temple? This cave, because then I know that in the day of trouble he will conceal me in his tabernacle, and my head, verse six, will be lifted up above my enemies. That's how it is.

Chapter 26, verse eight, let me read to you in the Message Bible. God, I love living with you. Your house, your house is this cave, glows with your glory.

See, this is how these men after God's own heart lived. In the midst of enemies, trials, they didn't ask for help or wealth. They said, Lord, I just want to see your glory.

That's the one thing I'm seeking. I don't have a second request. I know there are enemies around me.

I need more money. I need healing, but I'm not going to ask for any of those things. I want you, Jesus.

I want you, Lord. I want to see your beauty. I want to just sit and be with you the whole time.

And you know what happens to such people? God gives them enough money to live on. God gives them health and strength and everything. You seek his righteousness first.

Seek God's face first, and I guarantee that everything you need in life will be added to you. Otherwise, Jesus is a liar. Will you prove to an unbelieving world that my Lord is not a liar? That's our challenge in a poor country like India, to demonstrate to the nation around us, with all the persecution and the killing of Christians, with all the churches they're attacking around Bangalore and Orissa and all these places, what are we going to stand up here and say? Oh Lord, protect us from our enemies? No.

I've never prayed that prayer. I said, Lord, I want to see your glory. That's all.

Let India see the glory of Jesus Christ. Never mind about me. We can afford to die.

I'm ready to die if India will see God's glory. Are you ready to die if India will see God's glory? Yes or no? I hope we'll mean that in the time of trial and testing, which will definitely come in this country. For 30 years, I have preached persecution will come to India.

It's coming now. We must be ready. But I'll tell you, if your only passion in life is Jesus and you want to see his glory, like David, there can be enemies all around you and you're hidden in a cave and you say, Lord, this is your temple.

This is your place. Don't complain about anything in life. Say, Lord, there's only one thing I seek.

And you see, that's the type of person God said, that's the man after my own heart. I want a man like that to be king. And Israel rose.

And then came Solomon. Started out well because he had a wonderful godly father, but declines time. By the time it came to Solomon's son, Rehoboam split division.

And then every now and then a prophet would arise and preach like Elijah or someone would be some miracles. And for a while, they would all fall down and worship Jehovah. But in a few days, they'd be back again worshiping Beal and other gods.

And then came the day of Pentecost. Again, a mountaintop. Mighty power.

It says there was great power up to about Acts chapter 5. In Acts chapter 6, the grumbling started. The Greek women versus the Jewish women in the church. Grumbling and quarreling and the apostles had to sort out that problem.

But about food. Hey, these Jews, people are serving more food for their own widows and not giving less to us. Do you know when that started? In Acts chapter 6, a decline gradually started.

And by the time you come to the end of the first century, you see the condition of Ephesus and Thyatira and Laodicea, Revelation chapter 2 and 3. It's pathetic. Down in the dumps. And again, every now and then in the last 2,000 years of church history, God would raise up somebody and then it would be down in the dumps again.

Then God would raise up somebody, they'll be down in the dumps again. Again, God would raise up. Christian history is like that.

God would raise up a man. Usually that revival comes through a man. And usually that revival comes through a small group of despised people who recognize the anointing is with this David, not with Saul.

And they quit Saul and joined David, a few people. But then after a while, this group begins to prosper and they become proud. Oh, now we've got money.

We are rich. We are big. We're not like the old days.

That's right. The anointing is also gone and we're down in the dumps again. And then God has to forsake that group and start with another group.

And that rises up. And by the time it comes to the second, third generation, in about 25, 30 years, almost every group goes down with it. I mean, it's a rare group that lasts about 50 years.

Very rare. That's been the history of Christianity. And I've studied and observed this in various groups.

And I've tried to see, Lord, what is the reason? What is the reason? I don't want that to happen to me. I can't stop it from happening to other people, but I don't want it to happen to me. I want to go out in a cloud of glory.

I don't want to go out in the ditch. I don't want to leave this world as a grumbling, complaining man, murmuring and miserable. No, I want to go like Elijah went, up in the chariots of fire.

I hope you want to go out like that. You've got to understand the secret. And it's very simple.

You've got to be taken up with Jesus and not your ministry. It's as simple as that. You've got to be a Mary sitting at Jesus' feet and not a Martha busy with the ministry, ministry, ministry, ministry.

I'm the chief cook here in the kitchen. That's the elder brother. Don't be the chief cook in the kitchen.

Go and sit at Jesus' feet. The Lord's more interested in that. He said, one thing is needful.

Mary has chosen that good part to sit at my feet and listen. And I have, by the grace of God, learned a little bit of that lesson. And I never want to forget it.

And I share with you, my dear brothers and sisters, the most important ministry that you can ever have. What Paul said, we have received this ministry, this ministry. That is the word for this minute of our time.

We have this ministry. I hope that is the ministry you've got. What is that? Let me repeat again.

With the masks removed from our face, 2 Corinthians 3, 18, we see the glory of Jesus in the mirror of the scriptures. And as I see the glory of Jesus, you know what happens when we see the glory of Jesus? I'll tell you whether you've seen the glory of Jesus or not. It's very easy to find out.

A test. What happened to Abraham when he saw the glory of the Lord? Do you know what happened? He fell on his face. It's in the Old Testament.

I don't have time to show you all of that. What happened to Moses when he saw the glory of the Lord? He fell on his face. What happened to the Israelites, multitudes of them, when on Mount Carmel, in Elijah's time, when the fire of God fell, they fell on their face.

That means they hid their face in the ground, like the Seraphim in Isaiah chapter 6, who cover their faces because they can't see the glory of God. What happened to Peter, James, and John when Jesus' glory shone on the Mount of Transfiguration? They fell down. And what about the godly apostle John, 95 years old, and walked with God for 65 years of spirit-filled life in the Isle of Patmos in Revelation chapter 1, when he saw the glory of the Lord, he says, I fell at his feet like a dead man.

That has always been the mark of those whenever they have seen the glory of the Lord. And this glory of the Lord is today in the mirror of Scripture, it says, 2 Corinthians 13. We see in a mirror.

And James 1 says the mirror is God's Word. Let me ask you, when was the last time you read God's Word and inwardly you fell on your face before God? What did you get when you read the Scriptures last time?

A clever thought to preach in a sermon? That's a good thing, I can preach in a sermon. Is that what you look for in Scripture? That's what you'll get.

You seek for something, you'll find it. But men after God's own heart, they're not looking for points for sermons when they read the Bible. In my younger days, when I was a child, I thought like a child, I spoke like a child.

And I will confess, in my younger days when I was a child spiritually, I read the Bible to get sermons. Yeah, it's true. Clever ideas, clever illustrations, impress people.

But not today. I want to see the glory of Jesus when I see Scripture. I want to say, Lord, show me Jesus here because I want to be like Him.

That is my ministry, to be like Him. And if I can see something of Jesus, I can show that to other people. I have a little poem that I read when I was a young man that I've never forgotten.

It's challenged me through many years. It's a parable. It speaks of a man who held a flaming torch in the darkness to highlight a beautiful painting of Jesus.

And people came by and admired Jesus. And it says in that poem, the hand that held the flaming torch was not even visible. And then in that darkness, this hand was picking up water to give to the thirsty people going by.

And their thirst was met, but nobody could see the hand pouring the water. And the enemy was coming in the darkness. And this hand took the trumpet and blew the trumpet that people were ready for war and protected themselves from the enemy.

But nobody saw the hand that held the trumpet. Nobody saw the hand that held up the light to the painting. Nobody saw the hand that poured the water for the thirsty people.

Nobody saw the hand that blew the trumpet. But one day, it says in the last verse of that poem, the Lord will say to his servant, put down that flaming torch. Put down that pitcher of water.

Put down your trumpet. The time is over. And the Lord will come.

And in the brightness of that light, you will see that hand holding the hand of Jesus. Oh, it's challenged me. I say, Lord, make me like that.

Does that challenge you? You don't have to be a preacher. You don't have to be an elder. You just have to have a tremendous longing to be invisible.

Do you have a great longing to be invisible, to be an invisible preacher? I mean, you can't help it. You're visible, but you have no desire for visibility. You have no desire to show yourself.

It's a great danger when you stand. I tell you, I have seen singers and musicians and people who play instruments. They are so conscious.

Everybody's seeing me, you know, how I'm playing this instrument, how I'm playing. They're distracting people from the worship of God. Christendom is full of this.

Singers and preachers and musicians who are drawing people's attention to what they are doing and not to Jesus. I say, Lord, eliminate such people from Christendom. We don't want music.

We don't want anything. We want to see Jesus. But Christendom won't listen to that.

They don't have years to hear that. They haven't understood that this is a ministry to see the glory of Jesus, to be transformed into that likeness and to lead other people into that. You want to go that way? Then I'll tell you how Paul went that way.

Please listen. Verse 5, we saw that yesterday. We don't preach ourselves.

We preach ourselves as servants, invisible servants. There are two people I have learned lessons from. One is from children, babies, and the other is from this type of servants we have in our Indian homes.

You can learn from them. You can't learn much from many elder brothers, I'm sorry to say, but you can learn something from unconverted servants and you can learn something from little babies. But Jesus said, he took a baby and said, the kingdom of heaven is like this.

And I have meditated on babies. I've seen babies lying in a cradle. And I said, Lord Jesus, you said I've got to learn something from this baby about humility.

What can I learn? And the Lord speaks to my heart. And I think, what is this baby? What do you think is going on in the mind of this three-month-old baby when he's lying, smiling in the cradle? He's not thinking, oh, what a clever fellow I am, how everybody's admiring me now and they think I'm great and they're all coming to see me and all that. No, he doesn't even have thought like that.

And he's got no grudge against you. You pinch that baby and go away tomorrow. You come back and he'll still smile at you.

He doesn't even know you're the one who pinched it. And the Lord said, be like that. I said, Lord, I want to be like that.

I want to be a baby. I don't want to think everybody's admiring me or who pinched me yesterday or last week or 25 years ago somebody pinched me. Do you remember all that? Be like a baby.

And the other is servants. What is a servant? I tell you, we have some tremendous examples. Many of us have servants, poor people who work in our homes.

And I've seen servants, you know, in homes where you go and servants are there and they have brought the rice and the curry and everything to the plate and you don't even see the servant. By the time you come to the, sometimes it could be the mother who is the servant. But you go to the table and everything is there.

Who brought it? I don't know. I don't even see the face of the servant. A good servant in an Indian home, you'll never see her face.

She'd be way back there in the background somewhere. What about that servant who blows a trumpet, say, hey, I'm bringing the rice now. That's not a good servant.

You want to be an elder brother? Learn from the servants in your homes, how they serve people and disappear. Nobody even knows their name. Learn from servants, learn from children.

I have meditated on servants and children and learned more from them than from many elder brothers in the world. We proclaim ourselves, verse 5, as your servants. We don't preach ourselves.

We preach ourselves as servants. And then the light of the knowledge of the glory of God will be shown, will shine in the face of Christ. But how does God keep us with our face in the dust? How does he do it? Listen, do you want to go this way? Verse 8, we are afflicted.

Now I want to read this. We are persecuted. We're always caring about the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus will be manifested.

I want you to pay attention to me. I want to read this in the message Bible. Please listen.

This is how God keeps us humble so that the glory of Jesus can always be seen in our life. So that the anointing of God will be upon our ministry from one degree of glory to another. I have seen, I've heard in my lifetime, wonderful preachers.

I hear them 10 years later, the anointing is gone. I remember when I years ago as a young man, I heard a Pentecostal preacher. I was only 23 or something.

Boy, there was an anointing upon his ministry. Really? And I heard the same man about 15, 20 years later. Ah, dead as anything.

The same man. Because his earthly ministry had become bigger. He had become a Lord over many churches now.

It was gone. And I've taken warning from these people. I said, Lord, I don't want to judge him.

I look at it to learn a lesson for myself. I have the same flesh as him. The same thing can happen to me.

Please save me from this calamity. And the Lord says, this is how I'll keep your face in the dust. Please listen carefully.

He says here, as you know, as you yourself know, we are not much to look at. That means don't be proud of your appearance. That's number one.

Some of us have got good looking faces. There's nothing wrong with that. But when you're proud of it, there's everything wrong with it.

When you look into your mirror and you say, what a good looking boy I am or a good looking girl I am, you're in great danger. You know yourselves that we are not much to look at. We're reading from verse seven onwards.

We have been surrounded and battered by troubles. This is God's mightiest servants. Surrounded and battered by troubles.

But we are not demoralized. We are not sure what to do. We're perplexed.

But we know that God knows what to do. I like that. I don't know what to do.

But God knows what he should be doing and he'll take care of it. We are spiritually terrorized. Terrorism is a very popular word and a very well-known word today.

We are spiritually terrorized by human beings, by the devil. But God is still standing with us. That's enough.

Let the terrorists come. Like one American president said, bring them on. Let's see.

God has not left our side. We have been thrown down. But we are not broken.

We get up. What they did to Jesus, this is how he describes the dying of Jesus and the life of Jesus. What they did to Jesus, they do to us.

Trial, going to court, torture, mockery, and murder. But what Jesus did among them, he does in us today. He lives.

Resurrection. You can kill us, but there's a resurrection life in us. That is the greatest need of the hour.

To believe that even if people kill us, we will rise from the dead. And I don't mean just physically. We may all believe that.

But spiritually. To bear the dying of Jesus means that I reckon myself to be dead when people treat me whatever way they like. Because I believe one thing, that there is a resurrection that's going to take place while I'm alive.

The out resurrection from among the dead. See, that's the meaning of baptism. I'll give you one bit of advice.

Never allow an enemy to baptize you. Because he may never bring you up out of the water after he puts you in. Be sure that the guy baptizing you loves you.

Because you submit to him. You're helpless. And you know he's not going to keep you in.

Now, I'm not joking. There was a group of people called the Anabaptists in the 15th, 16th century in Europe, who preached more than what Martin Luther preached. Martin Luther preached justification by faith.

These people said not only justification by faith, but water baptism by immersion. And do you know what the Lutherans, the followers of Luther, did to these Anabaptists in the 16th century? They said, you want to be baptized, we'll baptize you. They pushed them under the water and kept them there till they died.

Christians, killing Christians, because they preached water baptism. Why do you submit to water baptism to somebody? Because you know that when he puts you down, he'll bring you up. That is our faith.

It says here in verse 13, I believe and therefore I speak. It's faith. I submit.

It is God who allows somebody to crucify me. It was God who allowed people to crucify Jesus. It says in Acts chapter 2, according to the perfect foreknowledge of God, Peter preached on the day of Pentecost.

According to the perfect foreknowledge of God, he allowed Jesus to be crucified, because that's nothing. They are pushing him under the water. I'll pull him out.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that if people push you under the water, God will lift you up? That is faith in the dying of Jesus. Let people kill me like they killed Jesus. Inwardly, I mean destroy my reputation, harm me, hurt me, insult me, speak against me, try to destroy my ministry, crush me in every way possible.

I believe God will raise me up. I've experienced that numerous times. Many times the Lord has spoken to me the word.

He spoke to the elder in Philadelphia. These people who say they are Christians, but who are not, I will make them acknowledge that I have loved you. God can do it.

He can do it for you, my brother, sister. Be taken up with his glory and let people crucify you. God will raise you up.

Why do we resist when people crucify us? Because you don't have faith in the resurrection. You don't have faith that God will raise you up. You feel it's you fighting the battle against your husband or your wife or your mother-in-law, your relatives, your neighbors.

Well, if God says you're going to fight the battle, I don't know when many times, you know, having been a servant of the Lord in full-time ministry for 42 years, I know what it is to be opposed by the devil and his agents. And many times what the Lord has spoken to me is this one word. Do you want me to deal with them or do you want to deal with them yourself? I said, Lord, you deal with them.

I will not deal with them. So we submit. And then what they did to Jesus, they do to us, trial, court, torture, mockery, murder.

But what Jesus did among them, he does among us. He lives and our lives are at constant risk for Jesus' sake, which makes Jesus' life all the more evident in us. If your Christianity was comfortable and easy, people would say, ah, that's easy to be a Christian.

Why is it in our churches, in all these 33 years, we have never paid anybody? Why is it our elders, including myself, have never taken one single rupee from anybody all these years? Because we don't want the non-Christians in India to turn around and say to us, ah, you fellows are preaching the gospel because somebody's paying you. Nobody's paying us. You fellows are preaching the gospel because you've got to send a report to America.

We don't send any report to America. We don't send a report to anybody. We are preaching because we love Jesus Christ.

Nobody pays us. All of our elders can say that. And like Paul said, nobody will stop us from this boasting.

There is a spiritual boasting and there's a carnal boasting. The spiritual boasting is for the glory of God. Yeah, the life of Jesus is all the more evident in us.

We're going through the worst, but it doesn't matter. We believe and therefore we speak. And what do we believe? Listen to this, verse 14.

We know for certain that the one who raised Jesus from the dead will also present us like that. That's why we submit to death. That's the only way for the resurrection life of Jesus to be manifest in us.

And that resurrection power is the thing the devil's scared of. He's not scared of all your preaching. He's not even scared of your preaching about the cross and the cross and the cross.

He's not afraid of all your evangelism. He's afraid when you believe that the almighty resurrection power of God is so powerful that it can conquer any of that death the devil or his agents put upon you. Dear brothers and sisters, let's live in that faith.

We need more of it in this country in the days to come. But if our eyes are fixed on seeing the glory of Jesus, we will demonstrate to this land that Jesus Christ is Lord, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. For 30 years we have prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed, Oh Lord, let India see the glory of God.

Let India know that Jesus Christ is Lord. Break the backbone of idolatry in this country. That's been our burden.

We've prayed it in our prayer meetings hundreds of times. We're not interested in great music. We're not even interested in great preaching.

We're interested in seeing the glory of God in our lives, in our homes, in our churches. We want our homes to be homes full of the love of God, a little foretaste of heaven upon earth. Let's aim for that.

And even if we are small in number, we will be the salt of India and a little light that burns brightly like these halogen lamps that light up a whole area. Size doesn't matter. I hope that'll be the passion of your life and mine in the days to come.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we don't want to just hear pep talks that stir us up for a few minutes. We want to respond to the Holy Spirit.

We want to be men and women of faith. The Holy Spirit works in us. We want to live under the anointing.

We don't want to decline and go down. Help us, Lord, each one. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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