

Revelation and the Way of the Cross

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of justification by faith, living a holy life, and humility in Christianity.

Duration: 1:23:23

Scripture: Ezekiel 16:48-49, Matthew 10:38, Luke 9:23, John 12:24-26, Romans 13:8

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "The Cross"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of justification by faith, highlighting Martin Luther's stand against salvation by works. It delves into the truth that our righteousness is like filthy rags and that boasting in our own righteousness is futile. The sermon warns against seeking self-interest and the need to deny oneself, take up the cross daily, and follow Christ. It stresses the balance between being justified by faith and pursuing holiness, cautioning against legalism and the dangers of seeking personal gain over God's interests.

Transcript

One of the great truths that was restored to Christendom in general after many years of darkness was the truth of justification by faith. If you read Christian history you know that Martin Luther stood against the entire Roman Catholic Church in the early 1500s because that church in that time anyway was teaching salvation by works. And Luther himself was a monk who studied the scriptures and discovered that is not true.

He realized it's Christ who is our righteousness that the most holy righteous man in the world who's done the maximum number of good works and the holiest person is still not fit to enter God's presence because even our righteousness is like filthy rags. So that was a great discovery that nobody could boast in his righteousness. I think all of us have understood that.

If you haven't understood it you'll never experience the joy of salvation. To know that it's not because we have done so a lot of good things that we are accepted but in Christ we are accepted. Now some people right from the first century onwards have taken advantage of that and says well if it's in Christ that I'm accepted it doesn't matter how I live.

Paul speaks about that in some of his letters and why does God allow that? God allows that so that some people will be lost because of their insincerity and crookedness and taking advantage of God's grace. We have to ignore them. So we're not going to change the message of God grace just because we are afraid

some people will take advantage of it.

Some people have done that. Some churches and they end up as legalists and preaching a gospel of works that leads to condemnation. So we don't do that but we do preach holiness and we need to understand the balance between being justified by faith which is the foundation and holiness which is the superstructure.

It's because people confuse the superstructure with the foundation that people are confused. So let me just say a brief word about that from Ephesians chapter 2. Paul said in his day when he preached grace people were accusing him of saying well it doesn't matter how we live but when we preach that we have to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God 2nd Corinthians 7 verse 1 we are accused to the opposite that we are preaching salvation by works. Well people will always accuse.

The devil's an accuser of the brethren and a person who's got an accusing mindset will his he's got a mind that's very sharp to pick out faults in people just like the Pharisees were waiting to catch people in adultery so that they could stone them and there are followers of such Pharisees in every church today but we can safely ignore them because they will destroy themselves finally but we had to be careful that we're not like that.

In Ephesians 2 it says here in verse 8 and 9 by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God never forget that but not as a result of works that no one should boast that's talking about the foundation there is no works in the foundation that's like saying in the foundation of a building you don't have doors windows no who places doors and windows in a foundation some crazy guy there are no works in the foundation but now you go to the superstructure in the superstructure there are plenty of works see the next verse we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works you see the contrast no works in verse 9 plenty of works verse 10 no windows and doors in the foundation but plenty of doors and windows in the superstructure if you

understand that difference you understood Christianity properly in a balanced way otherwise you'll be thinking there should be no doors and windows in the superstructure also just make it like a cage and then others who will say that no we got to put doors and windows in the foundation too these are the extremes I've seen in Christendom in the last 57 years so the Bible says don't be children in your understanding in understanding be men and these are good works not any good works we feel like doing verse 10 but good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them there are good works that man can think of doing every religion has it Hinduism has it Islam has it and every religion has some type of good works but this is not that a Christian does not just do any type of

good works you know you can go out and start an orphanage but that may not be what God wants you to do or you may can have a crusade against slavery or you know unjust political systems it may all sound very nice but if that is not what God wanted you to do you can spend your entire life wasting your life you know the superstructure has to be according to what the architect has drawn and designed and he does not design the same type of building for everybody so God has got a particular plan for your life that's why it says not just any good words you feel like doing we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for what purpose we are forgiven without any works but now for good works which God prepared beforehand that means long before you were born he planned some good works for you to

do and you to walk in them and I'll tell you this and I'm very glad I discovered it maybe a couple of years after I was converted when I was baptized that God had a plan for my life I had already made a plan for my life I was in the navy but I discovered when I was 21 years old that God had a plan for my life and when I understood that I said Lord that's what I want to fulfill I want to live where you want me to live and I want to do what you want me to do and I want to spend my entire life as far as possible every day being where you want me to be doing what you want me to do saying what you want me to say and not being influenced by men not being influenced by my own desires and love of comfort or any such thing I want because if I allow those things to influence me I won't be able to

say at the end of my life that I have finished the work God gave me to do Jesus said in John 17 4 I finished the work you gave me to do Paul said in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 79 I finished my course and I said Lord these are the only two people in the Bible who said follow me Jesus and Paul Jesus said follow me many times Paul said follow me in 1 Corinthians 11 Philippians 3 and I want to follow these people particularly in finishing the work God gave me to do and I hope all of you have that passion we must teach our children from early in life God's got a plan for your life we must finish that and don't follow the plans in the world if you follow worldly people you see a lot of Christians they want to accept Christ they want to go to heaven but when it comes to living in the

world they train their children to have the values of the people in the world because they think that's good for them in other words have the best on earth and the best in heaven those are the people who miss the will of God I don't want to do that I don't want to train my children to do that either we have to see Lord what is the plan you made for my life and it's different for everyone so having said that I just want to clarify that we've understood that justification is by faith we have declared righteous by God because we believe that nothing that I do like that song we rock of ages we sing nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling that's the only way I can be saved that's the only way I can be justified and accepted by God not only at the beginning of my Christian life

I think a lot of people realize that is the way we're accepted in the beginning but even if I've been saved 50 60 years I'm still accepted because I'm justified in Christ there's no other way now in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 see I'll tell you this is what is was not emphasized in the reformation in the time of Lutheran has not been mostly emphasized in these last four or five hundred years there are truths in the Bible that have slowly come up as people have studied it more for example Luther Wesley great men of God mighty men of God much better than you and me they never taught water baptism they were baptizing babies and in fact they persecuted the early Lutherans persecuted the Anabaptists who baptized adults born-again believers so we can't say that because we've understood water

baptism we are better than John Wesley I think he was a hundred times better godly man than any of us but he didn't have light on it and then later on you know the really had having titles and even people like Wesley had the title reverend and Jesus said he must never take titles but he didn't have light on it so we must recognize that this truth has been discovered as we as people have gone more and more into the scriptures the same thing with the baptism in the Holy Spirit for so many years people never spoke about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and yet is there in scripture every single all the first five books of the New Testament begin with teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit John the Baptist said it Jesus said in John chapter 1 Acts 1 before he went up to heaven you shall be

baptized in the Holy Spirit and yet that was a truth that was not spoken of in many churches and even today it's not spoken of in many churches and where it is spoken of in some churches they go off to some

fanatical extreme which turns other people away and that's exactly what the devil wants he wants one group to go to some extreme of truth even justification by faith people have taken it to such an extreme they say once saved always saved it doesn't matter how you live you're going to go ahead that's one extreme of truth and the devil is happy with people who live there and then there are others who react against that and say that's dangerous to preach that so we must preach works works works works and you produce a bunch of legalistic Pharisees who look down on everybody else and the

devil's happy with both groups the legalistic Pharisees on one side and the one saved always saved who live in sin on the other side the devil's quite happy about that the narrow way which Jesus said very few find it is a way in which there's a deep ditch on either side now i'll tell you something the only way you can walk on it is if you take the study of the scripture seriously and like i've often said if you know if you've got a bible in your language and you don't take time to study it then you deserve to be deceived you deserve to be deceived if you don't have a bible in your own language at least okay we can understand but you have a bible in your own language and you don't study it carefully to find out what God has taught about the most important thing on earth eternal life then i

say you deserve to be deceived and if you're deceived you've got nobody to blame but yourself if you just listen to preachers i tell you there are multitudes of deceivers among preachers so that's why i say be like the barians you read about the barians in act 17 the apostle paul spoke to them it says they didn't just swallow it they searched the scriptures daily to see if what paul said was right so i can imagine in a synagogue paul got up and preached something and the those christians say well praise the lord good to hear you but we don't believe you yet we'll check it this week and go back and and remember they didn't have a bible at home remember that also they couldn't go home the parchment old testament was only in the synagogue they had to come every day to the synagogue to check

with this thing that paul said is it right or not and they'd come back next week and say paul we agree with you i wish we had more people like that but we have a bunch of lazy christians nowadays all over the world who are too lazy to study the scriptures and that's why they swallow whatever some preacher says and that's why their lives are so shallow they don't get light on themselves they're not growing in christlikeness they're not growing in effectiveness for the kingdom of god or they don't understand exactly what god wants them to do and the tragedy of it is some of them are going to discover this only when christ comes again and they stand before the lord and say lord i missed it maybe they were saved maybe they get to heaven but that's not enough imagine i often think of this

imagine spending all eternity in heaven but with the regret that i did not live according to god's will in the one life he gave to me on earth i can sing for millions of years lord i love you i love you i love you but i remember that on earth i did not prove that love by obedience to everything god wants me to do i believe such people will have regret i know people say god will wipe away our tears but i personally cannot imagine that i can live as i like taking advantage of god's grace and only desiring to go to heaven when i die and living for myself on this earth and then going to heaven when i die and thinking that i'll be happy forever i i don't know about you i will not be happy i will look at jesus and understand how much he loved me how much he gave himself for me and i'll have

eternal regret eternal eternal regret that the one life god gave me i lived for myself and not for the glory of god i was gripped by that when i was 21 i'm very thankful 55 years ago and i'm very very thankful otherwise i'd have wasted a lot of my life i'm not saying you got to be in full-time christian work like me no god calls only one in a thousand to maybe go into christian work full-time 999 must work in their secular

jobs like all of you but even in our secular jobs god's got a plan for our life a specific plan and that's what you must fulfill and if you're committed to do the will of god alone in your life all this business of job security and all will disappear how can somebody take away the job god has planned for you how can you miss getting the appointment of the job god's

planned for you impossible that's a wonderful thing of being in god's will that if you seek his kingdom first and his righteousness everything necessary for life on earth will provided for you when you say give us this day our daily bread he taught us to pray that daily there i'm saying lord let me paraphrase expand it lord give me a job so i can earn my living and earn my daily bread without being dependent on others and always waiting for a handout or a gift from someone and lord please help me to educate my children so that when they grow up they will not be a parasite on society they will not be dependent on others as beggars but they will be able to get their daily bread all that is involved in this simple prayer give us this day our daily bread give me a job give me a house to live

in help me to educate my children is all in that one sentence give us this day our daily bread god's interested in that but if he can understand that he has a plan for our life when we live there it'll be wonderful but i want to move on from there i want to show you something that was not emphasized sufficiently and what i mentioned now is also not emphasized sufficiently but another thing which i was thinking of this morning one corinthians chapter one we read here by god's doing it speaks here in verse 29 that no one should boast before god why has god chosen verse 27 the foolish things he's chosen the foolish things to shame the wise and verse 26 he says not many wise not many noble because god has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise that's not what normal

companies and corporations do they don't choose foolish people they choose clever people god doesn't is that in your bible that god has chosen the foolish things that he's chosen the weak things the people who don't think too much of themselves who recognize they're weak the base things the ones that are despised god has chosen the things that are nothing the things that are zeros that he might nullify the things that are and the whole purpose is so that no one should boast before god one thing we can be pretty sure in eternity when you stand before the lord no one will be able to boast i often picture that in my mind you know this great crowd saying worthy is the lamb in revelation and i picture myself sometimes lost in that crowd of millions just one person among millions here i often

stand in the pulpit and people recognize me and esteem me but not there in heaven i'll be just one among the millions not recognized not special not standing in front of anyone just one among millions standing and saying worthy is the lamb meditate on that frequently it'll humble you any of you who have a problem with high thoughts who are thinking you're very spiritual and recognized by others as a leader or some stupid idea that god that the devil's put into your mind like that this will humble you if you picture heaven where everybody's singing worthy is the lamb even paul where do you look look for paul he's also somewhere there in the crowd paul and peter and you and me it's only jesus who's going to be honored there no one will be able to boast in god's presence in heaven and the

more heavenly you are you will not boast on earth either people who boast belong in hell i'll tell you that or people who are inwardly proud and look down on others they belong in hell they don't belong in heaven there's not going to be one proud person in heaven i can guarantee you that they've gone to hell long before that happens because the devil is the author of all pride that's how he became the devil so no one should boast before god it's a very simple statement but yet you know if you look at so much of christendom today there's such a lot of boasting church is boasting that we're better than others and the

spirit of the pharisee lord i thank you that i'm not like other men i want to warn you be aware of that and god's been good to you god's given you a revelation on things just

humble yourself and give him the glory be thankful but don't let him don't let it ever go to your head and then he goes on to say by god's doing we are in christ jesus i didn't get into christ by my own doing and you may say once i accepted christ and i would say but remember it was god's doing and christ has become to us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption and again it says just as it is written let him who boasts boast in the lord so between these two statements about boasting in verse 29 and verse 31 no one should boast before god verse 29 and let him who boasts verse 31 boast in the lord and not in himself do you know the things people boast in people boast in their accomplishments there are even people who boast in their children my children are have done so

well in school or college or they've got such good positions or perhaps they're most so spiritual my my son and daughter are so gracious and so humble and so loving i feel sorry for you and i feel sorry for your children because they will imbibe that spirit from you they will destroy themselves parents very often destroy their children with for the pride that they themselves have in their children and try to communicate it be careful all the instruction you give them about christianity can be canceled out and wiped out by communicating pride to them maybe we're especially careful so god in the final day is not going to judge how much they what marks they got in science or mathematics but how humble they were christianity i mean in the final day human beings are going to be divided not

according to their marks and academics but according who was humble and who was proud and i hope we and our children will be on the right side on that day and it's our responsibility as parents to make sure that i'm only preaching what i've practiced for years now especially if your children do well you've got to really work to keep them their face in the dust that no one should boast before god and if anyone does boast let him boast and what the lord has done for me it's of him that i'm in christ keep emphasizing that to your children keep emphasizing that to yourself i'm in christ because of what god did for me and if i had a desire to him it god produced that desire in me i can't boast over anybody else and he says here how in christ christ has become my righteousness in verse 30 that

we can understand it that was what was emphasized in the reformation christ has become my righteousness i'm justified in christ i have no righteousness of my own that's acceptable before god christ has become my righteousness so even at the end of my life if i've served god faithfully for 70 years i have to still say lord i'm damned but jesus died for me that's the only way i can enter heaven just like the thief on the cross who did nothing i i rejoice in the fact that i enter heaven on exactly the same basis as the thief on the cross he did nothing he didn't have an opportunity to do anything i may have served god for 50 years but i enter heaven on exactly the same basis and i'll never forget it and i never want to forget it he is my righteousness but what i also want to share with you

is that christ jesus has become to us wisdom and that is what has not been sufficiently emphasized in christendom even during the reformation or since then in most christians i have met it's not been emphasized sufficiently that christ is you know christ is my righteousness i find most almost all evangelical christians will accept i have no righteousness my own christ is my righteousness but will you also say you have no wisdom of your own christ is my wisdom that's what it says here he has become my wisdom and i want to say that is the reason why i find many christians don't get revelation when they read the scriptures they get bright ideas there's a lot of difference between getting bright ideas you just got to be a clever person to get bright ideas from scripture or to prepare a clever

sermon from scripture you just got to be a clever person but to get revelation for that you have to say christ has become my wisdom i have no wisdom of my own and there are very very few christians particularly among the educated and the clever who will be willing to acknowledge that and i want to tell you you miss a lot if you don't get revelation from scripture if you're a clever person you can put together verses put a concordance together and produce a wonderful sermon it may not be from the holy spirit at all i've heard a lot of sermons like that there are clever politicians who can hold people spellbound for one hour because they are great orators and eloquent that's not the way god speaks through his servants so just like you have i think all of you have recognized that your

righteousness will never qualify you for god's kingdom but christ is your righteousness let's learn also that my wisdom will only lead me astray in understanding the truth or i may understand partially the truth but all of the truth i must be willing to say i have no wisdom human wisdom will not enable me to understand god's word turn with me to matthew 11 verse 25 jesus said this matthew 11 verse 25 i praise thee oh father lord of heaven and earth now remember this is something jesus is thanking god for it's not just a statement it's a statement he could have just made a statement god has hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to babes that's a statement god has hidden things the most important things in the bible from clever intelligent people are you

clever and intelligent i want to tell you god has hidden things from you it's unfortunate you've got a handicap you're clever you were born with intelligence sorry you're going to not understand god's word isn't that sad you say well you mean god favors those who are foolish and dumb and stupid no he favors those who are humble the trouble with clever intelligent people is they're a little proud of their cleverness and intelligence that's what makes them miss understanding god's truth it's not that oh you're clever so you can't understand the bible then what's the hope for us i think paul was one of the cleverest men of his day i believe paul's iq was much higher than yours and mine he was a brilliant man i think he would have been a top computer scientist or businessman or anything today

but how did he get so much revelation he laid his wisdom down at the feet of the lord so it's in other words the wise has to become like a foolish man if he wants to understand scripture that was a great revelation to me when i discovered it i first discovered that christ was my righteousness that i had none of my own but if i came with my righteousness i completely missed god's will the second thing i learned pretty early in my life was that if i came with my human cleverness and i was clever i had to admit that god gave me a lot of intelligence when i was born that was not my making so i couldn't boast about it i was just born with it but if i began to think that that that would help me in the world it helped me in my school days it helped me when i was in the military but when i come

to the scripture i had to say lord here that intelligence does not help me at all it's worth zero so i don't want to come with that mind with which i study chemistry and mathematics to the scriptures i'll go completely astray and that's why you find one thousand or more ten thousand denominations each holding the bible and saying we've got the truth why is that because people come with their cleverness well you come with your cleverness you can produce a hundred thousand denominations each preaching different aspects of things it's human cleverness that's how all the religions in the world came people who have never seen god have tried to talk about what god is like and gradually to get a following and start a religion it's going to be wrong it's like you know if you go to a country where

nobody's ever seen an elephant or nobody's ever seen a picture of an elephant either and you tell all those students in the class i want you to draw an elephant you think anybody would ever think of a trunk

impossible because no animal has it they'll draw something like a lion or something or a big one and say elephant and they'll be wrong that is exactly how every religion in the world none of them knew god none of them has seen god they tried decided to talk about god and they all every religion is false the only one that could speak about it is one who came from heaven and there was only one it was only one in the history of the world that was jesus christ and that's why christianity alone is the truth there's nothing to compete with it because all the others were just men who had

bright ideas and with clever men wise men trying to talk about god and jesus said i thank you father you've hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent that explains to me why there are so many religions it's all a whole lot of clever people trying to explain god and the only one who could really do it properly was the one who was god himself who came to earth and said this is what god is like but we need to remember this for ourselves that there are things in scripture which i cannot understand if i use my brain as the primary source of understanding there's a message i spoke on soulish or spiritual which is on the internet you could listen to it sometime on youtube where i mentioned a man is spirit soul and body and the mind is a part of our soul we're not supposed to know god

by our mind primarily but in our spirit in the old testament tabernacle there was the outer court the holy place the most holy place symbolizing body soul and spirit and god dwelt in the most holy place not in the holy place teaching us that god does not dwell in our mind he dwells in our spirit so it's from our spirit that we need to understand god and if our spirit in the spirit we get revelation then we can use our mind we definitely need to use our mind i'm using my mind right now and you're using it right now to listen but if it originates there you'll go astray that's what i'm saying we use our eyes but we don't get revelation just by reading we don't not just the eyes not just the mind but the spirit and so the one who is pure in his spirit who's kept a clear conscience who walks

in holiness is even if he's not very clever will know god better than the person who's a little impure but brilliant in his mind you know if you're teaching chemistry or physics or some worldly subject you can be an adulterer and evil and you can be brilliant in your profession but not not when it comes to the bible when it comes to scripture your brilliant mind is no value a pure spirit and a humble spirit has tremendous value a spirit that keeps itself in humility in purity and in love to all people for example if you have an unforgiving attitude towards somebody just to take one example you haven't forgiven somebody you can be a brilliant professor in the top university easy because your conscience has got nothing to do with your brilliance but when it comes to scripture you will not

understand it with an unforgiving spirit if you hate someone you look down on someone you can still be a brilliant professor but you won't understand the bible and you think you understand the bible you're wrong i've had so many people come to argue with me about this scripture and that scripture and i try to show them from scripture and i found sometimes they're not able to see it even though it's crystal clear to me they don't see it and then i realize the lord must be seeing some pride some little thing there in their spirit that keeps them blind that even if you explain it they can't see it for example truths about the new covenant i find the vast majority of believers have never seen it or a new covenant church what's the new covenant church most people haven't seen it what is a new

covenant life most people haven't seen it even though it's written plainly and you know they can hear my messages and read it on the internet they think they've got it and they can teach it to others but it is not true in their life i mean if you're still defeated by anger and sexual lust in your thoughts and an unforgiving spirit you haven't understood abc of the new covenant life not at all you can explain it because you

understand in your mind and explain it to other people that's just intellect it's in the spirit that we need to know god so remember this so the particular thing which i wanted to show you that scripture speaks about is about picking up the cross a subject which is almost not preached much anyway in most of evangelical christianity taking up the cross for me it has been

the central message of my ministry for 40 50 years what does it mean to take up the cross let me show you everywhere in the gospels where jesus spoke about taking up the cross he said something else also in connection with that then you'll understand it first of all matthew chapter 10 i think this is almost the first reference for taking up the cross in the new testament matthew 10 verse 38 he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me we want to go slowly in this we really want to try and understand what it means to take up the cross because this is central jesus said you cannot follow me if you don't take up the cross you can come to church every sunday and you can live a very good life and give to the poor and give for mission work and do 101 things and have

your weekday meetings and praise meetings and everything else but if you don't take up the cross you cannot follow jesus christ but if you take up the cross every day even if you don't do those other things if you don't happen to come to church every sunday and you're not able to have any weekday meetings and you don't go around preaching you can still follow jesus it is the one single most important thing to follow jesus christ to take up the cross every day and we need to understand it husbands and wives need to understand it we need to teach our children what it means so notice he's not worthy of me that means i'm not worthy of jesus if i don't take up my cross in another place it says every day i cannot follow him if i don't take up the cross i need to understand it very clearly and

then he says in the next verse he who has found his life will lose it and he was lost his life for my sake she'll find it a verse which is thoroughly misunderstood by clever people and i'm not surprised but what he's referring to is our self-life not our physical life it's not my going and giving up my physical life there is a self-life that all of us have we are born as children of adam with self sitting on the throne self thinking of itself is very clever very righteous and very important and that's the thing that causes problems in all relationships what's the cause of husband and wife conflicts two people who got self sitting on the throne that's all there is to it how will they ever become one they both have to be crucified that's all if self is crucified they'll become one it's

because self is on the throne that all conflicts are there between brothers between husband and wife between people between churches whatever it is self is on the throne and that's why this health wealth gospel is so popular you know if you come and say jesus will make you healthy heal all your sicknesses and make you wealthy tell me anybody in the world who doesn't want that message we have numerous beggars in india everybody every beggar would be delighted with that to accept jesus will make him healthy and wealthy and all the rich people they also want health and wealth is there a human being on the earth who doesn't want health and wealth why did the world reject jesus christ then if that's what he came with i mean that to me is the simple answer that that's not the gospel if that was

the gospel jesus came with the whole world should have accepted him which pharisee in the world did not love health and wealth did herod love health and wealth of course he did why would he reject jesus if jesus was offering health and wealth not a soul in israel would have rejected him not a soul in the world would have rejected him that to me is the clearest evidence that this health wealth gospel has come from hell to lead people astray jesus did not say come and be healthy come and be wealthy he said come and die who wants that that's what he preached if you want to hear the real gospel come and die to your ambitions to

your interest to your self-life to your arrogance to your pride to your self-righteousness to everything you want that that's what i'm coming for that's why they hated

him that's why they killed him and if the world hates him today exactly for the same reason and that's why we have a christianity that ignores this thing and preaches all the other nice things that jesus will do i'm not saying that the lord doesn't bless materially he does but i'll tell you what the bible says he blesses unbelievers also materially he makes the sun to rise on whom the good and the evil he makes the rain to fall on whom the righteous and the unrighteous sun and rain material blessings are given by god to good people and to evil people the muslim sheikhs they may worship a false god but they are extremely wealthy people with false religions can be extremely healthy because material blessings are given by god to everyone it's not a proof of god's blessing if it were a proof

of god's blessing then we have to say that millions of non-christians are more blessed than christians because they got a lot more health and a lot more wealth that's not the proof of god's blessing so it's learning to lose our life like it says here if i find my life i lose it my family lose my life for his sake i'll find it now next reference to the cross i think it's in matthew 16 in matthew 16 he was speaking about the church the first time he spoke about the church matthew 16 and verse 18 i will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it and from that time verse 21 jesus also spoke about the cross the very first time he spoke about the church he also spoke about the cross teaching us that that was central to building the church not only the cross on which jesus

died verse 21 i have to suffer many things and be killed but also the cross that we have to carry verse 24 i've got to take up the cross this dual cross the cross on which christ was crucified and the cross on which i was crucified with christ galatians 2 20 and which i have to take up every day now that is the secret of building the church and if you want to really build a new covenant church remember the first time jesus spoke about the church he also spoke the first time about his death on the cross and about those who follow him also dying on the cross there's a connection there you got to see it it's hidden from the wise and the intelligent but it's revealed to those who are humble enough to come to scripture with an open mind from that time jesus said about taking up his cross and

there we also learned something else there are only twice that jesus used the words get behind me satan once was to the devil himself when the devil tempted him in the wilderness get behind me satan and the second is not to satan but to peter in verse 23 when peter said oh lord you're not going to go to the cross jesus peter said it out of great love i'm not gonna let you i'll defend you lord i won't let anybody capture you and take you to the cross i love you i laid down my life for you and jesus said that's the voice of the devil imagine someone who's trying to show love trying to protect me from going to the cross one would have thought that jesus should have spoken to him a little more tenderly saying well peter i really appreciate your love for me but you know god's ways are not our

ways we try to be more christ-like than christ himself i really seen that a lot of christians try to be more christ-like than christ himself they've got a wrong idea what christ is first of all get behind me satan why did he speak so strongly because he wanted us to understand something and it's written in scripture for us to learn that the voice that tells you to avoid the cross is the voice of the devil and i'll tell you we hear it frequently when a problem arises in the home and the holy spirit says to you husband or wife die and you don't die another voice says give your opinion there who has the wisdom to say get behind me satan if you understand this if you're humble enough to understand this it'll solve many problems in your life it'll solve many problems in your home you'll be a

happier person you'll never be discouraged you'll always live in triumph you'll be able to rejoice in the lord always you'll be able to come out obey commands which says do all things without murmuring and grumbling you'll be able to obey that you'll be able to obey commands like in everything give thanks commands which you don't normally obey for one reason because self refuses to die that's why it's the voice of satan because satan is glorified do you know that every time you have a conflict in your home as husband and wife satan is being glorified i don't really know that it is every time you get angry and upset with somebody satan is being glorified the only anger that jesus had was when he saw people making money in the name of religion he was never angry when they called him

the billosy bull prince of devils he was never angry when they spat on him he's never angry when people argued with him and disagreed with him and called him a you samaritan you got a demon he was not angry anything that concerned him he was never angry but something that touched the glory of god he was angry but how do you find christians today who claim to be following jesus who claim to be born again believers they're angry when somebody they heard somebody said something about me oh how dare he say that they're angry with that person or they're angry when somebody speaks rudely to them or somebody spits on you boy imagine overcoming anger there and when are they not angry when they see these television evangelists making money in the name of religion they watch it and they're not angry

they are unlike christ i'm furious when i see television evangelists making money in the name of christ that's christ likeness for me if i can sit and watch preachers pleading with people to give them money and i'm not angry i am unchrist like but most people say oh don't criticize brother he's also serving god he's also bringing people to christ let them say what they like they could have told jesus that in the temple these people are bringing sheep to help people sacrifice to god these people are bringing doves to sell people they don't have to bring their sheep all the way from galilee we sell give it to them here why did he chase them out god has hidden the i praise you father you have hidden these things from the clever intelligent believers you reveal them to those who are humble

enough to acknowledge that what jesus did was right and what all the ways that man do it is wrong i've said that for years to myself i say lord every idea that i have contrary to what jesus did in scripture is wrong if i try to be gentle with people making money in the name of religion i'm wrong i have to be furious with them not just gentle say will you gentlemen please move your tables from here not like that turn the tables and let the money go rolling on the ground that's christ-likeness i've seen very few people who would hit out at money-loving preachers like that everybody wants to be gentle and nice they're upset when their own will is crossed you see how we are the opposite of christ if i'm upset because somebody hurt me or said things against me but i'm not upset when people are

making money in the name of religion i am anti-christ the opposite of christ i may not even know it i don't want to be anti-christ i want to be like jesus and so get behind me satan why because matthew 16 23 you're a stumbling block to me everyone who does not take up the cross in their life and does not joyfully accept the way of the cross in their life is a stumbling block to jesus christ he will not be able to build a church and that's why most people don't build a new covenant church no you and i'll tell you the real reason it says here your mind is set on your own interests not god's interests ultimately that's the thing your mind is set on what you can get out of it you know a lot of christian ministry i can see through it all it's a preacher having his own interest at heart i'll

tell you something that god showed me when i left the navy 50 years ago he showed me something from the first temptation of jesus christ jesus was tempted the very first temptation after the 40 years of 40 days

of temptation the last three temptations the first of the three was you are hungry you have a need but you were anointed 40 days ago you were anointed god gave you power supernatural power use your supernatural power now not to steal from somebody that would be wrong not to hurt anyone that's wrong but to satisfy your own need what's wrong in that you have the power to turn stones into bread turn it into bread to satisfy your hunger use your supernatural power to produce bread for yourself and jesus said no he did use that supernatural power later on to produce bread for 5 000

people when they were hungry that he would do but he would not do it for himself have you seen that in that first temptation well the way the lord spoke to me is i have anointed you and given you the gift to preach my word i know very clearly god gave it to me don't ever ever ever use it to make money for yourself don't ever ever use it to get honor for yourself don't ever ever use it to get a position for yourself that is the first temptation to use the supernatural power god gives us to get something for myself who has light on it who has seen the first temptation in this light you think preachers have seen it you think all these preachers are running after money and honor and position who call themselves a reverend so and so on reverend doctor so and so why why does a person call

himself reverend so and so it's to show that i'm not the same level as you brother you're an honorary brother i'm a reverend but who has light on it that exaltation of one above the other they don't have light on it the christian world is full of people they're evangelical all right but they don't have light on this we say it's a small thing why did jesus speak about it then why did he say don't take titles if it is a small thing to me nothing is small if jesus taught it nothing is small that's why we teach that a woman must wail her head when she prays or prophesies it's a small thing a lot of small things in the bible breaking a bread is a small thing i do it baptism is a small thing i do it to me there's nothing small if it is a if it is a command of god so we need to understand this

when i seek my own interest i'm the i the voice of the devil will come through me get behind me satan your mind is set on your own interest and i want to say this my dear brothers very lovingly if you have the slightest interest to promote yourself the slightest interest to promote yourself to show others that you are somebody whether you know it or not your voice will have a little bit of the taste of the devil in it but since most believers don't have discernment they won't discern you but a man whose spiritual whose discernment will see through you straight away that's why people are scared of a spiritual man because he sees through them he sees through all their cleverness in their hollowness he sees as they've got their own interest and jesus could see through it do you think all the

other what do you think all the other disciples thought of peter hey peter what a brave man you are wanting to defend jesus saying don't go to the cross and jesus turns around as i get behind me satan jesus was the only person there who had discernment to see through peter's words it's the most important requirement in christian leadership is discernment i've seen that through 40 years of ministry in all the churches if you don't have discernment you a spiritual discernment given by god you can be fooled by clever people i thank you father you've hidden these things from the wise and the clever and reveal them to babes what do babes have which clever wise people don't have humility not this acting humble but think of a two-month-old child in a cradle a helpless dependence on his parents

that's humility a helpless two-year-olds are not humble they can be pretty proud but a one-month-old child lying in a cradle think of that what do you think are the thoughts going on through that child's mind how clever i am or how people are admiring me he's not bothered if people admire it it's really beautiful to have the mind of a child we're not like that we're not like that we get buffed up if somebody says a small thing

about us but think you go and praise a child one month old child the baby boy you're so good-looking you're so cute doesn't make the slightest difference to it and i praise the lord that the message of the gospel is that i can be like that child once again have you heard it that's the wonderful message of the gospel lord i can be like that i am such a proud arrogant

person that i got from adam i can be like that child one day helplessly dependent on my heavenly father for everything giving all the glory to him the child can say i can do nothing you don't have to teach him the verse which says without me you can do nothing we quote it from john chapter 15 the child knows it without my parents i can do nothing it doesn't need a verse it doesn't need any intelligence to understand it it's that is real faith lord i can do nothing without you i can't understand the scriptures without you i'm leaning upon you they said you know jesus pictured us like a branch in a tree you go to the branch and ask how do you produce such wonderful apples i don't do anything i'm helpless i can't produce a single apple i'm just staying in the tree the tree does everything

sends in the sap i just make sure that the channel for the sap to flow is open the holy spirit i make the channel clear by keeping my conscience clear that's all if i have to apologize to somebody i apologize immediately otherwise the channel will be blocked many christians take days to apologize to someone the channel is blocked all those days they're too proud they get puffed up with something the channel is blocked again so many things block the channel and we pray lord fill me with the holy spirit you can't be able to the holy spirit if you block the channel yourself so when our mind is set on our interests remember our thinking will be the thinking of satan that's what i learned from this verse i hope you understand it the only way i can do god's will it is my mind is set on god's

interest what is the thing that will glorify god most in this situation what is the thing that will glorify god most in my home what is the thing that will glorify god most in the way i bring up my children what is the way i glorify god most in the way i run my church what is the thing that will glorify god the most in the way i relate to others in the church not how it will influence me or what i'll get out of it i don't want to get anything out of it when i come to the cross i say lord you've already done so much for me i don't want anymore it's enough i don't even have to ask god for anything he's already done everything for me on the cross now lord i want the rest of my life to be only in god's interests is it possible to come to this life see philippians in chapter 2 it's not easy

but it's possible philippians 2 paul says in verse 19 i hope in the lord jesus to send timothy to you shortly so that i may be encouraged when i learn of your condition paul had a great burden for the churches he planted a true spiritual father will always have a burden for the churches he's responsible for and paul was a spiritual father he was concerned in those days there was no communication you know like we have to email and phone and all that he had to send somebody to find out how are things going there in philippi i want to know how that church is progressing and he looked around at his co-workers whom shall i send and he says yeah they're all good people they're all born again they all speak in tongues they've all had a baptism in the holy spirit many of them have given up their

jobs to serve the lord but i can't send most of them because they all seek their own verse 21 they all seek their own but timothy he's an exception i'll send him you know when i read that i said lord if i were in paul's team at that time what would paul say would he say timothy and zach oh no not zach timothy zach seeking his own i want to be honest i say i don't want to fool myself lord i don't want to imagine i'm more spiritual than i really am but would paul have selected me paul's a man with discernment i always say the opinion of men is fit for the trash can but the opinion of a godly man is not fit for the trash can that i'll tell you i

wouldn't throw paul's opinion in the trash can i would throw the opinion of anna's and kaiapas and all the jingbang lot of carnal christians in the

trash can but paul if he said something i take it seriously his opinion is not fit for the trash can he thinks i'm seeking my own that only timothy is not seeking his own he must be right lord give me light where is it i'm seeking my own do you ever feel like that when you read that verse that such wonderful people who are in paul's team paul could see through them and they were seeking their own you can be in a wonderful new covenant church with all types of wonderful doctrines and teachings and you knowing your heart of heart whether you're seeking your own or not or whether your mind is set on god's interests what will glorify god most in my life what will glorify god most in my home everything governed by that you see boy it'll be such a burden to live like that not at all jesus said

my yoke is easy my burden is light you will find rest in your soul in fact the unrest in your soul is because you're seeking your own interests there was one man who walked on this earth without seeing his interest at all jesus christ and he lived the most restful life he never had a fear when 200 people took him to the top of a cliff to throw him down in nazareth you read in luke chapter 4 he just quietly walked away from there he wasn't afraid when the soldiers came to capture him in the temple in john chapter 7 he wasn't afraid because he knew it's only one verse written there in john 7 his hour had not yet come therefore they couldn't catch him not because he was stronger than them not because they were not enough soldiers to capture him only one reason god's time had not come jesus

lived in that rest nobody can touch me till my father's time comes what a wonderful way to live when your mind is set on god's interests and we are seeking the glory of god in everything you will live the most restful life of all it's not a life of tension life of tension is when we seek our own and what we can get what we can get what we can get now the thing is in adam we're always seeking our own interest and then we look at jesus who never sought his own interest and it's a progression we're not saying we reach there in one day the meaning of pressing on to perfection is that i want to work my way towards the place where i will not seek my own in anything so we're not saying we are arrived paul said in philippians chapter 3 i have not yet obtained i'm not yet perfect verse 12 that

means there's still a teeny weeny bit of seeking my own i discover it in my life but blessed is the man who discovers it see it's a wonderful thing if you discover the areas in your life where you're seeking your own and trying to be free from it we may not be none of us are perfectly like christ and we will not be like jesus completely till he comes again that's for sure 1 john 3 verse 2 we will be like him when he appears but the next verse 1 john 3 3 says everyone who has this hope will purify himself from what purify himself from not just gambling and drinking and smoking and saying i've given up these habits from seeking one's own interests self is like a massive onion something happens and i get light on one layer of that onion and i peel it off i haven't got to the end of it no

something will happen one month later in another situation and i say oh boy there i was seeking my own again and i peel that off if i cleanse myself like that this onion of self will get thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner and i'll become more and more christ-like this is pressing on to perfection and what paul is saying is i haven't finished with my onion yet but it's it's pretty thin now compared to what it was when i got converted i hope all of us can say that if you can't say that i want to say to you you're being a part of this church from its beginning and all the wonderful truths you can understand and you can talk about and sing about is worth zero it's worth zero even though you belong to this church you say well this is we are a new coming church oh okay but

if you're still seeking your own it's all empty talk if you're not progressing that that onion of self-seeking is becoming thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner you know then you're really pressing on to perfection and that'll make your married life more and more glorious you can't make your partner glorious but you can be one yourself you don't have to feel condemned if your partner is not seriously taking up the cross but you really need to judge yourself if you're not taking up the cross john wesley had a very wicked wife was very evil to him in many ways but that was a test of his sanctification he never spoke evil of her he lived a godly life even when she pulled hairs from his beard in the presence of others that's how people knew but he preached holiness and he lived holiness

so it's you you're responsible for yourself say lord i want to cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit and filthiness of the flesh and spirit is this love of oneself just to emphasize it let me show you i showed you mat matthew 10 matthew 16 let me show you mark chapter 8 mark chapter 8 where he spoke about the cross verse 34 mark 8 34 if anyone wants to come after me let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me immediately after that what does he say whoever wishes to save his life his self-life will lose it whoever was willing to lose his self-life for my sake and the gospels will save it see in all three places so far you've seen as soon as he speaks about the cross he speaks about the self-life now let's go to luke chapter 9 luke 9 and verse 23 luke 9 23

luke 9 and verse 23 we read anyone which has come after me let him deny himself take up his cross daily and immediately after that if you try to save your self-life you lose it you lose your self-life you'll save it every time he speaks of the cross immediately after that he explains what it means it's your self-life you're going to lose it well let's turn to john chapter 12 where he speaks about the cross in another way john 12 24 if a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it'll bear fruit you're speaking about death to self again are you willing to die and again he says verse 25 explains it if you love your self-life you lose it and if anyone serves me verse 26 let him follow me where i am that is on the cross my servant will also be there on the cross have you understood it like

that every time jesus spoke about the cross if you look carefully he explained it immediately thereafter it is loving your self-life putting it to death is the way of the cross i don't know whether you notice it if you notice it and you say lord now i understand what it means to take up the cross it's to get rid of this self-interest which is the voice of the devil always telling people sometimes ask me how to distinguish between the voice of the holy spirit and the voice of self or the my own voice i say here it is the voice itself will always seek your own interests the voice of the holy spirit will speak god's interests you say then who will take care of me god will take care of me if you seek his kingdom first you can be pretty sure you won't lack anything on this earth jesus was now

not a homeless person never he didn't have to beg or borrow see i we must strive to all the power to the power of the holy spirit to seek to live like jesus lived by the principles by which he lived for example when the bible says oh no man anything i don't know how many christians take that seriously romans 13 8 don't owe anybody anything if you have happen to have to borrow in some tight situation okay replay it we repay it as soon as possible that means don't be in debt now don't misunderstand me a home loan is not a debt when you take a home loan there's a home there and the money you borrowed it's equal there's no debt there the balance is equal that's not a debt when you borrow money to buy a car that's not a debt because there's something there to show for that money it's when you

borrowed money you got nothing to show for it that's a debt you borrow money because you want to go on a vacation and you didn't have one this year you should not go on a vacation if you have to borrow money

for it because you've got nothing to show for it there's nothing on the other side of the balance that's the type of debt we must avoid oh no man anything and the way i see it is what does it mean to follow jesus i can't imagine jesus going to somebody and saying hey i want to go on a vacation but i don't have enough money and my heavenly father let me down can you please give me some money to can you imagine jesus going and telling somebody that my heavenly father let me down and so i'm a bit hard up can you give me some money because i want to go on a vacation it's pretty bad

everybody goes on vacations you know this is the craziness of so-called believers because they don't take god's word seriously no wonder their lives are so shallow no wonder they don't get revelation no wonder they remain ignorant about the new wine and the new wine skin of the new covenant life and the new covenant church because self-interest i'm not speaking what i've not practiced i'm 76 years old i never borrowed one rupee from anybody in my life till today i obeyed romans 13 verse 8 it's possible to live like that but my wife and i've been hard up sometimes really hard up we lived with what he had when we didn't have a washing machine we washed clothes the way jesus washed his clothes you know jesus washes clothes with his own hands we're a spoiled bunch of people in the 21st

century we think we need this we need that need the other thing buy now pay later i don't believe it it's all seeking our own and then you wonder why your christian life is not progressing because you know i can't just say i want to progress here but i ignore here sin is a big circle with many segments if i'm careless in one area it'll affect me in many other areas and that's why we get dirty thoughts sexual sin let me show you ezekiel chapter 16 sexual perversion sodom is a city known for sexual perversion sodomy is a word used for homosexual sin homosexual sin is not as is just as bad as heterosexual sin we're not saying that that is in a special category it's just the same any type of sin any type of sexual sin outside of marriage is evil that's what the bible says whatever people may

say it's not that those who commit homosexual sin are worse sinners than those who commit adultery just the same sex is permitted only in a marriage between a man and a woman that's it outside of that whatever you may call it it is sin but how did it come in soda you read in ezekiel chapter 16 and verse 48 about sodom your sister is talking about israel saying you people have become like sodom is equal 1648 this was the guilt of your sister sodom verse 49 and you would think he'd talk about sexual perversion no he talks about the things that lead to sexual perversion and if you want to overcome sexual sin in your life think of these things arrogance it's because you're arrogant that you can't overcome your dirty sexual thoughts number two gluttony eating eating eating eating and just

eating eating eating eating gluttony i want good food all the time no wonder you have dirty thoughts i'm talking about scripture now careless ease laziness this laziness even the world is a proverb which says the idle mind is the devil's workshop laziness and fourth a lack of care lack of compassion for the needy so what's the compassion what's the connection between no compassion for the needy and dirty sexual there is this is the guilt of your sister soda arrogance gluttony laziness and a lack of compassion for others who are less fortunate than you are so perhaps we can start working on these and overcome sexual sin as i told you sin is one circle i can't just get victory in one area i have to get victory overall sin shall not have dominion over you it's not just one particular sin i

have to attack sin altogether say lord no sin must have dominion over me not arrogance not gluttony not laziness not lack of compassion none of them must have power over me because all it's all because of seeking my own interests you can see that all these things are seeking my own interests so with all the things i shared i hope you received something that will be of help to you in your own life even if it was not

spoken in a very orderly way i like the way jesus spoke it was a pretty disorderly way and the way paul writes his letter sometimes he switches from one subject to another and then goes back to some other subject the holy spirit is like that he's not so orderly as we think because his aim is to bring conviction and not admiration and i hope you receive something and the hope

that the holy spirit will help us because wherever there's a death there's a resurrection when you're buried in the water you know that the guy you baptized you will bring you out jesus submitted himself i remember when i was seeking god for the baptism of the holy spirit as a very young man and i was i tell you honestly i'm i love pentecostal people but i was disappointed with what i saw in their churches so i stopped going there i never attended there i just once went only once just to find out what it's like and i was turned away from it because i said that's not what i want and i sought god on my own in my room said lord i want the real thing and if it takes 10 years to get the real thing i'll wait but i don't want any cheap counterfeit and the lord led me to see how jesus was

anointed he was anointed when he submitted to baptism and baptism was a symbol of allowing somebody to put me to death romans 6 says that buried with him in baptism and raised again by the glory of the father so i saw that jesus when he submitted to symbolically to someone to put him to death that's one part and trusted that the father would raise him up from the dead in that situation he was anointed as soon as he came out that's the revelation i got when i was 23 years old i said lord thank you i've understood now i must be willing to allow other people to put me to death with faith that you will raise me up if you don't have that faith you'll resist it imagine when you're somebody's baptizing you resistance you know you'll never be able to baptize you so i felt the lord say to me at

that time as long as you walk this way of death to self you will have my anointing and power resting upon you but the day you decide to move away from this path my power will depart from you i said lord i never want to depart from this path all my life and that's why for me it has been very central in my life and in my preaching the way of the cross the way of debt to self the way of seeing god's interests and the way of standing against the money changers in the temple and the way of recognizing the voice of the devil when i'm seeking my own interest and seeking to cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of god if we all about all of us do this in our personal private life can you imagine what this church will be in a even in one year

there'll be such a power manifested such a i don't mean i'm not talking about healings and miracles jesus healed thousands of people thousands and almost all of them are in hell today and lots of people are healed miraculously by jesus himself who never reached the gates of heaven that's not my goal but there were people whom jesus made disciples they have a glorious entrance into god's kingdom that's what i want to do so that's what i mean that we want to build a church that will have power to make disciples that will give them a glorious entrance into god's kingdom and along the way if the lord also does a few miracles like healing the sick and doing we've experienced that in our church to praise the lord but that's not our main goal so may the lord help us let's pray heavenly father

your word is a lamp to our feet the life of jesus is a light for our life thank you that we can walk the way that we see in your word and in the life of our lord jesus thank you father you have not only given us exhortation but an example that we can follow and also godly men like paul and others that we've come across in our life who are seeking to go this way help us to follow them as they followed you lord jesus and help us to be examples to those younger than us that we can say to them also follow me as i follow christ help us each one help us to build our families for your glory that we shall you raise our children to be

another generation that lives for the glory of god help us lord we pray in jesus name amen

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