

# Serving God Effectively

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being saved from sin, not just forgiven, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire as promised by Jesus. It highlights the need for a deep relationship with God, seeking revelation from the Holy Spirit when reading the Bible, and the power of the Holy Spirit in preaching. The speaker shares personal testimonies of transformation, the impact of living a Christ-centered life, and the significance of following Jesus closely to make disciples.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 1:21, Matthew 3:11, Luke 24:27, Ephesians 1:17, Ephesians 3:16, John 1:36, John 1:37, John 1:39, Luke 16:13

**Topics:** "Salvation", "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Our activity in our service for the Lord will be effective only if our relationship with the Lord is right. And the deeper our relationship with God is, the more effective our service will be. So very often in Christian work, we think of the need and how we got to reach people and all that.

But the quality of our ministry, sometimes we tend to forget. And that is the thing which I want to emphasize. Because when Jesus left this earth, he gave two commissions to his disciples.

One is in Mark 16. If you turn with me, you know this passage. Mark 16, verse 15 and 16.

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who is believed and is baptized shall be saved. He who is disbelieved shall be condemned, and these signs will accompany those who believe.

He'll cast out demons and speak in new tongues and pick up serpents, et cetera. So here, the charge is to go and preach the gospel and bring people to faith, baptize them, and the Lord will confirm his word with supernatural signs and casting out demons. Yeah, we have seen that.

But then there's another commission the Lord gave in Matthew and chapter 28. Just before he went up to heaven, he said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Go, this time it is not preach the gospel.

That was in Mark 16. This time it is make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So there's a lot of difference between a person believing and accepting Christ as a savior and being born again and is becoming a disciple.

A disciple is one who follows in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. So as I've looked around and I've traveled in many countries and seen the work of the Lord, I've seen the emphasis in most cases is to obey Mark 16. There are lost people.

There are so many lost people. We must reach them. I agree.

And we must bring them to faith in Christ and baptize them. And very often, once a person is baptized and become a member of the church, then the servant of the Lord or the church then begins to say, okay, now who else we got to reach? There's some more people now we got to reach who are somewhere else. And then we keep on like that and the numbers in our church may increase.

But it's possible that nobody in our church is a disciple. So you obeyed Mark 16, maybe you've seen demons cast out and sick people healed and all praise the Lord. But Matthew 28 verse 19 has not been obeyed.

They have not become disciples. And not only that, in Mark 16, which we just read, the proclamation of the gospel and bringing people to Christ is confirmed with supernatural signs that follow. That's what follows.

That's particularly in areas where the gospel has never gone. I believe it's primarily there because even in the acts of the apostles, we see it's where the gospel went first, that God confirmed the word with signs following. And we've seen that also in the villages in India, where we go for the first time, where the gospel has never been heard.

I mean, we've planted churches in some villages in India where there was no Christians for 2000 years. And you go to those places, you have to manifest the power of God as revealed in Mark 16. I mean, if you go and tell those villagers who have never heard about Jesus Christ, complete non-Christians, other religions, you tell them there was a little baby born 2000 years ago in Israel, who was born of a virgin, they won't even believe you.

And then he grew up and he was the son of God, and he did miracles, and he finally died on the cross, and they can't understand why. And on the third day, he rose up from the dead, and he died for your sins. How are they going to believe it? They think it's a fairytale.

But then at the end of that, you say, okay, now, is anybody demon possessed here? Bring them here. I'll show you the authority in the name of Jesus Christ. And when those demons are cast out in the name of Jesus, then they believe, yes, this is true.

Otherwise, they think it's a fairytale. And we have seen that. So, but that's where the gospel goes for the first time, and there's a need for confirming the word with signs following.

But we don't major on that. That's the initial opening up the door for the spread of the gospel in new areas, Mark 16. But then we concentrate on making them into disciples.

Matthew 28 must follow on from Mark 16. And you know, disciple is one who walks daily in the footsteps of Jesus. And here, he doesn't say a single word about demons, casting out demons or healing the sick.

Here, instead of casting out demons and healing the sick, this is a follow up that we read in Matthew 28, is teach them to obey everything I commanded you. And I want to say to you, as I've observed it, that is almost not at all obeyed by most servants of God. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And if you do that, Matthew 28, 20, I will be with you always. Now, I have seen many homes where there's verses on the wall, lo, I am with you always. But I say, every promise in the Bible has got a condition.

If you don't fulfill the condition, how can you claim the promise? It is not just lo, I am with you always that anybody can just put it up on their wall. And it doesn't work. What do we say? Go into all the world and make disciples, number one, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I have commanded you, then, those are the conditions, then I'll be with you always.

But Christians have this very bad habit of trying to proclaim a promise without fulfilling the condition, and it doesn't work. We imagine that Christ is with us. If Christ is with us, how does the devil get such power in so many of our churches? We have to search and see why is the presence of the Lord not mightily present in our midst.

You know, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 16, when he spoke to Peter, no, he spoke to his disciples, saying, who do you say that I am? Matthew 16, verse 15. And Peter immediately responded saying, you are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now, Peter was not the greatest Bible scholar in Israel.

He was only around 28, 29 years old. There were Pharisees who are 60, 70 years old in the synagogues who knew the Bible 10 times better than Peter, many of them. They were great Bible scholars, the scribes.

They studied the Bible right from Genesis to Malachi, and what conclusion did they come to after studying the Bible? They came to the conclusion that Jesus is Beelzebul, the prince of devils. Those are the greatest Bible scholars on earth. And they felt, after studying the Bible, that this Jesus is Satan.

Can you imagine how wrong they are? Now, these were not people who did not believe the Bible. They were the Sadducees. They were the liberals of those days who didn't believe everything in the Bible.

The Pharisees were the evangelicals and the fundamentalists of those days who believed everything in the Bible, and they believed it all, and they thought Jesus was the devil. Now, if that can happen to very clever people, these Jewish people are very clever. Those Pharisees were very clever.

They studied the Bible, and they were convinced that Jesus was the devil. Now, if that can happen then, it can happen today, where clever people study the Bible, study the Bible, and they got it all wrong. They haven't understood it, because you need the revelation of the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible, especially the New Testament.

The word revelation is never found in the Old Testament. The word in the Old Testament is understanding, knowledge. For that, you don't need the Holy Spirit.

You just need a clever brain. But the Lord told Peter, blessed are you, Matthew 16, 17, because you didn't come to that conclusion by studying the Bible. You came to that conclusion because the Holy Spirit revealed it to you.

That word revealed is a very important word. When we read the Bible, we must get revelation. Most Christians study the Bible to get knowledge and ability to explain it and preach it.

But revelation is better to read 10% of the Bible and get revelation than to read all of it and just have knowledge. So Peter got revelation. He was only a fisherman.

In fact, he is not at all a clever man. He never went to college. It's a very interesting thing that when he wrote about Paul's letters, Paul was a brilliant scholar, and Peter was just an ordinary, uneducated fisherman.

And God uses brilliant scholars like Paul and ordinary, uneducated fishermen like Peter. And Peter could not understand everything that Paul wrote. But Peter admits that.

He says in 2 Peter 3, verse 16, there are some 15 and 16 that are something that Paul writes which are very hard to understand. So what I see here is whether you're highly educated and clever like Paul or a very simple, uneducated man like Peter, both need revelation. Paul says in Galatians, it pleased God to reveal his son in me.

That's the same word he uses there when he's on the road to Damascus. That's where he got a revelation about Jesus. You read in Galatians chapter 1, in verse 16, it pleased God to reveal the same word.

Give me revelation on his son. Same word which the Lord said to Peter in Matthew 16, 17, Galatians 1, 16, Paul says the same thing. So the clever Paul and the uneducated Peter both needed revelation.

And Paul says that later on he went to Arabia, verse 17 of Galatians 1, and he was there for three years, verse 18. Now the reason Paul had to go to Arabia for three years was to get out of his mind all the foolish knowledge that he got from Gamaliel for three years in a Bible school. Because that was head knowledge.

And God had to take him three years in the wilderness to get all that head knowledge out of his mind and give him revelation of the Holy Spirit in his spirit. You know, man is body, soul, and spirit. You need to understand the human personality is three parts.

1 Thessalonians 5, verse 23. Man is body, soul, and spirit. So when we read the Bible, you can read with your eyes or listen with your ears as you're doing now.

And it goes into our mind. This is body. And from the body, it goes to the soul, which is our mind.

And if it stops there, we don't get revelation. Because man is not just body and soul. Man is body, soul, and spirit.

So the Word of God must go through the body, eyes or ears, and into the soul, which is our mind and our emotions, where we are stirred, excited when we read God's Word or challenged. But then, it must sink into our spirit, which is our heart. Then it becomes revelation.

And the difference between knowledge and revelation is, knowledge does not change our life. It may make us brilliant preachers, because we're very clever. But a brilliant preacher can have sexually dirty thoughts.

He can get angry and shout at his wife. That doesn't happen when you get revelation. Revelation will change your life.

So that's the question. You can easily find out whether you've got only head knowledge of the Bible or revelation. I know in my own life, see, I'm 82 and a half years old now.

I was born again when I was 19 and a half, 63 years ago, in July 1959. I was a naval officer in India, working in the Navy, and Christ came into my heart, and I was born again. And seven years later, in 1966, which is 56 years ago, the Lord called me to leave my job.

And I quit my job in the Navy. And one of the first things I did was, I took all the money I'd earned in the Navy, and gave it away for the Lord's work. I said, Lord, I want to start with zero in my bank account, to trust you from today onwards for my needs.

And 56 years, the Lord has taken care of me. I never joined any Christian organization. I never sent a single prayer letter in my whole life, asking for money, or reporting about my work.

Reason, I never see Jesus asking for money. I never see Paul asking anybody for money. He told people to give to the poor, but never for himself.

I never see Jesus or Paul sending reports of their work to anybody. Among their own co-workers, they shared what the Lord had done. So I had a great passion.

I said, Lord, I'm not going to look around at how other Christians are doing your work. I don't want to judge them. I'm not a judge.

God is the only judge. But I want to see how Jesus and Paul did their work. The reason is, because there are only two people in the whole Bible who said, follow me.

Moses went up to the mountain and came back and said, listen to me. But Paul said, follow me. You see the difference between listen to me and follow me.

Moses never said, follow me. 1 Corinthians 11, and verse 1. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 1. Paul says, be followers of me, just as I also am of Christ. You see, the Christian life is a pursuit to perfection.

Hebrews chapter 6, verse 1 says, let us press on to perfection. Perfection is like the top of a mountain, like Mount Everest, 29,000 feet. And we start at the bottom when we are born again.

And Jesus is at the top of the mountain, absolutely perfect. He was tempted like us. He overcame everything and reached the top.

Paul sees the footsteps of Jesus in the snow and puts his feet in Jesus' footsteps and says, I'm following Christ. And we see Paul's footsteps in the snow and he says, follow me. Look at the way I walked and follow my example is what Paul says.

I am following Christ's example, the way he lived and walked. That has been the challenge for my life right from the beginning when I started serving the Lord 56 years ago. I must follow Paul as he followed Christ.

Paul is not my head. Christ is my head, but I'm glad to have an example of one who followed Christ. And not only Paul, Paul says in Philippians 3, again, he says the same thing.

Philippians 3, 17. Dear brothers, join in following my example. The Old Testament prophet says, Old Testament prophets right from Moses onward, they said, thus said the Lord.

I've heard the Lord and he has spoken this to me and I'm giving you this message from the Lord. Thus said the Lord, thus said the Lord. Nobody said, follow my example.

Not one. How could Elijah, the great prophet say, follow my example? When he got discouraged, when a woman called Jezebel threatened him and he got scared and ran away and hid in a cave. And the Lord comes to him and says, what are you doing here, Elijah, in this cave? What are you afraid of? Are you a servant of God or what? He could not say, follow me.

The great prophet John the Baptist about whom Jesus said he's the greatest prophet that ever lived on earth. He cannot say, follow me. Because when he was in prison and the Lord did not deliver him, he sent disciples to Jesus saying, are you really the Messiah? Or did I make a mistake? He had seen the Holy Spirit coming like a dove upon him at Jesus' baptism, the voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son.

He heard all that. Yet when he went through a trial, he lost his faith. He cannot say, follow me.

When Elijah went through a trial, he lost his faith in God. And if you and I lose our faith in the time of trial by complaining or questioning God, how can we say, follow me? We can get up in the church and preach wonderful sermons with three points or five points and impress everybody. But we can't say, follow me.

That's the difference between a New Testament servant of God and an Old Testament prophet. Every New Testament servant of God must be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ. And you know how Jesus said we can follow him.

Luke chapter 9. There's one essential condition if we want to be, if we want to follow Jesus. Of course, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's why we begin.

But the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not primarily to exercise gifts, but fruit and then gifts. The Bible speaks about the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. But let me look at Luke 9 verse, Luke chapter 9 verse 23.

Jesus said, he said to all of them, and he says to all of us today, Luke 9, 23, if anyone, anyone, a servant of the Lord or an ordinary Christian, a brother or a sister, a young man, a young woman, even a little child, if you want to follow me, if anyone wants to come after me, number one, he must deny himself. His life must be characterized by self-denial. People who look at our life must see us as people who deny ourselves.

Many preachers exalt themselves. They try to project themselves before people as great men of God, who must be respected very highly and almost placed on a throne. Rubbish.

Rubbish. I must be known as one who denies myself. You know, many preachers, they have a goal in their life.

They want to admit it. But in their heart, they have a desire that by the end of my life, I must become a director or a chairman of the organization and be the head of so many believers and so many churches and all that. And I look at Jesus and I say, what was the end of his ministry? He didn't have even 10 churches.

He didn't even have one. But he produced 11 disciples who turned the world upside down and who started a faith that has lasted for 2000 years. What a work.

A work that has lasted for 2000 years in spite of the opposition of the Romans and throughout history, so many governments have opposed. But the work that those 11 disciples started has lasted for 2000 years. It turned the world upside down.

It was not great numbers. They were mighty men of God. That's what Jesus produced in his ministry.

Because he walked to the Father. He had no desire for title. You know, we read in John chapter 6 when they wanted to make him a king after he fed the 5000.

They said, oh, this is the prophet whom God sent. We must make him a king. It says he ran away.

He refused to become a king. And you know what he told his disciples in Matthew 23. Let me read this to you.

And if you don't know this passage, please see it yourself. Matthew 23. It says, it's these Pharisees who are Sikhs who love the place of honor at feasts and the chief seats in the churches.

Are you like that? Do you love the seat of honor in a function? Do you love the chief seat, the most important seat in your church? You know, these are little, little things. But we, and respectful greetings, being called rabbi, rabbi or pastor, pastor. We want people to call us by a title.

Don't be called rabbi. One is your teacher. And don't be called father.

One is your father. And you would say to us today, don't be called pastor. Be a brother.

And don't be called leaders. Verse 10. You want people to call you a leader? Only one is your leader, even Christ.

The greatest among you, if you want a title, here it is. Servant. Verse 11.

I would encourage you, my dear brothers and sisters, read Matthew 23 and verse 5 to 11 to 12. Meditate on it. This is what it means to follow Jesus.

My savior, on the last day of his life on earth, he was not a chairman or a director. He was a washer of feet. He came down from heaven and came all the way to the feet of his disciples.

That's where he ended up on the last day of his life. And that's what I prayed. I said, Lord Jesus, I want to be at the last day of my earthly life.

Whenever that is, I want to be at the feet of my disciples, washing their feet, doing dirty jobs for them. You know, when we think about washing feet, I'm not talking about the literal. Today, people wear shoes and socks.

Why do you need to wash their feet? Those days they were wearing sandals. Like in our Indian villages, I always go with sandals in the Indian villages. I don't wear shoes and socks there.

And feet get dirty. And it's very refreshing to have your feet washed, like to go into the bathroom and put your feet under the tap. It's refreshing.

And so, in the Jewish homes, they'd all come with these dirty feet in their sandals. They'd have a slave at the door with a bucket of water to wash their feet so that they'd be refreshed before they ate their meal. So this man who gave the house for Jesus for the last supper had kept that bucket.

But Jesus said, I don't want anybody there. So he didn't allow a slave to be there. But the disciples came in with dirty feet.

They're all looking around. Where's the slave? There's no slave here. Well, Jesus said, I am the slave.

And he took the bucket and he washed their feet. My dear brothers and sisters, this is the Savior who is our leader. He says, follow me.

You'll do a mighty work for God if you look at Jesus' life and follow him. And don't seek to be a great preacher, but one who manifests the life of Christ in you so that they can look at you and say, even if they don't respect you, they'll never forget. I remember in the years I was in the Navy, I was a bold witness for Christ in the midst of all my naval officers.

I'd have a Bible on my table. People know I was a Christian. And wherever I got a chance, I would witness for Christ.

Then I was in the Navy just a few years and then the Lord called me and I resigned. But I know the impact that my life had on others because 40 years later, one of my colleagues who became an admiral in the Navy, I met him at a retired naval officer's function. And he said to me, Zach, I can never forget you in all my life.

He saw what I stood for. 40 years later, he can't forget. I remember another captain of mine when he was on his deathbed.

I was working on a ship. He was my commanding officer, my captain. He was dying and someone met him and he came and told me, he said, Zach, he was remembering you at his deathbed.

Because when people get to die, they are aware of eternity. And I was the only person who reminded them of eternity by the way I lived on that ship. People won't forget you if your life is Christ-like.

It's not by preaching. I didn't get much chance to preach in the ships because we were not allowed to. If people came to me, I would share with them.

But your life, Jesus said to me, let your life so shine before men that they may see your life, your good works and glorify your father in heaven. Our primary testimony is our life. Follow me.

Not like the Old Testament prophets, thus said the Lord. See, the Old Testament prophets, as I said, their life may not have always corresponded with what they preached. What about their family life, for example? We don't know much about the family life of many of these Old Testament prophets.

We know that Moses, the only thing we read about Moses and his family life is that in Exodus chapter four, he's having a fight with his wife about his son not being circumcised. And his wife gets upset with him. That's the only picture we have of Moses' family life.

They didn't have a good family life. But in the New Testament, it's very different. Turn with me to 1 Timothy and chapter three.

How should it be for a true servant of God? 1 Timothy chapter three is talking about an elder or overseer, one who is called to serve the Lord. 1 Timothy three, if anyone desires the office of an overseer or an elder or leader, he desires a good work. But look at the testimony he must have.

I just want to read it to you in the living Bible. He must be a good man whose life cannot be spoken against, verse two. Nobody should be able to say anything against his life.

He must have only one wife, which means he must not be a divorcee. One who is divorced cannot be a leader in a Christian church. Only one wife.

If a man is divorced, he's got two wives. And if he's married again, he must be hard. And you see, I just want to mention that because nowadays in many churches, particularly in the United States, they don't have any rules on divorce.

Anybody, they can divorce two, three times and they're still pastors of churches. They don't care for the word of God. They got one wife, two wives, three wives, divorce two, three times.

How can such a man be a servant of God? He's a disgrace to the name of Christ. But where are the prophets who will stand up and stand for the truth and standard of God's word? May God raise up many like that. Further, in verse two, he must be hardworking.

Every servant of God must be hardworking and thoughtful. Even though I'm past 80 years old, I seek to work hard. Most nights I go to bed after 11 o'clock at night.

There are a lot of things to be done. A lot of people to correspond with, to seek my advice. I have to advise them.

We have about 100 churches that have been planted and 150 elders. I have to work with all of them, encouraging them, challenging them, leading them on. It says here he must be hardworking, thoughtful, considerate of others, very considerate.

For example, we have to think during this COVID pandemic time, a number of men in their 40s, about four or five of them in our churches died through the COVID pandemic. So their children are fatherless, their wives are widows, and immediately we have to take care of them. So I tried to find out, we made a list of all the widows, and even those who are older, whose husbands have died, because we have to care for them.

That's our responsibility, to be thoughtful, full of good deeds, and take care of them, and provide for them. That's our responsibility, just as much as preaching them. And further it says in Matt 1 Timothy in chapter

three, verse two, he must enjoy having guests in his home.

He must be hospitable. My home must be open to people who want to come seek fellowship with me. He must be a good Bible teacher.

Verse three, he must not be a drinker. Be careful that you don't have the habit of getting drunk. You cannot be a servant of God if you get drunk.

No, I'll come to that in a minute. He must not be quarrelsome. That's another thing.

He must have a testimony that nobody can quarrel with me. I will stand up for the truth, and I will speak the truth, but I will not get into an argument. When people come to my house, I say, listen, I can explain the truth to you.

I'm willing to spend two hours, three hours with you to explain the word of God, but I will not get into an argument. I do not believe in Ephesians 6:12 says we do not fight with flesh and blood. We fight with the devil.

Many years ago, the Lord said to me, if you want to fight with the devil, make one decision in your life that you will never quarrel with human beings. And I decided that day I will never quarrel with my wife. I will never quarrel with any human being because Ephesians 6:12 says we do not quarrel with human beings.

We fight with the devil. And the Lord said, you'll be strong against the devil if you refuse to fight with human beings. And I've seen that in my life.

I've seen sometimes people yell when they're trying to cast out a demon, yelling and screaming and shouting. Actually, I never see Jesus yelling and screaming and shouting a hundred times to cast out a demon. He always spoke with one sentence.

And we've cast out a number of demons. And I'll tell you my own testimony. Every single demon I cast out in India and even in America is with one sentence.

No shouting, no yelling, no screaming, no praying also. In Jesus name, get out of him, you demon, get out of her. And if it does not go, I would say to you, brother, go and fast and pray.

You're not fit to cast out a demon. Don't stand there and yell and scream and shout and get everybody. Something's wrong with you.

Something's wrong with you. That person's demon possessed, but something's wrong with you. You don't have the authority to cast out the demon.

The demon's not scared of one word from you. That is the authority God gives us. But why can't you fight against that demon? Because you're fighting with human beings.

You argue, you fight with human beings, you fight with your wife, you'll have no authority over demons. So we must not be quarrelsome. I decided that long ago, more than 40 years ago, I will not fight with human beings.

People have called me the devil. People have called me false teachers. They can call me what they like.

I will not respond. I will keep quiet. People write articles against me.

I don't reply. I say, the Lord is my defender. And he's defended me wonderfully.

People have taken me to court because I exposed their wrong teachings. They took me 10 years to court. God exposed them and humbled them, every one of them.

He must be gentle. 1 Timothy 2, 3, verse 3. He must be gentle and kind. Very important.

The servant of God must be very gentle, especially with weak people, those who are discouraged and people who need comfort. And above all, he must not love money. I want to tell you this.

The love of money is there in every human being. We think only the rich people love money. It's not true.

We have a lot of beggars in India, homeless people who are on the streets. Every one of them loves money. They are poor and they love money.

Have you ever met a homeless person who doesn't love money? Have you ever met a beggar who doesn't love money? Have you ever met a poor person who doesn't love money? And the rich millionaires also love money. Every human being loves money. But Jesus wants to free us from that.

We can have money, but not love it. We must not possess money. We must have it like this.

Here's something I can hold on to, which I can keep in my hand. I can clutch it and say, this is mine. This money is mine.

Or the Lord says, open your palm. I'm not going to take it away. It's in your bank account.

The house is in your name. That car is in your name, but don't possess it. You can't be my disciple.

He said, if you possess things, have them. You know the difference between having things and possessing things? When you possess things, you're not ready to let the Lord take some of it away. You're not ready to share what you have with somebody else because it's all yours.

You cannot serve God if you possess earthly things like this. Open your palm. You know how little children are? From the time they are born, they come with the clenched fist.

You put your little finger there, they'll hold it. That's how human beings are. You like to grab, grab, grab.

And we spend all our life grabbing things and grabbing position and all that. Jesus says, open your palm. Give it away.

Keep it there. I'm not saying that you should, and you don't have to give it away unless the Lord tells you to give it away, but say, Lord is yours. Everything I have on earth, my bank account, my house, my vehicle, is the Lord's.

I rode a scooter for 42 years in India because it's all I could afford. But it wasn't. It was in my name, but I never possessed it.

If somebody wanted to borrow it, he's welcome to borrow it. I say, Lord, I'm your servant. I will not possess anything on earth.

It's yours. I'll have it. I had a house.

It was in my name, but it was the Lord's. Anybody, people came and stayed there. Numerous people came and stayed there.

But I say, Lord, I don't want to possess anything on this earth. I'll have it and I'll use it. So the other thing it says in 1 Timothy 3 is he must be able to control his children well and keep them in control with all dignity, 1 Timothy 3 and verse 4. That's another very important condition.

You must have a well-behaved family, living Bible, with children who obey quickly and quietly. How is it with your children? Do they obey you quickly and quietly when they're at home? Do your children have a testimony in your church as well-behaved children? Very important. Because in the next verse, 1 Timothy 3, 5, it says, if a man cannot take care of his own little family and make them behave, how will he help a church with so many people? That's the argument.

You can't take care of two, three children at home. Where will you take care of two, three hundred people in your church? So that's one thing I decided in my life. I have four sons.

And when they were born, my wife was also a disciple of Jesus. We decided that we will really work to make our children disciples. From the beginning, we teach them scripture, make sure they read the Bible.

We'd get the children's Bible for them to read at the dining table. As we are having dinner, I would sit around and we would ask questions, practical questions. For example, in school, why don't we as Christians cheat in the examinations? It's wrong.

If you don't know the answer to a question, don't look at your neighbor's paper and find the answer. Don't cheat. I'd rather see you fail and come back home as a Christian than cheat and pass the examination.

I don't want you to cheat. We have to teach our children uprightness, righteousness and helpfulness. I used to tell them, if you are good at mathematics, find some other boy in your class who is weak in mathematics and sit down and help him for a few minutes after the school is over.

Things like that. Our children must be well behaved and never be ashamed to be known as a Christian. So I told the Lord, Lord, according to this verse, if my children grow up wayward, I have to say I have failed.

Then if I can't bring my children to be disciples, where can I lead other people in the church? So I said, Lord, by the time my children leave home and go to study in a college, by that time they must be born again and baptized and they must know something of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and be ready to be witnesses for even if they're not preachers. So that's how my wife and I worked with them. My wife was a medical doctor who studied in a top medical college in India.

But as soon as our first son was born, my first son was born 53 years ago. He's 53 now. As soon as our first son was born, she resigned her job and she's never worked for money as a doctor after that.

But she has helped hundreds of poor people in the villages in India. We conduct free medical clinics in the villages in India for the poor people who have no doctor, no pharmacy in their villages, extremely poor people. That she has done.

But she said the days our first son was born, my calling in her life is not primarily to be a doctor, but to be a mother. I'm very thankful for that. You know, the result was we struggled financially.

I'll tell you, we were very, very poor, but we never got into debt. We lived simply. People have washing machines to wash their clothes.

We could not afford one. We washed clothes the way Jesus washes clothes, with his hands. We lived simply.

I used to tell my younger children, younger boys, if your older boy's shirt and pant can fit you, you wear it. I can't afford to buy you new ones. If your older boy's shoes fit you, wear it.

That's how we brought them up, to live simply. Because I had a decision in my life. The Bible says in Romans 13 verse 8, oh no man anything, never be in debt.

And I'm thankful to say that in my entire life, I've never been in debt. In 83 years, I've not been in debt. I never believed in buy now, pay later.

No. I don't have the money. I say, Lord, then you haven't given me the money to buy something.

I won't buy it. When we could afford a refrigerator, we bought one. When we could, many years later, afford a washing machine, we bought one.

Till then, we live without it. You don't need all these things. Jesus never had all those things.

We can live without it. When you can afford something, we buy it. I rode a scooter, because I decided I don't want to be in debt.

I'm willing to deny myself, but I don't want to be in debt, because how can I be a servant of God, if I'm in debt to somebody? No. And today, and I taught my children also. We taught our children to live simply.

And they went to college. They got good jobs, scholarships. And today, all four of them are disciples and planting and are leading CFC churches, our own churches.

All four of them, and all four of them are preaching God's Word. I'm very thankful, preaching the same message of discipleship that I preach. I'm deeply thankful for them.

It's what the Lord's doing. But the Lord doesn't do things apart from us. He wants co-workers.

Your children, to become disciples, he wants you as the father and mother to be co-workers. This is so important, my brothers and sisters, because today, the name of the Lord is dishonored by the children of pastors who bring a bad name to the Lord. And we need to humble ourselves.

We're not here to criticize anybody. We're not here to judge anybody. God alone is a judge, but we have to judge ourselves.

Ask ourselves, am I making disciples? Have I made disciples in my own home first? And then, further about building the church, I want to turn back to Matthew chapter 16. Jesus told Peter, when Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. He said, blessed are you, Simon, Matthew 16, 17, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you.

That means he's saying, Peter, you did not come to this through human cleverness. My father in heaven gave you revelation. Revelation, as I said, is a very important word in the New Testament.

Paul writes to the Ephesian Christians, if you turn with a moment to Ephesians chapter 1, very important verse. Ephesians chapter 1, he speaks about revelation. Ephesians chapter 1, he says, I pray, verse 17, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

And I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened. Not your mind, the eyes of your heart should be enlightened so that you know the hope of his calling. But notice that word, wisdom and revelation in verse 17.

He doesn't say, please read my letter 10 times and see what I'm trying to say. No. He says, when you read my letter, I pray that the Holy Spirit will give you revelation.

I pray that God will give you revelation. Not just understanding, not in the knowledge of the Bible, but in the knowledge of Christ. Revelation to show you who Christ is, how he lived on earth.

And then you will be able, there are two things Paul prayed for the Ephesians. One is the spirit of wisdom and revelation, verse 1, Ephesians 1, 17. And the second is in Ephesians chapter 3, where he speaks that there'll be verse 3, 16, they'll be strengthened through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Two things he prayed for, that you'll have the revelation of the Holy Spirit and Ephesians 3, 16, the power of the Holy Spirit. You know what we need more than anything else? The revelation of the Holy Spirit when we read scriptures to know God's mind. And secondly, the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim that with spiritual authority in a way that goes straight to people's hearts.

So it's that revelation that is very, very important. I want to show you another verse in Luke's gospel and chapter 24. When I was a young Christian beginning to preach God's word, this is the passage that came to my heart.

Luke chapter 24, we read here that Jesus was, after his resurrection, was walking with the disciples to Emmaus, two disciples. And as they were going to Emmaus, see this, Luke 24, verse 27, beginning with Moses and all the prophets. That means all of Moses means the first five books of Moses and all the prophets means up to Malachi.

So Jesus took the Old Testament, Genesis to Malachi, which he had in his mind. You know that Jesus knew the Bible when he was 12 years old. So from what he had in his mind, there was no open Bible in front of him.

From his mind, he began with Genesis, went all the way to Malachi and explained to these two disciples everything concerning himself in the scriptures. So he said, from Genesis to Malachi, you'll find Christ. You can find Christ in Genesis, the seed of the woman that crushes the serpent's head.

You can find Christ in Exodus, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, the rock that is smitten. And in Numbers, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness. And all the way to Malachi, where he's called the Son, S-U-N, the Son of Righteousness.

All the way he explained Christ. And now see, you know, this was not a short trip. We read in Luke 24 in verse 13, that Emmaus was seven miles from Jerusalem.

Seven miles means about 11 kilometers. How long does it take to walk 11 kilometers in a leisurely way? I stop when I meditate on scripture. I don't just read it.

So I meditate seven miles. I picture in my mind, Jesus walking with these two people, 11 kilometers. I say, Lord, in a leisurely way, it must have taken you three hours.

And three hours he was explaining Genesis to Malachi to them. And what is the result? We read here, Luke 24, 32. They say, our hearts were burning when he was speaking to us.

That is the result of spiritual preaching. I read that as a young man. And I said, Lord Jesus, you are the same yesterday, today and forever.

Two things I want you to do for me. One, as you walk with those disciples and explain the scriptures to me, please walk with me as I read the Bible and explain it to me. I never been to a Bible school.

And I'll tell you why. I'm not against Bible schools, but I'll tell you why I did not go. Because I read in the Bible, no prophet came from a Bible school.

Jesus never sent his apostles to a Bible school. And the only apostle Paul, he went to a Bible school for three years. So Jesus took him to the wilderness for three years to take all that out of his head.

Because what he needed was a revelation. So I said, Lord, I don't need a Bible school. You teach me like you taught those people from Genesis to Malachi.

You're the same today, yesterday, today and forever. Your Holy Spirit has come. Explain it to me.

And I know you're explaining it to me. My heart will burn. My heart will burn.

Does your heart burn when you read the scriptures? That's the mark of the Holy Spirit speaking. Otherwise, your head gets knowledge. And you take your notes.

And I say, ah, I've got a wonderful sermon to preach next Sunday. You're seeking your honor, brother. You're seeking honor and studying the Bible.

You want to be known as a great preacher. Forget it. I confess my sin that when I was 20, 20, young man, I also sought like that honor.

But the Lord showed me, get rid of it. And I repented. I said, Lord, I'm sorry.

And I finished with it long ago. I said, now I want to read the scripture for the Lord to speak to me, not to prepare a sermon for other people. If the Lord speaks to me, I can speak to other people from my heart what the Lord has done in my life.

Otherwise, I'll just have a nice three-point sermon, which will get me honor, which won't change people's lives, which won't even change my children's lives. So I said, Lord, speak to my heart, first of all. And I will know you speak to my heart that when I read the Bible, my heart burns.

And not only that, the second thing I prayed was, Lord, I want you to so anoint me with the Holy Spirit, like you are anointed with the Holy Spirit, that when I preach the word to others, their hearts will burn. Not that they'll get up and say, well, oh, brothers, I preached a nice sermon. It was good to hear it.

And they take down the notes of my sermon so that they can preach it somewhere else. Lord, that's not what I want. I want their hearts to burn when they hear me speak.

I can't do that. The Holy Spirit is the fire of God. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a baptism of fire.

That's what John the Baptist said. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. I said, Lord, I want that fire.

I want it always burning in my heart. And I've been serving the Lord now 56 years, and that fire is burning in my heart even more today than it was 56 years ago. It keeps increasing.

And I want, if I'm on fire, you know, one candle, one candle can light a thousand other candles. You know that. You don't need a hundred people to serve the Lord.

One person can set a hundred thousand people on fire. That's how it is. But you've got to be on fire yourself, not a painted fire.

There are painted fires that look like fire from the distance, but you get close to it. There's no light. There's no heat.

That's not a fire. That's a fake. There are creatures who shout and make a lot of noise.

It looks like fire. It's not fire. It's just fake.

There's a lot of noise. You know, it says about Jesus that he would not raise his voice. Have you read that in Matthew? He would not raise his voice.

His voice would not be heard in the streets. But boy, his words were like a fire. And I say, Lord, that's what I want.

It's not a question of how loudly I shout. People don't, you see, I don't have the habit of saying hallelujah every now and then in my message. People ask me, Brother Zach, why don't you say hallelujah like all the other Pentecostal preachers? I say, I never see Jesus saying hallelujah every five minutes in his message.

That's why I don't do it either. I'm following Jesus' example. And I say most people, I mean, I'm not against hallelujah by all means.

I'm going to say in heaven, I'm going to say hallelujah for years. But I say I have so little time. If I have one hour to preach, I don't want to waste a lot of that time saying hallelujah.

I want to fill that with content to people. And I'm not against it. Somebody wants to say it, that's fine.

But I'm interested in the fire of God. And I want to say this, dear brothers, this wonderful promise. I'll conclude with this.

Many of you have studied the Bible. Let me ask you a little quiz. Can you tell me the first promise in the New Testament? The very first promise.

A promise is like a check. If you get a check, you can take it to the bank and cash it. The promises in the Bible are like checks that signed in the name of Jesus Christ.

I can take it to the bank of heaven, credit it to my account. It becomes mine. First promise in the New Testament is Matthew chapter one, verse 21.

You shall call his name Jesus. Why Jesus? The first time the word Jesus comes there in the first chapter, it tells us the reason why he's called Jesus. He will save his people from their sin.

Not he will forgive their sin. Forgive their sin is Old Testament. Psalm 103, David, 1000 years before Christ says, bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities.

This is more than forgiveness. Forgiveness is, okay, I ignore what you've done in the past. To be saved from your sin means I'm saved from that habit.

If I lust in my mind after a woman, that's a sin. The Lord can forgive me. But if he wants to save me, I have to be saved from that lusting habit.

Forgiveness is what most Christians live in. The constant circle of, you know, the children's merry-go-round. They sit in a wooden horse and go round and round and merry-go-round.

That's how many Christians live. I sin and then I'm forgiven. I sin and I repent and I'm forgiven.

I sin and I repent and ask forgiveness and I'm forgiven. And 20 years later, they're in that merry-go-round. I sin and I say I'm sorry and I'm forgiven.

When are we going to get out of that merry-go-round and go forward? You know, in a merry-go-round, you can sit there for hours and there's no progress in your life. That's how many Christians are. I sin, I repent, ask forgiveness.

Again, sin, repent, ask forgiveness. And 20 years later, they are sitting in the same, getting angry, lusting after women, fighting with people, loving money, don't love their enemies, all types of things. He will save his people from their sins.

If a man has fallen into a pit, how do you save him? You've got to pull him out, not leave him there. Second promise of the New Testament, Matthew 3 and verse 11. Jesus, last part, will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.

That's how the New Testament begins, with two promises. And I said, Lord Jesus, when I understood that, I said, Lord, I want those to prove in my life. I can't do it.

He will save you from our sin. I cannot save myself. Matthew 1.21 says, Jesus will save you from sin.

Please, you have forgiven me, now save me. I was a slave to anger. Every human being is.

Every man is a slave to lusting with the eyes in the beginning of his life. And I was like any ordinary 19, 20-year-old man. But I can say today, Jesus saved me.

He saved me from anger. My life with my wife at home, God is my witness, is a foretaste of heaven on earth. There is no anger.

There is no shouting and yelling. We make mistakes, we forgive one another. He said, we are human.

As long as we are human, something will go wrong in the house, we may, but we forgive. No shouting, no yelling. I did not do it.

I was a slave to anger. Jesus saved me. He fulfilled Matthew 1.21 many years ago.

It's been many years since the Lord saved us from these things. We can say to in the Old Testament, the prophets would say, come and hear what the Lord has spoken. Today, we say, come and see what the Lord has done in our life.

Come and see what the Lord has done in our family. You remember once in John chapter 1, there were two disciples of John the Baptist standing, listening to him. And they pointed to Jesus.

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus in John 1.36 saying, there's the Lamb of God. And it says the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. By the way, it's a great verse, John 1.37. Has it ever struck you, John 1.37? It struck me so much.

They heard him speak and they followed Jesus. They didn't follow him. They followed Jesus.

I, when I read that, I said, Lord, make that true in my life. They heard Zach speak and they didn't follow Zach and they followed Jesus. I said, that's the word that I want written on my tombstone after I'm buried, dead and buried.

They heard him speak and they followed Jesus. That's a tremendous testimony that can be said about you. They heard her speak and they followed Jesus.

But not only that, when they followed him, they asked Jesus, where are you living? And his reply was, John 1.39, come and see. Come and see where I'm living. Today, Jesus is living in our home.

You should be able to invite people. Come and see how we live in our home. Come and see how my wife and I live.

Come and see how we have brought up our children. Come and examine my account books. See how I keep my finances.

I can stand before God and say, I paid all my taxes. Exactly. Nobody in the world, not even no government in the world can say I owe them money.

I paid everything righteously because it's so important. Jesus said in Luke 16.13-15, you cannot serve God in money. You will love one and hate the other.

You will hold on to one and despise the other. If you hold on to money, you cannot hold on to God. I tell you, every one of you in Jesus' name, the more you hold on to money, your grip on God will become loose.

You wonder why you're not close to Jesus. Ask yourself one question. Is there some area in your life where you're holding on to money? Have money? Yes.

But love it wrong. May God help us. May God help all of you.

Christ is coming soon. Let us do a work that he can look at us in that day and say, well done, good and faithful servant. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

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