

The Better Message Of The New Covenant

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus' example in our lives, focusing on key aspects of Jesus' life such as his obedience to imperfect earthly parents, his experience of temptation without sinning, and the centrality of his life as the light for all. The speaker highlights the need to value the life of Jesus over mere doctrine, urging listeners to seek revelation and a deeper understanding of walking in Jesus' footsteps to experience the better things God has provided in the new covenant.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:15, Psalms 25:14, Hebrews 2:18, John 1:4, Psalms 25:14

Topics: "Following Jesus' Example", "Living in the Light of Christ"

Description

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Transcript

You know that in this church we have majored on the new covenant. So I never get tired of speaking on it. There are so many different aspects of it and I want to share something today which is very very important, which I don't know whether all of you you may have heard about it and understood whether you're gripped by it is another thing.

Let me begin with Hebrews chapter 11. In Hebrews 11 we read of wonderful things that many many people in the old covenant did. It's a big list of many people like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and the things they did were all you know pretty miraculous like splitting the Red Sea and pulling down the walls of Jericho by faith, having a child at the age of a hundred, shutting the mouths of lions and putting whole armies to flight.

It was all wonderful things and sometimes we wish we could see such spectacular things. You know those who major on the externals, two of the externals that a lot of Christians major on today are health and wealth, physical health and physical prosperity. That's an old covenant blessing.

At the end of it, at the end of chapter 11 it says in verse 40, God has provided something better for us. What can be better than physical health and material wealth? What can be better than seeing external

miracles like they had in the old testament? Whenever you read the old testament from Genesis to Malachi or Hebrews 11, always remember this one verse. God has provided something better for us.

When you try to excuse your falling into adultery by saying David fell and he still came back, remember this verse. God has provided something better for us that you don't fall into adultery. If only people would remember this one verse, whenever you read the old testament, whenever you read of the wonderful things they experienced, the dreams they had of a ladder going up to heaven and thunder and lightning that Moses experienced, remember this verse.

God has provided something better for us and the Bible doesn't leave us in suspense as to what that better thing is. You know sometimes it's very, very unfortunate that these people who divided the Bible into chapters divided it at the wrong place. You know when Hebrews was written there were no chapters and verses, it was just one big letter, maybe with paragraphs but not verses and chapters.

So I believe this is one of those many places where unfortunately the chapter closes and so those of us who have the habit of reading one chapter a day, you read it and you close it and the next day when you go to chapter 12 you don't even remember what you read in the previous chapter. So those of you who have the habit of reading a chapter a day, I would encourage you always read at least the three, four verses of the next chapter, then close your Bible. And when you begin a new chapter, start with the first three, four verses, the last three, four verses of the previous chapter and then read.

You will learn some amazing things in many, many places, not just one, in many places and you'll get a much better understanding of truth. So here it says, what is this better thing that God has provided for us? And that is in the next four verses and in fact the whole of chapter 12. He says okay, verse chapter 12, verse 1, we've got this great cloud of witnesses.

Who are they? The ones mentioned in chapter 11 who have all gone to heaven and they are like, you know, in a stadium. All the people are not taking part in the race. They're sitting in the stadium watching the people in the race.

So we got this great cloud of witnesses in heaven. This is about the only verse that probably, I'm not sure whether it indicates that they can see us from heaven because it says there's a cloud of witnesses surviving us and none of these people are alive. And since these people are watching us, let us run this race without any weights and without any sin clinging on to us.

There are two things it says here. One is we must lay aside every encumbrance and lay aside every sin. Sin is like a chain that ties your leg to a post or something.

You can't run the race then. And weights are like big heavy weights in your pocket when you try to run the race. That'll also slow you down.

When people run a race, their legs are not chained and they have no weights in their pockets. So what they're saying is sin is like a chain. If you don't get rid of sin, you won't be able to experience this better thing that God has for us.

And if you don't get rid of the unnecessary things that you accumulate in your life that are valuable to you, you won't be able to run the race. But if you're willing to give up your chains and your weights, we can run this race that is set before us. And here is the better thing that God has provided for us which none of the Old Testament people could have.

They could only have external miracles and external things which finished with this world. But here's something that we can have for all eternity. Let us run the race looking unto Jesus who is the author and perfecter of our faith who ran the same race and who had this joy set before him.

And I want to tell you what that joy is. The joy was not going to heaven or even completing the race. The joy was, the Bible says, in the Father's presence, Psalm 1611, there is fullness of joy.

There is only one place in the universe where there is fullness of joy, Psalm 1611. That was the joy set before him. There's one joy that Jesus had before him.

I want to be in the Father's presence always. And in order to be in the Father's presence always, if I had to get rid of some chains and get rid of some weights, I'll do it. And if you keep that same joy in front of you, that I want the presence of Jesus always with me, it won't be difficult to get rid of some chains and weights that we are carrying around.

If that is the greatest joy in your life, I mean, if your greatest joy is making money, just forget it. Go back to the old covenant. If your greatest joy is physical healing, brother, forget about this.

Go back to the old covenant. I'm not against your earning money or having good health. We believe in that.

We need to earn money as the cost of living goes up and we need physical health to live. But that should not be the greatest thing for us. Greatest thing must be that I can live in the presence of my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ every single moment of every single day.

And that's why I never want to lose my temper at home, because then the Lord won't be there. I don't want to lose the Lord's presence just to get rid of, to express my temper to somebody. If I do something unrighteous in the office, the Lord's not there.

I don't want that, because then joy is gone. Only in God's presence is fullness of joy. And for myself, I have made it a rule in my life for many years now, that anytime I don't have fullness of joy, I say to myself, I am not in the Father's presence.

I'm not in God's presence. I have, God has left me or I've left God, usually I've left God, because I chose something else and I lost the joy. You can be absolutely sure that in the Father's presence, there's always fullness of joy, no matter what happens to you.

Some of you may be going through terrible trials. It makes no difference. Nothing more than Jesus went through, but he, for the joy set before him, he endured every cross that was in his life for 33 and a half years.

And finally the wooden cross on which he hung on Calvary. It was the Father's presence that he wanted every day. And that's why he was willing to die to himself every day.

How do we know he died to himself every day? Because he tells us in Luke 9.23, if you want to follow me, you've got to deny yourself and take up your cross every day and follow. So how can we take up the cross and follow one who never took up the cross? He also took up the cross every day. That's why he tells us to follow him in that way.

And because he took up the cross and denied himself every day, he was in the Father's presence every day. That is the better thing. Now, most people can't understand that taking up the cross every day can be an Old Testament saint's experience, because that was external and it perished with this world.

But what God works in our hearts remains with us for eternity. You know how children are occupied with things that are only valuable for a short time, toys and little games and all, which last for a short time when they are children. But grown-up people don't play with toys.

They're thinking of long-term savings and keeping money and buying a house and things like that. Little three-year-olds don't think of that. In the same way, spiritually, those who are babies only think of, what can we get right now? What can we see? And those who are mature think of eternity, eternal wealth.

That's the big difference between babies and mature people in the Kingdom of God. So, Jesus endured the cross and any shame, there is a shame that he experienced, he despised it. And he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God and the Bible says, that's where we want to go as well.

But not everyone will reach there, because Jesus says in Revelation 3.21, he who overcomes, like I overcame, like I overcame and sat down at the right hand of the Father, he who overcomes will sit with me on my throne. There are certain people who overcome, who will sit with Jesus on his throne. The others will not.

And so, it says here in verse 3, a very important verse. So, consider him. Verse 2, fix our eyes on Jesus.

Verse 3, consider him who endured such tremendous hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will never get weary and you will never lose heart. Are any of you getting weary and losing heart because of something that you feel is not working out as you anticipated? Disappointed with something that happened in your life or disappointed something happened in your office or disappointed with something that you see in the church? I'm never disappointed, because I see, I follow one who was never disappointed in his life. He knew that God is sovereign and he knew that God would work everything out in a perfect way.

That didn't mean that everybody would get saved. The greatest preacher that walked on this earth was Jesus Christ, and he could make only 11 disciples who wholeheartedly followed him. 500 people saw him after the resurrection.

500. We read in 1 Corinthians 15, and he said, wait for the Holy Spirit. And out of the 500, only 120 bothered to wait for the Holy Spirit.

Why was that? Even though they saw something no other human being has seen, somebody raised from the dead, saw him going up to heaven, but they would not wait for the Holy Spirit. They didn't value it. A lot of believers like that today.

They know the answer to everything in the Christian life is the power of the Holy Spirit, but they won't wait. So not everybody is going to take this calling seriously. There are a few, and they come to a wonderful life.

And it says here in verse 4, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin. Jesus resisted to the point of shedding blood on the cross. That's how he resisted sin till the end of his life.

So this is the better thing that God has provided for us in the new covenant, that we can walk in the footsteps of Jesus. And the writer to the Hebrew says that. And if you turn to 1 Peter, you find Peter also says the same thing.

1 Peter chapter 2. Listen to these words in verse 21. 1 Peter 2:21. You have been called for this purpose.

This is the new covenant. Why were you called? You were called for this purpose. Because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example.

Christ is to be our example. Just like we read in Hebrews 12. Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Consider him. He is our example. We are to follow in his steps who committed no sin.

Just like you should not stop at the end of a chapter, don't stop at the end of a verse. It doesn't say you must follow in his steps. It says you must follow in his steps who committed no sin.

Who had no deceit in his mouth. That's the full sentence. It's only a comma after steps.

Follow. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Peter meant that to the Holy Spirit? Follow in his steps who never committed a sin? Follow in his steps who never told a lie? Is that possible? Well, according to your faith, be it unto you. You never find a promise like that in the Old Testament, because it is impossible.

You couldn't tell a man in the Old Testament don't tell lies. Even the commandment of the Ten Commandments was don't tell a lie when you are swearing in court. Don't bear false witness.

That's the Old Testament commandment. There's no commandment in the Old Testament saying you should not tell lies, because it is impossible for people. And those who are in the Old Covenant today still tell lies among so-called Christians.

But here it says follow in his steps who did not commit a sin and who did not tell a lie. As soon as you read that, the devil is very close by saying that's impossible. And you believe the devil, it will be impossible for you.

But if you believe the Word of God, it'll be possible. The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. So that's what we read in Hebrews, that we can look at Jesus.

That's the better thing. And it's what Peter says also. Let's turn to another apostle, John.

What does he say? 1 John chapter 2, John says, the one who says he abides in Christ, that is, I am in Christ. Christ is in me. I think a lot of us say that.

Well, you have a responsibility. You have to walk in the same manner as he walked. Or as the Living Bible says, anyone who says he's a Christian must live like Jesus lived.

That is the better thing. That is what the New Covenant is all about. The New Covenant is not about doctrine.

Please remember this, my brothers and sisters. And that is why those who major on doctrine think that they've escaped Babylon just because they left some Babylonian doctrinal system and came into a better doctrinal system. It's not about doctrine.

It's about life. It's about walking as Jesus walked. It's about living like He lived.

It's about making Him our example. It's about resisting sin like He resisted unto blood. It's about following in His steps who never told a lie, who never committed any sin.

And there are people like that. Not every believer. Let me show you two groups of believers in heaven.

Revelation chapter 7. These are believers. Revelation 7 verse 9. And I looked and behold a great multitude which no one could count. Notice this.

It is so huge you cannot count. That means it's millions and millions and billions. You cannot count.

From every nation, every tribe, every people and every language stand before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes. And they cry out with a loud voice saying, our salvation is due to our God. You know what they say? We are saved but our salvation is due to our God.

And what is their qualification? Verse 14 last part. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They are cleansed through the blood of Jesus and their robes are white and they stand in heaven.

How many? Thousands? Millions? No. Billions and billions. Trillions perhaps.

It says a great multitude which cannot be counted. Now that does not mean there's a great multitude of people following Jesus today. But Jesus said the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it.

So how is it there's a great multitude in heaven? And it says from every tribe and every language do you know that in India alone there are so many tribes and languages that have never heard the name of Jesus. They don't have a Bible in their language. How in the world can there be somebody from that tribe and then you go to other nations where there are so many tribes and nations in other countries in Asia where they don't have a Bible in their language.

They have never heard the name of Jesus but it says here from every tribe and nation there'll be somebody there and I meditated much on that. How is that possible? It can't be a lie and I don't believe that everybody in the world will hear the gospel before Jesus comes. It's impossible.

It hasn't happened in 2,000 years and even if the Lord waits another 2,000 years it will not happen. I'll tell you how there are because of the number of babies that die in the womb, the number of abortions that are committed, the number of babies that die and there are more babies that die in poor countries in Africa and Asia than in the wealthier countries. Where do those babies who die go immediately to heaven? That is how from every tribe and from every nation there will be somebody in heaven.

They were not converted on earth but they were babies born into every tribe and nation who died and that's a fantastic multitude. I believe there are millions and billions perhaps of such people in heaven. How did they get to heaven? Not because they are babies.

You can't go to heaven because I'm a baby. Because the righteousness of Christ has been put to their account. They didn't deserve it.

Neither did you and I deserve it but that has been put to our account and God can put into their account. I mean can't a billionaire father put a billion rupees into the account of his newborn baby was born

yesterday? Sure and that baby becomes a billionaire the day it is born. It's put to his account.

You can open an account in a baby's name the day it is born and the baby can become a billionaire that day. That's how these babies got the righteousness of Christ. Their robes are washed in the blood of the lamb.

That's the only way even a baby gets to heaven. But there's another group in heaven which is a much smaller group. That's in Revelation 14 and the difference is, forget about the number.

The number is not important. I'll tell you why the number is not important. Because the book of Revelation is a book of symbols.

It says in Revelation 1 verse, first three verses, the Lord symbolized this to John. That means revealed the truth in symbols and that's why in the very first chapter you see it a sword coming out of Jesus mouth and his hair is white and his legs are made of bronze. That's not true.

Jesus' legs are not made of bronze and there's no sword coming out of his mouth. It's picture, picture, pictures. The word of God coming out of his mouth and the white hair speaks of wisdom.

His actual hair is not white. So here is another symbol. A hundred and forty four thousand, Revelation 14 verse 1. The number is a symbol.

Symbol of what? A number that can be counted. Compared with the Revelation 7 group that could not be counted. So the point is there's a great multitude of people, mostly babies who are up there in heaven who are redeemed through the blood of the lamb and here's a small group compared to that I believe is actually going to be much more than 144,000.

I hope so. I don't know. But who've got the name of Jesus written on their foreheads and the thing written about them and listen to this.

Verse 5. No lie was found in their mouth. You know someone asked me, brother you mean to say they're only going to be 144,000? I said I'm surprised there are 144,000 who never told lies. Not that they never told a lie.

Every human being has told lies. The Bible says in Psalm 58 from childhood human beings tell lies and all of us sitting here have told lies, plenty of them, to our parents and in many many other places in false statements and etc etc. But these people are also like that but they cleanse themselves and cleanse themselves like you can eliminate a sickness from your body by treatment.

Here was a sickness called lying. Which they eliminated from their body so completely that they came to the place where there was no lie at all. It's like people cured of cancer.

You go for a scan and say hey the cancer was there it's gone now. Completely cured. Have you heard of people who had cancer and who were completely cured that they never got it and lived for another 50 years? Yeah I've heard of that.

So here are people who are born liars and so cleansed themselves that they came to the place where by the end of their life there was not a single lying found in their life. I hope you're going that way. I hope one of your goals in life is to come to a place where there will never be a lie not only in your mouth but in your way of life.

You know how Ananias and Sapphira told a lie without opening their mouth. All they did was stand in the line of people who are wholehearted and giving all their money for God's work. There was no rule those days saying you must give all your money for God's work.

It was just voluntary and all these people voluntarily came to give their money for God's work. Ananias and Sapphira wanted that honor but did not want to pay the price. So they never said anything.

Maybe they brought half the amount the land was sold for. That's okay. God doesn't mean one ten percent.

Why should he want fifty percent? They quietly left the money at Peter's feet and walked away and Peter said come back. That's discernment. I tell you that is the type of discernment that spirit-filled elders have.

When they look at a person they can know whether he's telling the truth or not. Whether he's really born again or not. Whether he's a crook.

It's revealed in their eyes. Now not everybody in the church could know it but Peter could because he'd walked with the Lord and he told Ananias. Remember in Acts chapter 5? Why have you told a lie to the Holy Spirit? He could have said I never opened my mouth.

What do you mean by telling a lie? Ananias your whole body is telling a lie. Do you know that you can tell a lie without opening your mouth? Sure. For example, you go to a church where they emphasize being wholehearted, radical, where Christ is first in every area of your life and you want that reputation.

I belong to a church where we put Christ first in everything but you don't put Christ first in everything in your personal life. You are Ananias and you are Sapphira today. You want that reputation.

That's exactly what Ananias and Sapphira did. They stood in the line of people are wholehearted and they were not wholehearted themselves. They went to a church where everybody was wholehearted and they were not wholehearted themselves.

You know all that Ananias and Sapphira had to do that day was sit at home and say we're not going to give anything to the Lord. We sold our house. It's ours.

They would have lived a long life. It's dangerous to go and join a wholehearted church if you're not serious. But here was a group of people who were serious.

There was no lie found in their mouth and it says in verse 4 middle, they followed the lamb wherever he went. Whatever the Lord told them to do, they do it. The Lord said you must forgive everybody who has harmed you.

They would forgive everybody. If the Lord says you must go and apologize to every single person you hurt or you told a lie to, even a small thing, every single one, they would do it every single time. I'm surprised that there are 144,000 like that.

It's a huge number if you ask me because most believers I've met are not like that. They always find some excuse to justify why they should not do this and why they should not do that. But this is the second group in heaven.

So it's a question of which group we are going to find ourselves in. We saw that Peter and John both said this. Now what is the secret of coming into this life? The Bible says in Matthew chapter 13.

In Matthew 13. Please turn with me to Matthew's gospel in chapter 13. Jesus told his disciples in verse 10 and 11.

Disciples asked him why do you speak in parables and Jesus answered. Listen to this answer in Matthew 13 11. To you disciples it has been granted.

Granted means as a gift. Not because you deserve it. Not because you studied the Bible hard.

No. Something was given to you to know the mysteries. Now the word mysteries means a secret that cannot be understood by human intelligence.

A secret that God can reveal. R-E-V-E-A-L. Revelation that God reveals to our heart.

Not to our head. That's intelligence. That's study.

But something that God reveals to the heart. A secret. That is a mystery.

To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But it is not being granted to them. Why was that? Is it because Peter and James and John were clever than them? No.

They were fishermen. They hadn't even finished school final. The clever graduates and all were the Pharisees.

But to these fishermen was granted to know the secrets of God's kingdom. Turn to 1 Corinthians in chapter 2. There is a verse in the Old Testament which is quoted here and the meaning of that verse is revealed here which is not revealed in the Old Testament. There are many Old Testament verses which are explained in the New Testament.

Here is one of them. 1 Corinthians 2:9 Things which human eyes have never seen, human ears have never heard, and which have not entered into the heart or the mind of man, God has prepared for those who love Him. So love is the important thing.

Those who love Him, God has prepared certain things. And what are those things? The Old Testament doesn't tell us. But in the New Covenant verse 10 it says God has revealed them to us.

Again the word reveal. You remember when Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Jesus said, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you.

I want to encourage all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, to value the word revelation more than understanding. Understanding is a word in Proverbs. It's in the Old Testament.

It's a head thing. Revelation is a spiritual thing of the heart. Many of you understand the Bible, but you don't have revelation.

If you had revelation, you'd overcome anger, you'd overcome anxiety, you'd overcome bitterness, you'd overcome an unforgiving spirit, you'd overcome the love of money. You'd overcome many things if you had revelation. If you have only knowledge, you can only explain.

You can preach sermons, but you won't be an overcomer. Value revelation. Many, many people have valued understanding.

Take Christian leadership today for example. You know if you went to the first century, to any church in the first century, any church anywhere in the world in the first century, and go to the elder, the senior elder in that church, and ask him, how did you become an elder here? He would never say, I went to a Bible school, and I spent four years and got a degree, and I came here when I was 25 years old and became the elder here. I've been here for the last 35 years.

Never. What he'll say in any church in the first century is, I came to this church as a young person, and I got converted, and I was filled with the Holy Spirit, and I spent many, many years in this church, and gradually I became an elder. Okay, now contrast it with today.

Today you go to almost any church, anyway 99% of churches, and go to their pastors and ask them, how did you become the leader of this church? He will tell you, I went to a Bible school when I was a young man, because I couldn't find any other job in many cases, and I studied there for four or five years, and I got a degree, and then I applied to different churches, and I couldn't get a big salary initially, because I was new. I went to a small church, but I was always hoping to get a promotion to a bigger church, and gradually I shifted to better, better, better churches. Finally I got a big church now.

So different from the first century. Completely different. The old covenant priests had to study and become priests, and scribes.

In the new covenant it's by experience, it's by revelation. So it's very important to understand this, otherwise we will remain with an old covenant way of life. You can hold new covenant truths in your head, and then it's only understanding, and it doesn't change your life, it doesn't change your home life, it doesn't change the way you live, it doesn't change the way you work, it doesn't change your attitude to people or to money, it doesn't build fellowship between you and others, but you got all the understanding.

I want you to turn with me to another passage that I've spoken of many times in Matthew chapter 23. I'm trying to show you what new covenant really is. Matthew chapter 23, we read there about Jesus speaking to the Pharisees.

There are many things he denounces in the Pharisees in that whole chapter, and finally ends up saying, verse 33, how will you escape the sentence of hell? At the end of criticizing them for so many things, but there are two good things that he said about these Pharisees, don't forget. Number one, all their doctrines were right, not 90 percent, 100 percent. He said that in verse 2 and 3 to his disciples, the scribes and Pharisees have seated in the chair of Moses, everything that they tell you to do, you can do.

How can Jesus say that, unless their doctrines are all right? Would Jesus say today, everything that the Seventh-day Adventists tell you to do, do, or everything that the Roman Catholics teach you to do, do, or everything that the Jehovah's Witnesses teach you to do, do? He'd never say that. He wouldn't even say that everything that the CSI church tells you to do, do. They baptize babies.

Do you think Jesus would say, go and do that? To which group will Jesus say everything they tell you to do, do? Only one which he can see. These folks are obeying every doctrine correctly. Pharisees were like that, but they were still going to hell.

What do you learn from that? You can have all your doctrines right and still go to hell. Second thing, second good quality in the Pharisees, Matthew 23 and verse 25. What you scribes and Pharisees, you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside is full of robbery and self-indulgence.

What is the good part of that sentence? You clean the outside of the cup. That means your external life is very upright. You keep the 10 commandments.

You don't worship idols. You don't murder. You don't commit adultery.

You don't bear false witness. You honor your father and mother. You do all the external things.

So here's the second certificate Jesus gave to the Pharisees. Your external life is good, but how will you escape the sentence of hell? Now put these two things together and the Lord says to some people today, your doctrines are all absolutely correct. Your external life is very good.

How will you escape the sentence of hell? I don't think there are many Christians who believe that. Just read Matthew 23 more carefully. My aim is to save you from that sentence of hell.

That's why I tell you the truth and I'll tell you everyone sitting here, your doctrine can be the purest doctrine in India. Your external life may be absolutely pure and you can still go to hell because in the new covenant is the inner life that matters. Man looks on the outside appearance.

God looks at the heart. Don't ever forget that. That's what Jesus condemned the Pharisees for.

Inside, he said in Matthew 23 in the next verse, in verse 26, he says first clean the inside. First clean the inside. That's the verse in verse 26.

Otherwise you're blind. You're a blind person if you don't first clean the inside. How is your inside? How is your inner life? How is your private life at home which nobody in this church can see? How is your thought life? That's the inside.

How is your attitude towards others in this church? Forget about all the others. What is your attitude? Is it one of looking down on them or backbiting against them? Have you joined the accuser of the brethren, Satan, by speaking evil of your fellow believers? Instead of going up to them and say brother, I think there's something wrong in what you're doing. That is the best way.

I've made many enemies by telling them to their face what I think about but I don't go behind their back and talking about them. No. I say Lord, I will never speak about a brother behind his back.

Never, never, never what I've not told him to his face and a lot of brothers here will testify to that. They get hurt with me what I say. That's okay.

But I will never be the accuser of the brethren. That's for sure. I will not hold hands with Satan.

I take that very seriously. Either I'll keep quiet if a person, if I don't, for example, a lot of people who come to CFC for whom I have zero responsibility. I never tell them anything.

Like I don't go to my neighbor's house and tell them what's wrong with them or what's wrong with their children. I have no responsibility there. But children who are in my house, I had four children in my house and I would tell them the smallest little thing.

I would correct them. That's how I brought them up. All the 18 years they were in my house, I corrected them about every little thing and even after they left my house.

But other people's children, the same spiritually. I know those who have confidence in me and expect me to correct them. And I know those who get offended if I correct them.

I remember one elder who's no longer with us now. It was many, maybe 30 years ago. He was an elder in one of our other churches and once I had to correct him about something and he said, Brother Zack, nobody speaks to me like that.

Oh, I said, I'm sorry. I will never again speak to you like that. And I never did.

He's left. He's probably lost today. I don't know where he's going to end up.

But I kept my word. I never corrected him after that day. Because he didn't want it.

He's offended. I believe God deals with us like that. If God rebukes you and corrects you and you don't take it seriously, I'll tell you something.

God will stop correcting you and you will live your life deluding yourself that you're very spiritual. Are you scared of that? I'm scared of that. I sometimes cling to God and say, Lord, please correct me.

Don't let me go, Lord. Even a small little thing. Give me something.

Give me a fever. Knock me down in bed. Make me sick or make me trip up and have a broken bone or something.

But wake me up if I'm not serious about sin in my life. I never want to be without discipline. I don't want to be like the Pharisees who got all the right external life and the inner life corrupt.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is very, very important. So the new covenant is one way we look at Jesus as our example. And I want to encourage everyone here to look at Jesus more and more and more and more.

Looking unto Jesus is the secret of the Christian life. And I'm very thankful that very early in my Christian life, when I got baptized at the age of 21, I began to see, the Lord showed me that looking unto Jesus is the secret of the Christian life. And I began to study the life of Jesus from the beginning, how he lived.

Let me show you some things that I saw, some of which I've said before. The first thing you read about Jesus is in Matthew chapter 2, where, do you know the very first time Jesus appears in scripture? Does it interest you, the first time Jesus appears in scripture, what people did? The first time Jesus appears in scripture is in Matthew 2 verse 8. Sorry, verse 11, Matthew 2 verse 11. The king's magi from the east came and they saw the child Jesus and immediately they fell to the ground and worshipped him.

That's the thing I wanted to stress. The first time Jesus appears in scripture, people fell down and worshipped him. I said, Lord, I never want to forget that.

Matthew's gospel begins with this. He was only a child, but the first time Jesus appears in scripture, they fell down and worshipped him. I want to be a worshipper till the end of my life.

Little things in scripture, if you read carefully, you'll find it. What is the last thing mentioned in Matthew chapter 28? In Matthew's gospel, the last thing mentioned about Jesus, when they saw him for the last time, Matthew 28 verse 16, they went to the Mount of Olives where Jesus was going to go up to heaven. Matthew 28 verse 16, and they saw him and they worshipped him.

Praise the Lord. That is how Matthew's gospel begins. That's how Matthew's gospel ends.

That's how I want my life to begin every day. That's how I want my life to end every day. That's how I want my whole life to be, of worshipping Jesus, falling down before him, inwardly I mean, always bowing before him with my own face in the dust, spiritually, inwardly.

Lord, I am nothing. I don't want to be known. I don't want to be quoted.

I don't want anybody to know my name. I don't want anybody to know who I am. I want to be a worshipper.

I don't want anything in me to hinder people from seeing your glory. Do you have that desire? Do you want to be prominent in the church, or prominent to be known by others? God have mercy on you. You are a stumbling block to Jesus Christ.

Okay, so the first thing I learned about Jesus and how God's care for Jesus is in Matthew chapter 2. When Herod wanted to kill him, when he was a helpless baby, it's a lesson for us because sometimes we are helpless in some situations and people want to harm us. There's a message here for you. Some of you say, I'm so poor.

I don't have any influence. I don't know any big shots who can help me in this difficult situation. I don't know any cabinet ministers or IAS officers or police officers or anybody to influence me.

I'm a poor person. I don't have any influential person I know. Wonderful.

Here is somebody like that. The child Jesus, more helpless than you. He was a child and somebody wanted to kill him.

Is anybody here who somebody wants to kill you? I don't think so. He was a helpless child and the biggest king of that area wanted to kill him. He had no hope.

You think it can happen? Impossible because God is watching over him. The angel of the Lord, verse 19 of chapter 2, appeared to dream Joseph and said, take up the child and go. Sorry, not there.

In verse 13 and 14, go to Egypt, take up the child, go to Egypt. Matthew 2.13. But there are people trying to destroy this child. So Jesus, Joseph took the child and went that night itself to Egypt and Herod came.

And like they say, the bird had flown. It wasn't there. I've experienced this myself.

When people tried to raid my house with the police, the bird had flown. I wasn't there. I never knew about it.

Just like Jesus didn't know. It's wonderful to have experiences like this. When people who hate you, want to harm you, but there's a God in heaven watching, who's planned and who's smarter than all those enemies of yours.

They can't touch you because your hour has not yet come. This is the example we have in Jesus when he was helpless. And if you're a helpless person, here's your example, that you have a father in heaven who is watching out to all the people who are scheming, trying to harm you and hurt you.

Maybe you've got some believers trying to harm you and hurt you. There were religious people who were trying to harm me and hurt me. It could be like that for you.

It doesn't matter. You can't outwit God. You can't outsmart God.

It's a wonderful comfort to know, look at Jesus as your example. And this is the first example of Jesus that we are given as a baby. It's good because when he was older, he could take care of himself in many ways.

What could he do when he was a child? An example for all helpless believers that there's a God in heaven. If he's your father, he plans and cares for you in things that you don't even know what other people are trying to do to you or plan against you. Doesn't make the slightest difference.

You can sleep peacefully at night. Like the psalmist says, even if army encamps around me, I will not fear because the Lord is like a wall of fire around about. The next thing I want you to see is in Luke chapter 2. You know, this was as a baby.

Now I'll show you Jesus as a young boy. In Luke chapter 2, it says about Jesus when he was coming back from the temple at the age of 12. It says in verse 51 that Jesus went down with Joseph and Mary, his earthly guardians, and he came to Nazareth and he continued in subjection to them.

That's the next thing we read about Jesus. And that continued till the age of 30. Joseph may have died 10-12 years earlier, but Mary was there and he continued in subjection till the age of 30.

Because we read in Matthew 4 that he left Nazareth only when he was 30 years old and then he set up his home in Capernaum. He continued in subjection for 30 years. That's the next thing.

What does it mean to walk in Jesus' footsteps, to look unto Jesus as our example and to run the race? This is the better thing, remember, that God has provided for us. It's not doctrine, it's not just an external life, it's an inner attitude. He continued in subjection to imperfect parents.

That's the thing to see here. Just like many of you are subject to an imperfect boss in your office. Do any of you have perfect bosses in your office? I'm sure the answer is no.

Why do you subject yourself to them? Money, money, that's why. But at home, you don't get any money by subjecting yourself to imperfect parents, right? So you can argue at home. My parents are imperfect, why should I listen to them? They don't know as much as I do.

You wouldn't do that for one day in your office, but their money is involved. You know how much you love money? That's why children who will gladly submit as they grow up, young adults, will gladly submit to imperfect bosses, will not submit to imperfect parents. They're very smart.

I know more than my parents. Don't you think Jesus knew more than Joseph and Mary? Think of children who despised their parents like Noah's son Ham, despised his father and even his Ham's son was cursed. Do you think Jesus saw many imperfections in Joseph and Mary? Do you think Joseph and Mary would sometimes yell and scream at each other? What do you think? Any Roman Catholics here who believe

that they never yelled and screamed at each other? Immaculate Mary, immaculate Joseph.

I'm sorry, they were not immaculate. They were not perfect. They were old covenant believers who were defeated by sin.

They were anxious, they grumbled, they murmured, they got angry, they lost their temper, everything. And they offered animals in the temple to get their sins forgiven. Jesus saw that.

And he never sinned. He had four brothers who irritated him. He never sinned.

Imagine growing up in a home as a perfect boy and seeing all your brothers and sisters sinning, imperfect, and your father and mother also sinning and not despising them. Wow, that's my example. That is my example who might follow.

This is the better thing that God has provided for us in the new covenant, that I can be a hundred times better than those believers and yet I will not despise them. If you despise one human being, I want to say to you in Jesus' name, you're not following him. God doesn't despise anybody.

Though he's almighty, he doesn't despise anybody. We read in the book of Job, though he's almighty, he doesn't despise anyone. Who is the one who despises? Satan.

Think of God who never despises anyone and Satan who despises everyone and all of us are in between there. Who are you closer to? Tell me. Be honest now.

Are you closer to the devil who despises everyone or you're closer to God who despises no one? In the beginning, we're all closer to the devil. We despise this person, that person, the other person. We despise so many things.

But if you get salvation, you'll come closer and closer and closer to God who despises no one. Maybe you haven't got there, but I hope you're moving in that direction. That's what I learned about Jesus.

Looking unto Jesus who never despised imperfect earthly parents. It's a very strong word. To follow Jesus is not just a question of singing songs saying follow, follow, I'll follow anywhere.

Wonderful, wonderful Jesus is to me. We can sing all that, but the test is in my attitude towards imperfect people all around me. Those of you who are married, let me ask you.

How many of you got a perfect husband or a perfect wife? Anybody? No. You see imperfection in your marriage partner? Of course you do, unless you're blind. Even if you're blind, you'll see imperfection in your marriage partner.

Now the question is, do you despise her or him? That shows whether you're closer to the devil or closer to Jesus. This is the better thing. In the old covenant, they despised people.

Miriam came to Moses and said, how dare you marry a non-Jewish woman as your wife? She got leprosy. The Pharisees with their perfect doctrine and their good external life despised Jesus, saying he's got the power of Beelzebub, the master of demons and that's how he casts out demons. All people who got a lot of knowledge in their head despise others.

God is the one who despises no one. You really want to be like God? A lot of us say, I want to be like the Lord, but here's how it is. The Pharisees despised the woman caught in adultery.

The only one who did not despise was Jesus. He didn't despise her. A lot of people despised the five times divorced Samaritan woman.

Jesus did not despise her. Jesus came to save her soul. I see such a tremendous difference.

Matthew was a cheating tax collector. Jesus didn't despise him, made him a disciple. Zacchaeus was another cheating tax collector.

You know some people say I despise the rich people. I've seen some people like that in CFC. They despise anyone who's rich or big.

Ah, he must be carnal. No. Why should he be carnal just because he's rich? Abraham was rich.

You would have despised Abraham also. I think such people would have despised Job. He was the godliest man on earth.

All rich people are not evil and all poor people are not good. Exodus 23.3 says don't be partial to poor people. I've seen that problem in CFC.

Some people are partial to the poor. That's as evil as James chapter 2 verse 3 which says you're partial to the rich. I don't want to be partial to anybody.

I want to be perfect in impartiality. I don't want to be partial to the poor. I don't want to be partial to the rich.

I don't want to despise anyone. Jesus did not despise. I'm just talking about the beginnings of Jesus life.

Forget about other things we can learn from him. But my brothers and sisters, here is where we can begin. Make the life of Jesus what you study.

You know I keep on reading the Gospels. I'll tell you. And sometimes I put a earphone and keep on listening to the Gospels.

Because in the Gospels I see the life of Jesus and I see I'm constantly getting new revelation on how he was. And since I haven't yet become like him fully and I want to become like him fully, I'm discovering new things all the time. It is a secret which is revealed.

And let me quickly go to one more verse Hebrews chapter 4. This is another thing that happened throughout Jesus lifetime. Hebrews 4 and verse 15. He was tempted in all points as we are and he did not sin.

Now there are a lot of people who fight against that doctrine. In fact they accuse CFC of preaching heresy because we believe that. That Jesus was tempted exactly like us and did not sin.

How are you tempted every day? You know. Even if you can't explain it in words doesn't matter. How are you tempted every day? Hebrews 4.15 says Jesus was tempted like that.

Some people say Jesus was like Adam. There's not a single verse in scripture which says that Jesus was like Adam. But still there are such clever people who dare to disagree with scripture and quote their own

scripture that Jesus was like Adam.

They are agents of the devil who say that because when you say that Jesus was like Adam, he's not an example for me. Adam is not an example for me. Jesus was like me.

Tempted like me. He was not tempted like Adam. First of all I don't know how Adam was tempted.

I can speculate because I don't know how Adam was created. No speculation. I don't want to go into speculation.

I know how I am tempted and I know Jesus was tempted like me. That's why I say all people who say Jesus was tempted like Adam are agents of Satan because they're trying to rob you of this precious truth that Jesus was like you and tempted like you and me. And it says even more clearly in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 17.

He had to be made like his brothers in all things. We are his brothers. Jesus told Mary Magdalene, go and tell my brothers.

We are the brothers of Jesus. Romans 8.29 it says that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Jesus is our elder brother.

We are his younger brothers and it says he had to be made like us in how many things? 100 percent. Now I don't try to analyze all that because this is a matter of the heart. Those who want to analyze it and go to Bible school and argue, they can do what they like.

They live defeated by sin. I want revelation on how to overcome sin and I'll tell you from my own testimony. I don't try to understand it.

The early days I tried to explain it. I've stopped that. I say it's a matter of revelation.

You can't explain revelation. I see if a person wants to know the truth, he'll know and the reason why he had to be made like us in all things is verse 18 because he was tempted like us and suffered in that temptation. Suffered means he denied himself.

He can run to help us who are tempted and I can testify to that for many many decades now that when I'm tempted Hebrews 2.18 is fulfilled in my life. Jesus the real translation he runs to help those who are tempted and I can testify he has. I remember the days when I used to say I got victory over sin and the Lord said don't ever say that.

Jesus keeps me from falling. Same thing but it has got a different ring about it. He runs to help me and keeps me from falling.

He runs to help me when I'm tempted to be angry and I don't get angry. He runs to help me when I'm tempted to be anxious and say be like a little baby who's not anxious. I will care for you and he helps me not to get anxious not to get and he runs to help me when I'm too proud to go and apologize to somebody and says go go ahead humble yourself and apologize.

Do you want him to run in to help you? Humble yourself. He runs to help those who are humble. It's a great revelation to see that Jesus came exactly like you and me and that's how he leads us into this life.

Let me show you this verse in Psalm 25. Why don't many Christians understand this? Why is there so much opposition to this truth? It says in Psalm 25 and verse 14. Here's the reason.

You get the answer here. Psalm 25 verse 14. The secret, I told you mystery is a secret.

The secret of the Lord is for those who fear him. There are secrets that husbands and wives have which they will whisper into each other's ears. They'll never tell anybody else.

Don't you have some secrets in your family that you won't tell anybody else except your wife or husband? God also has got some secrets. He doesn't tell it to everybody but he does tell it to those who fear him and to them he will show what his new covenant is. What a verse.

If you fear God he will show you his covenant and he will whisper his secrets into your heart which other people who are listening to the same message don't get it. They just don't get it. They understand it in the head but they don't get it and the proof of it is they are defeated by sin.

If you're defeated by sin, I want to say you haven't understood it and then go further and say that God doesn't reveal it to you because you don't fear him. You just want to create a good impression like Ananias and Sapphira. I hope it will become a passion in your life.

Say Lord show me what it means to become like Jesus. That's the passion of my life. That is the better thing of the new covenant.

The most wonderful life that any human being ever walked on this earth was Jesus Christ. Do you want to be like that? Do you want to live like that? He wasn't the richest person. He didn't have college degrees but it's the most wonderful life that anybody lived and you'll discover in eternity.

Listen to me. You'll discover in eternity that those who spent their earthly life seeking with all their heart to walk in Jesus' footsteps were the wisest people that ever lived on the earth. Let me encourage you to be in that number.

It's not that we don't value doctrine. One last verse John chapter 1 and verse 4. In Jesus was life and the life was the light of men. It's the life that is the light not the doctrine.

There are many people with the life of Christ in the Roman Catholic Church, in the CSI Church, in the Methodist Church, in the Baptist Church, in the Pentecostal Church, in CFC churches because they valued the life and the light. That's why I don't despise a person just because they belong to another church. Some of you may do that.

I don't. And if you do despise them it may be because of doctrine. See their doctrines are wrong.

The Pharisees were doctrines are right. Where did they go? To hell. A lot of people are upset with me because I say that Mother Teresa will be far ahead of me in the I believe that with all my heart.

Who are the people who criticize me for that? Those who feel that by doctrine you will enter heaven. Well the Pharisees would have all entered into heaven then. To them life, the light is doctrine.

In him was doctrine and the doctrine was the light. Rubbish! In him was life and the life was the light of men. Then people say oh brother Zach you mean to say you don't value doctrine? Of course we do.

We obey every doctrine in scripture. For example, even a simple thing like women must veil their heads when they pray or prophesy which is almost disobeyed 100% in western countries. Even that doctrine we believe.

So we value doctrine but we don't believe that's the light of men. In him was life and the life was the light of men. Never forget that.

While we keep all the doctrines, obey every commandment, even the smallest commandments in scripture, we believe that life is not in that. It's the light was in his life and if I don't have that life, I'm in darkness. Even if all my doctrines are right and that is why I believe there are a lot of people sitting in protestant churches, Pentecostal churches, CFC who got their doctrines right who are in darkness because they have not valued the life of Jesus.

I hope we will value the life of Jesus. Babylon is not some particular denomination. There are people with the spirit of Babylon who can sit right in this congregation and there are people who can have the spirit of Jerusalem who can sit in some church where the doctrines are wrong.

Let me repeat again. Doctrines are important but life is more important. That's what I mean.

Doctrine is like the parts of our body. What do I want to cut off? I don't even want to cut off a little nail. I believe in every little doctrine but my life is not in these nails or in these fingers.

My life is in the breath there is in my body. I can lose certain parts of my body and still have life. When I look at people whose doctrines are wrong and I see the life of Jesus in them, I see them like say one without one arm but they got life and then I see other people in some CFC church who got all the right doctrines but they are dead.

They're like a dead corpse lying here. Two hands, ten fingers, ten toes but dead. Don't value doctrine to such an extent that you think it is more important than life.

Remember doctrine is like the parts of our body. I want to keep every part of my body. As I said even the little nails I want but I say the life in the body is more important.

Keep that picture before you and say Lord I don't want to lose any part of my body. I want every doctrine but I don't want to value doctrine more than life and that life comes through Jesus through the Holy Spirit who has come to give us the life of Jesus. So let's look at the life of Jesus and follow him and then we shall experience that better thing that God has reserved for us.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father even what I said today I know it's so easy for people to have understood it in their heads and to think yeah I got it when they got nothing. We pray that you will give us revelation on what is important and what is secondary.

Give us light Lord that we don't deceive ourselves like the Pharisees who were in your lifetime on earth. We want to be like those disciples who followed you who probably could not understand explain the doctrines well but whose hearts were right. We want to be in that number in whose mouth no lie is found and who follow you wherever you go.

Help us we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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