

The Call of God - Unity

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in the church and the need to overcome selfishness, pride, and the desire for equality and superiority in order to achieve unity.

Duration: 59:43

Scripture: Proverbs 25:1, Matthew 20:1-16, Philipians 2:5

Topics: "Unity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the question of what believers will receive for forsaking everything to follow God. He uses the parable of the laborers in the vineyard from Matthew 20:1-16 to illustrate his point. The parable tells the story of a man who hires laborers at different times of the day, promising them a fair wage. However, the last group of laborers is hired without any promise of reward. At the end of the day, all the laborers receive the same wage, causing the first group to grumble and feel unequal. The preacher emphasizes the need for believers to have a humble and selfless attitude, not comparing themselves to others or seeking recognition for their sacrifices. He encourages listeners to have an honest heart and respond to God's call to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Transcript

I want to turn today to Philipians, in chapter 2. This has become for me, more and more, a very central passage in scripture. It speaks about the humbling of Jesus, and it says in Philipians 2.5, Have this attitude in yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus. One of the great problems in Christendom is the problem of unity.

It's very difficult to find husbands and wives who are one, a church where brothers are one, sisters are one. We have churches of all types, preaching all types of doctrines, claiming to have all types of supernatural experiences, and each claiming more than the other of some new revelation from God, movings of the Holy Spirit we hear of, people claiming to be converted and filled with the Holy Spirit and all that. But yet, wherever I've gone, I've found this one thing is elusive.

You don't seem to find it. A church where people are one. Elders in a church who are one in spirit.

And that was the problem even in the first century. And we need to see this exhortation, to have the same attitude that was in Christ in its context. Sometimes we can look at it by itself, Oh, I'm supposed to have the attitude Jesus had in myself.

But see what he's speaking about. He says in verse 2 of the same chapter, he says, Make my joy complete by being of the same mind. He's telling all these believers, be of the same mind.

He's saying to husbands and wives here today, be of the same mind. He's saying to brothers, to sisters, be of the same mind, maintaining the same love, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. I don't know if there is any verse in the whole New Testament that speaks so much of unity as this verse.

The same mind, the same love, the same spirit, the same purpose. And then he goes on to explain why it doesn't happen like that. He says basically it's due to two things, selfishness and pride.

So he says, Don't know anything from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, that each of you regard one another as more important than himself. And then he goes on to say, Think of Jesus. Think of the attitude he had.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Those who have just accepted Christ in order to go to heaven, it's impossible for them to be one. But those who become disciples, if they are really disciples, they will definitely be one. And if two brothers say they are disciples of Jesus and they are not one, well, one of them is either telling a lie or both of them, or they are ignorant of their true condition.

And very often it's the latter. I think most of us are really ignorant of our true condition. I say that because there are many times in my own life when I thought everything was OK with me.

And I came into the presence of God and I saw things that I never realized were there. You know, when Isaiah, we read, he was pronouncing in Isaiah chapter 5, he says, Woe unto this group of people and woe unto this group of people who are doing this. Woe unto the other group of people who are doing the other thing.

And everything he said was right. About all these people, all that he said about all these people was right. But when he came into the presence of God and he saw those seraphs who had never committed any sin covering their faces before a holy God, he saw himself as he had never seen himself before.

And he said, Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips. And that's what happens when a man sees the glory of God.

He sees himself in a clearer light than he's ever seen before. And so I was trying to point out to these folks in Philippi the reason why they could not become one. And when we go out and preach the gospel to other people, if you haven't made them one, and we've just made them converts, we haven't fulfilled the purpose of God.

And that is the most difficult thing to do. To make people one. Even Jesus could not do it during his entire lifetime.

He worked so much with those eleven disciples, but not even two of them were one. After three and a half years of preaching to them, teaching them, showing them miracles, at the end of three and a half years, each of them was still wanting to be the greatest at the last supper. Each of them wanted to be the leader.

They were not one. Then Jesus told them, After I leave, and the Holy Spirit has come, you will do a greater work than I have done. You ever thought of that verse? Greater works, John 14, 12.

Not only the works I do, but greater works shall you do. And what's that referring to? He said, Everyone who believes can do greater works than I do. Now either that's true or it's false.

Either everyone who believes can do a greater work than Jesus, or that's a lie, or it's a mistranslation. And if I don't believe it, I always say to people, all those verses you don't believe in Scripture, you must cut it out, be honest. But don't just be dishonest and say that you believe it, and don't try to understand what it really means.

What's Jesus saying that He raised people from the dead who were four days in the grave, and we're going to raise people from the dead who are six days in the grave? And not just one person, every believer. If that's the case, well, I've never seen a single true believer then. Did He say that He was going to walk on water, we're going to walk on water, He fed five thousand, we'd feed ten thousand? Greater works than Him? No, it's referring to none of these things.

It's referring to that one thing which He could never accomplish in all His three and a half years of ministry. Something which was more difficult than raising Lazarus from the dead, more difficult than feeding five thousand, more difficult than walking on the water, more difficult than turning water into wine, or healing a leper, or opening blind eyes, more difficult than all of these was to make two people one. And He couldn't do it.

Not because of any limitation in Him. We are not greater than Jesus. Oh, far from it.

He never said, you are greater than me. We're not even one millionth of what He is. Our ministry is not even one millionth of His.

But, there was something Jesus could not do until the Holy Spirit came into those disciples. Even Jesus couldn't do it. Any amount of preaching could not accomplish it.

If preaching, powerful preaching could make people one, surely Jesus could have accomplished it in those eleven people after three and a half years. He didn't do it. He couldn't do it.

The Holy Spirit had to come inside them and then it would be accomplished. So that was the reason why Jesus couldn't do it. And that's why today, that's why after He went and the Holy Spirit came, He told His disciples who were far inferior to Him that they would do something greater than Him that they would make people one.

Two would become one. And when we see Christians in a home, a husband and wife who are still not one, we say, well, we're back to the days before Pentecost. Whatever baptism in the Holy Spirit or speaking in tongues they may talk about, we're back to the days before Pentecost.

When we find people in a church and they can't become one, I say, however much they may wave their hands and shout hallelujah and act charismatic, we're back to the days before Pentecost. That's how it was before Pentecost. Jesus couldn't make them one.

People in the Old Testament could raise their hands, clap their hands, shout hallelujah. I think they put any of us to shame. That was before Pentecost.

But when Pentecost came, something more happened. And I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, there is such a thing as a baptism in the Holy Spirit. It's a real thing.

But it's not just something that makes us wave our hands and shout hallelujah and be more exuberant on the outside. It's something that makes husband and wife one. It's something that makes brothers one.

It's something that makes sisters one. It's something that makes the church one. And against such a church, the gates of hell will never be able to prevail.

That's what God is doing. And our eyes need to be open to see that. And this is why we need to see what is it then that's hindering this.

Is it that our baptism in the Holy Spirit is counterfeit? No. That may not be the reason. It may be that we got sidetracked into something secondary and majored on that and haven't allowed the Holy Spirit to show us the glory of Jesus into which he wants, into which likeness he wants to conform us.

Most people who speak about the fullness of the Holy Spirit, I find, speak about a liberty in praise and worship, a freedom and a liberation in expressing our, the devotion of our heart to God. This is good. It happened to me when God baptized me in the Holy Spirit.

That's good. I thank God for the gift of tongues with which we can express what's in our heart to God straight. But I say there's more to that.

The Holy Spirit has come to baptize us into one body. To make us one. And he does that by showing us the glory of Jesus.

You see, the Holy Spirit never forces us. The Holy Spirit is not pictured in the Bible like a lion terrifying us. He's like a dove.

He came upon Jesus like a dove. And he doesn't rest on anything. You remember that dove which Noah sent out of the ark? Went out and saw all those dead carcasses lying on the water.

And just came back. Wouldn't have anything to do with all that. The Holy Spirit is very gentle.

And that's why he's pictured like a dove. It says you can grieve the Holy Spirit. You can't grieve your enemy.

You can only grieve someone who loves you deeply. And the Bible says don't grieve the Holy Spirit. He's very gentle.

And he will not force us if we don't want to go a particular way. He leads us gently. He shows us the glory of Jesus.

And wherever he sees some people gripped by it and wanting to go that way, he gently leads them on. Those who are willing to pay the price. And the particular glory of Jesus he's trying to show us here in order to make us have the same mind, the same love, the same spirit, and the same purpose is the glory of his humility.

And a disciple is one who follows Jesus. It says here, though he was equal with God, verse 6, he existed in the form of God, he did not regard, verse 6, equality with God a thing to be grasped. To be equal with God is a tremendous position of power, of respect, honor.

It's the greatest position in the whole universe. And he didn't take that. He didn't hold on to that.

It says, he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but humbled himself, emptied himself, took the form of a bond-servant, and he humbled himself, became a servant, even to the point of death, even death on a cross. We must never forget that this is how salvation came. Just like many thousands of years earlier, sin came into the universe by Lucifer, trying to lift himself up, wanting to exalt himself, not satisfied.

He wanted to be equal. See, this business of equality, I want you to notice something here. Jesus did not consider equality with the highest person in the universe as something to be grasped at.

He said, I don't want equality. I'll just go down. He didn't even want to be equal with man.

He became a slave, below the level of most men. There was no desire for equality or superiority or to show himself as greater or more powerful. He came right down.

Whereas the spirit there was in Lucifer, and that's important for us to know because that's how sin came into the universe, and it's important for us to see very clearly, what Lucifer said in Isaiah 14 was, even though he was the highest of all the angels, he wasn't happy. He said, I'll make myself, Isaiah 14, 14, equal to the most high. That was his goal.

He wanted equality. Jesus gave up that equality. He wanted equality.

He had no right for equality. Gave it up. That's how sin came.

And the one who had every right for equality, gave it up. That's how salvation came. And it's important for us to know that these are the two spirits that are operating in the world today.

And they are influencing people everywhere. The whole world is influenced by this spirit of wanting something more, wanting to be equal to the highest, the greatest. You find it in business.

You find it in politics. You find it in education. You find it among nations.

You find it everywhere. And unfortunately, you find it in the church. Greater, higher, wanting to be equal to someone more than that person.

That's the reason for so many people taking titles in Christendom. Jesus said, You must not call yourself Rabbi, Father. Never take a title.

But do you think Christians have listened to that? They have every excuse under the sun to prove that they are not disobeying Jesus when they take titles like Reverend, Reverend Doctor so and so, and Pastor so and so. Jesus said, You are all brothers. And if you want one more title, He said, You are all servants.

But nobody wants those two. They want these other ones. And what's the purpose? I know people in India.

Pastors, if you call them brother, they are offended. I'm not a brother. I'm a pastor.

You see, the whole purpose is to show that I'm not at your level, brother. I'm a little higher. Don't you ever forget that.

I say, that's because you're blind. You don't understand that when I call myself a brother, that's the greatest title you can ever have. You know what I'm saying? Younger brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when I call you younger brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, are you going to take some low title like Reverend or Doctor or Pastor or some stupid thing like that? You haven't seen it. You haven't seen the glory of being called a brother. A younger brother, a younger sister of Jesus Christ.

Yeah. It's all over this desire to show that I'm greater. And you find that spirit of competition.

I find it in the schools, you know, when our children go to school. Right from the kindergarten class. It's that spirit of competition that gets into them.

You find it on the athletic field. You find it in the soccer field. You find it in every game they play in school.

You find it right from the age of five. They're competing in the class, competing on the playing field. That spirit of competition and the end of many years of that is this desire to show I'm better than you.

I'm greater. And if they've done well in class, they want to show their report cards to others. This is the world we live in.

I'm equal, I'm greater. The others are inferior. This tremendous desire to show that I'm greater.

And when we come to the church, it doesn't go away because it's in our system. The only way it can go away is if we have seen the glory of Jesus and see how it was with Him. He did not hold on to equality.

Do you remember that story which Jesus said in Matthew chapter 20? You know, this was after the rich man had turned away from Jesus, saying, I'm sorry, I can't sell all that I have. It says in Matthew 19, verse 22, the man went away grieved because he owned a lot of property and he wouldn't give it up when Jesus told him to give it all up and seek for treasure in heaven. And then Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 19, 23, it's very difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

And then we read Peter saying, in verse 27, But Lord, look at us. We're not like them. We're not like Him.

He wasn't willing to give up everything. But look at us. We left everything.

You see the spirit of comparison there in Peter? We have left everything and followed Him. What are you going to give us? Aren't we better than that fellow there? And Jesus said, OK, I'll tell you a parable. Just listen to it.

And He said there was a man who went out to hire laborers. Chapter 20, verse 1. He was answering this question of Peter's. What are we going to get who left everything? You may not realize it, my brothers and sisters, but in all of us, there is a little bit of that spirit when we look at other people who we feel haven't given up everything.

We feel we're better disciples. We feel we have sacrificed more. We're not like those people who have turned away, not given everything.

We're a little better. And it's to us that the Lord says this parable. He says a man went out to hire laborers for his vineyard and he went out early in the morning and he got people at 6 o'clock in the morning and said, come and work for me and I'll give you one denarius a day.

That's a day's wage. And he went out at the third hour, that's 9 o'clock, and said the same thing. I'll give you what's right.

And at 12 o'clock and at 3 o'clock, first five. And to all of them, he promised something. I'll give you this if you work for me.

You see, this is to answer Peter's question, what will you give me? What are we going to get for having forsaken all? What are we going to get for having worked from 6 o'clock in the morning? Okay. He agreed with them. And then, there was this, then he went out at 5 o'clock in the evening, one hour before closing time.

They used to work 12 hours those days. He said, why have you been standing here the whole day idle? Verse 6, chapter 20. And then he told them, you too, go and work in the vineyard.

And the difference here was, he never told them that he'd give them anything. That was the difference between this group and all the groups that came at 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock. All the others, he promised, I'll give you something, except the last group.

They came without any promise of reward. Well, they may have said, well, we've got only one hour to work, we might as well get a little exercise before we go home. It doesn't matter, if we don't get anything.

And they went to work. And when evening came, he called this group first. And he gave them one denarius.

And now see what the people who came in the first hour said. And when they were, who were hired first, came first, they thought they would receive more. They also got the same thing.

And they grumbled, verse 11, and said, these last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal. You see that word again? You have made them equal to us. See, this has been the great conflict from eternity.

Equality. How can you make somebody equal to me? I'm senior. I've been here longer.

I walked with you longer. I came at six o'clock in the morning. These fellows were living in the gutter till yesterday and came into the church, converted and sitting here.

And I've lived a holy life from the age of three. How can you make them equal to me? The Lord says, yes. In fact, they get their reward first.

Because you fellows have got such a desire for equality and honor and position. You are lost in the line. It doesn't matter how many years you worked.

It doesn't matter how holy you were from the age of three. That's not what I'm looking at. See, these people who came at the eleventh hour, we can say they are a picture of people who lived for the world ninety percent of their lives, eleven hours out of twelve, and came at the last moment.

Do such people really deserve to be made equal to those who lived holy lives from the age of three? Tell me. We're going to get a lot of surprises when we go to heaven. You know, even though, even though all of us will say, it's not my righteousness that saves me.

It's the righteousness of Christ. We don't really believe it. When that fellow who has lived ninety percent of his life for the world comes up and he's clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and I who have lived a holy life from the age of three am clothed with the righteousness of Christ, I still feel I'm a little better.

We lift up this cloak of the righteousness of Christ and show that man, do you know what's inside here? It's a little better than what's inside yours. I tell you it's there. If you look inside your heart, you'll find it.

That's why we feel that man who's lived such a wicked life, how can he be equal to me? How can the Lord make him equal? That's the thing that's got to be eradicated from us if we are to become one. Husband and wife can look down on each other because of various things. One thinks they're more spiritual and the other thinks they're more spiritual.

That's why there's no problem. There are problems. See, when there is a tension between a husband and wife or between two brothers, wherever I go, I ask people this question.

That can happen. Between brothers, it can happen in a home. And the question now is who is going to take the first step to restore that fellowship? Here's that little tension that's come between husband and wife.

And I think after a little while both feel a bit bad. Their tension is there. They want to remove it but no one is willing to take that first step and say, Oh, I'm sorry.

It was my fault. They'll say it as soon as the other person has said it. But they have to wait for the other person to say it first.

But now, who is going to take the first step? And I say, we have an example given us in the Bible. When God and man had a problem, separation, a tension, who took the first step? Who? God. The one who was more spiritual, right? So there God has taught us whenever there's a tension, the one who is more spiritual must take the first step to restore that relationship.

And since both husband and wife think they are spiritual, they should be just running into each other's arms as soon as... I mean, don't you think you're spiritual? Don't you think the other person is wrong? And you're right. All right. Then you're like God.

You're right and the other person is wrong. You should be taking the first step. Why isn't it like that? It's this equality.

She's beneath me. She's sinned. Not me.

Or he has sinned. Not me. This is the problem.

And that gap remains and the devil walks right in. Into our homes, into our churches. How is it with Jesus? He never wanted equality.

He came underneath everybody to become a slave of everyone. He took the lowest place that he might be nothing. I remember once when studying through Matthew chapter 1 and I was thinking when I read through a genealogy.

Can you get anything out of a genealogy? Somebody begat so-and-so and somebody begat so-and-so and somebody begat so-and-so. And we read all scriptures inspired by God and it's profitable for instruction, for reproof that the man of God may be perfect. And all I'm reading from 15 verses is somebody begat someone.

And I got something out of it. I don't remember whether I shared this before with you, but it's so precious. You see, this is how the New Testament begins.

And I said, Lord, there must be something here for me to see. My eyes are blind. There's a lovely verse in Proverbs 25.1 which says, It's the glory of God to conceal a matter, but it's the glory of kings to search it out.

So God has concealed many things in scripture. That's His glory. And if you're a king, as you say you are, then it's your glory to search it out.

Don't just lazily wait for some preacher to show it to you. Go and search it out. But I'll give you a little help this evening.

Just to encourage you to go to all the other chapters in the New Testament. Okay, it says about the genealogy of Jesus Christ. And you know, in this whole passage there are only four women mentioned.

Generally speaking, the Jews would never mention a woman in genealogy. The Jews despised women. But here are four women mentioned.

Number one was Tamar, Matthew 1.3. And to Judah were born Peres and Zerah by Tamar. That's why you need to go back to the Old Testament and you read in Genesis 38 how Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law. This was incest.

Two children were born of incest. Now, remember this. When you and I were born, we never chose which family line we were going to come through or which place we were going to be born into.

We were just born. There was only one person who was born into the world who planned his family line. I hope you can believe that.

Who knew he was going to be born into the world. That's Jesus. He knew he was going to be born into the world and he could plan his family tree right from Adam as to which line am I going to come through.

Wouldn't he want to come through a pure line without any sinners along the way? Or at least people whose sins were not known or written in the Old Testament. Why does he choose someone who was born of incest? It's almost as though Jesus sits in heaven and sees this incest going on between Judah and his daughter-in-law and those children born and he says, I'll choose that line. We don't understand how much he identified with sinners.

That's what comes through in the first page of the New Testament. He became like his brethren in all things. He humbled himself.

He was numbered with the transgressors. This is our Saviour. And this is the Saviour we are representing to other people so inadequately because of our pride, because of our arrogance, because of our feeling of superiority.

This is not the Christ we are presenting. I've often looked at my country in India and I've said, India has not rejected Christ. India has rejected the Christ they've seen in Christians.

America has not rejected Christ. America has rejected the Christ they've seen in all the television evangelists and all the other Christians they see around them. That's the Christ they've rejected and that's

not the true Christ.

And we need to ask ourselves, the people I encounter, have they rejected Christ or have they rejected the Christ they've seen in me? My relatives, my parents are not turning to the Lord. My brothers and sisters are not turning to the Lord. Why? Have they rejected Christ or have they rejected the Christ they see in me? You know, Jesus identified with sinners.

There was absolutely no trace of any sense of superiority. He wasn't equal to anyone. He was underneath everyone.

Well, one would think that if there was incest in your family line, you certainly wouldn't like to put that on the first page of your biography. Here it is. OK.

The second woman mentioned here is Rehab. Verse 5. And to Salmon was born Boaz by Rehab. You know who Rehab was? She was the most well-known prostitute in Jericho.

If you went into Jericho's red light district, asked where is Rehab, everybody would point out her house. Think if your great-grandmother was the most well-known prostitute here in this area. Would you like to put that in your family tree and publicize it in the first page? We try to hide it as much as possible.

And there it is in the first page of the New Testament. This is the line he chose. And the third woman mentioned there is Ruth.

The Bible says Ruth was a Moabite. That means she descended from Moab. You know who Moab was? Moab was one of the sons of Lot born through incest with his own daughter.

His daughters got him drunk and had a child through their own father. Moab. And Jesus watches this from heaven.

Says, I'll choose that line. It's amazing. So different from the spirit of showing that we are holier than others and superior to others.

Nothing of that. He chose the lowest, filthiest line from heaven. He planned it.

I want to ask you my brothers and sisters, how many of you would, I mean if you accidentally came along that line, you can't help it. But how many of you would deliberately choose such a line to be your family tree? If you want to understand Jesus, if you want to let the Holy Spirit show you the glory of Jesus in the midst of all these bigots and bigots and bigots, here it is. This is our savior.

This is the one we are supposed to represent to an unbelieving world by our spirit. Have you done it? I tell you when we see these things, we really have to hang our heads in shame. This is the glory of Jesus.

And the fourth woman mentioned here is Bathsheba. That was another, one of the worst crimes mentioned in the Old Testament. We talk about Samson and Delilah.

Well, Delilah at least wasn't married to anybody. What about David and Bathsheba? Here was a married man. David sleeps with his wife.

When the man is out fighting for David. Can you believe that? The man is out fighting a battle which David should be fighting. He goes and fights there in the battle front for David.

And this man goes, David goes and takes this man's wife. And when the man comes home, he tries to cover up his sin by telling the man to go, go and sleep with his wife at home. And the man says, how can I go and sleep with my wife when my brother is out fighting there in the battle and he sleeps outside the door of David.

Such a man's wife. He goes and sleeps with. Then sends that man back into battle.

Gets him killed in battle. Goes and marries this woman. And her name is there.

Yeah, it's really something to see that. This is my family tree. He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.

And when he came to earth, he did not consider equality with some high family or some pure family or some pure family line. He didn't want it. He came to save sinners.

And he identified with sinners. He was numbered among the transgressors. And he took the lowest of the low place.

That's how he became our savior. He humbled himself. And throughout his life, that's how it was.

I can imagine the, the shame that he faced from childhood. You know, in, I know how Nazareth must have been from the villages in India I have been to. The atmosphere and the surroundings and the way people live in the villages in India is exactly like in the, in the really, the real villages where much civilization hasn't gone in, in India.

Just like the village in Nazareth. Everybody knows everything about everyone. That's how it is in the village.

And if Mary became pregnant, everybody in Nazareth knew it. And probably Joseph alone knew that this was of the Holy Spirit. So they were talking about Mary long before she got married.

And then when Jesus was born, as he walked down the streets, people would say, that was a rare thing, you know, those days, for a woman to become pregnant. It wasn't a common thing those days. Without being married, Jesus would walk down and people would say, see that little boy, we know who his mother is, we don't know who his father is.

That's how he lived and grew up. He suffered, because he humbled himself. Because he had come to redeem man, he came and his father wanted him to face everything that all men face.

The shame of being an illegitimate child which many people face in the world today. Jesus can turn around to such a man and say, I know what you are going through. I faced it myself.

For years in Nazareth I faced it. Today it is not such a shame. Two thousand years ago in Nazareth, the shame was a thousand times greater.

And he faced it. I noticed in the Gospels, you know, whenever people were happy with Jesus, they would call him the son of Joseph. Whenever they were angry with him, they would call him the son of Mary.

Have you noticed that? It says once in Luke chapter 4, he got up in the synagogue and in the beginning when he started out, they said, what gracious words are coming out. Isn't that the son of Joseph? You

read Mark chapter 6, when they were very angry with him, they said, isn't this the son of Mary? You don't get the barb that little sting there. It was there.

I know in the villages in India, you never call a person the son of the mother's name. Such a thing is never heard of. Why did they call him son of Mary? It was another way of calling him a bastard.

He was an illegitimate child. This is how he grew up. All through his life, it was a way of going down, despised, it says he was despised and rejected by men and he took that place joyfully.

He never complained. He never complained that the father had given him a difficult lot. You know, some of us were bothered when somebody calls us a little bad name somewhere.

Have you understood? Have you seen the glory of Jesus? What are the type of things you and I have complained about? Somebody said something about me. Look at the line Jesus came from. Look at what they said about him.

He was not an illegitimate child. He was the purest child that was ever born into the world. And they called him illegitimate.

Has someone said something about you which is totally untrue? Not a shred of truth in it? Has it disturbed you? Well, have the attitude in you, the Bible says, which is in Jesus Christ. Why does it disturb you? Because you are being made equal to sinners and you are not a sinner. You are a holy person.

How dare they make you equal? There are sinners like that, but I am not one like them. That's why you are disturbed. And we are going out to represent Jesus, to redeem a world of sinners.

It's a lot of rubbish. We cannot do it until we identify with Jesus first and say, Lord, I want to be like you. And when I see the glory of his humility, I can never be offended no matter what people call me.

They can call me anything. I remember one godly person said, I don't remember who it was, said, he says, when people say something bad about me, I have to say, if they really knew all about my past life and my thought life, they'd say worse things than that. They don't know.

Isn't that true? Do people know everything about your past life? Do they know everything about all the thoughts that have gone on in your mind? What are we disturbed about? What they said was far less than what we deserve. But we are disturbed because we haven't seen the glory of Jesus' humility. And if we miss out on this, we haven't known God.

We were speaking yesterday about eternal life. Eternal life is to know God. And Jesus explained the Father by the way He lived on earth.

And He showed us that God is a very, very humble person. I've often thought that, supposing I were living in Nazareth in the time when Jesus was a carpenter there. And I never knew that He was a Messiah.

I just thought He was one of those carpenters like there are other carpenters in Nazareth. Supposing I met Jesus on the street someday. I mean, just another man.

What would be the first impression that He would make on me after I spent five or ten minutes with Him talking to this carpenter? What would be the impression left behind on me when I go away from Him? I see that's important for me to know that. Because if that's the impression He would leave on me, then that's

the impression I must leave on others when I spend ten or fifteen minutes with them. That's why it's important to know it.

If the Holy Spirit can show me the glory of Jesus there, He can change me into that likeness. But if I got a wrong understanding, then, you know, we become like the God we worship. If the God you worship is a hard, strict God, you'll become hard and strict too.

Because we become like the God we worship. And if you've got a false concept of God, then that's how you're going to be. And I think, this is my understanding, that if I met Jesus for ten or fifteen minutes and I didn't know anything about who He was, I would have gone away with this feeling, boy, what a humble man.

I think that's what struck me the most about Him. Not, ooh, what a holy man. I think the Pharisees would have given me that type of feeling.

Ooh, what a holy man. He's always talking about the Bible and always talking about spiritual things. But Jesus could talk about ordinary things and never make me feel small in His presence.

And just make me feel I'm down at His level. Even though He was the holiest man walking on earth, He could make a prostitute feel that she was on the same level as Him. That was His humility.

And when we go out to represent this Jesus Christ in a lost world, I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, when people meet you, and spend a few minutes with you, particularly if you're a servant of God, and you've been a preacher of the Word, anointed preacher of the Word, what's the impression you leave behind on people? One who knows everything, one who's mighty in the Scriptures, one who's holy. Then we haven't seen Jesus. We over all people with our personality, and our gifts, and our abilities, and our Bible knowledge, and our holiness.

That's why they turn away. We don't blame them. That's not Jesus.

If you've really seen the glory of Jesus, Holy Spirit changes you into that likeness. You'll feel so small, that you'll never again think that there's another man on earth inferior to you. It's not possible.

Consider one another, Paul says, more important than yourself. You'll take that low place gladly because that's the place your Savior took. That's how He lived on earth.

And that's why when there was no one else to wash the disciples' feet, He took the bucket of water and did it. I mean, there's a way of life with Him. There was a dirty job needed to be done, and He was the first to do it.

Because there was no sense of dignity about Him. That false sense of dignity. I can't do that.

And so, once we see this, brothers and sisters, I believe it will make a tremendous difference. In our whole ministry. I think of Jesus planning His death.

He knew that, you know, we saw how He planned His birth. How He planned His earthly life. Misunderstood as an illegitimate son and all that.

And called Bilzebul, Prince of Devils. Just by the way, you know, we think of many marks of being part of God's family. Have you ever thought of this as one of the marks of being part of God's family? If I were to

ask you, can you tell me some of the marks of being part of God's family? Say, we love one another, and we're pure, we're holy and all that.

But here's another mark of being part of God's family. It's what Jesus Himself said in Matthew 10, 25. He said that disciple, it's enough the disciple becomes His teacher because the disciple is not above His teacher.

Matthew 10, 24. The slave is not above his master. And listen to this.

The middle of verse 25. If they have called the head of the house Bilzebul, Prince of Devils. OK.

Now, the first thing is, the disciple is not above his master. And if the head of the house had been called Bilzebul, how much more the members of his family. So what's one mark of being part of Jesus' family? We're going to get a few names.

And they're not going to be very complimentary names. Can you tell me some of the names you've been called because you follow Jesus? I don't mean the names you were called because you did some stupid thing in the factory or the office. I mean, that we deserve.

I'm not talking about those, those types of things. I'm talking about the names you were called because you decided to follow Jesus in some situation. Because you stood up for the truth of His Word.

And you wouldn't compromise and you wouldn't yield your position. Then ask yourself, are you really a member of Jesus' family? Part of Jesus' humility was this. Getting, being called names by people.

And whenever people called Him a name like this, He said, It's forgiven. He didn't keep it. It rebounded off Him like a ball.

There was no big bullet. It didn't go inside. It's okay, forgiven.

That's how it must be. If we are members of Jesus' household, why are we so disturbed when you hear that somebody said something bad about you? It's a lack of humility. How dare they call me as such a holy man by such a name? Now, shall I tell you some of the names I've been called in the last 35 years that I've served the Lord? Devil.

Son of the Devil. Spirit of the Devil. The whole Trinity.

Antichrist. Terrorist. False prophet.

Cult leader. Diatrophies. I can't remember all of them.

There are many more like this. Now, when I saw the glory of Jesus, it didn't disturb me. I said, well, I'm a member of Jesus' household.

That's all it proves. It doesn't prove anything else. How much more? And I tell you, I didn't get called these names because I took anybody's money or cheated anyone or did any harm to anyone.

It's because I stood for the truth of God's word and exposed the hypocrisy that was in those systems and in those money-loving pastors and people who had a false manifestations of the Holy Spirit. That's why God called these names. It doesn't disturb me.

I've never lost one minute of sleep bothering about all these names. It's just an assurance. I'm a member of Jesus' household.

And think of the way Jesus planned his death. Now, Jesus had to die for the sins of the world. But couldn't he have died in a more decent way? In a more sort of respectable way? I mean, there are respectable ways of dying.

He could have died in a respectable way. Why does he choose the the most evil way ever invented by man to kill someone? The electric chair hanging. Why have people invented these things? Because it's instantaneous.

It's a dignified way of killing a man. But crucifixion? Hanging there, hanging there. Suffering for six hours and the humiliation stripped, hanging into an underwear before all those people mocked, ridiculed.

He chose that way. Everything he chose in life, I see from birth to death was in order to go underneath everybody so that no one on earth could say to him Lord, you don't understand what I've gone through. He understands it very well.

And if we are to be leaders of God's people I want to say to you, brothers and sisters it's not a question of going to a Bible school and getting a head crammed full of knowledge and then going out and vomiting it all out before people. That's not ministry. It's going the way Jesus went being humbled crushed and rejoicing.

Saying Lord, thank you for this privilege. I see your footsteps here. Another situation.

Lord, that's your footsteps. I want to put my feet in there. What an honor to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Then I get a ministry. And that ministry comes out from within out of our life. And I wish all of us sitting here would see the glory of Jesus in this area.

And that from this day it will transform us completely. I know what it did to me as I began to see this more and more in my life it eliminated all grumbling and complaining from my life totally. Then I understood why when it says in Philippians 2 how Jesus humbled himself.

It goes on from there to say take this attitude in you which is in Christ Jesus who humbled himself went to the death of Christ. Now, therefore verse 14 of Philippians 2 do all things without grumbling or complaining. That's what happens.

It's one of the marks of a humble man. He never complains or grumbles. People in his church can turn against him and rebel against him and say all types of things behind his back.

It's fine. Go right ahead. If God is with me you cannot overcome me.

It's impossible. God is with a humble man. God is on the side of the humble.

He supports the humble. He resists the proud. And if you want God to be with you humble yourself.

And I tell you it's not just the church being against you the whole world is against you. They will not be able to overcome you. Because God is with you.

That's the type of servant of God that this world needs to see. More and more of that. And you can be like that.

I believe all of us need to be like that. Let's pray. Like we heard at the beginning of the meeting it's easy for the seed to come into our heart and for the devil to snatch it away so that it never produces any fruit.

Or it can fall on an honest heart. That's what Jesus said in that parable. An honest heart.

One that says Lord I have seen my need today. I need something here. I want to see this more clearly.

Please continue to speak to me through the hours of night. That my whole life and ministry will be transformed from this day. As I seek to see your footsteps and walk in them.

Say that. Say that from the depth of your heart to God. Mean it.

Do business with God tonight. And say Lord I respond to the call of your spirit. I want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

I'm sick and tired of this competing with people trying to show that I'm equal or better than them. Help me to go down Lord the way you went. Heavenly Father help us that your spirit move in our midst.

Humble us and make us one. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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