

(The Foundation and the Building) Knowing the Love of God

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing and experiencing God's love, which is the foundation for loving others and overcoming selfishness.

Duration: 57:38

Scripture: Matthew 10:42, Matthew 20:1

Topics: "Christian Love", "Generous Giving"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a warm heart towards every person in the church. He encourages the listeners to examine their hearts and start working on developing this attitude. The speaker also mentions the website poonen.org where video messages, audio messages, and books by Zach Poonan can be freely downloaded. He then provides the mailing address and email address for those who want to receive weekly messages by Zach Poonan. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the concept of giving and how it should be done in a way that is quickly forgotten, without keeping track of what was given. The speaker refers to a verse that suggests that when giving, one should not remember the act of giving after a few months. He contrasts this with people who remember and boast about their giving years later. The sermon ends with a story from Matthew chapter 20 about servants who were hired at the 11th hour and were given their pay first, highlighting the generosity of God. The speaker expresses his desire to worship and be like this generous God.

Transcript

Let's turn to 1 John chapter 4. This is one of the most important truths that we need to be gripped by. The truth that's written here in 1 John chapter 4 and verse 16 onwards down to 19. 1 John 4. I want to read in the Living Bible.

We know how much God loves us because we have felt his love and because we believe him when he tells us that he loves us dearly. God is love and anyone who lives in love is living with God and God is living in him. And as we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete.

So we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the day of judgment but can face him with confidence and joy because he loves us and we love him too. We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly. His perfect love for us eliminates all dread or fear of what he might do to us.

If we are afraid, it is for fear of what he might do to us and that shows that we are not fully convinced that he really loves us. So you see, our love for him comes as a result of his loving us first. Most Christians, particularly when we are young, have a problem with not loving the world, not loving money, not loving anything other than God.

Many people find it a tremendous battle, if they are honest, that there are other things in the world that seem to draw us and we are drawn. It could be our job, it could be a person, it could be an ambition, it could be a profession, it could be anything, something that competes with God for our affection. And what is the reason for that? The Bible says that the reason is that we are not convinced of God's love for us.

More and more, I have come to see that that is the real reason. We are not convinced that God loves us perfectly because, it says in the last verse we read in verse 19, our love for God comes as a result of his loving us first. We love him because he first loved us.

And if ever in your life you meet a Christian who is fervently and passionately in love with Jesus Christ, willing to do anything for him and sacrifice anything for him, and who has no interest in anything in the world or in money or honour or pleasure or anything, you can be absolutely sure that that Christian was first of all convinced about God's tremendous love for him. That's why he came to such a passionate devotion to Jesus Christ. Why is it that the Lord had to tell one church, you are neither hot nor cold, you love me a little bit, you don't love me fervently, at the same time you are not like those unbelievers who don't love me at all, you love me a little bit.

And we think that's a good thing. A lot of Christians think that, yeah I love Jesus a little bit and that's okay. And I want to say to you, it's not okay.

In fact, the Lord said to that church in Laodicea, because you are lukewarm, I'll spit you out of my mouth, means I don't want a person who is not fervently in love with me, because God's love is fervent, passionate, wholehearted. There are no half measures in God's love for us. And he expects that type of love from us.

So you see, our love for him comes as a result of his loving us first. In all heathen religions, the God they worship is a God whom they are afraid of. In fact, that is the way to identify a heathen religion.

One of the primary marks of a heathen religion is that it has a God who is a God to be afraid of. And the people who worship this God also become like that. They are not loving, gracious people.

They are people who like to terrify others. There are Christian leaders like that. You can't get very close to them, because they put you in awe and fear of them, because they worship a God who is like that.

There's a verse in the Old Testament where God said, I think it's in the Psalms or Isaiah somewhere, where God says about the people who worship idols, that they become like them. They worship idols and they become like them. They become like the God they worship.

And that's a principle which is true, that if you worship a God whom you can't get very close to, you will also be a person whom people can't get very close to. People have to keep a little distance from you, because you become like the God you worship, whom you can't get close to your God and nobody can get close to you. So this is very important for us that we get all these wrong concepts, ideas of God out of our head.

In every heathen religion, as I said, they worship a God who is to be feared, whom you have to appease by going on sacrifices or pilgrimages or doing things to please him, somehow make him happy. Now the reason I emphasize that is because there is a Christianity also, which is like that. There is a version of Christianity that is being preached and presented, which has got a God like that, who you have to somehow try to please, otherwise he'll be very angry with you.

I'm not talking about unbelievers, I'm talking about preachers who tell people, unless you give God some money, he's not going to be very happy with you, he'll give you some sickness. There are pastors who actually say that. But if you don't give money to the God, you'll have to give it to the doctor, because you'll get sick.

See God is a pretty covetous person, he wants your money. Let me tell you, what would you think if, supposing you were a Christian for 40 years, and you never gave one rupee to God, what do you think God would think of you, if in your whole life you never gave him one rupee for his work or anything? It's a good question to answer. I don't think it would make any difference, at all.

Not the God I worship. I mean, supposing my wife never gave me one rupee in 40 years of our married life, would it change my attitude to her? Is God better than me or worse than me? That's all my question. We worship a God of our imagination.

It's not the God of the Bible. We worship a God whom we have manufactured in our imagination, and no wonder, many of us, our lives are not very happy. God is the most wonderful person to live with.

The Bible says, in his presence there is fullness of joy. You'll be a very joyful person if you live with God. I'll tell you this, you will not be a grumbling, sour, grumpy, long-faced person if you live with God.

It's impossible. If you live with a heathen God, sure, you'll be grumpy and long-faced. I really believe a lot of Christians are living with some other God, because they are so grumpy and long-faced and sour and hard to get along with and so mean.

God's not mean, God's so generous. He's not calculating in how much he gives us. He's so generous, because love is like that.

And we have to see that if there's any element of fear in our thoughts, that if I don't do this, then God will do this to me. See what it says here, in the middle of verse 18, it says, if we are afraid, and we are afraid of what he might do to us, that shows that we are not fully convinced that he really loves us. If you are afraid of something that God may do to you, it could be due to any reason.

You know, I've had people come to us and ask me this question. You know, some difficulty, some suffering has come into their life, some sickness or something. Brother, am I reaping for all the sins I committed in the past? They're afraid God's doing something to them.

They're not absolutely sure that God loves them. If you're afraid of what he might do to you, that shows that you're not fully convinced that he really loves you. Everything that I have to reap, I'll tell you my faith, I don't know what's yours, but my faith is this.

I have to reap a lot of terrible, terrible things for the sins I committed in my life, but Jesus reaped it all on the cross. So, I don't have anything to reap. That's why I'm so happy.

Then why are you so miserable? You know the reason now. I don't believe a Christian who has understood that can ever be unhappy. And a Christian who has tasted the generosity and the goodness and the lavishness with which God blesses us.

I cannot imagine how such a Christian can be stingy and calculating in his attitude to other people. I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, I don't know your private life, but I fear that some of you are stingy and calculating, even though you're very religious in your activity in CFC. And the reason is, because the God you worship is a pretty stingy God.

It's not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is a loving, generous Father. He never makes anyone miserable.

He makes us happy. So happy that even when he doesn't give us something, he doesn't take away our happiness. Isn't it amazing to have such confidence in a loving Father that if I ask him for twenty-five things and all twenty-five he says no, that makes no difference.

We're still happy. We are absolutely convinced he loves us. Do you know God like that? Do you have a complaint in your heart today, like Mary and Martha had? They told Jesus when he came after Lazarus died, Lord, if you had been here, this would not have happened.

I wonder if in your life there is something like that, about something that you have to say to God, Lord, if only you had answered that prayer, or if only you had done this or done that, things would have been different. You know, you're not really convinced that he loves you because you feel he's punishing you in some way, afraid that he might hurt you in some way. And the sad thing is that this affects our relationship with other people in the church and in our home.

It makes us very insecure. I was like this in my younger days, very insecure, because the God I worshipped was a very strict God. He was a very stingy God.

He was a miserly God. He wasn't the God of the Bible, he was the God of my imagination. He was a cold, calculating God that I worshipped, and he made me cold and calculating.

He was a God with whom I had to do business. I did things to please him. Now, you know, there's a good way to please God.

You can please God because you love him, but there's another way of pleasing him because, you know like the heathen do things to please God because they're afraid if you don't please him, he may be a bit unhappy. Jesus spoke so much about doing things in secret without knowing about it. He said when you give money, for example, your left hand must not know what your right hand does.

How can you do that without your left hand knowing what your right hand... If I have given some money to someone, or done some good to someone, how is it possible for me, myself, other people okay, they don't know about it is okay. If Jesus had said when you give some money, make sure other people don't know about it, that I can understand. But that also he said, don't blow your trumpet when you give your gifts.

But he said more than that. He said when you give your gifts, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. That means you yourself must not know.

How is that possible? I've thought about that. And I felt that, you know, some of these difficult verses, we mustn't skip through. We must try to understand it.

And I've discovered that difficult verses can be understood not by study, not by meditation, but by practice itself. By practicing what that verse says, then you understand it. So if you sit down and try to study and get some books on Greek and all that, you won't understand.

But if you do what that verse says, and seek to do it the way the Lord told you to do it, you'll understand. I believe what it means is that when you give something or do something to someone, it should be done in such a way that you're pretty quickly forgotten about it. That means a few months later, you don't even remember that you did good to somebody.

You don't even remember that you gave some money somewhere. So that when somebody comes and tells you, you know, brother, I'm so thankful for what you did. You really don't remember that you did that.

Your left hand has forgotten what your right hand did. But many people who give to God are not like that. I mean, years later they can tell you exactly how much they gave and where they gave and whom they gave.

That's like the heathen. They've got a pretty good account of what they've done. And such people also keep an account of all the wrong things that other people have done to them.

They keep an account of all the good they've done and keep an account of all the bad that other people have done to them. Because their God is like that. They worship a God who keeps a very accurate account of all the evil things they've done.

And they keep a very accurate account of all the evil things other people have done to them. But imagine if you start worshipping the true God of the Bible. The true God of the Bible is one who, when he looks at me, I've repented of my sins and I've cleansed, been justified in the blood of Christ.

He looks at me and he doesn't remember any of the bad things I've done. But he does remember all the few good things I did in my life. If I keep on worshipping this God and delight myself in his presence, you know what will happen? Gradually when I look at other people, I won't remember any of the bad things they've done.

But I will remember all the good things they did. I'll remember the cup of cold water they gave me somewhere or some little thing they did for me here or there. And I'll be very thankful and grateful.

I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, do you remember the little things that other people have done for you? Let's forget the whole wide world, let's stay within the church. Can you honestly say that from the day you came to this church, you remember the things that people have done for you and that you try your best to forget all the bad things that people did? Then you have seen the God of the Bible. We all want to be like Jesus.

We say that. But one characteristic of Jesus Christ is, he said that if somebody gives even a cup of cold water to one of my disciples, I will never forget it. And I say, Lord, I want to be like you.

That means, if somebody somewhere 20 years ago gave me just one cup of cold water, I never want to forget it. Leave alone things which are much more than a cup of cold water. You know why we are

generally speaking a bunch of ungrateful people? Because we worship the wrong God.

You may call him Jesus, but he's not the Jesus of the Bible. You may call him Father, but he's not the Father of the Bible. That's why Jesus said that eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he sent.

That's why the Bible says, no one has seen God in any time but Jesus Christ came and explained him to us. And for me, the greatest longing in my life is to know my Father better and to know Jesus Christ better. Because the more I know Jesus Christ, the more I can know my Father.

I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, take seriously this thing of being like Christ in this area, that he remembers even a cup of cold water given. Jesus said, if somebody gave a cup of cold water to one of my disciples, do you remember the good things that some people have done for your children? Maybe somebody somewhere gave a cup of cold water to one of your boys or girls. Don't forget it.

Be like Christ. We forget so easily because the poison of selfishness is deep-rooted in us. The thing that Jesus came to save us from.

When the Bible says that thou shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. I see that almost the greatest sin I need to be saved from is selfishness. There is a tremendous amount of selfishness in all of us.

If you haven't seen it, ask God to show it to you. And the wonderful good news is that Jesus came to save us from all of it. It's like, you know, if a serpent has bitten me and the poison has gone into my system, I'd be very happy if there's some type of suction machine that could get into my veins or arteries and suck out all the poison.

I'd be very happy if there's some machine like that. I don't want one drop of that cobra's poison in my system. That doesn't do me any good.

And the old serpent bit our forefather Adam. That poison flowed into his veins. It's the poison of selfishness.

And it has come down to all of us. And Jesus has come to save us from it completely. Make it your goal in life.

How is this connected with love? Because love and selfishness are opposites. The more selfish you are, the less loving you are. There is absolutely no selfishness in God, because he's totally love.

When it says here, God is love, when it says, we read this, verse 16, the middle, God is love. And anyone who lives in love is living with God. That means anyone who is free from selfishness.

It's particularly in our decisions that we find selfishness coming forth. It's not feelings. We must get rid of a religion of feelings.

I'll tell you the type of religion we must get rid of. We must get rid of a religion which is only in doctrines. We must get rid of a religion which is only in feelings.

We must get rid of a religion which is only in words. And we must have a Christianity which is reality. And that is where I'm actually being freed from my selfish way of life.

Actually, the most of us who are married, if you're honest, all of us who are married will acknowledge that we discovered how selfish we were when we got married. Because in our single days, we don't usually discover how selfish we are, how self-centered we are, how we want a certain way of life. That's part of our selfishness.

Nobody must disturb it. And that's how we live as single people. And if somebody disturbs that, I mean if you try to disturb my selfish way of life, I'll just keep little distance from you.

Because you're disturbing my selfish way of life. And I'll fellowship with those who don't disturb my selfish way of life. And all those people who disturb my selfish way of life, I keep away from them.

And then, as a single person, I can always retreat to my room at night. But the trouble when you get married is that when you retreat to your room at night, there's somebody else there, whom you can't escape from, who's also in that room, who's an equally selfish person as you are, who's also interested in preserving her selfish way of life, or his selfish way of life. And what wonderful opportunities when these two people decide to follow Jesus.

Tremendous opportunities to develop character. Like iron sharpens iron. I feel sorry for you if you've got a weak wife who is like clay, who'll say, yes sir, yes sir, yes sir, yes sir, yes sir, to you.

She can't sharpen you. Have you ever tried sharpening iron with clay? Try it sometime. You can't do it.

But if you've got a wife who is strong, or hopes, tremendous hope, both will sharpen each other, if you're determined to follow Jesus. I remember when I wanted to get married, I wanted to get married to a strong wife, because I'll tell you why. Because I felt I'm going to be away from home so often, preaching the gospel.

I don't want a weak wife, who with some little problem comes in the home and says, oh, please come back, please come back, there's a problem here, and then I'll be always running back home from wherever I am. I don't want a wife like that. Do you want one? Or do you want a strong wife? The strong wife is certain other, you know, if you really know how to live together, they can sharpen you.

The same thing with a brother. You know, God gives us brothers who are different from us. And I've never tried to change my wife to be like me, and I've never tried to change any brother in the church to be like me.

I see that God gives us people like that. And in this wonderful process of living together in the church also, I'm using the example of the home, you can apply it to the church as well, that in the church we meet with brothers who are so strong and so different, and if you can learn to fellowship with them, you will discover their selfishness being scraped and smoothed out. And that's the reason why some people have, even after years and years and years and years, they are unhappy in their marriage, and they are unhappy in almost every church they go to, because they never want to get rid of their selfishness.

They don't live in God. The Bible says, he who lives in love, lives with God. That's what it says in this verse.

That means you've got to be really, if you want to live with God, you've got to live in love. As I said, love is the opposite of selfishness. So, if you want to live with God, you have to be determined to be totally unselfish.

We may not reach that height before Jesus comes, but that must be your goal. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, many of you have been Christians for so many years. How many of you can honestly say your goal in life is to become totally unselfish in your life, like Jesus Christ? That totally you want to live for other people, and not like Jesus Christ, and like Jesus Christ lived.

Never seeking your own. That's the really happy life. That's the way God wants us to live.

Totally for him and for others, so that self is out of the center altogether. But we never think of what we can get from God for ourselves. God gives fine.

Why is it so many people have complaints about prayers not answered? God's done one million good things for us, but five or six things he didn't do, and those are the things we remember. It's the same thing with our relationship with human beings. People may do so many good things to us, but if they do one or two bad things, that's what we remember.

You know why? Because we are so saturated with selfishness. That's the reason. We're not living in God.

If we live in God, we live in love. So that's what we should make our goal in the coming days. Not to use people for our benefit.

A lot of people in the world, they're always thinking of using people for their benefit. They like to make friends with influential people. Why? For their own benefit.

They like to mingle with big people and famous people for their benefit, to get some gain. And they despise people who are poor or who cannot do anything for them. I'll give you my testimony in the last 25 years, as we have travelled, my wife and I, to all these poor, poor, poor, poor, poor, poor people in the villages in Tamil Nadu.

They have blessed me more than any rich man could ever have blessed me. Their simplicity and the joy that has come being able to do something for them and not expect anything. I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, time goes by.

By the time you come to the end of your life and you look back over your life, make sure that you've lived a worthwhile life. Make sure that you didn't live seeking your own. You'll have a lot of regrets on earth and even more regrets in heaven, in eternity.

Determine that you're going to be totally free from selfishness. That you're determined you're going to live for God and for others. Jesus lived on earth for God and for others.

He never sought his own. What does it mean when it says, let's look at this verse again. Verse 16, in the middle, God is love and the one who abides in love abides in God.

That means somebody who is permanently rooted in love dwells in God. And I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians 13. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 it says, which to me is one of the most important characteristics of love mentioned here, is what I've been saying so far.

One of the most important characteristics of love is the middle of verse 5, love does not seek its own. You got it? Love does not seek its own. I know I have love, but I don't seek my own.

You know, we have to get out of our head. This falling in love concept that we have read in romantic novels and maybe you've seen in the movies. That's all false.

In fact, that is the false idea of love which the devil tries to put upon the world, where they are seeking their own. In the world, when a boy says, oh, I'm madly in love with that girl. Tell me, is he seeking his own or is he seeking the good of that girl? You know the answer.

He's seeking something for himself from her. Definitely. And when a girl says, oh, I'm madly in love with that man, I want to marry him.

What she's seeking? Is she seeking his good or her good? She's seeking her good. All this love in the world is like that, seeking their own and that's why they're so unhappy. That's why it's so difficult to find a happy marriage in the world, even among Christians.

Most Christian marriages are terribly unhappy, even though they had some wonderful hopes on the day of the wedding. You know why? Because they don't understand love does not seek its own. And even after hearing it so much, Jesus came to save us from seeking our own.

How much has he saved you? I remember when I got married to my wife, I said to her, I'm a preacher, you're a doctor. We both love Jesus Christ and we want to serve other people. We can never use our professions to make money for ourselves.

Never. Not if we do it in the name of Jesus Christ. If we do it in our own name, oh, I can make a lot of money as a preacher and you can make a lot of money as a doctor.

But if you do it in the name of Jesus Christ? Because we live in a poor country. You know, 85% of India is villages. I remember years ago I said to the Lord, I said, Lord, all the great preachers go to the cities.

Send me to the villages where these great preachers don't go. I want to go there. There are people in this land who need to hear and nobody goes to them.

I'll go. What has been the result? My life has been so tremendously blessed and enriched. I have become a very rich man spiritually.

You never lose out. I want to say to you, live for other people. You'll be a very happy person when you come to the end of your life.

If you live for yourself, you'll be miserable and unhappy. If you live for money, you'll be unhappy. My wife has helped other people for 30 years as a doctor.

She's never earned one rupee. We don't regret it. I believe that's the spirit of Jesus Christ.

He never sought his own. He always sought to bless people and never wanted anything. He didn't even want them to tell his name to other people.

So often when we think of being like Christ, we don't realize this is the fundamental root of it. That's why in our churches we've always said, we're never going to have paid pastors or paid preachers because we won't know whether these fellows are coming for the money or for Jesus Christ. And that's what's preserved us through 28 years.

If you come, come because you love the Lord and serve him. Serve the people and don't take anything from them. Serve them, bless them.

God will take care of you. Serve them and bless them and learn something of the way Jesus lived on this earth. Learn something of God's nature.

Dwell in love. A love that does not seek its own, but always seeks the good of the other person. That's the mark of spiritual growth.

If you want to know whether you've grown spiritually, having been in this church for so many years, ask yourself, how much does your mind think of how you can bless other people? Of the needs of other people? How you can encourage somebody? How you can build a little more fellowship with somebody with whom you don't have fellowship? We don't have to think of the wide world. This local church, you know, many clever people think that the mark of discipleship, if you're a Christian, people must see that you love them. I'm sorry, that's not what Jesus said.

That's what clever worldly people say and clever worldly people are a million miles opposite to Jesus Christ. Do you know what Jesus said? Something which will surprise you. People will know you're my disciples not when you love them, but when you love one another.

Isn't that a crazy thing to say? What is the right thing to say? Those worldly people will know you're my disciples when you love them. Show them love and then they'll know that you're my disciples. But Jesus never said that.

That's what clever people think. And those clever people are the people who don't know God. Jesus said, people will know you're my disciples when you love one another.

I believe Jesus, I don't believe these clever people. That means my mark of my discipleship is not the love I show to the worldly person, it's the love I show to my fellow believers in the church. And I understand that very well.

You examine your own life and you'll see that sometimes it's easier to love that worldly person than to love somebody in the church. It's true. Many husbands speak more courteously to a stranger who comes to their house than to their own wives.

Many wives speak more courteously to a stranger who comes to the door than to their own husbands. It's easy to love that stranger who comes to the door. That's why Jesus said it's not your love for that person that's going to prove you're my disciple.

You're going to prove you're my disciple when you love one another. It's not the way you speak to the stranger who comes to your door that shows you're a Christian. It's the way you speak to your wife whom you live with every day, and the husband you live with every day, and the brother whom you see every day.

And if you can't love the brother whom you see, you can't love God. It's not possible. We need to get a lot of these clever ideas out of our head and come back to what Jesus said.

But God says, My ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts. The reason we don't grow spiritually is we're far too clever.

We got all these ideas in our cleverness instead of coming as simple children to the Bible and say, Lord Jesus, I believe what you say. I'm not a disciple because I don't love my fellow believers. I show a lot of love to strangers.

Imagine if a wife has to say to her husband, Will you please treat me just like you treat the strangers who come to the house? That's enough for me. Please treat me like you treat the strangers who come to my house. Imagine if a wife has to say that.

Isn't that pathetic? And yet that's how it is. He who dwells in love dwells in God, because God is love. God is a good God.

I'm thankful for that lovely word in James 1. It's a beautiful verse. I'm very thankful for it and I want to be more and more like that. I know in my younger days, I didn't know God like this.

It says in James 1 verse 5, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach. And in one translation it says, And God will not scold him for asking. Do you know the meaning of scolding? Scolding.

Teachers do it to children. Foolish fathers and mothers do it to their children. Scolding.

How many times I told you not to do that? One thousand times I told you not to do it. Maybe you said it two or three times, but it has become one thousand times. I'm sick and tired of you.

Nothing good will come out of you. That's scolding. Imagine if God said that to you sometime.

Nothing good will come out of you. God, nothing good will come out of me. I'm finished.

Thank God he doesn't say that. He doesn't say such things. He never scolds.

No matter how many times you failed. No matter how big a mess you've made of your life. He doesn't scold.

You come to God after years and years and years and years and years and years of laziness. Years and years and years and years and years of doing nothing for him. Years and years and years of living for yourself.

Okay Lord, I'm 70 years old now. I'd like to live for you a few years now. God said, come.

You know there's a verse in the Bible that teaches that? There's a parable that teaches that. Do you know which one it is? At the eleventh hour, the master went looking for servants. It says, eleventh hour means the day finishes at six o'clock in the evening.

And these fellows for eleven hours, they were just lazily doing nothing. And the master went out and saw these fellows hanging around. You read in Matthew chapter 20, doing nothing.

And he said, what are you doing the whole day? Nobody told us to do anything. Come. And he called them.

And they worked only for one hour. And, you know what happened? When the pay was being given for the day, he called these fellows first. He said, come, I'll give you your pay first.

I really like that. I worship a God like that. And I want to be like that myself.

You know, you and I will be able to hit it off much better with each other, if we all begin to worship this God. I tell you, we're so demanding on each other, because we don't worship this God, who is so large-hearted and so generous, who is not calculating. How much did they work? One hour, eh? Okay.

One denarius per day. Okay, what these fellows should get? One divided by twelve. He didn't calculate.

Lord, make me like that. It'll be so much easier to fellowship. I met a lot of good believers who are very stingy.

And that's why they never grow. They're good. Twenty years later, they're still good.

But they haven't developed. They never did any gross evil. But they never grew, because they never got to know God.

They keep grudges against somebody. Are you one of those who keep grudges against someone? Somebody did something to you, or said something, and you got a grudge against that person. I'll tell you, you must be worshipping a God who keeps grudges against you.

Otherwise, how did you be like that? How can you be like that, unless you worship a God who's got a grudge against you? I don't want that God. You can keep Him. I don't want that God.

I worship a God who keeps no grudges against me. His mercies are new every morning. You know the meaning of that verse? That means in the morning, God says, OK, you, you haven't sinned at all, right, so far? That's right, Lord, I've never sinned so far.

New every morning. And if I sinned that day, the Lord says, oh, that's the first time you've sinned, right. Why? Because the past was all blotted out.

I was justified by the blood of Jesus. When we are young, I know from my own life, we tend to be very legalistic. We worship a God who's got rules, thick.

I worshipped a God who had a huge book of rules. I studied those rules, and I made sure everybody else lived according to those rules. You know, Paul said, as I grew up, when I was a child, I behaved like a child.

When I became a man, I put away childish things. He says in the same chapter on love, when I was a child, I did childish things. When I grew up, I put away those childish things.

And this legalism is all childish stuff. Rules and books, you didn't do this, you didn't do that. It's gone from my life.

Many of you who have known me 20 years ago would probably see that. And I haven't changed because somebody taught me something. I changed because I came a little closer to God and saw what the God of the Bible was like.

And I'm very, very thankful that he opened my eyes to see who he really was, a loving father who never scolds, who doesn't hold grudges, who overlooks the past, who is so saturated, who is dripping with love. And it's gripped my heart so much that I say, Lord, I want to be like that. This is the ultimate goal of the

Christian life.

It doesn't matter if I don't travel the world. It doesn't matter if I don't preach wonderful sermons. It doesn't matter even if I don't bring people to Christ.

If I can become like this God of mine, full of love to others, hold no grudges against people, forget whatever they did or didn't do, forgive them, Lord, they don't know what they're doing. If I can have that attitude toward all the people and smile at everyone in the church. Can you smile at everybody in the church today? Forget the outsider.

In this church, do you have a warm heart towards every single person in the small church God gave you? If you don't, start working on it today. Say, God, I missed something. I missed the central thing in the Christian life.

May God help us. That is, P-O-O-N-E-N dot O-R-G forward slash Z-A-C for video messages, audio messages and books by Zach Poonen that can all be downloaded freely. Our mailing address is Christian Fellowship Center, Forte da Costa Square, Bangalore, 560-084-INDIA.

If you would like to receive a weekly message by Zach Poonen by email, please send us your email address to CFCLIT at touchtellindia.net. That is, C-F-C-L-I-T at T-O-U-C-H-T-E-L-I-N-D-I-A dot net. The Lord bless you richly.

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