

(The Foundation and the Building) the Simple Gospel Message

by Zac Poonen

God chooses young people because they have their whole life ahead of them and can be molded and shaped to follow Him, and making a decision for God early in life is crucial for a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Duration: 57:37

Scripture: Psalm 119:9, Proverbs 22:6, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Romans 6:16, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Salvation Message", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following the instructions given by the Creator in order to live a better life. He compares life to writing an examination paper, where our thoughts, words, actions, and behavior are constantly being evaluated by God. The foundation of our faith is the belief that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. Once we have received Christ into our lives, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit. The speaker also highlights the concept of justice, explaining that God cannot simply forgive us without punishment, but instead, He paid the penalty for our sins Himself.

Transcript

What some of you may not know is that in the Bible, there are lots and lots of stories, true stories, of God selecting young people, right from the very first book of the Bible. In fact, he even selected a little child once, called Samuel, he was a little boy. And in the first book of the Bible you read about God choosing a young man who was only 17 years old, Joseph.

You read later on about his choosing another young man who was probably about 19, called David. And even when Jesus came to earth, and not only that, there are a number of prophets like that, you know, Jeremiah was a very, very young man when God called him. And even Jesus, when he called his twelve disciples, they were all in their twenties.

Now, we have a question there. Why does God choose young people? Why doesn't he choose people who are 60 or 70? He chooses young people in the Old Testament, he chose young people when Jesus came to earth, and there's a reason for that. Because young people like you have your whole life ahead of you.

Now, you may see me with grey hair saying this, but I made this decision 44 years ago, when I was young like you. I made a decision in my life that God who created me would be first in my life. And today I'm standing before you not preaching some theory, but something that I have proved the reality of for 44 years.

And I want to say it's worth it to make a decision when you're young. I was 19 when I made that decision. One, because you've got your whole life ahead of you.

I mean, if God picked a person who was 60, how much of his life does he have ahead of him? Very little. But when God picks you up, when you're a teenager, like I was a teenager, I hadn't even become 20, or in your early twenties, you have the opportunity of right from very early in life to make maximum use of your life on earth. You know, all of us get only one opportunity to live on this earth.

In all the school and college examinations, if you failed once, you can always sit it a second time, sit for it a second time, a third time. But life is not like that. Once you've finished your life, if you failed, you can't sit a second time.

There is no second time. The Bible says it's appointed unto all men, once to die, and after that to judgment. So, we have only one life, and we can't afford to get it wrong.

We can't spend all our life, or 75% of our life, discovering we were on the wrong track at the end of 60 years or so. At the end of it, discovering we were on the wrong track, and then try to make the best of our life thereafter. There is very little of life left thereafter.

And that's why it's wonderful to remember our Creator when we are young. There is a verse in the Bible. I want to read it to you.

If you have a Bible, you can turn it. Otherwise, just listen to me as I read it. It's in the book of Ecclesiastes, which comes after Psalms and Proverbs, chapter 12.

Here is what God's word says, Ecclesiastes 12, verse 1. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come. That's when you are much later in life, when you will say, I don't have any delight in that. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, when you say, I have no delight in that.

Another reason why God, Jesus, when he was on earth, chose young people, is because young people can be molded. Like a little plant can be bent in any direction, when it's a plant, and you can't bend it, you can't change its shape when it's a tree. But when it's a little plant, you can make it grow straight or one direction or another direction.

Young people are like that. See, Jesus knew when he was on earth, that if he picked up a 50 or 60 year old man, he couldn't mold that man's thinking. Because the man's thinking has been set in a certain way for 60 years.

But you folks, your minds are not set. Many of you are in the process of learning, learning new things. And that's the time when your mind can be molded, and your life can be directed to the very best possible way.

And Jesus came to reveal that God is a good God, a loving Father. He even said that the best earthly father was evil compared to God. Not that the best earthly father was evil, but compared to God.

You know, it's like something like saying, the stars have got light. That's right, isn't it? The stars have got light. At least we can see light.

They don't have light, but we see them as light. But that light, even though the star is a burning fire, when the sun comes up, the light disappears. It's there, but the sun is so bright that you can't see the stars.

And that's the picture of the best father's love on earth. It's like the light of a star. Yeah, he's got love, but when compared to God's love, the star is like darkness.

That's what Jesus said. That the best father's love was darkness compared to God's love. It was so great.

Now the reason why I say that is, you see, a lot of people think that religion is for old people. I thank God that I didn't believe that when I was 19. Religion is for young people.

True religion. I don't mean false religion. And I'm not talking about, you see, unfortunately, even a lot of things that go by the name of Christianity today are not really true Christianity.

You know, just like you've heard of counterfeit 100 rupee notes, counterfeit 500 rupee notes. Why are there counterfeits? Why do people make counterfeits? Because the original is valuable. Nobody makes counterfeit brown paper because the original is not valuable.

Counterfeit is only made of something valuable. And that's why there's a lot of counterfeit Christianity. You've probably met counterfeit Christians in your life.

You've probably met counterfeit pastors. I'm not surprised. Because there are real Christians, just like real 100 rupee notes, counterfeit 100 rupee notes.

So, I'm not talking about Christianity in which you may have seen a lot of counterfeits. But I'm talking about Jesus Christ, a person. You see, the true Christian faith is not a religion in the sense of a way of life.

Many people think of so many religions, there are different ways of life. And that's a very popular thing to accept nowadays. You know, when we say that there's only one way of salvation, and that is through Jesus Christ, people say, Well, you're being very narrow-minded when you say there's only one way to God.

But you know, truth is always narrow-minded. Truth is always narrow-minded. 2 plus 2 equals 4. It's not 3.9. It's not 4.1. It's not 3.8. It's not even 3.99. It is 4. So, a good mathematician is very narrow-minded.

He says, I'm sorry, 2 plus 2 is always 4. That's the truth. There's no other way. So, remember this, that if you've really got the truth, it's only one.

You can't have so many options when it concerns truth. But if it's not the truth, then of course you've got many options. And we're talking not about a way of life, you know, be good and don't harm other people.

We're talking about a relationship. A relationship, which the Bible says, is exactly like marriage. You know, just like in marriage, a boy and a girl get married together, and their whole life becomes different.

And if it's a really good marriage, marriage makes both of them much happier than they were when they were single. It's true. Unfortunately, a lot of unhappy marriages, but a good marriage makes the lives of both people much happier than when they were single.

And the Bible speaks of true Christianity like a marriage. A spiritual marriage, not a physical one. The physical one is a picture of the spiritual marriage between me or between you.

And not a religion, but a person, Jesus Christ. In Christianity, I'm not choosing a religion. I don't have to change my name.

No. I'm marrying a person in my spirit. I'm saying, Lord Jesus, I want to be united to you.

That is true Christianity. And if that spiritual union does not take place, you're not really a Christian. And a lot of people think that if you're born in a Christian home, you're a Christian.

Or you go to church, you're a Christian. It's not true. I was born in a Christian home, but for 19 years of my life, I was not a Christian.

I mean, my name was Christian, and I went to church, but I was not a Christian because I was not married to Christ. And the wonderful thing is that it's so easy. If you want to, you can be married to Him.

And it's much better to be married to Him when you're young, so that He can be your guide and friend all through life. And tell us what the true values in life are. You know, we live in a world with a lot of things which are a deception.

We think that we can find happiness in money. Now, I realize that if you live in the slums, you're not going to be happy. And if you're extremely poor that you have to beg or sleep on the streets, you're not going to be happy.

I don't believe God will ever allow any of His children to descend to that level. What I'm talking about is, don't think that if you have lots and lots and lots and lots of money, crores and crores of them so that you can do what you like with it, that's not going to make you happier. More money far beyond what you need is not going to make you happier.

I mean, I've read numerous stories of people who commit suicide when they have made so much money. There are stories of top film stars, businessmen who commit suicide, proving one thing, that money never made them happy. And even the others who don't commit suicide.

A lot of them divorce each other and they're not happy. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ came to earth from heaven and walked on earth as a man and demonstrated to us what true happiness comes from. And He shows us that true happiness can come only by doing the will of God in your life, opening your life to obey the laws that your Creator made for you.

You know, it says here about remembering your Creator. Do you know that there is a Creator who created you? In your mother's womb, it was Almighty God who fashioned your body and gave you a spirit that makes you aware that there is a God above. And that's why we are different from animals.

The dog or even a clever monkey does not have any... You can teach those animals many things. I mean, in the circus and all, they teach elephants and tigers and monkeys, all types of tricks. But there's one thing you can never teach an animal.

You can never teach an animal to be aware of God. That's impossible. It's impossible.

I mean, you can make a monkey kneel down and fold its hands. It's meaningless. But an awareness of God, it's impossible.

And it's not because of education that you have an awareness of God. It's not because your parents took you to church or temple or anywhere else. You go into the jungles where there is no education, where there are barbarian tribes.

We have some like that in India. I remember when I was in the Navy, I went to the Andamans 40 years ago. In some of those islands, there were wild tribes who, you know, had no civilization.

And they, they don't know the true God, but they know there's some God. And so they worship something. Sometimes they make a stone or worship the sun or a tree or... You know why a lot of religious places are on top of hills? Because they think that's the way to get close to God.

You know, the higher up you go. They all know that there's some power up there. We're not very sure who he is or where he is.

But how did that awareness come? Now you never see a monkey or a dog building a little shrine for God or something like that. No. Because that awareness is not there.

But these people who are completely uncivilized, they have an awareness of God which did not come through education or newspapers or anything. It came through their conscience. And each of us has got a conscience that first of all tells us that you are a moral being, answerable one day to the God who created you.

And that all of life is like writing an examination paper. You know, all of life is like, you know, you sit in an examination hall for two hours. Here we sit in this examination hall for 70 years.

And we're writing a paper every day with our thoughts and our words and our actions and our behavior. And there's no invigilator. Most of the time we're alone.

But God is watching. And one day when we die, it's like the bell ringing, saying exam's over. And God picks up the paper and says, OK, we've got to evaluate you now.

What is your evaluation going to be like? Why do I say it's good to start young? If there's a two-hour examination paper, isn't it good if you come at the beginning of the examination instead of after one and a half hours is over? You've got only half an hour to complete your paper. I don't want to come in one and a half hours late for an exam. No.

I want to be there right at the beginning. That's why I want to start my life with God right at the beginning. But the wonderful thing about this is, life is not just like an examination.

You see, an examination can be a burdensome thing. That's only one picture of our earthly life. But on the other side of it, it's a marriage.

Think of, I don't mean an arranged marriage where both are unhappy with each other. I'm talking about a marriage where they really love one another. Boy and a girl really love one another.

They long to get married. I mean, you've read stories like that in the papers. Some young boy wanted to marry some young girl, and the young girl wanted to marry the young boy, and the parents won't allow it,

and they go and clasp each other and commit suicide somewhere.

I'm talking about that type of love for Christ. Can you imagine if they did get married? I mean, they really wanted each other. And if they lived all their life.

Unfortunately, some people who start their married life like that, after six months they hate one another and get sick and tired of each other. That's another thing. But in Jesus Christ, it's that type of relationship where it's a deep love relationship where it's so exciting.

Now, it's difficult to describe. How can a very happily married person describe a happy marriage to some young fellow who's not married? It's very difficult. It's like that.

True Christian life is one where we receive Jesus Christ as not just someone who's going to forgive my sins and take me to heaven when I die, like a lot of churches preach, which is true. But more than that, one who's going to walk with me all through life in every decision I take, helping me, guiding me in everything. You see, one of the most important decisions which many of you sitting here are going to make is the decision of marriage.

Physical marriage I'm talking about now. You come to that age, marriageable age, and then you have to decide you're going to get married to somebody. And that's another advantage of yielding your life to Christ and to God when you're young.

Because marriage, humanly speaking, is the most important decision a man's ever going to make on this earth. It's more important than a job. Why? Because if you're not happy with your job, you can throw it away and take another one.

But if you decide six months after you got married that you married the wrong person, what are you going to do? That's why it's such an important decision. And that's another reason why it's good to find God and Christ when you're young. Because you've got somebody to help you and guide you in taking that most important decision in life.

I got married 35 years ago. I'm a very happily married man today. But before I got married, I prayed to God.

I was married to Christ spiritually. And I sought His guidance in marriage. Isn't it wonderful to have someone with you who knows the whole future, who knows all the dangers that lie ahead of you to the end of your life, and steers your path avoiding those dangers.

That's what true Christianity is. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? To take you through life. I mean, if you're in a strange city and you've got to travel a long distance to some place.

And someone says, well I'll take you in my car and he takes you all the way, this way, that way, to the right place. Isn't that good? It's something like that. Life is a strange city.

I don't know the byways and the roads. I don't know where I should turn left and where I should turn right. And you find the same thing in different situations in life.

And particularly when it comes to marriage. When I see the number of unhappy marriages there are, even among people who call themselves Christians. I tell you, boy, I feel scared.

I feel sorry for the man who's got to make that decision on his own. I mean, how do you know how this fellow is going to turn out? How do you know how this girl is going to turn out? Isn't it good to have someone like Jesus Christ, who not only knows the future, but knows everybody inside out. And if you humble yourself and say, Lord, I don't want to take a single decision in my life without consulting you.

And you come to the most important decision in life, which is marriage. You say, Lord, I want to consult you. I want to seek your will.

And he guides you. He guided me. He's guided a number of others that I know, who are very happily married today.

And it's wonderful. That's all I can say, to have someone like that. And I just used the example of marriage, but in other decisions too.

You know, we have to make so many decisions in life and we don't know the consequences of going down that road. I don't know whether, for example, if I'm in a strange city and I'm driving down a road, I don't know whether this reaches to a dead end or whether it's going to take me away from my destination or not. And it's good to have a guide.

So that's the other thing Christianity is. It's like someone who's going to be your guide and leader. I mean, if I were to use the picture of marriage again spiritually, think of an orphan girl who has no parents, no money, helpless, you know, in very dangerous situations because she has no parents to protect her.

And all alone living in a hostel and trying to look for a job. And then some wonderful man, well-placed man, marries her. Can you imagine the change that will come in her life? This insecure orphan girl, living all by herself, wondering, anxious and would have probably committed suicide, who could have been exploited by so many young men.

And one day, one wonderful young man marries her, sets her up in their own home and she becomes the queen of a home. Don't you think that there will be quite some change in her life after that? What a difference that now she's secure. Now she's got a protector.

Now she's got someone to guide her. She doesn't have to take all her decisions by herself. This is a picture of true Christianity.

Giving our life to Christ and allowing him to become Lord of our life. And saying, Lord, I want you to guide me. I want you to lead me.

I want you to pilot me through these difficult waters of life. And that's what God wants to do for you. See, when you're young, you don't think much about the end of life.

You say, well, I've got plenty of years to live. Of course, that's not true because, you know, in every day in Bangalore, somebody dies crossing the road. There are more people who die crossing the road in Bangalore than taking the flights out of Bangalore.

And every day somebody dies, somewhere or the other. So we can't, any of us can't say we're going to live a long life. I hope it won't happen to any of us.

But, you know, life is so risky. But even if you do live a long life, you know, you must think of the time when you come to the end of life. You're going to look back and see how you lived your life.

Was it in a worthwhile way? It's like, suppose you have a lot of money and you foolishly waste it. And then you, couple of years later, you find this big inheritance that you got from your father is all wasted. And then you'll begin to think, oh, I wish I'd been a little more careful.

And that's how a lot of people are going to feel when they come to the end of their life. Lots, I'm not talking about tens or hundreds, millions, when they come to the end of their life, they look back and say, boy, I wish I'd made certain other decisions when I was younger. Your entire future, the type of feeling you're going to have at the end of life depends on the little, little decisions that you make in life.

I told you that marriage was the most important decision. And it's wonderful to have someone to guide you to marry the right person at that time. But it's not just that.

There are so many other decisions in life which we take. For example, a young man decides one day to try one of these harmful drugs like marijuana or cocaine or something like that. And there are so many cases of people who are gradually trapped in it.

They begin to take it and then they can't give up their longing for it. They start with one and then try a little more. They think, no, no, no, I can control myself.

And after a while, they are hooked. And then most of them can't escape. I mean, a few do escape by God's grace, but most of them can't escape.

And many of them die young. And even those who live, if they have taken it long enough, their brains are damaged. And all started with one little decision.

Sometime when he was seventeen or eighteen, he took a little decision, let me experiment with this new thing that my friends are talking about, which they say will give me a kick. It could be drugs, it could be alcohol, it could be... there are so many things that ruin our body. And there are even more things that ruin our mind.

Pornographic literature, filthy magazines, which you think that they don't do as much evil as drugs, they do. The only thing is, drugs harm the body and all that type of stuff harms the mind. Now, how many of you believe that your body is more important than your mind? I hope there's nobody here like that.

You know, in the scale of creation, the tree has a body, and then you have animals that have a body and a mind. But then you have man, who's got a body, a mind, and a conscience, a spirit. So, at the lowest level of creation is body without mind.

Those are the trees and the plants. They've got life. Your mind is more important than your body, and your spirit or your conscience is even more important than your mind.

So, to destroy your mind is actually worse than destroying your body. And people are hooked onto that habit, bad habits in their mind, that lead to bad habits in the body also, that also destroy them. I know of cases myself of people who have very unhappy marriages because they took a little decision to indulge in internet pornography or sex before getting married.

It's little, little decisions that cause them regret all through their life. Of course, we can hide it, but your mind is destroyed and it's very difficult to purify a mind that's been damaged like that. But Christ can do it.

See, one of the wonderful things that Jesus can do is that he can purify a dirty mind. He can even heal a sick body. There are amazing things that Christ can do.

When we make him Lord of our life and allow him to enter into our heart, into our spirit, just like previously your corrupt mind spoiled your body, now as your mind is purified, it begins to make your body pure. But the first thing you need to deal with, which is the first thing that all human beings have to deal with, if you don't deal with that, you can't go to the other things. It's like when you get into kindergarten, you have to start with ABC before you learn physics and geography and all in higher standards.

So in the Christian life, the ABC is to make sure your sins are forgiven. That means there's absolutely no sense of guilt on your conscience. As I told you, we have a conscience which animals don't have.

That conscience tells all of us, even this evening as you've been listening to me, your conscience has told you about things that you have done wrong, which nobody else knows about perhaps. You have violated the moral law that God put into your being, in your conscience. And every time you violated it, your conscience has told you that's wrong.

And it's because you know it's wrong, that you do it in secret. All the things that our conscience says are wrong, we do in secret because we don't want anyone to know about it. But your conscience still tells you, before you do it and after you do it, it's wrong.

And we've disregarded and disobeyed the voice of conscience for so many years, that now we've got an accumulated list of so many things that we've done wrong in our life. That's the first thing we've got to get rid of. And I say Christianity has not come with a message saying be good, help others, be kind, don't tell lies.

I mean everybody says these things and Christianity comes with a message saying before we get into all that, let's start with the ABC. Before we get into physics and geography and all, let's start with ABC. Before we talk about be good, be kind and don't harm others, let's start with the ABC.

What's the ABC? Get rid of this baggage that we have of so much of guilt. That's why the Bible says Christ died for our sins. None of us are born on this earth to die.

You know when your mother saw you, she didn't think of a child who was going to die. She thought of a child who was going to live. There was only one person who came to earth specifically to die.

That was Jesus Christ. He came from heaven to earth specifically to die. Why? Because his death was taking the punishment for your sin and mine.

Before a holy God, sin is so serious that its punishment is death. Now in the world, there are various kinds of punishments for various crimes like if you've robbed a bank, they don't put you to death. And even if you've committed murder, there are different degrees of murder, manslaughter and deliberate murder and things like that.

In some cases they don't put you to death, they just put you life imprisonment. It's only extreme cases that on earth the judge will say sentence to death. But in God's relationship with man, sin is so serious.

When we violate the moral law in our conscience, the Bible says that even one sin makes us guilty of death. Now we can't understand that because we've got these human courts where we can do so many

wrong things and still not be put to death. Maybe we've got to pay a fine or go to jail for a year or something like that.

We can't understand God's law which is so strict and so absolute that one sin brings death. But that's because when we sin, we are breaking our connection with God. It's like these wires that bring light to a fan or to a tube light.

If I were to just cut one of those wires, what happens? You don't have to keep it five feet apart. No. One millimeter apart after it's cut, there's no light.

It's gone. Whether it's one millimeter or five feet, if it's cut, the light is gone. That's how it is.

Our connection with God, sin cuts it. And more sin, it's already cut, it's gone. And Jesus Christ came to restore that connection.

A lot of us are like tube lights that are trying to burn, trying to be good, trying to behave ourselves, trying to be good without this connection. And that's why you're frustrated. A lot of young people, I think they're very sincere, I think many of you are quite sincere.

You try to be good and have you discovered you can't be good? Have you discovered that you can only pretend to be good? Have you discovered that you can only show other people that you're good? And deep down your heart you find yourself a slave to all types of terrible, evil, bad thoughts and attitudes which you try to cover up with a smile or something like that. That's like a tube light trying to burn when the electric wire is broken. It can struggle, it won't burn.

What it needs is the connection to the source of electricity must be restored. That is what Jesus came to do. He didn't come to tell us like all religions, burn! Come on, burn! A lot of preachers, you listen to them on Sunday morning, they say, come on, burn, why aren't you burning? But Jesus wasn't foolish.

He knew why man was not burning. He knows exactly why you cannot live this life. And he says, the connection is broken.

And you just fix that and the light begins to burn. It's that connection with God that Jesus came to restore. And in order to restore that connection, that's why he had to die.

You know, a lot of people think like this. Well, if God is a good God, why can't he just forgive us? You know, I come to God and say, I'm sorry. Why can't he forgive me? Well, let's take an illustration.

Supposing I'm a young man, and I went and robbed a bank, and I'm caught. And I'm taken to court. And sitting in the court as the judge is my own father.

And I say to him, well, dad, you know, I'm your son. Don't forget that. And I know I made a mistake.

I'm really sorry. And dad says, oh, well, okay, son, you go. You're free.

You think they'll keep him on that court bench anymore? But you say, why can't he do that? And I say, why can't you do it? I'm sorry for what I did, dad. You know what a good father will do? He'll say, listen, son, I'm not here as your father. I'm here as a judge.

You did something wrong. Your father will do that if he's an upright man. Any father who's not a crook will do that.

And he'll say, listen, you got to be punished. You got to be fined. Supposing, let's say, let's assume the fine is a hundred thousand rupees.

You're fined a hundred thousand rupees or you go to jail. Where do I have a hundred thousand rupees? I don't have it. Then what does my father do? He bangs that hammer and says, okay, finished.

And then he gets down from his seat and he takes off his judge's robes. And he becomes my father all over again. And he comes to me and says, son, he takes out his checkbook and writes a check for how much? One lakh.

He says, here you are, son, go and pay the fine and go free. Can I complain? Can I say he didn't love me? Can the government say he didn't practice justice? No. He gave me the full penalty of the law and then he came and paid it himself.

That is the message of Christianity. If you never understood it before, you can understand it today. God says, I can't let you go just because you say, oh, dad, I'm sorry, please forgive me.

He says, no, I'm a just God. The foundations of the universe are based on justice. I can't let you go just because you say, I'm sorry.

You ought to be punished with death. And then he came down from that seat as a judge, came as a man in the person of Jesus Christ. And he was crucified and he hung on the cross and died.

He says, okay, I paid your price. Now when my father comes down and writes the check and gives me the check, what do I have to do? All I have to do is take it. Say, thank you, dad, I'm so thankful.

And Jesus said, that's all you got to do. Take what I'm giving you freely. Take it.

I can't be free if I don't take it. Just because my dad wrote the check, does not mean I'm free. I have to take it.

I have to say, thank you, dad. Then I go and take the check and give it and I'm free. So that's what the message of Christianity is.

Receive this offer free. You don't have to pay anything. That all that heavy weight on your conscience of all the sins that you committed from the day you were born till today can be forgiven like that in a moment because the price for the entire thing has been paid.

Secondly, I'm trying to explain what true Christianity is so that even if you are a Christian, you understand the basis of your faith. That's number one. That's what makes the Christian faith distinct from all the other faiths in the world.

Number one, Christ died for our sins. And then secondly, there's another very important foundation to the Christian faith and that is that Jesus Christ was the only person in the history of the earth to come up from the grave alive, never to die again. Do you know the Bible says that man's greatest enemy is death? That's why everybody in the world is afraid of death.

The fear of death is the greatest fear that people have, more than the fear of robbers. I mean, people are afraid of robbers because they're afraid the robbers will come and kill them. That's why they give them the money.

Say, take the money and go, because they don't want to die. Fear of death is universal. All religions.

Because death is man's greatest enemy. And the proof of it is that man has conquered so many other things but he's never been able to conquer death. You know there are many diseases that man has conquered now, with antibiotics, man has conquered space, but he's never been able to conquer death.

Death has conquered everybody. So that's man's greatest enemy. And how do we know that Christ is speaking the truth? Because he conquered death.

He died, he was buried, three days later he came out alive from the grave, conquering man's greatest enemy, proving that he was almighty God himself. So my faith as a Christian rests on two things. Not be good, be kind, don't tell lies.

That's all like physics, geography, chemistry and all, much later. ABC first. Kindergarten.

Foundation. Your physics and geography and chemistry is based on knowing ABC. Do you think any of you would have studied, been able to study geography or history, if you didn't know ABC? And lot of people think, don't know, they're thinking about, you know, be good, be kind.

No, no, no. Hang on. Start with the foundation, which is Christ died for our sins and Christ rose up from the dead.

That is what we base our faith on. And once we have received Christ into our life, God gives us the power of his spirit within. It's like electricity.

Like I said, that tube can't burn without electricity. When electricity goes in, it's easy for that tube to burn. If electricity doesn't go in, you can keep on preaching to that tube to burn, it won't burn.

Jesus Christ offers us the power of his spirit within to help us overcome these habits that are destroying us. I want to ask you young people, do you have habits that you're ashamed of, that you wouldn't even want your closest friends to know that you indulge in? You not only know they are filthy, they are destroying your body. They've made you a slave.

You know what a slave is? A slave is someone you tell him, do this! And he'll do it. The Bible says sin is like a master that tells you, come on you young fellow, I want you to commit this sin right now. And they go and do it.

A fellow is a slave. And tomorrow the sin will come up and say, come on, do it again. He'll do it again.

He's a slave. And Jesus Christ doesn't say, be free from it. He says, I'll give you the power within.

Like electricity coming in. See, I thank God that Christianity is not just a preaching thing. Come on, burn, burn, burn.

No, that's a wrong understanding of Christianity. God says, I'll give you power. I like the electricity coming in.

I'll make you burn. So I hope this evening you got a little understanding of what the true Christian message is. And maybe you're not ready to get married to Christ yet.

I hope you are. But if you're not, I want you to think about what you heard today. Never forget it.

You can always come back here on Sunday morning and listen to more. But it'll be wonderful if you respond to the message you heard and say, Lord Jesus, I know I'm guilty. I'm a sinner.

My conscience tells me I'm a sinner. And you died for me. I thank you that you paid the price.

And you've risen and you also promised me this power within to be able to overcome these filthy habits. What more do I need? Lord, I want to surrender to you. I want to give my life to you so that my life can take on meaning.

You see, I believe that if you're a Christian, you'll do much better in everything in life. You'll do better in your studies in school and college. You'll do better as a human being.

You'll be a better son at home. You'll be a better daughter at home. If you get married, you'll be a better husband, a better wife.

Everything becomes better. And if you're doing a work, there's a promise in the Bible which says, whatever you do will prosper. I've experienced that for so many years in my life.

Because you know, let me close with this one illustration. And that is, when you get a tape recorder or a computer or a washing machine or something, you get a little booklet with it, right? A booklet called the Manufacturer's Instructions. And it says there, don't start the machine before you read this.

Follow these instructions exactly. Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, Step 4. And if you spend twenty, thirty thousand rupees on that equipment, you're going to be very careful to follow those instructions. And when you follow those instructions, the machine works beautifully.

Supposing you think, hey, I know better than this fellow who made it. What does he know? Throw the book away. I'm going to do what I like.

I'm going to figure all this out. That's how a lot of people have problems with their computers and with their washing machines and everything else. And with their own lives.

Here are the Manufacturer's Instructions. Read it. I've read it.

It tells you exactly how we can program our bodies and our minds and our lives and get the best out of it. You know why there's frustration? It's because somewhere you didn't follow the instructions. The purpose in our church, we have meetings Sunday after Sunday to teach people those instructions.

These are the Manufacturer's Instructions. Follow them. You can live a better life.

And it's free. There's no charge. Absolutely free.

Think that you can make good use of your life. And when you come to the end of your life, thirty, forty, fifty years from now, you can look back and say, well, thank God, I followed the instructions of the Creator in my life. Bow your head with me for a moment.

Bow your head and let's close our eyes for just a moment. It's an act of reverence to God. Perhaps some of you have understood very clearly for the first time in your life what true Christianity is.

This can be the beginning of a completely new phase in your life. If you will pray a simple prayer in your heart right now as our heads are bowed. You don't have to open your mouth.

You don't have to be audible. God can listen to your thoughts. Will you pray this simple prayer in your mind? God, I'm a sinner.

I know what a lot of people don't know about my life. I've done a lot of wrong things. My conscience tells me that every day.

I'm a sinner. But I thank you that you love me so much that Christ came to earth to take my punishment. That I don't have to be punished for my sin.

I can be forgiven completely of all the millions of sins I've committed. In a moment I can be forgiven. I want to take that check that you're offering me.

I want to take that forgiveness that you're offering me today. Lord Jesus, I receive that forgiveness from you right now. Forgive me.

I'm sorry for my sins. I want to turn over and live a new life from today. But Lord, I don't have the power.

But you promised me not only forgiveness. You also promised me power. So I ask you to give me the power of your spirit in my life.

Also, help me Lord. Give me that power to live as I should live so that when I come to the end of life, I have no regret. Jesus says, if anyone comes to me, I will never cast him out.

I will never reject him. You can be absolutely sure that if you prayed that prayer in sincerity right now, Christ has accepted you. Received you.

It's come into your heart. Forgiven you. Thank you.

This is the most expensive and the most valuable gift that you've ever received in your whole life. What should you say? Thank you Lord. Thank you.

Thank you for forgiving me. Thank you for coming into my heart and being my saviour. And Lord, some of you may have already done that before, but you've never taken your Christian life seriously.

Say, Lord, I want to follow your instructions from now on. I want to live according to the principles of your word. I want to make the maximum use of my one earthly life for you.

Because I know that that will be the best for me as well. Heavenly Father, I want to pray for all these dear young people who are here. The tremendous potential there is in this room right now.

Tremendous potential. So many lives and so many years ahead that can be lived for God or wasted on self. I pray that these young people will make the right decision this evening.

And they'll never regret it years from now. Bless them Lord. I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Our mailing address is Christian Fellowship Centre, 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.

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