

The Foundation for God's Purpose

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of proclaiming the whole purpose of God, balancing truth and grace, and becoming like Jesus through purifying ourselves and living out the truth in our lives.

Duration: 1:03:29

Scripture: Job 1:21, Luke 14:26-27, Luke 14:33, 1 Corinthians 10:26

Topics: "Spiritual Foundation", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of laying a strong foundation in our Christian walk, focusing on loving Jesus above all, dying to self daily, and surrendering possessions to God. It highlights the need to prioritize Christ over family, self-will, and material possessions to build a solid spiritual foundation.

Transcript

It's wonderful to be able to begin our conference by recognizing the tremendous care that the Lord has for us, that he'll never, never leave us alone. I think a lot of Christians don't know the presence of Jesus with them all the time and that's one of the reasons why there's so much struggle. It's one of the reasons why they get angry, speak badly to others.

If Jesus was there right in front of you, would you ever talk like that to some people? What we need to recognize more than anything else in the presence of Jesus. Jesus said, Lo, I'm with you always to the end of the age and that's absolutely true what we sing, no, never alone. For me, it has been the greatest comfort in my life to wake up in the morning and to know that Jesus is there, to go to bed at night and know that Jesus is there, there all the time.

I want to encourage you to recognize the presence of God always with you and make all the difference in your life and at the same time like we sing in that song to bow the knee and to worship him, though he is our friend, he's also Almighty God. To recognize both, he's our friend and he's Almighty God, so we bow down and worship him. It's that balance between reverence for God and intimacy with Jesus as our friend that makes our Christian life really glorious.

You know, everything written in the New Testament can be experienced by us even today in the 21st century. So our theme for this conference is proclaiming the whole purpose of God. So I want you to turn with me to Acts of the Apostles in chapter 20, Acts of the Apostles in chapter 20, where the Apostle Paul speaks, uses this expression.

He says in Acts chapter 20, he's I testify to you this day I am innocent of the blood of all men. What does it mean to say I'm innocent of the blood of all men? That means I am not guilty if that person who came across my path and knew me missed the way of God. If he missed it, it was not because of me, because I did not hesitate, verse 27, from proclaiming to you the whole purpose of God.

So what that means is if we as a church have proclaimed the whole purpose of God to people who come to us, then we are not guilty. If they go to hell, we're not responsible. If they miss what God has for them in their earthly life, we're not responsible.

That's the meaning I'm free from the blood of all men. I'm innocent. So it also means that if I don't do it, supposing in your church you don't proclaim the whole purpose of God, you only preach what will satisfy people, what will keep people happy, what will increase your numbers, or which will increase your offerings.

That's the worst rubbish you can think of, to preach in such a way as to increase your offerings. That's the worship of mammon, and I tell you 90% of churches worship mammon today. Then you're guilty of the blood of some of those people in the day of judgment.

They will stand and say, hey, you didn't tell us the whole purpose of God, and that's why we are suffering today. That's why we have come short of God's will and purpose. But nobody in the day of judgment will turn to Paul.

You know, Paul will be standing there on the day of judgment. Nobody will be able to turn around to Paul and say, hey, you're guilty. You did not proclaim the whole purpose of God to me.

And I have said to many people in our church, in the day of judgment, none of you will be able to turn to me and say that I did not proclaim the whole purpose of God to you. Whether it hurt you or whether you were offended, it didn't make any difference. And some who think that we preach a very hard message, a very strict message, in the day of judgment, you will turn around and thank us when you see the condition of a lot of other believers who went to other churches, who missed out completely on God's purpose because their preachers or their pastors did not proclaim the whole purpose of God.

I think of the purpose of God like a big circle with many sectors. And you can leave out some of them which will offend people. Or like the colors of the rainbow, to use another illustration, there are seven colors in a rainbow and you mix them all together, you get white.

If you leave out one of them, you don't get white, you get some other color. But you mix all of them, you get white. So it's something like that.

If you wanted the glory of God to be manifested, you have to proclaim every part of God's purpose and not just some part of it or most of it. The whole purpose of God. And I believe this is what is so lacking today.

And as I said earlier, the main reason is because people seek popularity or their own honor or money. And I trust that none of the elders sitting here, none will ever seek your honor when you preach God's Word. I know you don't seek money, but you can seek honor.

Or you can seek to increase your numbers. That is a danger in some CFC churches because you don't proclaim the whole purpose of God. And to proclaim the whole purpose of God does not mean to make the law so strong that you terrify everybody.

That's not it. Jesus didn't go around terrifying people. It was grace and truth.

If it's only truth, truth is like the bones in our body. And grace is like the flesh on top of the bones. And that's what makes human beings look beautiful.

If you have only truth, now you hear about the whole purpose of God and you say, well now I'm going to proclaim the whole purpose of God. And you go around like the Pharisees making laws for people, you will be exactly like a skeleton. People want to run away from you.

No, that skeleton, those bones must be covered with flesh. All the truth that you proclaim must be covered with grace. Then we are proclaiming the whole purpose of God.

Because then we are not just telling people what God wants, but we're also telling people how you can reach there. If you only proclaim in your church, this is what God wants, and you don't tell anybody how you can get there, and you yourself are not getting anywhere near there, then you're a hypocrite and you're not fulfilling this verse. Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

And I tell you dear brothers, especially the elders of the CFC churches, if you cannot say follow me as I follow Christ, you need to go before God fast and pray and repent and say, Lord please bring me to the place where I can say, follow me as I follow Christ. Now that does not mean that we've become perfect. Like becoming like Christ, like I've often said, is like climbing a mountain.

Think of Mount Everest, 10,000 meters, 30,000 feet high. You can climb even 500 feet and look around to people younger than you and say, follow me. You don't have to reach the top to say, follow me.

Jesus reached the top. Perfection. Paul went quite a way.

We're behind, but we can turn around to people younger than us and say, follow me. In other words, you're on the right track. You're following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Every true servant of God who preaches God's word should be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ. And if not, you must repent and seek God. I want to say boldly to all of you, follow me as I follow Christ.

Follow me in the way I live. Follow me in my attitude to money. Follow me in the way I brought up my children.

Follow me in the way I live at my home with my wife. Follow me in the way I live with my co-workers and my fellow elders. We should be able to say that.

That does not mean I'm perfect. I'm pressing on to perfection. I've got a long way to go, but I believe that I'm seeking to follow in the principles by which Jesus lived and dear brothers and sisters, not just the elders.

Many of you are older brothers. You've been in the church for a long time and sisters, you should be able to say to the younger sisters, follow me as I follow Christ. This is my great longing that in our churches, there'll be many, many brothers and sisters who by their life are proclaiming the whole purpose of God.

You may not be a teacher. There are very few called to be teachers. You don't have to be a teacher alone to proclaim the whole purpose of God.

We proclaim the whole purpose of God in explanation and teaching if you're a teacher. But by your life, you can proclaim the whole purpose of God. That God is holy and God is love and that people can see that.

So this is very, very important. So when we think of, as I said, the white being many colors to use in illustration or if you think of the whole purpose of God like a circle with some sectors, many sectors, many different teachings. What shall we concentrate on? It's like, you know, if in a school they got a maths teacher and an English teacher and a geography teacher and a history teacher and the science department is completely empty.

There's no physics and chemistry and biology teachers. Then that school needs chemistry and physics and biology teachers. They don't need two more geography teachers.

They don't need two more history teachers. That department is full. Which are the departments in a school that are missing? That's what every good principal looks for or in a college.

So when we look at Christendom in general and we hear all the messages. Nowadays you hear messages on Christian TV and radio and DVDs and all that and as you listen to them, if you know the Bible, you compare what they are teaching with the Bible. The Bible is the full circle and what these people are teaching on different sectors.

Okay, these folks are thinking about forgiveness. Good. And they're talking about justification.

Good. They're talking about evangelism. Good.

So some sectors are covered. What about other sectors that are completely missing? Those are the sectors that we need to fill up. Those are the parts of the circle that have not been colored.

You tell your child to color a circle and they just color a few parts of it and leave it out. How do you complete? You've got to complete the circle by coloring the other parts of the circle that have not been colored. And I believe that's one reason God has raised up CFC 41 years ago.

We're not better than anybody else. We don't claim to be superior. Far from it.

We are a small part of the body of Christ in India and now in other countries as well. We will always remember that we are a very small part. But we believe that we have a very important function to fulfill and that is to color the segments of the circle that are not being colored by other Christian preachers.

So then we proclaim the whole purpose of God. And it doesn't matter if we are not numbered in millions, we are maybe just a few thousands. But if we are proclaiming the whole purpose of God, even if we are small in number, God can take that by various means and spread that message to millions of people.

So we want to be a church that proclaims the whole purpose of God without thinking that we are superior to others, without comparing ourselves with others, and without despising others, without devaluing their ministries. We value all the parts of the circle that have been already colored. We're not against it.

But the thing is many of those churches are keeping on coloring those same parts again and again and again and again. And there are a whole lot of other parts of the circle which are completely left out. So we're just saying we want to color those parts of the circle.

And so people, if they accuse us saying, hey aren't you interested in the parts we are coloring? Oh yeah we're interested in that but you guys are doing it. Why should we go over and do again what you've already colored? Think of all these other parts of the circle that are still not colored. We want to do that.

We're not against you. We are part of the same circle. Very important to maintain that balance because sometimes you know we can get a little proud and think that oh we're special.

We're not special. We're just another part doing something and we're not competing with them. We're not trying to say hey we're doing better than you.

No no no no no. We don't compare ourselves with anybody. If I do compare myself, I'll tell you who I compare myself with.

I compares myself with Jesus and I compare myself with what I was one year ago. And I say am I a little better? Just like we want our children to be promoted to the next class every year. Those are the only two comparisons I make in my life.

I say have I overcome some things I was defeated by one year ago or five years ago? If not I'm not making progress. Then I look at Jesus and compare myself with him. That's the best way.

It saves us from judging others, saves us from comparing ourselves with others and even our ministry. We're not here to compare our ministry with somebody else's. Think of it like I said this circle.

They're doing a wonderful job in their area. There are many parts of that circle not completed. So the result of that is when we proclaim only part of the whole purpose of God, it's like a doctor who does not give the full treatment.

And so the per patient is never cured. If they were given the full treatment, they'd be cured completely. But they're given only one part of it.

Maybe they have to take five medicines and they take only one. They remain sick. I think of Christendom like that.

Personally, I'll tell you honestly, I don't believe that in the New Testament any Christian, any Christian should live a life defeated by conscious sin. That's not God's will. Unconscious sin, I have, you have.

Till the day Jesus comes, we will all have areas of our life which we don't understand. But the areas where we see, we must have victory. It's like, you know, when the children of Israel went into the land of Canaan, they didn't occupy the whole of Canaan in one day.

It took many years. They would see one giant, kill him, occupy his territory. And then they would kill another giant, occupy his territory.

Think of each giant as some sin in your life. Maybe anger is a massive giant or sexually dirty thoughts. You see, boy, I'm going to kill this giant and occupy his territory.

But that doesn't mean that you've occupied the whole land of Canaan. There are many other giants, but you can't kill them till you see them. So even if I killed two or three strong giants in one area, I'm not proud.

I say, boy, there are a whole lot of other giants up north. And somebody asked me, hey, you're not killing them. I said, well, how can I kill them till I see them? When I occupy this territory, I move on to the next area.

I kill that giant. As I kill giants, I see more and more. And I'll never finish till Jesus comes.

That is the Christian life. See, for example, in 1 John chapter 3, I'm just trying to explain to you things that you probably never hear taught in any other church. And I dare to say that.

If you hear these things, let me know. I'd be delighted to see and meet and fellowship with people who are also eager to proclaim the whole purpose of God. But I've been a Christian 57 years, and I've covered most of the different groups in Christendom, and I hardly find these truths proclaimed anywhere.

Think of 1 John chapter 3 and verse 2. It says, we are already children of God. Everybody knows that. But it has not yet appeared what we shall be.

I mean, he says, this is what we are now. We are born again, justified by faith in Christ, may be filled with the Holy Spirit, great. But what are you going to be? I hope you know what you're going to be.

It says in the next part of that verse, when Christ appears, that's what we're waiting for. We will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. We will be like Him.

That's our goal. That's the finishing line of this marathon race. And if you are, let me paraphrase verse 3 like this.

If you are really running this race, and you're not on some other track, marathon race is going on here. How to know whether you're on this track or on some other track where nobody's running, or which is not counted? You will be doing something. You will purify yourself till you reach His level of purity.

In other words, you'll keep on killing the giants in Canaan till the last giant is killed. And I want to say to you in Jesus' name, none of us have killed all the giants. Not you, not me.

We will be like Him only when He comes. But we shouldn't sit in one corner of Canaan saying, I've killed one giant, and I've occupied His territory. There are 500 giants still to be killed.

What about them? Don't say, I've entered the land of Canaan, and I've killed one giant. The whole purpose of entering the land of Canaan is to kill every single giant there, and occupy the land for God. The land of Canaan is this body, head to foot.

And there are many giants that have ruled this bitterness, jealousy, anger, dirty thoughts, love of money, telling lies, all types of things. Giants that have ruled the land, and God says, drive them out, and this land belongs to me from head to foot, because Jesus purchased it on the cross. Don't tolerate any of those giants.

Now, if there are giants you have not seen, for example, some of the giants you have not seen could be an unthankful attitude towards somebody. You may not see that, or you haven't encouraged somebody you should have encouraged. Those are things we don't see.

But start with the ones you see, and purify yourself, and when do you stop? If anybody sits back and says, I've reached, he's absolutely blind. We're to stop when we become like him. This is the whole purpose of

God for the individual, that I might run this race, whichever way you put it, or purify yourself as he is pure.

And so when people say, you're just a bunch of people sitting and purifying yourself. No. When we say we become like Jesus, it does not mean only holiness and love.

It also means ministry. There was nobody who worked as hard as Jesus. He never took a holiday in three and a half years.

You know that? He wasn't sitting like a monk in some monastery purifying himself. No. He worked hard as a carpenter, and he purified himself then, and he worked hard as a full-time worker traveling the length and breadth of Israel, walking hundreds of miles.

He was to become like Jesus means like that, to serve him, not just purifying my thoughts and my language and sitting at home all the time. So becoming like Jesus includes life and ministry, to become like him in every area. But it's not only ministry.

It's not just evangelism, evangelism, evangelism, and it doesn't matter how I live. No. Jesus lived 33 and a half years of pure life, and three and a half years of full-time ministry.

Divide three and a half by 33 and a half. One-tenth. One-tenth, he emphasized ministry.

So our life must be 10 times more important than our ministry to us. And yet Jesus did such a lot in his life. He did such a lot that towards the end of his life he could say, I have finished, Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do.

If you don't know that verse, please turn with me to John 17. Jesus accomplished the full purpose of his Father here on earth. John 17 verse 4, I have glorified you on earth, Father.

How did I glorify you on earth? By finishing the work which you gave me to do. Many of us say, I want to glorify God. I'll tell you how you can glorify God.

By finishing the particular work that God planned for you when you came out of your mother's womb. In fact, when you were in your mother's womb. All of us, if you're a true child of God, if you're really born again and you've given your life to Christ, made Jesus Lord of your life, then I want to tell you something.

God knew about that millions of years ago. Millions of years ago, God looked into the future and saw you and me accepting Christ. Sometime, in my case, 1959.

In your case, I don't know when. But he saw that. When did he see it? Millions of years ago before I was born.

Before you were born. And therefore he planned something for you to do. And so when you were in your mother's womb, he equipped you with the particular personality and gifts that he would, that you would need to serve him.

I believe that. I don't believe that I'm superior to people because I can teach God's word. No.

God called me for that purpose. And so in my mother's womb, he gave me the type of mind and memory that's needed for this ministry. I can't take any credit for it.

And if you're called to be something else, he equipped you for it. He won't make you like me because your ministry is not mine. You've got some other part of ministry in the body of Christ.

But there is a work that you have to do. Listen to this. There's a work that God wants you to do that nobody else other than you can do.

And you, when you come to the end of your life, should be able to say, Lord Jesus, I finished the work you gave me to do. But do you know what a lot of Christians are going to be able to say? Lord, I took care of my children, I educated them, I brought them up well, and I got them married, and I got them established, and then I retired. Shame on you if that's all you can say.

That's for the godless unbeliever to have that type of testimony. It's an absolute shame if you're in a CFC church and that's all you live for. Then I brought up my children, educated them, clothed them, got them married, and settled down to a retired life.

I'd say, go and join some other church. This is not where you belong. You don't belong here.

This is not our goal. Our goal is to proclaim the whole purpose of God, and we want everybody to be passionate to finish the work God prepared for you and planned for you before you left your mother's womb. You say, well, I wasted so many years of my life.

That's why we have conferences. You know, our conferences are not to reach out to unbelievers. That's why we are very strict about whom we invite to our conferences.

This is not an outreach conference. Four days in a year only we have a consolidation meeting for believers from all parts of this country and other places. We are consolidating people who are already believers.

The remaining 361 days, you can reach out in your local churches to all the unbelievers around, but for four days we don't want unbelievers here. We say, we're consolidating believers, equipping them to go out the remaining 361 days and reach out to unbelievers, and that's what we have done. When we started in CFC in my home 41 years ago, we were about four or five people.

That's grown to four or five thousand or more. How did we do that? We didn't do it. God did it.

It says in the last verse of Acts 2, the Lord added to the church. We don't take any credit. The Lord has added to the church.

The Lord has planted churches. It's all His. He uses different ones in different ways, but we reach out and our message is to every one of these is to proclaim the whole purpose of God.

So I want every one of you to not get discouraged because you wasted so many years. Let me give you this wonderful verse to comfort you today in Acts 17 verse 30. Some of you who may have regret, Lord I wasted years of my life, not being gripped by your purpose for my life.

Here is a verse for you. Acts 17 verse 30. God overlooks the times of ignorance.

The years before when you did not know the truth that you're hearing now, He overlooks. That means He says to you, my son, my daughter, have you failed? Forget it, but repent now. He commands people to repent now.

That means turn around at least now and say, Lord, for the rest of my life, I want to live for you. When I was a young Christian, I read a little poem which said something like this. When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ and He shows me His plan for me, the plan of my life as it should have been, had He had His way and I see how I checked Him here and I stopped Him there and I would not yield my will.

Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes? Grief though He loves me still and I will stand there with regret over a life that I cannot live again. So the last verse of that hymn went like this, Lord of the years that are left to me, I give them to Thy hand, take me, break me and mold me to the pattern you have planned. Will you say that? God says, okay, right up to today, I'm willing to overlook all the blunders and mistakes and selfish way you have lived till today.

But how many of you are willing to turn around today and say, Lord, this is not just going to be another conference for me. This is, this October is going to be the turning point in my life. I had a turning point in my life like that.

About 16 years after I was born again, in January 71, God did something with me. My life has never been the same since. To me it was like a second conversion and it was almost more glorious than the first one.

Because I have a lot of regret of those first 16 years of my Christian life after I was born again. It's not that I didn't do anything. I served the Lord and I did many things.

A lot of regrets because I wasn't passionate about living according to God's purpose and proclaiming God's full purpose because I didn't know. I did not have a spiritual father to guide me and teach me. So I decided that what I did not have, I will pass on to others.

And dear brothers and sisters, many of you have received so much in the years that you have been in CFC. I want to ask you, what are you doing to pass it on to others? You may not have the ability to teach, but there are many ways in which we can contribute to further the purpose of God in our generation. To color the spots of the circle that have not been colored.

I hope you will see it. So here when Paul took this, gave his advice to the elders in Ephesus saying, I'm not guilty of any of your blood. I proclaim to you the whole purpose of God.

So I told you that the whole purpose of God is that I might day by day, year by year, become more and more like Christ. And like I've often said, this is the message in the first chapter of the Bible. Turn with me to the first chapter of the Bible.

The first chapter of the Bible is in a nutshell, the message of the whole Bible, proclaiming the whole purpose of God. What is that? God finds man in the beginning. God created man perfectly.

Now if I were to paraphrase Genesis chapter 1, not about the earth. Take that what happened to the earth as a picture of what happened to man. Of course Genesis chapter 1 is a picture of how the earth got corrupt and God remade it beautiful.

But I want to see that as a picture of you and me and of the human race. God created man perfect. Adam and Eve.

That's Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created man and woman perfect. But Satan came in and that's not mentioned in between verse 1 and 2 as described later on in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Satan came in

and verse 2, man became formless.

That means he lost the image of God and man became empty. The presence of the Spirit of God had gone and dark. Dark means Satan had taken over.

That's what it says in verse 2. But God did not leave man alone. Immediately the Spirit of God began to move over man. And the word of God went forth.

Verse 3, God said, and that's what happened to you and me. Sometime in your life when you were dark, empty, without God, the devil had come. Spirit of God began to move over you because he had chosen you from the foundation of the world.

He knew that you were a sincere person seeking for him. And so he sent his spirit to move over you. And somebody gave you the word of God and your life was changed.

The light came in. That's the first thing that happened. Light.

God said, let there be light and light came into your heart and you were born again. But was that the end of the story? Is Genesis chapter 1 only about one day? That was the beginning. You see the whole purpose of God? That's just the beginning.

And a lot of Christians stop there. Then they go and find another person and bring him to the first day and stop there. They go another person.

This is called evangelism. Bring him to the first day. Okay, you got light, finished.

What about the second day, third day, fourth day, fifth day, sixth day? They don't know it. So then after that, the very next thing that God did. What did God do after light came in? It says here in verse 4, he separated the light from the darkness.

He says, now you're born again. You have to be separated from your worldly friends and worldly attitudes. Because otherwise the darkness will come back again.

You know, division. The first division in the Bible was from God. A lot of people say division is all from the devil.

No, no, no, no, no. The first division was done by God. He divided and separated the light from the darkness.

And that's why if you sit in a church which is full of darkness, God will want to separate you from that church. Because he says, that church is full of darkness. Why are you sitting there? He wants to separate the light from the darkness.

He separated me. Whenever he found I was sitting in some system that was dark, he separated me from it. And I came to another system was a little better, but there was again some darkness.

He separated me. And that's how I finally ended up in CFC. Because God is always trying to separate anything.

He doesn't want any darkness. No dark place at all. So if he sees a little bit of darkness still in you, he's still got to do some separation because that's his first message.

I have to separate the light from the darkness. And that is why it says in 2nd Corinthians 6, can a believer marry an unbeliever? What fellowship does light have with darkness? And we've had some cases of people who in CFC after being some years here, they fall in love with some unbeliever and they get married. I say, it's time for you to leave CFC.

You have disobeyed God's word. You have slapped God in the face saying, I don't care for what you say. I'm going to marry this unbeliever.

Even though your word says that there should be no fellowship between light and darkness, a believer and unbeliever, they should not be unequally yoked. And you, as it were, spit in the face of God and say, I'm going to do what I like. There's no place in the church for such people.

There is no place in the church for such people until they repent. Until they repent and come back. They recognize what they did was wrong.

And they'll have to suffer. You know, what a man sows, he will reap. You marry an unbeliever.

The Bible says there are children of God and the children of the devil. And if you marry an unbeliever, your father-in-law is the devil. You can't stop your father-in-law from visiting your home.

And I'll tell you, he'll make quite frequent visits. So there are many reasons why you've got to be very careful that you don't end up with the devil as your father-in-law. Because you may discover after some time that God is no longer your father.

If you go that way, you can be saved and you can lose your salvation. God separates the light from the darkness. And that's why we keep preaching strongly in the church against sin, against any type of sin.

We hate divorce. That's why in 41 years, we've never had a single case of anyone in our church who got married, who was divorced. People have left our church and got divorced.

That's fine. But nobody in our church ever. We are 100% against it.

These are ways in which people are drifting. And now people are drifting into same-sex marriages and all types of evil. You see how the darkness, once you compromise in darkness, it just becomes more and more and more and more and more.

And a lot of Christian leaders and preachers are overwhelmed. They don't know how to stop it. Well, you should have stopped it at the first step.

You keep a little crack in the door open for the devil to come in. He's going to push it more and more and more and more and come right in. So we got to be very firm in all our churches.

We're going to proclaim the whole purpose of God and we're going to keep the darkness away. It doesn't mean we are unloving. We say, what about loving that sinner? I love that sinner, but I love God more than I love that sinner.

The first commandment is not love your neighbor as yourself. The first commandment is love God with all your heart. For me, that is the first commandment.

A lot of people have made the first commandment, love your neighbor as yourself. Love others as Christ loved you. Yes, but that's second.

And if you try to put the second first, it's like standing on your head upside down. I'm not going to do that. We got to love others.

In fact, I love my brother better if I love God first. So to proclaim the whole purpose of God means that I proclaim the light and then say the light has to be separated from the darkness. And what I see in Genesis chapter one is every day the Spirit of God moves and God's word goes forth.

It becomes a little better, a little better, a little better, a little better. And finally, on the sixth day, what do you read in verse 27? Man is in the image of God. Isn't that the goal we saw in 1 John chapter 3 verse 2? That we shall be like him.

So the whole Bible is there in Genesis chapter one. The whole message of the Bible starts with perfectly created. The devil comes in, messes up, makes us dark, empty, lose the image of God.

But the Holy Spirit and God's word comes and works every single day, works, works, works, until man is back in the image of God. This is the whole purpose of God, that God does not stop. And then we read in Genesis 2, God rested.

Verse 2, Genesis 2 verse 2. God didn't rest that he was tired. We rest because we are tired. When it says God rested, the meaning is he had finished his work.

So applying that to our life, God is not going to rest until we have become like Christ. And all the trials and difficulties he sends across our way, all the problems he sends are in order to break us, to make us like Jesus. And that's what we proclaim in the church.

To make us Christ-like is the whole purpose of God for the individual. Now there's more to it. The individual has to come into a church and build fellowship.

We'll think about that later. But initially it's got to do with yourself personally. See each part of the church, each of you is an individual part of the body of Christ.

So in the body, every part must be healthy. So that's what we're talking about now. And then if you're healthy, then they can work together with other parts of the body.

So when it says God rested, he rested when the work was finished. And that was called the Sabbath day. The meaning of the Sabbath is that the work is finished, that God could rest.

If you turn to John chapter 5, you see something very interesting. In John's gospel chapter 5, we read like this. Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, where there were many, many sick people, verses 1 to 3. And there, there were many people waiting for some stirring of the water, which happened once in a while.

And whoever stepped in first would be healed. And you read that story, there was one man who had been sick for 38 years. And Jesus went and healed him, and told him to take up his bed and go home.

And it says here, in verse 9, the middle of verse 9, that was a Sabbath day. That was the day God rested, you remember? That was a Sabbath day. And the Pharisees said to this man, how did you start doing your work on the Sabbath day? How did you carry this pellet and walk? It's not permitted, verse 10.

But he said, the person who healed me, I don't know who he is, but he told me, if he healed me, I'm sure he could tell me to take up my bed and walk. Why should I lie there anymore? Now, there are a couple of things we see. There are some people who say that Jesus healed everybody who's sick, and Jesus heals everybody who's sick today.

It is not true. There were a multitude of people who were sick, verse 3. Sick, blind, lame, withered, paralyzed. And out of those hundreds of people, he healed one person.

And even today, God heals. I believe that. I've experienced healing myself.

I've seen people healed. But he does not heal everybody. That is the message of the New Testament.

You see that clearly here. I mean, if his aim was to heal everybody, he'd have just walked in and healed everybody there. With one word, he could have healed everyone.

He didn't do it. He came here to do the will of God, not to heal everybody. He came here to do the will of God.

And it's very clear that when he did the will of God, in this particular case, the will of God was that everybody should not be healed. Now, don't ask me why. God's wisdom is like an ocean.

My mind is like a little cup. I can't understand it. But I look around and I see it's true.

Everybody's not healed. Exactly like here. There are a lot of Christians who live in a world of unreality.

They have a favorite verse and they try to live on that and force people to live in it. They live in a world of unreality. They say everybody will be healed.

People have asked me this question. Brother Zack, why don't you preach on physical healing? And I say, show me one sermon that Jesus preached on physical healing and I'll preach. Do you know that in his entire life, Jesus never once preached on physical healing? I'll show you sermons preached on holiness, on love, on humility, on being like little children and faith and so many things I can show you.

But show me one message on healing. Not one. He healed thousands.

He never preached one message on healing. Today we have the opposite. Thousands of messages and books on healing.

Actual number of people healed? Hardly anybody. All these fake healings like magic shows on the platforms you see. Don't be fooled by all that.

If you want to be like Jesus, you must heal the sick, not preach on healing. If you preach on healing and don't actually heal the sick people, it is the opposite of what Christ does and there's a word in the Bible for it, anti-Christ. Yeah, to be opposite of Christ.

Christ never preached on healing but he healed thousands. Today you preach thousands of messages but heal nobody. That's the anti-Christ.

It means very simple. I don't want to be like that. So it's very important to understand this and then why did Jesus do it on a sabbath day? I mean those guys were lying there six days of the week.

Why didn't he go there on a Friday or a Thursday and heal them? Jesus had a great desire to heal people on the sabbath day. I think sometimes he would see somebody sick person and say, come to the synagogue on the sabbath day. I'll heal you there.

You know why? Because part of Jesus' ministry was to irritate the pharisees. We have that ministry too. We are following in Jesus' footsteps.

Irritate any pharisee and boy the number of pharisees we have irritated in the last 41 years. Why did Jesus do that? Because he wanted to show them the hollowness and emptiness of their so-called keeping the sabbath. You don't allow a fellow's withered hand to be healed.

You won't allow a man even to carry his bed on the sabbath day and he said, your donkey falls into the ditch on the sabbath day. You'll pull it out. You care more for that donkey than for a man.

That's how Jesus was. And then I want you to see a very interesting thing in verse 16. It says the Jews were persecuting Jesus because he did these things on the sabbath.

You learn something there that they wanted to kill Jesus not because he washed the feet or spoke on humility. They killed Jesus because he broke that useless human traditions and spoke against them. And now listen to this.

This is what I want you to see. I want to paraphrase verse 17. My father has no sabbath now.

He had a sabbath in Genesis chapter 2 but ever since man sinned in Genesis chapter 3, my father does not have a sabbath. He works seven days a week and I have no sabbath. I am working seven days a week.

You see there? God's sabbath finished in Genesis 3. He has no sabbath today. People ask me, Brother Zach, I mean you're 76 now. When are you going to retire? I said retire? I'm going to retire in heaven.

I'm going to have a long retirement but not till I get there. No, I'm not interested in holidays and sabbaths. My father has no sabbath.

God is my father. Jesus has no sabbath. He's working.

And I'm not saying we don't sleep or we can't go on a vacation. My point is I have no, even on a vacation, I'm looking for opportunities to witness for people about Jesus. Yeah, I hope if you go on a vacation you look for an opportunity to witness for Christ.

Not say, oh I've closed down my Christianity for one week. I'm on vacation. What type of Christian are you? There's no such thing as a vacation for me.

I'm always looking for an opportunity to serve the Lord. That is true Christianity. I have no sabbath because my father has no sabbath.

That is the whole purpose of God and God gives us enough energy to serve him. There are many things in scripture, you know, which if you look at the whole purpose of God, you find that God opens your eyes to see things which are written there and you don't see it. We must pray that God will open our eyes to see these things.

So in Luke chapter 14, I want you to see what Jesus spoke about. Another thing which is not very often understood. You see, when you want to proclaim the whole purpose of God, think of it like a building which has got to have a foundation first.

This building has got a solid foundation. That's why we can have two floors. The foundation is the most important part of any building but it's not visible.

What you see is the outward beauty of the building but I want to tell you the strength of this building is not in all the things that you see, it is in what you don't see. Why do you see sometimes in a storm, one tree uprooted, huge tree uprooted and fallen on some car on the middle of a road and another small tree still standing there. How did it stand in the storm? The big tree fell and the small tree didn't.

Roots. It's got nothing to do with the size of a tree. The roots of a tree determine whether it'll fall in the storm or not.

In both building and tree, the message is the same. It is the roots are hidden, the foundation is hidden. The hidden part of your life, the hidden part of your life determines whether you will stand when a storm comes or whether you'll collapse.

It's not the visible part. Your visible Christianity that you go to meetings and you know so much of the Bible and you sing so well means nothing. What about the hidden part of your life? The whole purpose of God.

We proclaim in our church that the foundation of your life is more important than the superstructure. The roots of your life are more important than what you see on the outside and that is the part of the circle which is not colored by many people. How many churches are emphasizing hidden life, thought life, your private life which nobody can see? We're emphasizing that all the time because we say that is the foundation.

Those are the roots of your life. So here it is in Luke 14, the foundation. Jesus spoke about people who did not fulfill the conditions of discipleship.

You know here it says here that some people laid a foundation and they were not able to finish. People ridicule him. Now listen to this verse 29.

First I used to think this verse you know as you read you begin to meditate more and you learn more. First I used to think these are people who just laid a foundation and forgot about it. No, as I read more carefully I found they tried to build.

It says they were not able to finish. It doesn't say they didn't even try to build as I thought before. It's amazing what you discover when you read scripture more carefully.

They lay a foundation Luke 14 29. They lay a foundation and they were not able to finish. Just the other day we read in the papers a couple of days ago a building collapsed somewhere in Bangalore.

Few stories collapsed and a lot of people died. Why? Here people are you can say the same thing was true of those builders. They laid a foundation but they were not able to finish.

The building collapsed and people began to ridicule them. Why did this collapse? Because the foundation was not strong and that's not always the reason. Sometimes the material in the superstructure is not strong but very often if the foundation is not strong the building begins to shake.

So that is why in our churches we have tried to emphasize the foundation and I believe the foundation is the part of the circle that's not properly colored. It's left out. The whole purpose of God.

What is the foundation? Whenever you read a verse in scripture look at the context in which it is written. Read the verses before, read the verses after. So I read a verse like this.

Somebody who laid a foundation tried to build the whole thing collapsed and I say Lord what does that mean? Read before and read after. Discipleship. Discipleship.

The three conditions of discipleship are here in verse 26 27 and 33. In between he talks about this foundation or the tower that could not be completed. Okay what are the conditions of discipleship? If you come to Jesus verse 26 and you love any of your relatives more than Jesus Christ you cannot be a disciple.

That's the foundation. This is not deeper Christian life or higher Christian life. This is not a skyscraper.

This is the foundation. When you come to Christ he must be more important to you than your father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters. If not you haven't laid the foundation and I've seen so many so-called believers.

They haven't laid this foundation. That's why they don't make much progress in their Christian life. They waste their life.

They will not be able to say at the end of their life I finished the work you gave me to do like Jesus said in John 17 4. I finished the work you gave me to do. So ask yourself if you see the Lord wants you to do something and your parents tell you to do something else who will you listen to? If you ask if you see the Lord wants you to go a certain way and your wife doesn't want to go that way what are you going to do? Do you please your children and displease the Lord? Do you teach your children to cheat in the examination? It's much better they fail and are honest. They'll grow up to be disciples of Jesus.

You teach them to cheat in an examination. Let me tell you parents you are training a child for hell. There was a time when one of my children was studying in school here and you know for our children the difficult subject is always Hindi.

We don't speak Hindi at home. It is very difficult. They do well in other subjects.

Hindi would bring down their average so when the 10th standard examination was going on in school the rumor went around before the examination the Hindi question paper is available if you pay enough money. I said good opportunity to teach my children. I told them even if somebody gives me the question paper free I will not show it to you because I don't want any of you to pass by having looked at the question paper in advance.

You can say I never paid for it somebody gave it to me. Yes but it is still cheating to let your child see it before the exam. You know it.

You know you're saying no I didn't pay for it and somebody gave it to me free. I said if somebody gives it to me free I will not show it to you. I don't care if you get 30% in Hindi and you fail fine you will grow up to be an honest man and live for God then see the question paper and get 70% and grow up to be a crook.

I hope we have these values. We love Jesus more than we love our children. We love Jesus more than ensuring that our children pass in an examination.

We want them to be honest whether they pass or not is secondary. Love Jesus more than father, mother, wife, children and that can be different areas in your life. If you don't have this foundation no wonder your children will go astray.

Have you put Jesus first above your children in everything more than you put Jesus above your wife above your parents. Yeah there are lots of people who come from non-christian homes who've had a tremendous price to pay when they have to break away from their parents many of them lose their inheritance. What is inheritance? Jesus will give you much more than that.

You honor him he'll honor you. That's part of the foundation. Secondly verse 27 part of the whole purpose of God you have to die to your self-life to the choice of yourself every day in order to follow Jesus Christ.

Lord not my will but thine every day you get up and say today I want to do your will and not mine. That is the second condition of discipleship. Verse 27 that's the meaning of carry the cross.

To take up the cross means where Jesus was crucified to his own will you are crucified. This is the foundation and the third part of the foundation is in verse 33 if you don't give up your possessions. Now there's a difference between having something and possessing it.

We're not allowed to possess anything on this earth because the bible says listen to me 1 corinthians 10 26 says everything on this earth belongs to God. 1 corinthians 10 everything on this earth belongs to God. The earth is the Lord's and everything it contains.

Do you know that money in your bank account is not yours? It's God's and you can't be a disciple if you possess it. You can have it but you can't possess it. You can't say it's mine.

It's not yours. To use an example there's a difference between living in your house and in a rented house. You understand that? In a rented house you can do many things but it's not your house.

You may have to vacate it one day. If it's your house you can do what you like. You can paint it black or whatever you like but it's somebody else's house you can't do what you like but you're using it.

Everything we have on earth, money, property, even your own house, it may be registered in your name but it belongs to God. In a sense it's rented. It's not mine.

If I have a house in my name, it happens to be my name in the registrar's office but it's God's. If you don't have that attitude to property, you have a car, it's not mine. You have a scooter, it's not yours.

That's the meaning of possession. To have something and possess it. Jesus said you must give up your possessions.

So you can use an illustration. Supposing this is something I have or own, this pen. Possessing is to hold it.

This is mine. To have it is there in my palm but I'm not possessing it. I'm not holding it tight.

It's God's. Like Job said, the Lord gave, the Lord can take it away one day. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

That's the attitude we must have to all possessions. If you don't have that attitude to your money, to your property and everything, you cannot have a good foundation and if your Christian life is shaky, check up one of these three areas. Your attitude to your relatives and other brothers and sisters that you're free from them and you live before God.

Your attitude to your wanting to have your own way all the time. Give up your own way and the third your attitude to possessions. So if we have a solid foundation, we can build and build and build and you can build a skyscraper on your life.

Think of people who live such a wonderful life because they died to themselves and gave up their right to their own life. So this is what we proclaim in the church. The whole purpose of God starting from the foundation.

There's a lot more to share on that but we'll stop here for the time being. I hope you will take the opportunity to digest what you have heard and let's live before God's face and ask God to make it clear to us. Let's bow in prayer.

Our heavenly father, we pray you will write these truths deeply in our hearts and help us to be gripped by them. Thank you for hearing us in Jesus name. Amen.

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