

The Humility of the Exemplary Man

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of acting like men by following the example of Jesus Christ in humility, righteousness, and endurance. It highlights the need to entrust ourselves to God, not retaliate when insulted, and continuously seek the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life pleasing to God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 16:13, Hebrews 12:2, Matthew 5:39, Isaiah 54:17, 1 Peter 2:21

Topics: "Christlike Humility", "Endurance in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Let's turn once again to 1 Corinthians 16. This is a theme verse for this study, act like men, be strong. 1 Corinthians 16 and verse 13, which says, be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

So we were considering what it means to act like a man, not the understanding that people in the world have of this he-man, this muscular person who can stand up for his rights and fight for his rights, no. But the man, the man Christ Jesus, whom God gave to earth, sent to earth, his only begotten son who is now his firstborn son, who walked on this earth not only to die for our sins, came to earth not only to die for our sins, but walked on earth for 33 and a half years to show us how every man should live, how every child should live in his home. In all the years he was in his home as a small boy, how a man should work in his profession when he worked as a carpenter, how he should treat other people in all his life.

That is the man we are to be like. And that's why it's very, very important for us to look unto Jesus if we want to finish this race with joy, and if we want to stand firm and be alert. So Hebrews chapter 12 is a very important chapter in this connection.

Hebrews, first of all, the last verse of Hebrews 11, Hebrews 11 is a great chapter on faith, you know, describes all these men of the old covenant, beginning with Abel, right down to the end of the Old Testament, of men who by faith accomplished great things. They were all physical things, mostly in the realm of the external. But it says here in the last verse of Hebrews 11, don't ever read Hebrews 11 without reading the last verse.

Whenever you read about somebody who split open the Red Sea or pulled down the walls of Jericho or overcame lions or defeated armies, at the end read, but God has provided something better for us, Hebrews 11.40. Did you overcome lions? Did you pull down the walls of Jericho? God has provided something better for us in the New Covenant. Did you split open the Red Sea? God has provided something better for us in the New Covenant. So what is this better thing? Better than pulling down walls of Jericho, better than miracles, and better than raising the dead like Elijah and Elisha, what is that better thing? Many Christians have not understood it.

Even among Christians, the idea of being like Jesus is do miracles and do great things and show you're a man. That is not what the Bible says, because the people in the Old Testament did miracles like raising the dead, splitting the Red Sea, getting manna from heaven every day for 40 years, but God was not well pleased with them. That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 10.

Even though they experienced all these miracles, it says in 1 Corinthians 10, the first six verses, God was not pleased with these people who did the mightiest miracles that you see in the Old Testament, that you see in the Bible, the people who raised the dead in the Old Testament. Here was a man called Elisha, you read in the Old Testament in 2 Kings chapter 13. After he died and was buried, much later, when somebody and Elisha's body had decayed, and it was only his bones left in that grave, but it was an open grave.

Somebody dug up that and threw a dead man into it in a baffle, and that dead man's body touched the bones of Elisha, and he was raised from the dead. Have you heard of a greater miracle than that? This is not a living man raising the dead. This is a dead man's bones raising somebody from the dead.

There was anointing in the dead bones of Elisha. What shall we say at the end of it all, Hebrews 11.40? God has provided something better for us. Something better than my dead bones raising a dead man.

Something better for us. Have you understood that? If you've understood it, then you've understood the new covenant I'll explain to you. What is that better thing? The first four verses of chapter 12 should actually be the last four verses of Hebrews 11.

You see, these chapter divisions were not made by God, they were made by man. Hebrews was one letter. It was not divided into chapters and verses.

Maybe into paragraphs, but not chapters and verses. God has provided something better for us, Hebrews 11.40 goes on to the next verse, therefore, and whenever you read therefore, in any verse in the Bible, go back to the previous verse to understand what it means. What is that? Therefore, God has provided something better for us.

What is that? That we should now lay aside every weight and the sin that besets us and look unto Jesus and run this race, looking unto Jesus who took up the cross every day for 33 and a half years and is now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, and he overcame. He overcame by taking up the cross every day. And he says to us in Revelation 3.21, if you overcome as I overcame, then as I am set down at the right hand of the throne of God, you will sit with me on my throne.

Who's going to sit with Jesus on his throne? Those who overcome. How do we overcome? Here it is. Hebrews 12.2, looking unto Jesus, fixing our eyes on Jesus, it means turning our eyes away from everything else unto Jesus alone, who is the author and finisher of our faith, who ran this race.

You see, he began this race and he ran this race. Now we begin this race or should have begun when we were born again. That means the race begins when you start taking up the cross, because it says here he ran this race enduring the cross.

That's not the physical cross that he took for six hours at the end of his life, no. If he told us, if you want to follow me, take up your cross every day and follow me, how could we do that if he didn't take up his cross every day? How can he be an example for me to take up my cross every day if he himself did not take up his cross every day? We need to understand this, that when it says about Jesus enduring the cross, it was a daily thing for him. It was not just once at the end of his life.

It was daily, every single day. That's why he could say to us, if you want to follow me, you have to do the same thing. Daily take up the cross.

He endured the cross and there was a shame attached to it. Act like men, take up the cross. Act like men, despise the shame of being a Christian, of being despised and rejected by men as Jesus was, because you stand up for the truth.

You stand up for the truth in a secular office and most people will not appreciate you. You don't laugh at their dirty jokes and you don't engage in their gossip or their rebellion against the bosses and you will not be popular. You live as a witness for Christ and don't do anything unrighteous.

You pay your taxes uprightly and do everything righteous. You will not be popular. Despise the shame.

The Bible says in Hebrews 13 that Jesus was crucified outside the camp. Hebrews chapter 13. Jesus suffered outside the camp, Hebrews 13, 12.

He wasn't crucified inside Jerusalem. He was crucified outside Jerusalem and it says it was just like in the old covenant, the bodies of the animals whose blood was brought into the holy place was burned outside the camp and that was a picture of how Jesus would be crucified outside the camp of Jerusalem, that religious place. And so it says in Hebrews 13, 13, let us also go outside this religious camp of backslidden compromising Christendom, outside of that, outside this Babylonian Christendom that has religion without spirituality, religion without the power of the Holy Spirit to make them holy.

Let's go outside that, bearing his reproach. There is a reproach attached to being a disciple of Jesus Christ. If you're only popular, something is wrong with your Christianity.

If you've never experienced reproach that Jesus experienced throughout his life, you have missed the road. You're running on the wrong track. Brother, turn back, get onto the track and see the way Jesus went.

Let us run this race, fixing our eyes on Jesus who endured the cross because there was a joy set before him. He didn't look for a joy on this, on earth, the joy that comes through making a lot of money, the joy that comes through being popular and famous, the joy that comes through people admiring you because you can preach well or because you pray for someone who was sick and the person was healed, all this type of stuff, that's not what a true Christian is seeking for. There's no joy in that for a Christian.

Have you noticed in the Gospels, whenever Jesus healed the sick, he always told them don't tell anybody. And when people tried to make him a king, he ran away. He never, never sought for honor from men.

He did not do a miracle to get honor before men. He did not preach a sermon to get honor before men. The Bible says in Galatians 1.10, if I seek to please men, I cannot be a servant of Christ.

You'll be a servant of the devil, all right, but you won't be a servant of Christ, impossible. Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy set in front of him, what was the joy set in front of him that enabled him to endure a cross? In the previous two chapters earlier, in Hebrews 10, it says Jesus entered into the most holy place. In the Old Testament tabernacle, there was a place called the most holy place, which is blocked off with a veil, a curtain, and God's glory dwelt in the most holy place.

It was not in the outer court. It was not in the holy place. It was in that place beyond the veil.

And it says in Hebrews 10 and verse 19 and 20 that that veil was a picture of the flesh of Jesus, the will of Jesus. Flesh means His will, which He denied and denied and denied. That's the meaning of taking up the cross.

He denied His own will every single day for 33 and a half years and thus rent the veil of His flesh. God enabled Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. And so when He died on the cross, He said, it is finished.

That means every part of self-will has been crucified. He was tempted throughout His life to do His own will right from the beginning till God in the Gethsemane, He said, not my will, even in the most painful of all temptations, to be forsaken by the Father on the cross, even to the uttermost, He said, not my will. For the sake of lost humanity, I'm willing to go to hell for six hours on the cross, for three hours on the cross.

And He was forsaken, experiencing an eternal hell in those three hours. He said, I'm willing, I give up my will to do Your will, Father, to save man so that his sin can be blotted out, so that I can take the entire punishment for the entire human race. He endured the cross, but He had taken it up every day of His life.

The veil was rent finally when He said, it is finished. And the way into the most holy place was opened up. And the Bible says in Psalm 16:11, in the Father's presence is fullness of joy.

Jesus knew that. There is only one place in the universe, in the universe, where there is fullness of joy. There's a little bit of so-called joy in different parts of things on this earth, but not fullness.

Fullness of joy is found only in the presence of the Father, Psalm 16:11. That is in the most holy place. And Jesus knew to get there, you've got to go through the veil.

You've got to rent the veil, you've got to say no to your self-will. He did that every day. And He lived in the Father's presence every day.

That is the man God has set before us as an example. That is what it means to act like a man, to take up the cross every day, not to be scared to take up the cross, not to be ashamed to take up the cross, not to be afraid of the reproach that comes through taking up the cross and standing up for Christ boldly, suffering the reproach. He goes on to say in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 3, when you get weary in your heart and you tend to give up, tend to get discouraged, Hebrews 12 verse 3, consider Him, consider Jesus who endured such tremendous opposition from sinners throughout His life and follow His example.

So the better thing, mentioned in Hebrews 11:40, is the privilege and honor of being able to walk in Jesus' footsteps every day. Act like men, act like the man Jesus Christ, impossible without the power of the Holy

Spirit. That's why nobody could do that in the old covenant times.

There were great men of God in the old covenant, many wonderful men. Elijah was a wonderful man of God. John the Baptist was the greatest.

But even he lost faith towards the end of his life when he was in prison. He was wondering why Jesus, the Messiah, could not deliver him from prison. And he sent disciples to Jesus and said, are you really the Messiah? Yeah, I know I heard the voice from heaven saying, you are the beloved son.

I saw the Spirit of God descending upon you when you were baptized. I saw it myself. But I'm not too sure now.

He began to lose faith, why? Because Jesus was not delivering him from some earthly problem like prison. And that can happen to a believer. Some earthly problem, you pray and pray and pray and pray, and it looks as if God doesn't open the prison doors and you're stuck there.

And you wonder, Lord, are you listening to me? Or you can go even beyond that and say, is there a God up there at all? Possible if you're under the old covenant, but not if you're in the new covenant. No. Nobody.

Paul was in prison for much longer than John the Baptist. He never lost faith. From prison, he wrote Philippians and writes there, rejoice in the Lord, Philippians 4.4. And don't think I made a mistake when I say that.

He says, again, I say rejoice. That was different from John the Baptist. And towards the end of his life in prison, Paul says in 2 Timothy 4.7, I have kept the faith.

I fought a good fight. I finished my course. That is the example for us, a man who walked in Jesus' footsteps, who says to us, follow me as I follow Christ.

Be alert. Act like men. Be strong.

Follow the example of Paul who said, follow me as I follow Christ. And Paul also says in Philippians 3 and verse 17, not only my example, I'm not the only one. Look at other people who are like me, who can also say, follow me as I follow Paul, who followed Christ.

There are men, very few, living even today, who will say, follow me as I follow Christ. Those are the only people I want to follow. They may not say it with their mouth, but they say it by their life.

Follow me as I follow Christ. Look at my life. Look at the steps I take.

I'm walking in the footsteps of Jesus. I'm not perfect, but I see the footsteps of Jesus in this climb up the mountain. Think of a mountain covered with snow.

And Jesus reached the top, finished the race, took up the cross every step of the way, all the way up to the mountain, every step, denying himself, taking up the cross. And in the snow, I see his footsteps. And I am still many thousands of feet from the top of the mountain, but I can see his footsteps.

Maybe I'm only at 100 feet, and the mountain is like Mount Everest, 30,000 feet. Jesus is at the top, but I'm climbing. I see his footsteps, and I go step by step by step.

And maybe after a few years, I reach 200 feet, 300 feet, 400 feet, 500 feet. I'm looking at his footsteps. I'm not worried about other people around.

I'm not worried about which way the great men of this world walk. I want to see the footsteps of Jesus. I never want to take my eyes off that.

I see the example of Jesus. And ahead of me, I see Paul. I see other godly men, not great preachers.

No, I'm not looking at them. Not great authors of books. A lot of people admire the great preachers, the great authors of books, or even the great healers.

I don't admire any of them. I admire humble people who walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. And there have been men like that through the years.

Those have been my heroes. Never has a healer been my hero. Never in my entire life, never has a preacher been my hero.

Those who walked in the footsteps of Christ. Don't seek to preach like others. Don't seek to preach like Paul or heal like Paul.

Seek to walk like Paul did in the footsteps of Christ. That's what it means to act like a man and be strong, because they are walking in the footsteps of Christ. And so Paul says, not only me, Philippians 3.17, but those who are walking in the same pattern who have seen it in us.

And he goes on to say in the next verse, Philippians 3.18, all the others, all the others who are not walking in these footsteps, who don't take up the cross every day, they are not just carnal believers. They are not just immature believers, which is true. They are, verse 18, Philippians 3.18, enemies of the cross of Christ.

And let me say that boldly. I have no hesitation in saying that. A person who does not take up the cross every day of his life and follow in Jesus' footsteps is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

That means he's despising the cross of Christ. What does it mean in practical terms? Here, you know, we have to try to take up the cross daily. We begin one day by saying, okay, day that our Christ has crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, Galatians 5.24. I've taken that decision once, but then I must follow through that decision every single day of my life.

It's like marriage. There was a particular day when you get married. You say, I will be true.

A wife says, I'll be true to my husband every single day. And I'm married permanently to this person. No question of divorce.

No question of ever living without him. And then every day of her life, she's with him, submitting to him as the church is subject to Christ. That is how Jesus lived under the authority of the father.

That's how he denied his own will every day. And so must I, every single day, deny myself and walk in Jesus footsteps, then one day I will reach the throne of God. And if I'm not doing that, any day when I don't do that, I'm an enemy of the cross.

That means in practical terms, some situation comes up where I'm provoked to get angry because somebody yelled at me or somebody did something very hurtful. I have a choice now. Either to take up the

cross, die to myself and love that person and forgive that person or become an enemy of the cross and say, no, I'm not going to take up the cross.

I'm going to give him a piece of my mind. I'm going to treat him like he treated me. How dare he treat me like dirt.

Let me give him a taste of his own medicine. Uh-huh. Maybe you succeeded in doing that.

Maybe you opened your mouth and let him have it. Maybe you treated him like dirt. That moment, you were an enemy of the cross of Christ.

And until you repent of that and ask forgiveness, you're continuing as an enemy of the cross till you humble yourself and set that matter right. And you set that matter right by going to that person and saying, it may be your wife. I'm sorry for getting angry.

Please forgive me. Then you have taken up the cross again. But how many people do that? How many husbands go and apologize to their wives for getting angry? How many wives go and apologize to their husbands for getting angry? It's rare.

I tell you, even among believers. They are enemies of the cross. It's very clear to me in Philippians 3, 17 and 18.

Those who follow Christ and those who are enemies of the cross. You cannot say you follow Christ if you don't take up the cross every single day. That is the meaning of Hebrews 12, verse 2. You say this is a better thing than shutting the mouths of lions and splitting the Red Sea.

Yes. The Bible says so. God has provided something better.

That we can look at Jesus and run this race. Who despised the shame that was set before him. And for the joy that was set before him.

And walked in the way the Father wanted him. The will of the Father at every point. So we need to see what this means in practical terms.

I want you to turn to John chapter 13. This is the one place where we see Jesus saying these words. In John chapter 14.

This is the Last Supper. John 13 to 17. All those chapters are at the Last Supper.

It says here, while he was sitting at the table. He told Philip in John 14. And verse 9 onwards.

Verse 9. He who has seen me has seen the Father. You see the Philip had come to Jesus and said, show us the Father. And that's enough for us.

And Jesus said, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. And what did he do there? He was not talking just about the words he preached. There was something he did there.

Which demonstrated what the Father was like. In John 13, he had washed their feet. That was the job of slaves in those days.

In those days, rich people had a slave, at least one in their house. And when people were invited for dinner, you know, in those days, everybody wore sandals. And they walked the dusty roads and their feet were full of dirt.

And so at the door, there'd be a slave with a bucket of water, or a basin of water, to wash the feet of people when they came in. That was standard procedure in every rich man's house. Now when Jesus asked someone to loan him his room, upper room, for them to have their Last Supper, the man, whoever owned that house, kept the table ready, the food, and the basin of water at the door.

But no slave, because Jesus said, I don't want anybody in that room. So even though he had a slave, he didn't send any slave up there. It had to be empty.

And all the disciples came, their feet were all dirty, there was a basin of water, and nobody thought of picking it up and washing anybody's feet. They looked around for a slave. No slave.

And everybody was too important to do it himself. Matthew was an accountant. Peter was the leader.

John was a relative or known to the high priest. How could they descend to things like this? And Judas was the smartest postgraduate person among the disciples. No, they wouldn't do it.

Everybody sits there with dirty feet. You have to wash the feet first before they eat. And Jesus, or at some time during the meal, Jesus takes up the basin of water.

He says, I'm the slave. You call me Lord and Master. You see what I did? I'm the slave here.

He washed their feet as a servant, as a slave. And then he said, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. You want to know what God is like? There it is.

One who washes our feet. One who takes the low place. We think of God as almighty who's sitting on the throne, threatening everybody, frightening everybody.

No. He who has seen me has seen the Father. I see what the Father is like.

It humbles me when I think almighty God, my Father, manifested in Jesus, comes to wash my dirty feet. I, who am such a sinner from birth, he comes to wash my feet. How dare I ever claim to be a representative of this God and act in any other way.

I should be ashamed of myself every time in my life that I have acted in any other way than with this spirit of a servant of others. This willingness to do dirty jobs for others. This willingness to go beneath others and be at their feet.

He who has seen me has seen the Father. And Jesus went on later on in chapter 16, sorry, chapter 20, to say, as the Father sent me, so send I you. And I hear that word myself.

As he came, representing the Father, I am to go into the world to represent Christ. So as he said to people, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. When people look at my life, I should be able to say to them, if you've seen me, you've seen a little bit of what Jesus is like.

Not perfectly, because I have not yet fully become like Christ. But you've seen a little bit of what Jesus is like. Not in the way I preach, no.

There are many great preachers in the world. But in the way I relate to you. The way I conduct myself.

The way I behave. The way I react when other people hurt me or speak evil of me or do harm to me. You've seen a little bit of what Jesus is like.

That is what it means to walk in Jesus' footsteps. That is the better thing that God has provided for us. So be alert.

Be strong. Act like men. Act like Jesus Christ.

That's really the meaning of that verse. Be strong in faith. In dependence upon God.

Take the lowly path. I'm sorry to say, this is very little seen in today's Christendom. And one reason God has raised up, one reason why God has raised up CFC churches is to once again emphasize the humanity of Jesus Christ that we have to follow as our example.

The humility of Jesus Christ that we have to follow as our example. You see, the world sees the greatness of God in creation. When I behold the heavens that you have created, O God, what is man that you are mindful of him? That's what the psalmist says.

They see the greatness of God in creation. The whole world sees that. This universe, which is so huge that the whole planet Earth is like a speck of dust is almighty God.

But the disciple of Jesus sees the greatness of God in the humility of Jesus Christ. Not in the vastness of creation. Not in the miracles Jesus did.

But in the way he washed people's feet. Do you want to follow Jesus in raising the dead and healing the sick? Or do you want to follow Jesus in washing people's feet? That shows where your mind is set. I'm not talking about what you say with your lips or what you pretend to be.

Deep down in your heart, what do you desire? Towards your fellow believers in your church. Are you eager to wash their feet? Or are you eager to show them what a great preacher you are? Or eager to show what discernment you have? How you can cast out demons? I've seen videos of preachers who get people to take a video of their casting out demons. I've cast out demons in my life but I would never, never allow anyone to take a video of that.

I'll tell you why. Because I don't want anybody to see the face of that person who is now a converted Christian. Why do you want to see the person's face who, supposing that was your daughter who had a demon? Would you want everybody to see the demon being cast out of your daughter? No! That's why I never want a video to be taken of such.

We want to respect the dignity of human beings. We will guard each person's dignity in the body of Christ. We don't do or say anything that will humiliate another person.

In the church, as elders, sometimes we have to discipline people. That is a responsibility that an elder has to take and he's not to be bothered about what people think about him when he takes that discipline which may look sometimes like taking a whip and chasing the money changers out of the temple. It may sometimes look like telling his closest co-worker like Jesus told Peter, you're interested in the things of man and not the things of God.

It may involve rebuke. It may involve taking authority like Paul had as an apostle to hand somebody over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so the spirit may be saved in the day of Christ. 1 Corinthians 5. Those are painful decisions but always in humility.

Never seeking to exalt ourselves. Never, never, never. That is to follow Jesus.

Never glorying in anything in ourselves. I see the very first chapter of Matthew. How does the New Testament begin? How does the New Testament begin? So different from the Old Testament.

What I see in the beginning of the Matthew is trying to show us Jesus Christ. Remember the New Testament where we read all about the New Covenant. It says, this is the record, Matthew 1.1 of the genealogy of Jesus.

How Jesus descended. Now remember this is introducing the New Covenant which is better than the Old Covenant. This is the lineage of Jesus Christ.

Read it carefully. Jesus who from heaven planned for thousands of years all eternity actually which line he would come through to this earth to be the savior of men. He could have chosen the lineage of the most godly, pure people on earth or relatively better people.

And the lineage of some rich people, kings. But what does he choose? Let me show you. There are some women mentioned here in Matthew 4 right at the beginning.

In the first six verses, the genealogy of Jesus Christ in six verses, four women are mentioned. Isn't that interesting that the New Testament begins giving us the lineage of Jesus Christ and begins naming four women? Usually Jewish genealogies never mention women. Only men.

Read the list of names in Chronicles and even in Luke chapter 3 and other places in the Old Testament. It's always men, men, men, men. In the book of Numbers you see that.

But here you see four women mentioned. Amazing. And these are not four godly women.

No. The genealogy of Jesus Christ. The greatness of Jesus Christ.

Number one. He came of the line of Tamar. Matthew 1 verse 3. Judah was the father of Perez and Judah by Tamar.

Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah. He had married Judah's son who died and then she sat on the roadside pretending to be a prostitute. And Judah, the father-in-law, not knowing who she was went into her and had a child.

And Jesus from heaven says I'm going to come through that line. Come through the line of a man who committed incest with his own daughter-in-law. What would you think of a father-in-law who commits adultery with his own daughter-in-law? Would you like to be born of that line? Jesus chose it.

Then we go on. The next woman mentioned there is Rahab in verse 5. Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab. Rahab was the most well-known prostitute in Jericho.

Not even a Jew. She was a Gentile and a prostitute and a very well-known prostitute. And she married a Jewish person and Salmon.

And Jesus says I choose that line. A Gentile prostitute. Would you choose it in your lineage? Would you be proud to say one of my ancestors was a prostitute another one was one who was born of incest? Number 3. Matthew 1 verse 5. The third woman mentioned there is Ruth.

Ruth was a Moabite descended from Moab. Who was Moab? Moab was born out of incest. Worse than Tamar's birth.

Worse than Judah's incest. Lot committed adultery with his own daughter and Moab was born. And from that line comes Ruth.

And Jesus says I'll choose that line. Again another incest. And the fourth woman mentioned here is Bathsheba.

Not in the direct line but mentioned in the genealogy because David was in the genealogy of Jesus and David committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed her husband and married her. Think about a line. My ancestry consists of a man who committed adultery with somebody else's wife and killed that man and married her.

These are the four women mentioned in Matthew. The first six verses of the New Testament. What is the purpose? To show us that Jesus did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

We have so many people in our churches who by the grace of God have come to an overcoming life. And it's very easy for us brothers to look down on others who have a bad ancestry, who are a lower social level, who have an immoral background, or who come from an immoral line, or who are beneath acceptable social standards. And if you look down on any of them, even inwardly, I want to say to you in Jesus' name, you have not understood anything about the New Covenant.

You have not seen Jesus at all. You are following another Jesus, the one you see in today's great famous preachers and healers who stand on the platform like film stars who make millions from the poor people in their congregations. That is another Jesus.

Act like the man Jesus Christ. To act like men means to see Jesus clearly, to see His humility. Not His miracles, not how He preached, not how He did miracles, but to see His humility from the line He chose to be born in.

And then you know where He was born. In a stable. I have never in my entire life seen, even in the poorest people in India, anybody India is a poor country, but I've never heard even of a beggar's child who was born in a cow shed.

With donkeys and cows and filth and tetanus germs all over. No. It's only the Son of God who was born there.

And in fact, the angel said to the shepherds, this is the sign by which you will know the Messiah. He's born in us. You'll see Him in a stable, in a cow shed, inside the feeding trough of a cow.

That's how Jesus was born. We saw His lineage. We saw how He was born.

And this is His greatness. Act like men. Choose this way.

See, sin came to the universe through pride. Sin did not come through adultery, murder or any such thing. Sin came through pride.

Through one created being exalting Himself and wanting to be like God. Wanting all the other angels, not only to worship God, but to worship Him. Whenever we want other people to admire us or we rejoice that we are admired or happy that people appreciate the way we preached or we served them.

Don't forget who was the first person who did that. Lucifer. We don't know his real name.

Who was immediately cast down by God and became the devil. So sin came into this universe, this perfect universe, where sin did not exist. Sin came through pride.

So salvation had to come through the opposite of that humility. All those who follow the devil follow Him in that pride of exalting Himself, wanting to be big, wanting to be admired by others, exalted by others, getting titles and all that. And Jesus went down.

Jesus was not known as the Reverend Doctor Jesus Christ or His Highness the Archbishop of Metropolitan or the Pope Jesus Christ. No. He was not known by any title.

And He told His disciples in Matthew 23, don't ever let anybody call you by all these exalted titles. You are servants. You are brothers.

There's only two titles He gave us in Matthew 23. Brothers and servants. You desire any other title than that, you're exalting yourself.

Who gave you the right to call yourself Reverend or Pastor? You read in the Psalms, God has that title Reverend. Holy and Reverend is His name. It says in the Psalms.

I think it's Psalm 131. Holy and Reverend is His name. How dare a human being take that? It's like Satan saying I will be like the Most High.

Where are the people who stand against that? Very rare to find. I'm not saying that's the only thing. Many people who take that title, do it in ignorance.

But we are not ignorant today. We are living at the end of the 21st century where so much light has come. We don't despise others, even godly men in the olden days who took those titles.

It's because they didn't have light. I never forget the fact that I am standing on the shoulders of others. You know when you stand on somebody's shoulder, you can see further than the person standing beneath you can see.

I see godly men, say from the last five hundred years, godly men who proclaimed the truth, recovered the truth that's in the Bible, little by little, justification by faith, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the pattern of the church, the body of Christ, little by little. All these were men who discovered it. Each was standing on the shoulder of somebody else who went before him.

And now there are a number of godly men and I'm standing on the shoulder of all those people in terms of understanding of doctrine. So it's not surprising that I can see further into God's Word than some of those people could see. Some of those godly men who lived two, three hundred years ago, they did not even see the truth of water baptism.

They did not see the truth of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Is it because we know more than them? No, we're standing on their shoulders. So we humble ourselves and say we're thankful for all these men who recovered truth little by little by little.

And today we stand in the place where we've recovered almost all of the truth in the New Testament. And we see the greatness of Jesus in his humility, in his telling people when he did something miraculous, don't tell anybody about it. He wanted to be hidden as much as possible.

Dear brothers, that is to act like a man. When it says act like men, be like that. When we read here in 1 Peter and chapter 2, 1 Peter chapter 2, I'm just trying to clarify what it means to act like a man and to be strong, because we can get the wrong idea of this.

1 Peter and chapter 2. Please turn with me. 1 Peter chapter 2, it says here, verse 21 onwards, we have got Christ as an example. We have to follow in his steps.

Let me read the last part of verse 21. You have been called for this purpose. Christ has left you an example to follow in his steps.

And remember, this is Peter who's writing, who had seen so many miraculous things. He'd even seen Jairus' daughter being raised from the dead. Not follow in his steps to raise the dead.

No! He doesn't mention one miracle. Christ has left us an example to follow in his steps. Not a priest to carry sermons.

Who did no sin. In whose mouth no lie was ever found. Who, what are the areas we're going to follow Jesus in? Let's get it very clear.

Act like men, be strong. Follow the man, Christ Jesus. Who did no sin.

Who never told a lie. And who, when he was reviled, insulted, he did not insult and return. And people got angry with him.

He didn't get angry at them. He said, Father, forgive them. And they spat on his face.

He just kept quiet. While he was suffering, he did not threaten. He did not say, wait and see how God will judge you for treating me like this.

No, no, no, no. It's only today's believers who say such stupid things. He kept quiet.

If he did open his mouth, it was, Father, forgive them. For they don't know what they're doing. Have you ever thought of that verse? That statement of Jesus? Can a man not know what he's doing when he's crucifying somebody on a cross? What did he mean by they don't know what they're doing? Can you not know when you're not, when you're killing somebody? Can you, can it be said that you don't know what you're doing? They knew very well what they were doing.

What he meant was they don't know who they are killing. They don't know that I'm the Son of God. They don't know that I'm the second person of the Trinity.

Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing. And when they treat you, a child of God, who's the apple of God's eye. You know, it says in Zechariah chapter 2, verse 5 and 8, God is a wall of fire

all about me, and I'm the apple of his eye.

And they poke you. You're poking God's eye. He feels the hurt.

Don't you feel the hurt if somebody poked your eye? God feels it because I'm the apple of his eye. God said that to me in Zechariah chapter 2. Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

They think I'm just an ordinary man like them. When he suffered, he uttered no threats. But what did he do? It says he kept entrusting himself, 1 Peter 2, 23, to him who judges righteously.

He didn't just do it once. He had to continuously take up the cross because they kept insulting him. Father, I entrust myself to you.

I entrust myself to you. It was an inner attitude of keeping on entrusting himself. Father, you judge righteously.

These people accuse me about a whole lot of things which I never did. I'm not going to defend myself. I will not open my mouth.

Let them say what they like. I will entrust myself to you who judge righteously. Because Jesus knew the promise that God had given in Isaiah 54 and verse 17, no weapon formed against you will prosper.

And every tongue that accuses you in judgment will be condemned. That means God will condemn them. Their vindication is from me, says the Lord.

You don't have to open your mouth. I will vindicate you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

And you won't be vindicated immediately. I remember some years ago when, you know, people have the habit of sometimes taking one statement that I've made in a sermon and taking it completely out of context and pretending that it means something else just to suit their own ends. People who don't like the message of overcoming sin that we preach.

People who don't like what we teach about what a preacher's attitude should be towards money. They're very upset with me and they take some statement of mine and twist it. And I've experienced that for years and years and years.

And once I said, Lord, these people are twisting my words and making it mean what I never meant. What should I do? Will you vindicate me? And the Lord said to me, I have not been vindicated yet. For 2,000 years, Jesus said people have twisted my words, even Christians.

And I have not been vindicated yet. You're not going to be vindicated before me. But time will come when Jesus will be vindicated, when he returns.

Are you willing to wait for that? I said, yes, Lord. I don't want to be vindicated here and now. I'm willing to be, I'm willing to wait till your second coming to be vindicated then.

Dear brothers and sisters, keep your mouth shut when you're accused falsely. That is to act like a man and be strong. Let's pray.

Bow your heads and close your eyes and meditate for a few moments on what you have heard. And remember one thing, Lord, I cannot live this life without the power of the Holy Spirit. If you're convicted,

confess your sin.

But don't think you're going to overcome tomorrow without the power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, give me the power of your Spirit. Help me to walk as Jesus walked.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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