

(The Last Days) Enduring in Love

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of enduring in love and being ready for the last days, rather than focusing on knowing the details of what's going to happen.

Duration: 1:00:44

Scripture: Matthew 24:10-25

Topics: "End Times", "Christian Love"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on being ready for the second coming of Christ rather than getting caught up in details or seeking after signs and wonders. The key message is to love God with all your heart and to love others as Jesus loved you, as this is what truly matters. The speaker warns against deception, false prophets, and falling away from the faith, highlighting the significance of enduring in love till the end to be saved.

Transcript

So we've been considering this theme of the last days and the second coming of Christ in about eight sessions. And this is the ninth one. And hopefully, we'll conclude it this Wednesday.

We saw that when Jesus spoke about the last days to his disciples, his emphasis was not on knowing the details, which is what satisfies the curiosity of carnal religious Christians. But Jesus' emphasis was on being ready. And that's much more important.

You can know the details and not be ready. All your understanding of the details of what's going to happen may be correct. And you may not be ready.

On the other hand, some of your understanding of the details may be wrong. But if you're ready, you will go to meet the Lord when he comes in the air for us. So it's clear, even from a logical standpoint, that it's more important to be ready than to know the details.

Knowing the details is a matter of the mind. Being ready is a matter of the heart. And throughout scripture, you'll find the emphasis on the heart being what God looks at.

So please keep that in mind. We were considering about the heart's attachment to the world that needs to be detached if we are to be ready for the coming of the Lord. I want you to look at Matthew 24 now.

This is the chapter where Jesus spoke about his second coming. And more than once, he says about deception and false prophets. And that's why we constantly warn against deception and false prophets.

It speaks about lying signs and wonders in the last days. It speaks, Jesus spoke about people who do miracles in the name of Jesus, in his name, who he will reject in the final day and sent to hell because they lived in sin. And we need discernment to be able to know that today.

I don't want to discover in the last day that somebody was a hoax. I want to know it now. It's too late to discover in the last day that somebody whom I followed was actually a hoax or somebody who I respected and admired as what I thought was a great man of God.

I discover in the last day when he stands before the Lord that he's a hoax. I don't want to discover that. I want to know it now.

One of the things that Jesus said here was, behold, I have told you in advance. He said that here in Matthew 24. I've told you in advance.

So I want you to see this. In verse 10, Matthew 24, verse 10, that time many will fall away. See, that's one of the things which is also emphasized throughout scripture in the New Testament.

Not only there'll be a great amount of deception in the last days, not only there's going to be a lot of false signs and wonders in the last days, but many believers are going to fall away. I mean, it's obviously not referring to unbelievers. Unbelievers don't fall away.

They're already down. Where do you fall away from? You fall away from a position God has brought you to. It's talking about believers.

Many, not one or two, many will fall away. And one reason they fall away, and when they fall away, you see what's going to happen is they're going to hate one another. Have you noticed that when people go away from hearing the truth, they begin to hate? I've seen that.

I've seen that with people who leave the church. Very soon, two sins become very prominent in their lives. One is telling lies, and the other is hatred.

When we begin to tell lies without our conscience pricking us, we know that we are beginning to fall away. When we start hating, and hatred is a mother that produces all types of children, bitterness, jealousy, strife, these are all the children of hatred. And when those things come in, you know that you've already begun to fall away.

So many will fall away and they will hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and mislead many. It's in the middle of this passage here, he speaks again about false prophets and will lead many astray, telling them, I suppose, it's not so serious that you hate one another, or it's not so serious that you've fallen away, or that you won't fall away.

You remember how 15 years ago you asked Jesus to come into your heart? You won't fall away. That's a false prophet. They will arise and mislead many so that when people fall away, they still think they are saved.

Jesus once spoke to the Pharisees about those who become twofold children of hell. Now, everybody's a child of hell to start with. How do you become twofold a child of hell? Twofold a child of hell, he spoke

about that in Matthew 23, is when a man thinks he's saved and he's lost.

So many will be led astray. And then listen to this, verse 12. This is the verse I want to speak on.

Because sin, iniquity is increased, lawlessness is increased, the love of many people will grow cold. There's going to be so much sin in the world in the last days. And we see that around us, all types, particularly in the areas of sex and violence.

Two things that characterize Noah's day and Lot's day in Sodom. The love of many will grow cold. That means fervent love for Jesus, which once upon a time a man had, is going to grow cold.

Because there are many attractive, sinful pleasures in the world around him to draw him away from that love. Or people around him are going to be hard and evil in the last days that his love for them is going to grow cold. So people are going to, when it speaks about people falling away in the context, it appears to me they're going to fall away from this love for God and love for one another.

But, verse 13, the one who endures to the end, that means the one who endures in love. Let's always read it in its context. The love of many will grow cold, but, it's the same sentence, the love of many will grow cold, but, the one who endures in love till the end will be saved.

He'll be ready to meet the Lord. So, what is the message for the last days? Endure in love. When sin increases around you, when people treat you badly, when the sin in others increases towards you, the one who endures in love till the end will be ready to meet the Lord.

And, keeping that in mind, if you turn to chapter 25, you see the story of the 10 virgins. Now, this has been subject to all types of interpretations, but, the fact of the matter is, even though all 10 were virgins, it was not five virgins and five harlots. Even though all 10 were virgins, which means their external life was ripe, and all 10 had lamps, which means their external testimony was good.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works. So, their light was shining. Yet, at the end of the story, you read five were raptured to meet the bridegroom, and five were left behind.

And the reason they were left behind was not because they were harlots, but because they didn't have their lights burning. And why were their lights not burning? Because the bridegroom delayed his coming. If the bridegroom had come three hours earlier, he came past midnight, but if he had come three hours earlier, have you thought of it? All 10 would have looked wise, because all 10, their lamps were burning.

But it says here, verse three, sorry, verse five, the bridegroom delayed, and they all got drowsy and began to sleep. I mean, that's talking about physical sleep. But at midnight, he didn't come at nine o'clock, he came at midnight.

There was a shout, behold the bridegroom, come out to meet him. And all the virgins rose up, trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil, because our lamps are dying out.

That lamp, that light is the life, in him was life, and the life was the light of men. That's dying out, that means it was burning once upon a time. But it's dying out now.

It's possible for us to have the life of Christ at one time, and for it to die out, because we're not careful to have a vessel full of oil. That's the point. The only difference between these two was, the five did not, verse three, did not take any oil, but the wise, verse four, took oil in their flask, and somewhere hidden in

their garments was a flask of oil.

You couldn't see it. You could only see the lamp burning. You know, there are two parts to our life, one which other people can see, symbolized by the lamp burning, and all 10 were okay there.

And there's another part of our life which other people can't see, and that's symbolized by the flask of oil. You may not have it, or you may have it. It's hidden in their garments.

Nobody, externally, they all looked alike, because the lamps were burning. But inwardly, five had the flask of oil, and that oil throughout scripture is a picture of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit that floods our hearts with the love of God. Bible says in Romans 5, five, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the one who keeps this lamp burning.

Now, when we relate this to what Jesus said earlier, the love of many will grow cold. That means they had love, and it sort of died out. Now, he's explaining it in a parable, that in the last days, there are people gonna be standing there before the Lord comes, and if the Lord had come early and come immediately, it looked as if we all had love.

But you know, it's time that tests us. Can you think back to the time when you first got converted, or some years ago, when you fervently loved the Lord, and you came to the church, and you loved everybody in the church? I think whenever a person joins a church newly, he loves everybody in the church. Wasn't it like that with you? You hardly knew anybody, and you were so happy to be welcomed, and you loved everybody.

But now you've been here a few years, and now you have difficulties with some people. You don't feel like talking to some people. You see, what's happened to your light is dying out.

Do you recognize that? Why is it dying out? Because you don't allow the Holy Spirit to keep renewing it with fresh oil. Here it says that when the lamps were dying out, the foolish said to the wise, and were saying, give us some of your oil. You know, that's something we just can't do.

I can't give you the love I have. I wish I could to be in your heart. I mean, I could love you, but I can't give you the love which God's put in my heart.

You gotta get it yourself. And so they said, we can't do that. Go to the dealers, verse nine, buy some for yourselves.

We meet many dealers who teach us how to love, to keep our flask full of oil. I see that as, you know, we go to God. He's the only one who can give us love.

But we go to God at times when we are pressurized by situations, circumstances to lose that love. When we are tempted to lose our love for God and for others, instead of remaining in that condition and say, God, I come to you, please give me love in my heart in this situation. I don't want to be drawn away by the pleasures of this world.

I don't want to have an unforgiving attitude towards this person. I'm tempted now. If I don't go to God at such a time and I allow my innate natural selfishness in my flesh to rule, I'll find over a period of time that my life dies out.

That's the message of this parable. And whenever Christianity loses its focus, you know, the Bible says about how the God of the world blinds our eyes so that we, blinds the eyes of people, the unbelieving, so that they cannot see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What is that glory of God? Now, let's turn to that verse.

Sometimes we read a verse carefully, carelessly rather. It says here in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse four, the God of this world, that is Satan, has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. I want to say to you that when Moses asked God to show him his glory, the Lord said, I will let all my goodness pass in front of you.

You read that in Exodus 33 and chapters 33 and 34. Lord, show me your glory. God said, I will show, I will let all my goodness pass before you.

That is the glory of God. The glory of God is his goodness. And the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, when we don't see that clearly, when we don't see that that is what God wants us to have, then God sent Jesus on this earth so that we can have that glory in our hearts.

When we don't see that, when we lose that focus, when we forget that the Holy Spirit has primarily come to make us like Jesus Christ, when we forget that, what it says in chapter three, verse 18 of the same letter, verse 17, the Lord is the spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Liberty means freedom. Here's another word, which a lot of people have misunderstood.

Many people say that that means freedom to dance and shout. Yeah, that's fine. But that type of freedom you can get without the Holy Spirit.

All you got to do is get drunk with alcohol. You'll get that type of freedom. But this is a type of freedom only the Holy Spirit can give.

Think of a freedom that alcohol can't give you, that your outgoing temperament can't give you, but only the Holy Spirit. It's freedom from sin. It's freedom from the flesh.

It's freedom from selfishness. All human beings have a flesh. And one way we could describe the flesh is selfish, self-centered, selfish, always seeking one's own interests.

That's a characteristic of the flesh. And you and I know we still have it, even though we are born again. And that's what Jesus conquered.

He never did his own will. And the Holy Spirit, it says here, shows us in verse 18, the glory of Jesus, and changes us into that same likeness. So when we lose that focus, once when people ask Jesus, what is the great commandment? You know, the Pharisees thought the Sabbath was the great commandment.

So they were testing him. Is he going to say the Sabbath or is it circumcision? They were always taken up with some external rule. There are many Christians like that today.

I'm talking about born again Christians whose Christianity is summed up in external rules. It could be reading the Bible every day, or it could be breaking bread every Sunday, or it could be various things, which an external form of dress or some external type of behavior or language, praying in a particular way or something like that. It's external always.

And the Pharisees had their list of external rules. And some of these things are very important for them. They said, Jesus, which is the great commandment? And Jesus replied saying, the greatest commandment is love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.

And the other side of the coin is love your neighbor as yourself. The whole Bible hangs on these two commandments. That is what it means to be conformed to the likeness of Christ.

So when it says here that the Holy Spirit is going to make us like Jesus, this is what it means. How do you know whether you're becoming like Jesus or not? If you find yourself loving God more and more fervently every day, if you find yourself being able to love unlovely people around you, you can be sure that the Holy Spirit is making you more like Jesus. See, those are the situations where we need to go to God and say, God, I find myself unable to love someone.

I find myself unable to forgive someone. I find myself cooling off in my love for you. You've heard me speak about internet pornography a number of times.

It's a man who's losing his love for God who clicks on some site to watch internet pornography. That's one of the clearest evidences that his love for God is going down. Because iniquity shall abound.

There's plenty of iniquity on the internet. The love of many will grow cold. Is that happening to you? You think you prove your love for Jesus by coming here and singing a lot of songs and feeling very emotional? The God of the world has blinded your eyes to the truth.

It's when you find a brother who irritates you that you discover whether you have oil in your vessel or not. If you have oil in your vessel, your light will burn. Because you take a lamp, for example, a light, to use a modern illustration, as long as there's electricity, the light will burn.

And a light never complains. A bulb never complains. It's too dark here, I can't shine.

A candle never says, it's too dark here, I can't shine. A lamp never says, it's too dark. There are people who say it's so difficult to forgive that person.

It's so difficult to love that person. That's like saying it's too dark, I can't shine. That's not the reason.

If the lamp cannot shine, it's because there's no oil, not because it's too dark. And as long as we say the problem is that person, he keeps on irritating me. That's why I can't love him.

The devil has focused your mind on the wrong reason. That's not the reason. The reason is there's no oil in your flask.

That's why the lamp is not burning. Like I said, the lamp never says, it's too dark. The honest thing is the lamp has to say there's no oil.

But as long as the devil can blind me to that, and keep on telling you, well, the problem is with your wife or the problem is with your husband, and that's why you're always sinning, you lose your temper so often because your wife's irritating you. Brother, that's not the reason. It's because you don't have oil in your flask.

Your husband is so bad, that's why you can't love. That's not the reason, sister. As long as you think that's the reason, and the devil will make you keep on thinking that, you'll never go to the dealer to get oil.

You'll never go to God and say, God, fill me with the power of your Holy Spirit, because if I'm filled with oil in my flask, it doesn't matter how dark it's around me. It doesn't matter how dark everybody's around me. But because iniquity will abound, iniquity will abound in the world with all its electronic gadgets, iniquity will abound in people, in their attitude towards you, the love of many will grow cold because they don't know the secret.

They don't know that, don't blame the other person. Go to God and say, Lord, fill my flask, fill my heart with oil. Fill me with the Holy Spirit.

Remember this, my dear brothers and sisters, as we approach the end of time, if you listen to this, I believe you'll be protected from all deception. And that is the first commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And the second is to love your neighbor as yourself, or as Jesus said, love one another as I've loved you.

Let me show you that verse. If some of you are not familiar with it, Jesus said that in Matthew's gospel in chapter 22, where somebody asked him, it says in verse 34, Matthew 22, 34, the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees. They all gathered together.

You know, they came as a gang to Jesus and they appointed one person as their representative to ask, to test him. Verse 33, 35, and 36, which is the great commandment in the law. And he said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.

This is the oil in the vessel. And the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. It flows from the other.

Now listen to this, verse 40. On these two commandments hangs the whole Bible. The law and the prophets is an expression for the Bible.

The whole Bible, in those days it was the Old Testament. It's the same today. The whole Bible's message is these two things.

When it says God made man in his image to reflect his likeness, what is that? It is to learn to love other people. God is going to lead us into a kingdom when Christ comes again. When we get into that kingdom of heaven, we will discover that there are not rules.

The kingdom of heaven, we'll discover when we get there, if you haven't discovered it already, it's not run by rules. I mean, here on earth, everything is run by rules. You have traffic rules and your rules for the country, and unfortunately, in so many churches, there are so many rules by which they test people and judge people and condemn people, et cetera.

But when we get into God's kingdom, we'll discover there's only one law there, and that's the law of love. God's kingdom is ruled by the principle of love. And God is preparing people now through all types of trials and situations, that's you and me, to rule in that kingdom.

We are to rule in that kingdom, but we won't be fit to rule if we don't understand how to live by the law of love now. So that's why I say we got to take the circumstances and situations that we face in life seriously. I find that when I'm tempted with money, it's a test of whether I love God with all my heart, because I know what Jesus said, you can't love God and money at the same time.

It's not possible. So I know that when I'm tempted with that, I'm being tempted whether I love God or not. When you're tempted to lust after a woman, whether it's on a computer screen or on the street or in a poster, it's a test of whether you love your neighbor as yourself.

You wouldn't lust after your own daughter, would you? Well, that girl is somebody's daughter whom you're lusting after. Yes. You don't love her.

If you loved her, you wouldn't lust. You never lust after somebody you love. Lust is the result of the flesh.

It's selfishness. I want some pleasure for myself out of that person. If I can't touch her physically, let me just look at her.

And that's how pornography spreads. Let me look at her naked bodies. It's somebody else's daughter, so what? I don't care for somebody else's daughter.

I care for my own daughter. Nobody should ever do that to my daughter. Nobody should ever do that to my sister, but that's somebody else's sister, somebody else's daughter.

I don't care. Are these the thoughts of a Christian? Unfortunately, they are of many Christians. Every Christian who watches pornography, who watches filthy scenes in movies is saying that.

I would never let anybody, I would never let my daughter behave like that. Or my sister, but that's not my sister. It's not my daughter.

I don't care. I don't care if that person goes to hell living in that scene. You're watching people going to hell, and it doesn't bother you.

I remember as a young man hearing the story of, I mean, the way one man conquered lust. Whenever he saw a pretty girl through whom he was tempted, he would say, Lord, you created that body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Say that next time you see a girl improperly dressed.

You created that body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. That girl doesn't have a clue what she was created for. You died to save her from that sin.

Lord, save her from sin. I tell you, it'll be impossible to lust when you pray such a prayer. Such a prayer comes out of love.

Are you discovering how the light dies out? There's no love in the heart. There's no oil in the flask. This is what we need to go to God for.

Lord, give me love in my heart. It protects me from so many sins. You'll never cheat people.

Would you like somebody to cheat you? No, we don't like to be cheated. Jesus said, do to others as you want them to do to you. That's a law of love.

A true Christian is one who is allowed love to so flood his heart that he'll never do to another person what he doesn't want somebody else to do to him or do to his wife or do to his daughter or do to his sister. Do to others as you want others to do to you. And it's in order to do this, in order to make our light burn, we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our heart.

So you see how Jesus said in the last days, things are gonna be really bad. Sin is gonna abound. You don't have to go in the olden days.

I remember in 50 years ago and all, if somebody wanted a pornographic book, they had to go secretly looking for it. Now they don't have to. The internet cafes are full of people who sit in their closed cubicles and sin.

The number of believers who have been deceived by the devil in this area is absolutely amazing. It's very easy to lose the oil in the flask. And when I see all this happening and increasing, increasing, increasing, I know the coming of the Lord is near, it's near.

And I wanna keep my flask full of oil. And I wanna say to those of you who have years to hear, keep your flask full of oil. Don't let the world ensnare you away.

Make sure your heart loves Jesus fervently. That every part of your heart is flooded with love for God. And whenever people treat you badly, that's the time to rush to God and say, God, help me now.

I really need some love for this person. That's the meaning of purifying yourself. What's the use of knowing the Bible? You know, we study the Bible, we read the Bible.

I wanna ask you whether you're more convicted because you didn't read the Bible for a half an hour or 15 minutes in the morning, or when you violated the law of love sometime during the day. It's amazing how many Christians are more convicted. Oh, I didn't read the Bible this morning.

And during the day, they violate the principle of love so many times in their conversation, the way they speak, and that doesn't seem to disturb them so much. They seem to have an ease of conscience because they kept a rule, rule number 289, which says read your Bible every day. Believers got a lot of rules and they follow these rules and they think they're okay.

There's one law, brother, sister. Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Love your fellow believers as Christ loved you.

Love does no harm to one's neighbor. Love does no harm to one's neighbor. You can't lust after your neighbor if you love.

It's because you don't love. The oil in the flask is empty no matter how many meetings you go to, no matter how much of the Bible you read. And this is why we need the Holy Spirit.

It is impossible to live the way God wants us to live without the power of the Holy Spirit. Let me turn you to 1 John chapter three. 1 John and chapter three.

Again, here it's speaking about the last days. And I want you to understand this and be gripped by it. That's why I'm emphasizing it again and again because I believe this is the area where many believers are gonna fall.

I don't know how many of you take seriously what I say. 1 John chapter three, verse two, it says in the last part, when he appears, he's talking about the coming of Christ, we will be like him. He will appear and we will be like him because we will see him just as he is.

And listen to this. If you have this hope fixed on you, if it's really gripped you, this truth that Christ is coming again and I'm gonna be like him when he comes, it says such a person will purify himself. There is a cleansing that God does and there's a cleansing we have to do.

Here it doesn't say God will purify him. It says he purifies himself. How do I know that I have the hope that Christ is coming again? Is it an intellectual thing that I tick off on a paper? Yes, I know Christ is coming again.

No, it's a heart thing. Everyone, that's very important to read that word. Everyone, verse three, there's no exception.

This is the way I can find out whether I'm ready for the coming of the Lord. This is the way you can find out whether you're ready for the coming of the Lord. Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as Jesus Christ is pure.

What do I need to purify myself from? Lack of love. Lack of love to God and lack of love for others. The moment I see it, the person who's waiting for the coming of the Lord purifies himself.

You see, this is spoken in the context of what we read in the previous chapter. Chapter two in verse 28. Also, it speaks about his appearing.

Little children, verse 28 of chapter two. Abide in Christ so that when he appears, you may have confidence and not shrink away in shame at his coming. So here, we see how when Christ comes, some will shrink away in shame and some will have boldness.

Yes, Lord, I'm ready to meet you. Who are the ones who are gonna have that confidence? That's written three, four verses down. Chapter three, verse three.

The one who purifies himself. How do you know whether you're gonna have confidence when Christ comes back? If Christ were to come this moment, would you have confidence if you're purifying yourself? If you spent the last week purifying yourself, you'd be ready. But if you just read your Bible and gone to meetings and eased your conscience by following the different rules Christians follow and you haven't purified yourself of unloving attitudes and unloving thoughts and words, I wanna say to you, you're gonna be ashamed when he comes.

It's what the Bible says. Little children. Is he talking to unbelievers? No.

Little children, children of God, you may shrink away from him in shame when he comes. There are believers who are gonna shrink away in shame when Christ comes again, who are not ready. They think they're ready because they intellectually believe he's coming again.

Love is going to be the important thing. Without love, the Bible says, whatever else you may have is worth nothing. We're living in a day when Christendom, please listen carefully, is majoring on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, every one of them. I believe that Jesus' ministry would have been useless if he didn't have the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit in fire.

We need the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve him. But you can have gifts and not have character. I heard an illustration once, which has remained in my mind.

You see a nurse in a hospital giving a spoon of medicine, a teaspoon of medicine, or a mother gives a teaspoon of medicine to a child. That's about the only way you can give medicine to a child or to another person, either in a glass or in a medicine or in a spoon. The glass or the spoon is the gift of the Spirit.

What is in the glass and what is in the spoon, that is love. The tragedy today is a lot of people have golden spoons, wonderful glasses. There's nothing inside of the love of God, of the love of Christ.

That's what happens when you have gifts. So what do we need? Get rid of the spoon and the glass? No, we need the spoon, we need the glass. But what's inside it? Is there water inside the glass for that thirsty person? So that's why we see that God allowed Jesus to live for 30 years on earth without any gifts of the Holy Spirit.

No, he never cast out a demon, never healed the sick. For 30 years he lived. What did he do for 30 years? He loved his father with all his heart and he loved others as himself.

Never preached a sermon, never healed a sick person, never cast out a demon for 30 years, 90% of his life. He never healed the sick, he never did any of the miracles. And at the end of 30 years, what does the father say? I'm delighted with my beloved son.

That's what he said at the baptism. Can God be delighted with a man who's never done a miracle, never healed the sick, never raised the dead? Sure. Can he reject people who do miracles and cast out demons? Yes, he said that.

Jesus said that in Matthew 7. Many will come to me and say, I did miracles and I healed the sick and I cast out demons. And I'll say, I never knew you, go away to hell. But do you think anybody will come to Jesus in the final day and say, Lord, I loved you with all my heart and I loved others as myself and the Lord say, get away from me, you never healed the sick, you never cast out demons.

You think the Lord would say that? No, you got it all wrong. Christendom has got it all wrong because their focus is gone. The focus has shifted from what the whole Bible hangs on, which is love God with all your heart, love others as yourself.

It shifted from that onto supernatural miracles, which the devil can duplicate or which can be done in the name of Jesus. But love is not there in the heart. Purity is not there.

God's people are not being led towards purity. You see that in the earthly ministry of Jesus. There was never a man who walked this earth who did as many miracles and healings as Jesus did.

He healed the sick by the thousands, but how many of them became his disciples? So few. And at the end of his life, John 17, he says, I'm not praying for these big crowds who got healed. I'm praying for these 11 whom you've given me that they may be one as you and I are one.

Has the devil blinded your eyes to see what Jesus is after? Jesus said, all men will know you're my disciples. How? Today, the Christian world says, when you heal the sick, when you do miracles. Jesus said, when you love one another.

Jesus got his focus right. And I'll tell you this, if you don't believe this, you are a prime candidate for deception. You remember when the rich man went to hell? I want to ask you, the rich man was a man who went to the synagogue regularly and do you think he expected to go to hell? I don't know how many

people expect to go to hell.

I think a lot of people who go to hell get a big surprise because the rabbis and the priests had told this rich man, you're going to heaven. They had fooled him. They had never told him the truth.

And when he goes to hell, all of a sudden he gets a surprise. Hey, how did I land up here? And he discovers it's because he hadn't repented. And he tells Abraham, will you please send Lazarus down and warn my five brothers, this is in Luke 16, and tell them because they haven't repented either.

And do you know what Abraham told him? This is what I want to say. See, the last verse of Luke 16, if they don't read the Bible, nothing will convince them. I'm paraphrasing it.

If they don't listen to what the Bible says, even an angel comes from heaven and says, this is the truth. They won't be convinced. That's the message from heaven.

If they don't listen to the Bible, they don't read the scriptures. If they don't understand what the whole scripture hangs on, why did that rich man go to hell? Was it because he didn't do miracles? Was it because he didn't heal the sick? Was it because he didn't believe in miracles? No, it's because he didn't love God with all his heart. If he loved God with all his heart, he'd love that poor man Lazarus sitting at the gate of his house because Lazarus was his brother.

Did you know that? All Israelites were children of Abraham. They were brothers. That's why he calls Abraham, he's his father.

And Abraham says, yeah, you're my son, but you're in hell. They were brothers. Lazarus was Abraham's son and the rich man was Abraham's son.

This guy didn't care for his own brother. It's like we are brothers in Christ. When you love one another and you love God with all your heart, you're ready for God's kingdom.

And when we lose that focus, that's what I see it like this, that in the last days, that focus is gonna shift. The devil's gonna do something wonderful to get people's focus to shift from loving God with all their heart and loving their neighbors themselves is gonna shift to other things. To earthly prosperity, satisfying our own interests and not caring for others of God's children.

Look at the number of people in the world today who have more than enough already and who are trying to have faith for being taught by preachers, to have faith for, you already have plenty, but you've gotta be a millionaire. You gotta have a bigger house. You gotta have a bigger car.

I wish they would come to the poor villages in India where you see born again believers living on one and a half meals a day. That's where we have our churches. Many of you haven't gone there.

I go there regularly. Sick people who the only time they see a doctor in a year is when my wife goes and treats them. Where do all these rich preachers who charge \$10,000 for an evening have an interest in those people? They are also their brothers in Christ.

Have they got an interest in them? No. It's all a deception. I wanna tell you this, my brothers and sisters, we're living in a world where the devil has blinded the minds of so many believers.

So I wanna urge you, don't lose your focus. The whole Bible hangs on these two truths. To love God with all your heart and to love others as Jesus loved you.

If you got that right, I wanna tell you, if you never see a miracle in your whole life, you'll be ready for God's kingdom. If you don't get healed, you'll be ready for God's kingdom. See what Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5. 1 Timothy 5. I want you to see these two verses.

I don't know whether you've ever seen these two verses together. It is talking about sin and sickness. Sin and sickness next to each other.

1 Timothy 5, verse 22, the last part. Keep yourself free from sin. Very important.

What about my sickness, Paul? My stomach's frequent sicknesses, verse 23. Well, Timothy, I prayed for you a number of times. You didn't get healed.

I laid hands on you. I anointed you with oil. You didn't get healed.

Take a little medicine for that. Can't God heal stomach sicknesses? You mean God who made lame people walk and open blind eyes can't heal a man's stomachs infirmities? You mean Paul didn't have faith for that? Why doesn't the urge Timothy have faith, man? You shouldn't be having any stomachs infirmities. Paul's got his focus right.

Timothy, keep yourself from sin. That's the important thing. Love God with all your heart.

Anything less than that is sin. Make sure you love others as Jesus loved you. If you don't, you sin.

Keep yourself free from sin and your stomachs infirmities. One day you'll get a new body. But meanwhile, keep yourself healthy with medicine.

I wish there were more people like the Apostle Paul who would give such sane, sensible advice to people in our day. Keep yourself free from sin. Why in the world doesn't Paul urge Timothy to have a little more faith? Yup, Timothy, we prayed a hundred times for your stomach infirmities.

Are you trying to tell me Paul never prayed for Timothy's infirmities? I hope you don't believe such rubbish. But Timothy has not just once in a while, frequent, read scripture, frequent, frequently was sick in his stomach. Don't you think he'd have told Paul, the great man of God who raised the dead to pray for his little problem of his stomach? I'm sure he did.

And Paul prayed for him numerous times and the guy was not healed. I personally think it was Timothy's thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. Sometimes God allows a thorn in the flesh like that to keep us on our face before God and he allowed it in Paul's life and maybe allowed it in Timothy's life.

They tried believing. They tried believing numerous times. They never got healed.

Paul says, okay, forget it. That's not the main thing. Take some medicine and you'll be a little better.

But keep yourself free from sin. Don't lose that focus. Don't spend all your life going to this meeting, that meeting, the other meeting, to get healed of your stomach's infirmities.

You know, that's what people are doing today. They go to 100 meetings to get healed of this and that, get this man to lay hands on him, that man to lay hands on him, watch television and put their hands on the

television to get healed and all that. And all the time, they don't concentrate on the main thing, to be free from sin.

Because iniquity will abound. The love of many will wax cold. The focus will shift from loving God with all your heart and loving others as Jesus loved you to other things, which I'm not saying healing is unimportant.

I've experienced healing in my own body, in the name of Jesus. And I've experienced something even better than healing called health. I ask God for health.

I don't ask God for healing. You can certainly ask God for health. But what I say is, the fact of the matter is, people are not, everybody's not healed.

In every single meeting, healing meeting in the world, 99.999% of people are not healed. It's a fact. Go anywhere and see.

What shall we tell them? You don't have faith, you don't have faith. You mean this 0.01% people only have faith? I've used this argument. I wanna say this because this is the area of a lot of deception nowadays.

Everybody will say, every healer will say, the greater miracle is being born again. Physical healing is secondary. To be born again is the greater miracle.

Physical healing is secondary. We all agree there, right? And now you tell this man, have you accepted Christ? You had faith for the greater miracle to be born again, but you don't have faith to be healed of the sickness. How can that be? You have faith to get a million rupees from God, but you don't have faith to get 10 rupees from God.

It doesn't add up. But that's exactly what people are being told. But you know what happens to a logically thinking man? Hey, this preacher says that it's because of lack of faith that I'm not healed.

At the same time, he says, being born again is a greater miracle than healing. So if I didn't have faith for this smaller thing, probably I'm not really born again. Probably I don't have faith.

Well, I'm just fooling myself. This is where the devil is leading a lot of people. A lot of Christians.

I'm sorry to say many Christians don't think these things through. They don't read the Bible. And like I've said many times, if you don't read the Bible, you don't look at the earthly life of Jesus as your example, you deserve to be deceived.

God has given us the earthly life of Jesus in the scriptures. He's given us the Bible. You got it in your own language.

You got it in many translations. Instead of that, you focus on something other than what God has told you to. You deserve to go astray.

Many false prophets will arise. We are looking for false prophets in other religions. No, it's gonna be false prophets who come with sheep's clothing.

Sheep's clothing means they're gonna carry a Bible, speak the right doctrine. Be careful. Make sure that your focus is where God has put the focus in scripture.

Let me say this too. I mentioned it before. Jesus never preached a single sermon on healing.

Nowhere. Paul, Peter never preached a single sermon on healing. You won't find a sermon on healing in the whole New Testament.

Point number one. Point number two. Jesus and the apostles never spoke about the healings that happened elsewhere.

This happened there. When I was there, you ever heard Jesus say, when I was there, I opened a blind man's eyes. When I was there, I made a lame man walk.

You never hear Jesus or the apostles saying that. But have you heard today's preachers preaching thousands of sermons on healing and always saying what happened somewhere else? What Jesus and the apostles never did. Now I'll tell you the third thing Jesus did do.

He healed thousands. And that's what we don't see today. So what did Jesus do and the apostles? They never preached a sermon on healing.

They never talked about the healings that happened elsewhere, but they healed thousands right there. Okay, get it again. They never preached a sermon on healing, number one.

They never talked about healings that happened elsewhere, but they healed thousands right in front of people. Now what is the opposite of that? The opposite of that is preach thousands of sermons on healing. Always talk about healings that happened elsewhere and hardly anything happens right now.

Now there is a word in the Bible for the opposite of Christ. It's called anti-Christ. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

You'll never go that way. You'll never go astray if your focus is on love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. Love one another as Christ has loved you.

And I'll tell you this. When you do that, when we obey God's word, it brings health to our body. When my body is for the Lord, the Lord becomes my body.

I'll show you that in conclusion, lest any of you think I don't believe in healing. I've experienced healing in my life. I've seen people healed in answer to prayer, but I never lose my focus.

Let me show you 1 Corinthians 6. Verse 13, the last part. I have claimed this verse numerous times in my own life. Numerous.

I can't even count the number of times. The body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body. I've said, Lord, I have absolutely no desire to do anything in this body, but the will of God in my life.

I don't want to seek anything for myself in this body. This body is totally for you. I don't want my eyes to look at something which you don't want me to look at on the computer or newspaper or on the poster or anywhere.

I don't want my tongue to speak anything you don't want me to speak. I don't want my feet to take me anywhere. You don't want me to go.

This body is for you. 100%, I claim that you are 100% for my body. Try that, you'll be much healthier.

Another verse, Proverbs. It says in Proverbs 4.20-22. My son, give attention to my words. Incline your ear to my sayings, that's to the word of God.

Don't depart from God's word. Don't let it depart from your sight. Keep it in the midst of your heart because if you keep God's word in the midst of your heart, you'll first of all get eternal life and health to every part of your body.

But watch over your heart, verse 23, because all the springs of life and even physical healing flow from there. Don't worry about your body, watch your heart. When I was speaking to the children once, I tried to tell them something.

The Bible says if you speak in tongues and you don't have love, you're zero. When you do miracles, it's all in 1 Corinthians 13, you know, prophesy and give your money to the poor. You don't have love, you're nothing, you're zero.

So once when I was speaking to the children, what is the man who's got so much, so many abilities? I made a number of children stand in front, I said, they're zero. What's the great preacher like me? Zero. The Bible says we're all zeros.

What's the thing that gives value to all of us who are zeros? Jesus, who's the only one who is one. You see my value now? That's what makes me valuable. Without that, I don't care what I have, I'll be a zero and I don't care what you are.

You think you're smarter than me? Good, you're a zero, brother. It's Jesus that makes the difference. Don't ever forget that.

When we violate the law of love, you know what we get? Minus one. What's your score today? Minus a billion? That's what it means to repent. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Let's pray. Ask the Lord to adjust your vision so that you can see clearly, so that all that distorted vision will go away from you. We have value only in the measure in which the Holy Spirit has given us the love of God in our hearts.

Heavenly Father, help us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/4d1QDTHewfY.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-last-days-enduring-in-love/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net