

# The Law and Faith

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon highlights the contrast between living under the law and embracing grace, encouraging believers to find excitement and fulfillment in their Christian walk through the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 59:07

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28

**Topics:** "Faith", "Grace"

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## Description

Zac Poonen addresses the misconception that a life surrendered to Christ is boring and burdensome, emphasizing that true Christianity is exciting and fulfilling. He encourages young people to reject the false images of religious life that the devil presents and to embrace the light yoke of Jesus, which offers rest and satisfaction. Poonen highlights the importance of living under grace rather than the law, asserting that a genuine relationship with Christ leads to a vibrant and victorious life. He urges listeners to recognize their identity as conquerors, programmed by God to rule, and to seek the Holy Spirit for empowerment. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, leading to a life of joy and purpose.

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## Transcript

I believe that a lot of young people do not surrender themselves completely to Christ because they feel that the yoke of Jesus is very heavy and you can't have fun and it's pretty boring to be a whole-hearted Christian. You can't talk about a lot of earthly things. And that's partly because the devil has put before you certain types of Christians who looked very religious and who considered themselves very holy and you also got fooled that they were very holy and you thought, I don't want to be like them.

But you know, if Jesus was here, he would have said, I don't want to be like them either. To me, one of the wonderful verses about the yoke of Jesus is Matthew 11. You know, Jesus invites us in Matthew 11 saying, come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden.

I would also say, Jesus says, come to me those who are bored with life. Those who find life boring, nothing exciting, come to me. Isn't that a good invitation? I like it.

I want my life to be exciting. I don't want my life to be boring and I'll tell you, I've been a Christian for nearly 49 years, nearly half a century. And I'll honestly say, I'm not a salesman trying to sell Jesus.

My life is absolutely exciting. It's not boring. I've seen grumpy old Christians who are sour and bitter and they get more and more cranky as they grow older, more and more impatient and more and more expecting everybody to treat them as revered uncles or some type of rubbish like that.

That's not Christianity. You know, if the devil can succeed in portraying before you a false picture of Christ and Christianity, he's really achieved more than he'll ever achieve by tempting you to take drugs or, you know, go to prostitutes or live in sin. What use will you be to the devil if you go into drugs? Nobody in CFC will respect you.

What use will you be to the devil if you're a womanizer? Nobody in CFC will respect you. But you don't do all those things, but if you're a respectable member of CFC and you give everybody the impression that true Christianity is boring, then the devil's really got an agent in CFC. Because you're not the adulterous type or the smoker or the drunkard or anything, but you're giving everybody the impression that the interesting things are movies.

You know, Christianity, reading the Bible is all boring. He's really got an agent. Do you realize that unconsciously you can become an agent of the devil by portraying a picture of Christ or Christianity? It's not true.

Come to me, all those who are bored, who are weary, fed up, those who are ashamed to acknowledge that really your Christian life doesn't satisfy you. Come to me. Jesus says, take my yoke upon you.

You haven't got the right yoke. I think a lot of Christians have got the yoke of the law, and that's why I spend my life talking about the new covenant. You can never be an exciting, vigorous Christian if you live under the law.

That's impossible. And you can never be a boring, cranky old Christian if you're under grace. There's something you have missed.

True grace of God. Seek it. Seek it.

Your whole life will change. I'll tell you, your life will be more exciting for you than if you were the star batsman in the cricket match against Pakistan in Bangalore. Much more.

Much more exciting than the most exciting thing you can think of. You know, when you try to struggle to get young people free from the fascination with rock musicians, what's the use of telling them rock music is bad, rock music is bad? Is this to warn them about demonic things in this land and the other, all those things? You know, the thing is to be taken up with Jesus. That's the answer.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I'm gentle and humble in heart. And you will find rest for your souls. Rest means all this desperate searching for something to satisfy you, which cannot satisfy.

People are looking for something to satisfy them, and it doesn't satisfy them. They try to find satisfaction in music or sports or... it doesn't. He says, if you really want to find satisfaction, you've got to come to me and take my yoke upon you.

And I want to say to you, young brothers and sisters, if you can say, Lord, I want to be a living demonstration in my life of the fact that in Jesus Christ, there's perfect satisfaction. That in Jesus Christ, life is exciting. And he said, my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

I like that. That Jesus... life with Jesus is easy. It's a light burden.

It's not heavy. You know, a lot of people who say, boy, all these things, can't do this, can't do that, can't do the other thing. You've got it wrong.

There's something you've got wrong. It's like a computer program that doesn't work. That means something is wrong.

It's supposed to work. Why isn't it working in your case? Why is it working in somebody else's computer? It's not working in yours. Why is that guy able to do so many things with that program, and you can't do anything with yours? Something is wrong.

There's something wrong there somewhere, which you haven't got right. And if it is something related to your work, you'd do everything to fix that bug. There's a bug in your Christian life.

And if you're earnest enough, I mean, if it were your job, if you were a software programmer, you'd do everything to get rid of that bug, because that's your job. You'll be sacked from your job if you don't get rid of it, if you're incapable of getting rid of it. There is a bug in your Christian life.

That's why Christian life is boring and heavy, because it's supposed to be light and easy and exciting. And I'll tell you honestly, I said that before, I'm not trying to sell Jesus. I'm not trying to portray a picture that's not true.

There is a rest. It may take time to come there. I'm not saying that you can get there overnight, but there is a rest.

It's a wonderful thing to get on top of Mount Everest and stand there and say, boy, I've conquered the greatest mountain in the world. You know, Jesus wants you to be an overcomer. I would say, when God made man, you know, one of the first things he said was, let man rule.

You know that? You know where that's found? Genesis chapter 1. Okay, anyway, it's and let them rule. The first thing that God said he wanted man was to be in his image and to rule. He didn't say, well, let them go out and work for me.

You can work for him, but let them rule. I want to tell you that when God made Adam, he programmed him to be a conqueror. And when he made you, in your mother's womb, I don't care whether you're a man, boy or a girl, I want to tell you inside you, please listen to me, he programmed you to be a conqueror.

And the devils fooled you, that you've got to be defeated, you've got to be a slave of your sexual passions. No, no, no. As God said, you're going to rule.

No, you're not going to rule. You're going to lose. You're going to be a loser.

And you believed the lie of the devil for so long. Will you tell him to his face he's a liar today? And will you tell him that God programmed me to be a conqueror? It doesn't matter who you are. You know, some of you feel, well, I'm not so capable.

I can't speak like somebody else. So what? He didn't say, let them speak. He said, let them rule.

It's not a question of speaking. That's a gift God gives to some people and you don't need it. God may have given you some other, I mean, does every part of the body speak? Only the tongue speaks.

Thank God. Imagine if every part of our body started speaking, how terrible it would be. Everybody else's body was full of tongues.

But it's just one tongue and so many other things about seeing and hearing. So in the body of Christ also, don't think that the most important person is the one who speaks. That's a gift God gives.

But whether you have that gift or not, you know, some people, many of you, I feel that you may feel I can never come to prominence in the church or even among the work among young people because it's only those who have the ability to speak and sing who can stand up in front and I don't have the ability to speak or to sing. But you're programmed to be a ruler. That's the important thing.

It doesn't matter whether you can speak or sing. It doesn't matter if you can't play any instruments. You know, it's true that in young people's groups around the world, those who can speak, those who can sing, those who can play instruments or those who can, you know, be master of ceremonies to organize things, they always have the prominence.

But they are not necessarily the most spiritual. The most spiritual are those who love Jesus with all their hearts, who are conquering in their life, who got a spirit of triumph even though they may be from a poor family. You know, sometimes when you're from a very poor family, maybe you live in a small little house and you look around and some others have got, they're rich and their parents are rich, they can buy so many sets of clothes and the latest fashions and you feel all these things make you feel inferior.

You know that Jesus came for you? Jesus came for those who are sidelined by society. He came for those who are being pushed out by others. He didn't come for those who wanted to take center stage.

No. He always looked for those who are marginalized by society. That means the Pharisees, the great singers and the preachers and the musicians are up there in front and some people like lepers and poor divorced women in Samaria and the Samaritans, the whole group of Samaritans and Jews just marginalized them and Jesus went for these people.

What have we learned from that? Jesus said, look at me. Learn something from me. He did not come to call the righteous.

He did not come to call the smart and the capable and the good speakers and the rich. No. He came for the weak.

He came for the helpless. And if you feel that others marginalize you because you are not so capable, maybe you're poor and you try your best to try and catch up with these people who are all smart, you don't have to catch up. Don't struggle.

Give it up. Just enjoy Jesus. The Christian life is a life of enjoyment.

You really can be that. And I'm speaking particularly, I'm not speaking now to the smart, the capable and the one who is always in front. I'm talking to those who feel neglected.

Those who feel you're just a digit. You are number something in the, you're number 34 or 45 or something in the list and nobody knows who you are. They probably don't even know your name.

Does it matter? Jesus knows you. He knows you by name. You're important.

He says, come to me. Know that I love you. And if you were the only person in the world who was a sinner, I would have come for you.

You know, I grew up like that. You won't believe it when I'm standing here. You think that, oh, I was always very bold.

I wasn't. You know, in my entire time in school, I never took part in public speaking. Not once.

I was in the military academy for three years. I never took part in public speaking. I was shy, small, reserved, looking inward, always feeling inferior to others.

Jesus came into my life, forgave me. I still felt inferior to others because I would go into a church where people were, they never spoke to people like me. But I began to seek God, to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I'll tell you, that's what changed my life. That's why I urge people everywhere, young people especially, don't despise the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is the answer to all your needs.

That's what will make you a conqueror. That's what will deliver you from the law. If you were to go to the Jewish people and say, what is the great thing in your nation? They would say, the law.

The law. And if you were to go to Christians and say, what's the great thing for you? We should say, the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit has today been replaced by so many other things.

It's replaced by theology. So many people argue about doctrine, fight about doctrine. They go to Bible schools and Bible colleges.

It's been replaced by music. What would a Christian church be without music? What did they have in the day of Pentecost? They had no music. Can you imagine 3,000 people getting converted in a service where there's no music? Where there's nobody softly playing the organ at the end to move people? That was the Holy Spirit.

Peter didn't need music when he had the Holy Spirit. When you don't have the Holy Spirit, boy, you need a lot of other things. You need music.

The Holy Spirit's been replaced with money. Can you think of Christian work without money? I mean, God who made David rich and Job rich and Abraham rich could have made Peter, Paul and James also rich. Why didn't he do that? Because he knew it would be a hindrance to their preaching the gospel.

And we have seen that. I've seen it, clearly. I've seen one of the biggest hindrances to Christian work in India is money.

American money. People depend on it so much. They think you need a fancy building or you need a fancy program and the Christian preachers all make a lot of money.

The Holy Spirit's out of it altogether. And you can do a lot of things with money. You can do a lot of things with music.

And the third thing that's replaced the Holy Spirit is psychology. I've heard all these television preachers. They are experts in psychology.

They know how to move people. They know what people want to listen to. And that's why you feel nice when you listen to them.

Jesus never bothered about it. He was seeking to reach people in a way that they would change permanently. Not just to make them feel nice at the end of a meeting.

His yoke is easy. His burden is light. And if you haven't found his yoke to be easy, say to yourself, there's something in the Christian life I've missed.

There's a bug in this program. It doesn't seem to work for me. It seems to be working for somebody else, but it doesn't seem to work for me.

What is it? You know, in the New Testament it speaks a lot about faith. And don't think that you have to have many years. You know, when I say about all these things, you can think, oh, that's for older people.

Okay, let me just do a little test here. All those who are over 30 and below 34, that means you have crossed your 30th birthday and you have not yet become 34. Can you stand up for a moment? Those who are over 30? Oh, only two.

The rest got married, that's why they're not here. Okay, thank you. Okay, now let's have all those who are between over 27 stand up.

Do you know that this is the age, look at these people, this is the age at which Jesus chose a number of his apostles. Supposing I were to name you Matthew, James, John, what shall I call you, I don't know the names. Yeah, Jesus had some disciples, women also, we don't know all their names.

But anyway, just look around. Do you believe these people look like apostles and followers of Jesus who are going to be disciples? That in three years, by the time they are 30, they're going to be apostles? Do they look like that? I mean, you think, how in the world can these people be apostles? Please sit down, thank you. My point is, the world has despised youth and Jesus went for them.

He never chose a single person over the age of 30, but he himself was 30. What I say is, don't despise your youth. Even today God is doing that.

But to get there, God starts training you very early, by the time you're 30. Imagine, I think of John, I believe John was 30 years old and he was an apostle on the day of Pentecost. The great preacher Peter was 33 years old on the day of Pentecost.

That's what he was. And he was preaching. We wouldn't think of a 33 year old being an apostle today.

Or a 30 year old being an apostle. We think they've got to be 50, 60 and all that. That's a lie of the devil.

He keeps you waiting till you've got one foot in the grave and says, OK, now go and serve the Lord. Why? Do you know what age Joseph was when he started getting visions of God? Can you tell me? 17. You read in Genesis 37.

He had visions of God when he was 17. What do you think young 17 year old men dream about at night? You think it's about God? I doubt very much. Not today's young men.

Because they're reading and looking at a lot of rubbish. Joseph didn't have a Bible, he didn't have any conferences with him, but he was thinking about God. Why not develop that habit? Lord, you created me to be a conqueror.

You programmed me to be a ruler, not to be a slave. Many times when I get up to preach, the Lord has told me, when I say the Lord told me, I've never heard Him in these years, but I hear Him in my heart. And what the Lord says to me is, many of these people sitting in front of you, all of them are supposed to be kings and rulers and queens, but they are slaves.

Deliver them. Tell them they're supposed to be rulers. That's what I want to say to you.

Don't believe the lie of the devil, that you're supposed to be a slave to anything in your life. Don't give in and say, oh well, my temper gets the better of me. You keep saying that, you'll be like that 50 years from now.

You say, no. Okay, the devil got me and I got angry, but I'm not going to be like that. I'm programmed to conquer anger.

I'm programmed to conquer getting irritated. I'm programmed to conquer getting offended. I'm going to be a conqueror.

When God created man, He said, let them rule. Jesus says, come to me. Why did God first put man under law? I'll tell you in a nutshell.

If man didn't know that he was a sinner, the law would show him he was a sinner. Now you don't need that part of the law, because I think all of us are sensitive enough in our conscience to know that we are sinners. But people who don't have that sensitive conscience, they need a law to say, listen, you're a sinner if you're told a lie.

You're guilty. But we don't need that. But there's another function of the law we need.

That is, that God wanted to teach us that if He doesn't help us, no matter how hard you try, you'll never be able to please God. Have you learned that lesson? If He doesn't help you, no matter how hard you try, you'll never succeed in pleasing Him. So what is God waiting for you? To strive a little harder? That's going back under the law.

Be a little more disciplined. How many of us know, including me, that we make New Year resolutions? Now we have another New Year coming up. You say, all the things, I mean, it's 2007, I failed.

2008, I'm going to make it. You'll make it for up to about January 7th. Or, if you're a little more wholehearted, maybe until January 14th.

After that, it'll all be forgotten. Haven't we had that experience? We're going to fast. We're going to go on a diet.

We're going to be slimmer. We're going to be fitter. We're going to be stronger.

We're going to read the Bible every morning. And we're going to spend so many minutes in prayer. January 7th is the deadline.

Or January 14th. Lord, I can't make it. I can grit my teeth.

2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 will all be the same. I can't make it, Lord. It's a wonderful thing to recognize that the law was only meant to lead you to Christ.

Let me show you that verse. Galatians 3. It says in Galatians 3, and before faith came, let me read it from the message translation. Until the time when we were mature enough to respond freely in faith.

In faith means independence. Until the faith came. That's the expression.

Before faith came. So the whole period before Jesus came. B.C. What we call B.C. is B.F.C. Before faith came.

And after faith came. There are two periods in history. Before faith came and after faith came.

Before faith came, it was law. And do you know in your life, there's a period before faith came and after faith came. I don't mean... There are two things here.

One is before faith came, in terms of forgiveness of sins. A lot of people in the world think that I can get my sins forgiven by working and working. Look at all the non-Christians who roll on the ground, who go on pilgrimages, who give money to God to get their sins forgiven.

You've finished with all that, right? Faith came into your life one day, where you realized, I can do nothing to get my sins forgiven. It's all free. Isn't that a wonderful message? And we look around at so many people struggling, rolling on the ground, giving money, going on pilgrimages.

And we've been delivered from that. They're in the period before faith came. We're in the period after faith came.

Now, that's stage one. Stage two is, now we're trying to please God. And we have to learn the same lesson again.

And learn a lesson from those people struggling to get their sins forgiven by rolling on the ground and going on pilgrimages. You're trying to get victory over sin in the same way. You need another lesson in this area.

You can't make it. You tell that person trying to get forgiveness of sins, even if you try a hundred years and go on every pilgrimage and give any amount of money to God, you can't make it, brother. You can't make it.

Just accept it. Isn't that what you would tell that unconverted person? Well, I'm telling you the same thing. You can try a hundred years, you will not get victory over sin.

You can make any number of New Year resolutions, you just won't make it. You have to come to rest in God. Verse 23, Galatians 3. Before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, because otherwise you'd just become wild.

I mean, imagine if there was no law and order in Bangalore. There'd be crime all over, people being murdered, robbed, killed, raped. So people have to be kept in custody under the law before faith came.

It's like the same with children. Children haven't come to faith, so they have to be under law. Don't do this.

Do this. Do this. What do parents mostly tell children? Do or don't do, right? Eat this.

Listen to me. Don't do that. Don't touch that.

It's basically law, just like Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not, thou shalt not. All children, parents tell them, thou shalt, thou shalt not.

That's the law. They have to be that, because faith hasn't come. And before faith comes, if they're not kept in custody under the law, you have these wild children, whom parents don't keep under the law, then they grow up.

Indiscipline and a bad testimony. They have to be kept in custody under the law. One day when faith is revealed, they're free from that.

That's what we need to experience too. Therefore, the law became our tutor to lead us to Christ. You know, it's like these Greek tutors, it says here, who escort children to school to protect them from danger and distraction, to make sure the children really get to the place they set out for.

If you send a five-year-old to school and say, the school's in that direction, just about one mile, just turn right here and turn left and take the second turning to the left and the third turning to the right, you think he's going to reach school? Oh no. But it says the law was like a tutor saying, hey, hey, hold my hand, I'm going to take you. You're not going to go anywhere.

You're just going to hold my hand and I'm going to hold you. You're not free. Walk, walk, walk, and finally you come to Christ.

Okay. That's what the law was supposed to do. You don't need it to hold your hand once you've come to Jesus.

Wonderful. But now you've arrived at your destination. By faith in Christ, you're in direct relationship with God.

Great. You're in a direct relationship with God. Faith is the main thing.

And I want to speak of faith in these, in relation to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Okay. God is a trinity, like we heard.

God is three persons. And to have faith in God means to have faith in the Father, faith in the Son, faith in the Holy Spirit. So what does that mean? We heard about the branch and the twig.

Let me show you in John 15, where Jesus uses this illustration too. Jesus was the master of illustration. I've tried, tried, tried, tried to be like Him in preaching.

I haven't succeeded yet. To be a master of illustration, to make things so simple. Jesus was explaining faith here.

Okay. John 15, He's speaking about faith. Because, you know, this whole speech begins in, you know, John 14, 15, 16 is the long message Jesus gave at the Last Supper.

And what is the first verse of that message? What is it? Believe in Me. You believe in God, that's John 14, 1. You believe in God, believe in Me. And then He spoke about allow the Holy Spirit to lead you.

That's in those chapters. So He's speaking about faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That's the subject.

Okay. He was explaining faith. He was trying to deliver these people who had spent all their life under law to come to faith.

Okay. And then He says, now remember, He's explaining what? Faith. All those who are awake, reply.

Faith. And here is the explanation of faith. I am the true vine.

Now you see, you can apply that to any other tree. I am the orange tree or mango tree or whatever it is. I am a tree.

Whatever tree you are familiar with. Wherever you have seen a tree with fruit, think of that. The Israelites saw vines everywhere.

Maybe you haven't seen a vine. Doesn't have to be a vine. Any type of tree with branches that you have seen bearing fruit.

Anything. Think of that tree. Jesus says, I am the tree.

And you are the branches. Okay. Jesus is the tree, the trunk.

And what about the Father? Verse 15. The Father is the farmer. He is the gardener.

The Father is the gardener. Jesus is the tree. We are the branch.

I love this illustration. What's the subject? Faith. Okay.

Don't forget that. Okay. Faith.

Jesus is the tree. The Father is the gardener. What about the Holy Spirit? Where do you think He comes in this picture? Hmm? Fruit is the Holy Spirit.

Sap. Have you heard of a thing called SAP? I don't mean the company. I mean... I mean... The sap from the tree which flows into the branch.

You know, why did we say this one thing which somebody picked up was a little fresher than the other? Because it was newly broken off. It had still a little bit of sap in it. And why did the other become all brown and dry? Because the sap had gone.

There's no sap left in it. What is it that makes a branch fresh? What? Sap. Sap.

That's the Holy Spirit. So the whole picture is here. And it's faith.

That's the subject. And He says here in verse 5. Okay. I'm the tree.

You're the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you'll bear much fruit. If you're not bearing fruit, there must be something wrong with the sap.

You're not allowing... The Father also does a job here. It says here that every branch, verse 2, that bears fruit, the Father, the gardener, prunes it. That means takes you through some trial and testing and cuts out

something.

You know what pruning is? A knife used on the branch. Have you had some painful experience that God takes you through? If you have never had that, God's probably given up on you. I feel sorry for a person who's never had any painful experience in their life.

You know, from parents or other friends or those who pretended to be friends or those who despised you. God allows you to face... Or some... you lost a lot of money. Somebody blamed you for something you never did.

Have you had some painful experiences? Is the Father pruning you so that you bear? What's that? What do we see? Two steps here. First it is fruit. Then it becomes, verse 2, more fruit.

But if you react against the cutting of the knife and say, God, I don't want all that. Look at this guy, he messed up my life. It's not this guy.

It is the Father pruning you. You know when Judas Iscariot came with the soldiers to capture Jesus, Peter thought it was Judas Iscariot. Jesus said, no, it's not Judas Iscariot.

Do you know what Jesus said? The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it? Dear brothers and sisters, read the Gospels. You should know these verses. Even if you don't know where it is, you should be able to complete the sentence when I read it.

The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it? That's in the Gospels. He said that. You know, that's very important that Jesus said, this is not Judas.

Judas is only the postman. The one who sent it is my Father. I mean, supposing your dad is sending you, instead called you up and said, listen, son, or my girl, I'm sending you a check for 10,000 rupees.

Just a gift for your birthday. And the postman who brings it has got a grumpy, long face. Are you going to refuse to receive the letter from him? Your dad says, you get it? No, I didn't receive it because the postman who brought it had a long face, so I didn't take it.

And you didn't receive the check just because the postman had a long face? The dad will say, what type of fool are you? Jesus looked at the Father who sent the letter. It doesn't matter if Judas brought it. The cup which my Father has given me, I'll tell you this, it has been the thing that has made my life exciting to know that every letter I get in my life comes from my Father.

I don't care what the postman is like. I don't care whether I like his face. Some of the postmen have good faces.

Some of them have got bad faces. But it's all the same. Because they come and they go for the letters from my Father.

I don't get upset with the postman. I mean, if a man with a long face comes to me and gives me a letter, a money order for 10,000 rupees, I say, thank you so much. Very kind of you.

My father sent that money order. I mean, you can live with your grumpy face. That's okay.

But I have no problem. I'm very grateful to you. You know, it's a wonderful life, the Christian life.

It really is a wonderful life. What a wonderful life God has made our Christian walk to be. Take my yoke upon you.

Walk with Jesus. Learn from Him. For He was humble and gentle, meaning that He was willing to accept anything the Father sent Him.

See, the Father prunes you. He does His work. The Holy Spirit supplies you with sap.

And verse 5, I am the tree. You are the branches. You remain in me.

I remain in you. You'll bear much fruit. This is great.

Fruit. Verse 2. More fruit. And then verse 5. Much fruit.

Do you know that it's God's will for every single one of you who say that you have received Christ to bear much fruit? Not for one or two branches. There is no branch in this tree that's supposed to be without fruit. Believe me, I don't care how much you have messed up your life in the past.

You are going to change this weekend. Good. And, you are going to believe God for greater things.

Not what you can do. Not your New Year resolutions. But what God can do.

You know, a couple of... I sometimes ask God to give me a verse for my birthday. I don't always get it. But, I think maybe two, three times in my life God's given me a verse.

So don't get discouraged if you don't get a verse every birthday. But, once in a while. One of the best verses I got was last year.

Where the message translation of Luke 10, 20. Not what you do for God. But what God does for you.

That's your agenda for rejoicing. I can't always rejoice in what I have done for God because sometimes I've messed up. You don't believe I've messed up? Wait till you see the video of my life in eternity.

Oh no, you won't see it because it's all blotted out. Sorry. You'll never see it.

You'll never see it. It's all blotted out in the blood of Christ. I'm sorry.

I'm not going to tell you. And God's not going to show it. So, but I'll tell you.

It wasn't all perfect. But it's not what I do for God. It's what God does for me.

And see, if it's what I do for God that's my agenda for rejoicing. Then maybe I have something more to rejoice in than you. Right? Because I say, how many of you will stand up and say I'm doing more for God than Brother Zach? I think you may have a little hesitation to say that.

If that's the agenda for rejoicing I say I'll be rejoicing more than all of you. But it's not true! Not what you do for God. But what God does for you.

That's your agenda for rejoicing. Is there anybody here who can say God has done more for Brother Zach than for me? Anybody? Really? No. Christ died for you.

He died for me. He poured out the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. You can have it.

I can have it. I mean, if I went with a big bowl and said God, I want everything. You can go with a big bowl.

You can go with a bigger bowl than I did. And get more from God. It's a question of what He does for you.

You know, I stand up to speak and I say God, I came here to the meeting and said Lord, I don't even know what to say. But I'm coming with a big bowl. I'll keep my pipe wide open so that you can let the river flow.

Yeah, it's amazing what God can do when you trust Him. But I say, faith grows. I'm not saying that you guys, when you start will also be able to come with a large faith.

But I'm saying, develop in it. I say to that kindergarten, if you're in the kindergarten, I say Hey, you can be a PhD one day. Not tomorrow, but you can be a PhD one day.

You can deal with complicated problems. But work at it, work at it. Be faithful in the kindergarten.

That's all you got to do now. Next year, be faithful in the first standard. And the year after that, be faithful in the second standard.

It'll take you time to get your PhD, but you'll get it. Don't give up. Don't drop out in the fourth standard or something just because in one examination you got 35%.

Don't give up. Don't give up. Some of the most wonderful stories I've heard are of people who didn't give up.

Who fell in a race and got up and ran. And came first. You know, I like the story of Eric Liddell.

Some of you may have read of him. His story was portrayed in a movie called Chariots of Fire. And this man was an out-and-out Christian.

And he was the fastest 100-meter runner in the world in 1924. And he was going to represent England in the Olympics. For the 100 meters race there was another man called Abrams, who was a keen competitor, but he would have no chance because this guy was faster.

And Eric Liddell was a committed Christian. And he was such a committed Christian that he said, I will not run in any race on a Sunday. And the 100-meter heats was on a Sunday.

And if you don't qualify in the heats, you can't get into the finals. Now there was a big test. This man is the fastest man in the world.

It's an Olympic gold medal that is at stake. He said, no, Jesus means more to me than an Olympic gold medal. And he went and preached in a church in Paris.

That's the place where our fellowship meets, by the way. I went and preached in the same church too, in Paris. We have a little church there that meets in the same building.

I mean, it's all renovated now. But he preached on Sunday there when the 100-meter heats was going on. So Abrams, the second guy from England, he got the gold medal.

He got the honor of being the world's fastest man. Fine. But this English team really wanted to encourage this guy, and so they said, OK, listen, Eric, why don't you run the 400 meters? Now, I don't know if you know anything about athletics.

But a man who trains for the 100 meters can never run the 400 meters. I'll tell you that. It's a different style.

100 meters is zoom all the way. 400 meters, you can't zoom like that. You'll drop out after 150 meters.

You've got to sort of pace it, and you have to have trained for it. You have to know at what particular pace you must do the first 100 meters, the next 100 meters, the next 100 meters, and the last 100 meters. And here's a guy who would never train for the 400 meters.

He said, well, I'll lose nothing. Let me go and run at it. And they put him for the 400 meters, and he came to the final, and he stood there, you know, on your marks, and just before that somebody gave him a slip of paper, perhaps sent by his sister who was sitting in the audience, with one word.

Those who honor me, I will honor. And he grabbed that in his hand, and ran. And he won.

Boy. And he became the gold medalist. You know, you honor God.

God honors you. God can do amazing things. I mean, it's not, I mean, I'm not saying an Olympic gold medal is not his main thing.

The main thing is, that man's life was a challenge to so many others. That's why God allowed him to win that. He went back from there to Scotland, where he was home.

And he gave up his athletic career, and went as a missionary to China. The man who could have won in another Olympic Games. He went as a missionary to China, and he died when he was just 43 or something, during the Second World War.

I want to meet that man in Heaven. I tell you. You know, Heaven's going to be so exciting, because I'm going to meet people like Eric Little.

And I'm going to meet a lot of other people whose stories I've never heard. People say, what are you going to do spending eternity? Boy, I'm going to listen to stories. All those millions of stories from people who honored God.

Put Jesus first in their life. And those brothers will then turn to you and say, what was your story? What do you tell them? What do you tell them, brother? You're young. You've got your life ahead of you.

Don't mess it up. Don't mess it up. Say, Lord, I want my life to count for you.

I may not be as famous as Eric Little or any such thing. But I want my life to count for you. I remember that passion gripped my heart when I was 21 years old.

I had my ambitions at 21, just like you, to become someone great in the world. But I said, Lord Jesus, I want my life to count for you. When I come to the end of my life, I want to be able to look back over a life that was lived for you.

It doesn't matter any sacrifice I have to make. I'm willing for it. You know, when I felt that the Lord may call me out of the Navy, I used to sometimes skip meals for two days.

And the ship, where there's rich food there, I would just drink some glass of milk or something and train myself, in case I'm in some place where I don't have food, where food would never have a hold on me. I'm supposed to be a conqueror. I'm not supposed to be a slave to food.

I mean, we can have our taste. I have my taste. There are certain things I like and certain things I don't like.

But I'm not a slave that, Oh, I can't survive if I don't get this type of food wherever I go. Rubbish! And I said, Lord, most human beings are enslaved to food. You know that? That's why Jesus taught us to fast.

To break slavery to food. I decided no food is going to rule over me. I like certain things, sure.

I'm not saying if I eat a chicken biryani or an ice cream or something, I don't like it. I like it, but I have to conquer that I can survive without these things. And the other thing I wanted to learn was to sleep on hard floors.

You know that I can sleep on that floor even today. I don't need a mattress. I remember when I was traveling in a train with a European brother.

It was to Pondicherry or somewhere. We went for a meeting and I came back. In those days we had an unreserved compartment with not even a board, but slats strips of wood.

That was the place where we kept the luggage and I stretched out and was completely knocked out and woke up the next morning and this poor brother was sitting up the whole night. He couldn't sleep. But that was because when I was in the Navy and I had this comfortable bed, I slept on the hard floor just to be tough.

I said I never want to be a slave to comfortable mattresses, to food because I want to serve Jesus and I never want these things to rule over me. Now, I sleep on a comfortable mattress today, but it doesn't mean anything to me. I eat good food, but it doesn't mean anything.

I'm not going to complain. I tell you honestly, I've never complained when I go down to some of these villages and I don't care what food they give me. I don't care where I have to sleep.

But I got trained for it. I trained myself for that when I was young. Paul said, I disciplined myself.

He said in 1 Corinthians 9. I disciplined my body and I make it do not what it wants to do, but what it should do. That's what the Living Bible paraphrases in 1 Corinthians 9, 27 and 28. I disciplined my body, make it do what it should do, not what it wants to do.

You must start on that when you're young. Say, Lord, give me the power. I want to do that.

I want to trust you. Now, I told you about Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I want you to think of three words.

Confidence, commitment, dependence. What are the words? Confidence, commitment, dependence. Confidence in the Father, commitment to Christ, dependence on the Holy Spirit.

What is faith? Faith is, I have absolute confidence in my Heavenly Father. He is in complete control of this world. No postman can do anything to me.

He can only bring me letters from my Father. Whether he's a good postman or a bad postman, it makes no difference. He brings me letters from my Father.

Everything works for my good. I have absolute confidence in my Father. And also, everything that my Father has written in the Word is for my good.

I have absolute confidence in that. You see, some of you may not have that confidence that your Father tells you what is good for you. You know how little children, they think their parents don't know what's good for them.

If only those children knew that the food the parents are giving them is good for them, whether it tastes nice or not. That every command the parents give is good for them. If only they knew it.

How much better? But children are stubborn. They think they know better. And when they become teenagers, they really think they know better.

We're like that. We think we know better. Eve thought she knew better.

Adam thought he knew better. And we think we know better. That's why we're not diligent to study the Word.

You know why I study the Word of God? I'll tell you. Because I wanted to know what my Heavenly Father wanted me to do. Because I knew that was the best for me.

Second, commitment to Christ. Faith means, just like in marriage, when a woman says to the man, I want to be with you for how many days? Supposing he says, for how many days do you want to be with me? Or suppose she says, I want to try you out. No.

Marriage is total commitment. For life. Are you willing to change your name? Yes, I'm willing to change my name.

Are you willing to come and live where I live? Yes. If I live in a hut? Yes. You know how they say for sickness, what's it in sickness and in health and all the rest of the stuff they say? Whatever it is, for better or for worse.

You see, this is commitment. Faith is to commit yourself to Christ, just like a woman commits herself to a man and says, I can trust him completely. I tell you something, you can trust Jesus better than any woman can trust her husband.

You believe that? Why don't you commit yourself then? That's the solution. Commitment. Lord, everything, all my future, my plans, everything is committed to you.

What's the third word? Dependence. Dependence on the Holy Spirit. Just like this branch, I can't bear any fruit.

Now you go to the branch which is producing such wonderful oranges or such wonderful apples and say, hey, how in the world do you manage that? I don't do anything. I just open myself up to the sap, flows into me, produces the fruit. I'm just a channel.

All I do is open the branch. It's not struggling, struggling, struggling to produce good fruit. The Christian life is a life of rest.

Dear brother, sister, it has let us strive diligently to enter that rest. There is a striving, but the striving is to get into that rest. See, that's the place where we entered.

You know, that's why when God created Adam, what is his first day? Eh? Day of rest, right? It was the seventh day for God, but the first day for Adam. God did all the work and Adam rested. It's like, you know, you join a company and the company says, we'd like you to go on one month holiday first, then come back and work.

You say, boy, I really like this company. Wouldn't you like to join a multinational company? As soon as you join, they say, go on one month vacation and come back and then work for us. Who wouldn't want to join a company like that? That's what God said to Adam.

Okay, Adam, I've done all the work. Let's have a holiday first. Just you and I. We'll walk and enjoy ourselves with each other.

The garden can wait. The garden can wait till Sunday. Today is Saturday.

We're going to have time together. I'll tell you something. God is a good God.

It's more than what we sing in a song. God is good all the time. All the time.

He's a wonderful God. I wish you would know him. Why do you disappoint him? Let's surrender confidence, then commitment, and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That's faith. Let's pray. Oh, if you could only see how the Holy Spirit was moved in your heart during the last one hour, is waiting to enter in and take possession of your life and bring you into that rest that there is in Christ.

And remove from your mind all the wrong conceptions that you have of Christianity. Don't let the devil say you're too young. Samuel was younger than all of you.

Timothy was younger than most of you. All of you, perhaps. David, Joseph, they were all younger than 20.

They wouldn't have qualified to come for this youth camp because they were all younger than 20. Imagine, David, Joseph, Samuel, wouldn't have qualified because of their age to come for this youth camp because they were too young. Don't let the devil say you're too young.

You are not young. You've gone past the age where you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh, the Father seeks for you.

Don't look at other people and become worldly in your life. Have a personal relationship with Jesus and say, Lord, I'm going to live with you from now on. I'm not going to look around at some of the bad examples.

There's only one good example in the church to follow. Follow that one good example. Say, Lord, I want to be like that, live for you.

Heavenly Father, do a work we pray in every life here this weekend. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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