

(The Law of the Holy Spirit) Jesus Stayed Away Sin

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and grace in overcoming sin, using Jesus as the ultimate example of a life lived under the Holy Spirit's law.

Duration: 52:06

Scripture: 2 Samuel 24:24, Psalm 51:3, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 12:24, Matthew 16:17, Acts 2:4, Hebrews 5:7

Topics: "Law Of The Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of moving beyond the basic teachings of Christianity and pursuing a deeper level of spiritual maturity. He uses the analogy of learning to swim to illustrate this point, explaining that just as someone who has learned to swim can teach others, mature Christians should be able to teach and guide others in their faith. The speaker also highlights the difference between 'milk' and 'solid food' in the Christian message, with milk representing the basic message of forgiveness of sins and solid food representing the word of righteousness and holiness. He urges listeners to discern between good and evil, not just in a worldly sense, but also in terms of living a life that reflects the way Jesus lived on earth.

Transcript

We've been considering this subject of the law of the Holy Spirit, and we've seen something about this law of humility, how it operated in the life of Jesus, how He received grace from the Father, because He was humble. God gives His grace to the humble. Now, if you've heard me, you know this, but if you haven't, let me show you the verse.

Do you know that Jesus received grace from the Father to overcome sin? You read that in Luke chapter 2 verse 40, that from the time He was a child, He continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom, because the grace of God was upon Him. When you say the grace of God is upon somebody, He could put it in other words and say He was under grace. And Romans 6 14 says, when you are under grace, sin cannot rule over you.

So, when you put Luke chapter 2 verse 40 with Romans 6 14, you understand why Jesus overcame sin, not because He was the Son of God. He had given up the privileges and rights of being a son. He came as a man, and let me say this reverently, that with the limitations He took upon Himself, He could not have

overcome sin without the grace of God.

If He had not given up equality with God, then of course He could have overcome without any problem, but then He wouldn't even be tempted. You know, people who say, well Jesus was God, how could He sin? Well, I would say the Bible says in James 1, God cannot even be tempted. Do you believe Jesus was tempted? How do you equate that with James 1, which says God cannot be tempted? Was He God or not? Of course He was.

Seven times in the Gospels we read, people worshipped Him. Even angels do not accept worship, but Jesus always accepted worship, proving that He was God when He was on earth. But as a man, He did not use the resources of God.

And when I saw this truth, two things happened in my life 35 years ago. I was a thoroughly defeated, born-again preacher, like most people, most preachers, thoroughly defeated, born-again preacher. And I didn't know, I wanted victory, but I didn't know how to get it, till I saw the secret of godliness, 1 Timothy 3 16.

Great is the mystery of godliness, or like the living Bible paraphrased it, it is true that the way to live a godly life is a great secret. But the answer lies in Christ, who came to earth as a man. So I saw there is the answer, that He did not use His resources as God to live this life.

It was because grace was upon Him that He overcame. And God gives His grace without partiality to anyone who is humble. So if I fulfill the conditions Jesus fulfilled, and always live under grace, which is the place of humility, and that's what we were considering in our last session, how He always took the path of humility, He never sinned.

And right up to the end of His life, it says in Hebrews chapter 2, how did He taste that terrible death on the cross? How could He have the ability to go to the cross? Not the physical aspect of, you know, there are martyrs who've gone to their death singing, but I'm talking about the agony of hell. How could He face it? Hebrews 2 9 says, by the grace of God, again the grace of God enabled Him to taste death for us. So birth, Luke 2 40, death, Hebrews 2 9, all the way He lived under grace, and that's why He never sinned.

And the thing that happened when I saw that truth, now you know you can hear it, you can understand it, but there's a lot of difference between understanding and revelation. In the Old Testament, you read understanding, but revelation is a new covenant word. Revelation is from the Holy Spirit.

And you know, like Jesus told Peter, blessed are you, Simon, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. You got revelation. The Pharisees who sit in the synagogues are cleverer than you, Peter, but they couldn't see me.

They thought I'm Beelzebul. How is it you see that I am the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God? Is it because you're cleverer than them? No. Is it because you know more of the Bible than them? They know the Bible 10 times more than you, but you got revelation from the Holy Spirit.

You saw something of me which those people haven't seen. It's revelation, Christ being revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. On that rock, Jesus said, I will build my church on the revealed Christ.

And I believe that many of you, probably all of you, have seen Christ revealed as God. But it's possible that you still have not seen Him as a man 100% like you without sin, capable of being tempted like you

and I are tempted. It's a great argument that theologians have.

Could Jesus have fallen in temptation? There is no temptation. If it is impossible to fall, then He was not tempted like me. Hebrews 2.15, 4.15 is the answer.

He was tempted exactly like us in all areas. What does that mean? When I'm tempted, is there a possibility of falling? I don't know. Was Jesus tempted like me or not? We have to get rid of our human ideas and accept scripture.

I decided to accept scripture. I battled it for a long time because I said, boy, if I say this, am I degrading Jesus? Am I bringing Him down to a sinful level? By saying, oh, He could have fallen. Actually, I made Him more glorious.

I mean, if He had victory, handed Him on a platter and I have to battle to get victory, I'm going to stand in heaven as a greater conqueror than Him. I said, Lord, I conquered something. You didn't have to conquer it.

You got it on a platter freely. You could not have fallen. I could have and I overcame.

Is it possible that you and I are going to stand as greater victors than Christ? He said, Revelation 3.21, if you overcome as I overcame, then you will sit with me on my throne. I mean, scripture is full of it. All of a sudden, verses began to open up to me, which I never saw before, that I have to overcome as He overcame, exactly as He overcame and it was possible.

Well, anyway, now looking back over 35 years, I've seen the fruit of that doctrine in my life, in my family life, in my four boys, who also believe it, in other brothers and sisters in our church, and the unity is produced in our church, the victory is produced in our church, the transformation that has taken place in many families and in many children in our homes, in our churches and in many churches and elder brothers, that today I don't, it's no longer a theory to me. I've proved it. The fruit of it has been so positive and when I compare it with the rest, a lot of Christendom that's arguing about theology and all that, and I see the fruit that's coming from there of strife and conflict and wayward children and all types of things, I say, thank God, I'm not in that type of theological argument.

I've seen the reality, but I remember two things happened to me. When I saw that Jesus was tempted exactly like me and did not sin, number one, I could have no more excuse for my sin. Up till that time, always my excuse for sin was, I'm human.

If I get angry, I'm human. If I yell at my wife, I'm human. If I slip up and have dirty thoughts, after all, I'm human.

We can't be perfect. Always I had this excuse. I have a flesh.

Until I saw that one walked on this earth with my flesh and did not sin, I had no more excuse. And the picture that came into my mind was something like this. I like to think in pictures.

It helps me to understand scripture better and it helps me to explain scripture better too. I saw of myself, I thought of an island somewhere, some remote island completely untouched by civilization on this earth, somewhere in this planet where civilization has never reached and where, because it's been so cut off from the rest of humanity, this island, nobody there knows how to swim. Because from the time of Adam,

whoever went there to that island, they always communicated to their children, if you get into the water, you drown.

So that was passed on from generation to generation to generation. If you get into the water, you drown. And they tried it and everybody drowned.

So they said, okay, man cannot swim. And lo and behold, one day somebody from the civilized world comes there and says, hey, here's a river, let's jump in and swim. Hey, don't get there.

It's impossible for man to swim, you'll drown. So what do you mean? Let me show you. He's not explaining theories or theology on a blackboard, he's demonstrating.

He says, now I'll show you, he gets into the river and swims and these folks are dumbstruck. And when he comes back to the shore, they touch him, have you got the same body? Is this specific gravity the same as the rest of our bodies? There must be something. He says, no, it's possible to overcome gravity.

He says, just I'll show you how. And for the first time in thousands of years, somebody in that island learns to swim. And he swims.

And if he goes to another part of the island and tells somebody, hey, you know, I swam. He said, you're a liar. For generations, nobody's ever swam in this island.

You're saying you swam. He said, yeah, I'll tell you. This is the history of people saying I overcame sin by the grace of God.

For generations, people have said it's impossible. Perfect peace at home, impossible. Living without bad moods, impossible.

Nobody's ever swam on this island for generations. My father used to get angry. My grandfather used to get angry.

It's in a generation. It's there till somebody has faith that sin, if you come under grace, sin will not rule over you. It's the same faith that the Israelites needed when they came to the borders of Canaan and they saw the giants.

God said, go and kill those giants. Most of them said, no, it's not possible. Two people, Joshua and Caleb said, yes.

And they are the only ones who went in. So when I look at 600,000 born again believers who say we cannot overcome sin, if I find two people who say we can, the other ones are right. And the Old Testament says sometimes you may find only two out of 600,000 believers who really demonstrate in their personal life, in their home life, in their church life, that we can overcome sin.

Not so much we can overcome sin as much as that Jesus can keep us from falling. That's a better way to put it. So that the emphasis, I remember years ago, the Lord said to me that, don't say you overcame sin, say Jesus kept you from falling.

I said, no, that's more correct, more accurate to say that Jesus kept me from falling, keeps us from falling. It's one of the last promises in the epistles. Do you know that before the book of Revelation, the last epistle of Jude is the last epistle.

And in almost the last verse of Jude, the promise is He can keep you from falling. So if you turn to Hebrews in chapter 5, it says about Jesus, verse 7, chapter 4, 15, it says He was tempted but He did not sin. And therefore, verse 16, we can also go to this throne of grace, they could not get grace in the Old Testament, so that we can receive mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.

If you've heard me, you know I've often pointed out the distinction between mercy and grace. Mercy is dealing with our past life, forgiveness, grace is dealing with power to overcome sin. Mercy, we can say, is a part of grace, but grace is a lot more than that.

So if Jesus got grace to overcome, we can also go to the throne of grace. It says, therefore, let's also go to the throne of grace and get the same grace that Jesus got. That's the meaning of verse 16.

If Jesus could not sin, therefore, let's also go to that throne of grace and say, hey, there's no partiality with you, Father, give me what you gave Jesus, the same grace to overcome. The Father says, sure, come to the place of humility, like Jesus was always, and I'll give you the same grace. How long shall I have it? As long as you stay in the place of humility, perpetually.

I remember when I was seeking for the baptism in the Holy Spirit when I was 23 years old, and I didn't know anything about it. I was in an assembly where they only studied the Bible, like we study chemistry books, we analyzed it and all that, but we had no power in our life. And I said, Lord, there's something missing in my life.

I know the scriptures, but I don't have power. I'm born again, I'm baptized in water, but something is missing. And people told me, if you want power, you've got to go to the Pentecostal church.

There was no charismatic movement those days, 1963. So I went to some Pentecostal church, and all I saw was a lot of noise and emotion, and I saw the pastors there loved money more than anybody else. And I came back to my room, I was just 23 years old, I knelt down before God, and I said, Lord, I do not want what they have.

I want what Peter got on the day of Pentecost, what Peter, James, and John got on the day of Pentecost. And if it takes me 10 years to get that, I'll wait 10 years, but I don't want any cheap counterfeit. I'm thankful that I did not reject the baptism of the Holy Spirit, just because I saw a counterfeit.

And that's what stood me in good stead. And I began to seek God, and God met with me. But I want to mention here in Hebrews 5, it says about Jesus, in the days of his flesh.

Have you ever meditated on this verse? Here's another verse at which there's a stoplight. You got to stop. And the way to find out whether you've understood this verse is, if some younger Christian came to you and asked you, can you please explain Hebrews 5, 7 to me, 7 to me, how would you explain it? If you cannot explain it, you have not understood it.

In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the one who was able to save him from death. And he was heard because of his godly fear. Okay, let's go step by step.

In the days of his flesh means during the 33 years that he was on earth, not on the last day when he was on earth, but in the days of his flesh, speaking about the entire period of 33 years, what did he do? He prayed. Supplication means specific request. Prayer is general, supplication is specific.

He prayed and he made specific request. He wasn't asking for money. He wasn't asking for any earthly blessing.

He was asking to be saved from death. Now there are two types of death. The bible speaks about physical death and spiritual death.

James 1 says, sin when it is finished brings forth death. That's spiritual death. Which death was Jesus praying that he would escape? I can't imagine him praying to be saved from physical death because there are thousands of martyrs through the ages who've gone singing to physical death and Jesus was no coward.

He'd be willing to go through a thousand calvaries for you and me. But there was another death that Jesus shrank from. Spiritual death.

He shrank from the very smell of it. We are so familiar with sin that we don't shrink from sin so easily. You know you can lose your temper with somebody and your fellowship with God is broken immediately, but you can carry on like that sometimes for a whole day without confessing it.

There are husbands and wives who clash with each other. They don't set it right for two or three days sometimes, but they seem to be okay. Their fellowship with God is completely broken, but they seem to carry on very well.

And I'm reminded of people who live in the slums. I mean I've been seeing slums in different countries and I see that people who live in the slums are quite used to living with filth and muck and rats and rodents and cockroaches and all types of things and all types of filth in their house and in their gutters outside and they're quite happy. Now you and I would not be happy to live in that type of condition.

They're happy. That's how it is. And when people can commit any sin, let it be any little thing and it breaks their fellowship with God and they can live comfortably, they are like people who are living in a slum.

Quite comfortable. But a person who's come from extreme hygienic surroundings, they find it very difficult to live in such surroundings. It's amazing.

And I said that Jesus came from this perfect hygienic atmosphere of heaven to this wretched slum called the earth and he couldn't tolerate break of fellowship with the father even for one fraction of a second. There was a revulsion in him. In that sense, temptation was more difficult for him than for us.

We're used to living in the slum. But here's someone who's come from perfect hygienic surroundings. It was such a tremendous and he prayed, father don't let me ever have even a smell of this filth in me.

I don't want the, you know how you sit around people are smoking and the smell of cigarettes on your clothes even though you were not smoking. And how if you're in a room where there's some type of filthy smell, it can get on even your clothes. Jesus didn't even want that even if he didn't touch it.

I don't want any of that. He shrank from it, from the smell of sin. That is the death he prayed to be saved from.

That's the only death he feared. He never feared physical death. And the Bible says he was heard and that proves doubly that he was not, he's not referring to physical death because he was not saved from physical death.

So when it says he was heard, you know that it was from that death which is the smell of sin that he was saved from. And now comes the question, why was he saved from physical death? He prayed, he knew that he could not save himself. That's another thing you need to see in this verse.

Even Jesus in the days of his flesh on earth, he could not save himself from sin. Why? Because he had taken upon himself the limitations of man. Just like you and I cannot save ourselves from sin, no matter how hard you try.

Jesus recognized that. That's why he prayed. We don't recognize that.

That's why we don't pray so much. How did he pray? It says he prayed with loud crying and tears. Now I know you'll pray with loud crying and tears if your child is sick and the doctors have given up all hope of this child's survival.

Sure we'll all pray with loud, my child. But how many will pray or you young wives will pray if your husband is seriously injured and about to die and you're in danger of being a penniless widow. Boy, you'll really pray with loud crying and tears.

Extreme situations like that. But how many would pray with loud crying and tears to avoid the smell of sin? I mean, just offer a general prayer. Yeah Lord, I think it'll be a good idea if you can give me victory over anger.

I'm not talking about that type of prayer. Or you know this lust is bothering me a bit. See if you can help me out a little bit from there.

That's not how you pray when your child is dying. Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears. Father, in any provocation, I never want to, not only I don't want to lose my temper and say something bad, I don't want to have anger in my heart.

Not for a second. Because the Bible says if the lamb had one blemish in it, it could not be a fit sacrifice for sin. And He loved us so much that He wanted to be absolutely without blemish.

Can you imagine how it is? You and I know how difficult it is to live free from sin in thought, word, deed, attitude, motive for one day, 24 hours. Jesus lived like that for 33 and a half years as a man. And the only way He managed it was because He prayed, Father, keep me, keep me.

I don't care what price I have to pay. Keep me from sin in my words, in my actions, in my look, in my thoughts, in my attitudes to people, in my motives with which I do things. I want to be totally free from sin.

Every single moment of every single day for 33 and a half years. That was the only thing He was interested in. It didn't matter, like I said, whether somebody gave Him a bed to sleep in.

He could go out and sleep under the trees. But He didn't want to sin. It didn't matter if somebody called Him the devil.

Forget it. That's not important. I don't want to sin.

You see, we've got other things which are more important for us. We want a little comfort. We don't want anybody to hurt us or harm us or call us the devil or anything like that.

Other things are more important, but not for Jesus. The only thing important for Him was, I don't want to sin in any area. And that's why He prayed with such desperation.

I want to ask you all, my dear brothers and sisters, many of you talk about holiness and believe that you belong to churches that emphasize holiness, etc. Can you think of one time in your life when you prayed with loud crying and tears that you might never sin? Once. Jesus was praying that all the time.

Do you see why we're defeated? We have grown up in a society that's lazy, laid back, and we want everything offered to us on a platter. Yeah, we'd like if somebody can just lay his hands on our head and just give us victory like that or the power of the Holy Spirit. We'd like it.

But this route of loud crying and tears, oh, we don't want to go that way. Well, I'll tell you, if Jesus went that way and you think you're going to get it some easier path, you're not going to get it. He said, follow me with loud crying and tears.

And I believe that's why He would often go out into the wilderness. Have you read in the scriptures how He'd go out into the wilderness? Like somebody said, as tourists, when they come to a new town, they'll find out what the tourist attractions are. When Jesus came to a new town, He'd look around for where's the nearest wilderness where He could get alone with His Father and cry out.

And, you know, I thought a lot about that. I said, Lord, I live in a city where the nearest wilderness is maybe 100 miles away. How in the world can I have this loud crying and tears? I don't want to disturb my wife and neighbors and everybody else with my loud crying and tears.

They'll call the police or something if I do that. And I learned something which really blessed me. That I could pray with loud crying and tears without opening my mouth.

I could have a cry in my heart which was really loud. And tears are okay. There's no sound in that.

And really cry out to God for help. Lord, I never want to sin. Or pray like that when I did slip up.

In the beginning, it's like that. In the beginning, we slip up and I cannot think of the number of nights I wet my pillow with my tears because I said, Lord, I'm defeated today. I've sinned.

I slipped up there. I spoke one word which is not right. And Lord, in that sermon I preached, a little bit of that was not really of you.

It was me coming out in that. There's hardly a sermon I preach which I don't go home and judge myself for many, many years. Because I want to offer the best to God.

I don't want to offer anything third-rate to God. I don't want to offer to God that which costs me nothing. In the same way with sin, most of my precious times are late at night before going to sleep or early morning.

When I can get alone with God and really let God search my heart, let his search light scan me. And in the beginning, before we cry out for victory, we cry out for having fallen and slipped up in areas where other Christians wouldn't even think that serious. And God sees we really mean business now.

We're not talking about gross sins which other people recognize as sin. We're thinking about those little, little teeny-weeny things which other people don't even bother about. And then the Lord sees that you're really serious.

And that is the proof that we fear him. I told you earlier that one of the proofs that we, the spirit of the fear of the Lord is upon us is that we don't judge by what our eyes see or our ears hear. Here is another proof of the fear of God.

It says Jesus' prayers were heard because he feared. There was a godly fear about him. And that's another proof that I fear God, that I have a tremendous revulsion to sin.

I have a desire to immediately set right when I have slipped up somewhere. It's a proof that he feared God. The apostle Paul had it.

He says in Acts 24 and verse 16 in a testimony before King Felix, he says Acts 24 verse 16, in view of this, I do my best, I do my best to always maintain a blameless conscience before God and before men. That is one of the secrets of Paul's life. And I, the Lord showed me that more than 30 years ago, that I could have that type of life if I did my best to keep my conscience blameless.

Now that's easier than overcoming sin. To keep the conscience blameless means as soon as you fall, you immediately set it right. Of course, a higher level than that is that you don't fall at all.

But if you do fall, the next best level is to immediately set it right. I slipped up, I immediately set it right. In other words, I don't wait till the evening to pull out the thorns from my feet.

Some people say, before you go to bed at night, confess all your sins. That's like saying, if you accumulated thorns in your feet during the day, at night just check up your feet and pull out all the thorns. Do you do that? Or do you pull them out immediately? I mean, in India we have a lot of mosquitoes and sometimes they come and sit on our hands.

Do you wait till all the mosquitoes come till the evening and then drive them off one by one? Or do you drive them off as soon as they come and sit on your hand? I drive them out as soon as they come. Even one comes and sits on it, I take it off. Is that our attitude to sin? That immediately I slipped up, apologized to God and to men.

And I'll tell you, it's more difficult to apologize to men than to God. One would think it is easier. Tell me, is it easier to stand before someone whose standard is absolute like God or before a fellow sinner like yourself? One would think it's much more difficult to stand before God.

Why is it then I find it easier to confess my sin to God and find it so difficult to confess it to my wife or husband or my brother? Why is that? I'll tell you, because I'm fooling myself when I think I'm confessing to God. I'm confessing to myself. I think, Lord, forgive me.

I didn't go before God. I just said it to myself. If I really came before a holy God, I'd be in fear and trembling that I violated his law.

But it's so casual, the way we ask God for forgiveness. Oh, Lord, I'm sorry, slipped up there. But we find it so difficult to go to a human being and say, I am sorry.

That was my mistake. Please tell me how I can set it right. That's not the way people confess.

They say, well, brother, if you think I hurt you, I'm sorry. In other words, I don't think I hurt you. But if you're so stupid enough to think I hurt you, well, OK.

That's not apology. That's not the way to apologize. The way to apologize to somebody is, I am sorry.

That was my mistake. I'm sorry that I did that or said that. Now please tell me how I can set it right.

That's a real apology. And I tell you, there are very, very few Christians, even among husbands and wives, who apologize like that. We stand too much on our dignity.

Yeah, sorry. Just like you tell little children, say sorry to your brother. OK, sorry.

That's how a lot of believers also apologize. No different. It's getting over an obligation.

There's absolutely no conviction that I've grieved God. I've violated His laws. I do my best to keep my conscience clear before God and men.

And I say, Lord, I never in my life want to violate my conscience because I know what price I'll pay for that. It won't be money. It'll be something much worse than that.

I will lose the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Many people have asked me this question. How can I continuously be filled with the Holy Spirit once I'm baptized in the Holy Spirit? How can I remain filled with the Holy Spirit all the time? I said, I'll give you, I won't give you 20 rules.

I'll just tell you two things. Keep these two things in mind and you'll always be filled with the Holy Spirit. One, keep your conscience always clear before God and men.

Acts 24, 16. Immediate confession. As soon as it happens, as soon as you're aware of it, not as soon as it happens because you may not be aware, but as soon as you're aware that you violated God's law, you set it right with God and with man.

If you find that you've been unrighteous and money matters, the earliest opportunity you seek to give it back. And the second is always humble yourself. Go down, go down.

There is a spirit. The spirit of Lucifer is the one that seeks to go up and up and up right from the time he was created. And the opposite of that is the spirit of Jesus Christ who went down and down and down and down.

And there are basically only these two spirits operating in the world and unfortunately operating in the church. People with the spirit of wanting to go up and push other people down and exalt themselves and stand up and say, I'm right and you're wrong. And then you have those of the spirit of Christ who refuse to fight and who will humble themselves and be willing to take the blame even for things they didn't do.

That's a completely different spirit. So I say if you want to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, keep a good conscience, number one, and always go down and humble yourself. Just two little rules and the spirit of God, because water always flows to the lowest place.

Remember that it never flows up to the mountain. It flows down to the deep valley and the deeper you are and humbling yourself, the spirit of God will just come flowing down upon you. God gives grace to the humble.

These are such simple rules. So Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears. I want to move on in Hebrews 5. It says this was the proof of his godly fear.

Why does it say that Jesus' prayers were always heard? Here's the answer in Hebrews 5.7. Did you notice that? He was heard because he had this godly fear. And the thing that came to my heart was, what God did for Jesus, He will do for me. He will hear my prayers too.

If he sees in me the same godly fear there was in Jesus, a revulsion to even the smell of sin, save me father, I don't want even the smell of death on me. And when God sees that you're like that, your prayers are heard. You know, it is my conviction after having observed believers in many countries, in many places, that 90% of prayers that believers pray, they never get a reply.

They never get an answer. And they comfort themselves by saying, perhaps that was not the will of God. That's a very easy way out of it.

I mean, a heathen could pray to an idol like that. Imagine a non-christian going and bowing before his idol and praying for something. Oh my God, give me this.

He's praying to this brass statue. Please give it to me. I want this desperately.

I want a promotion in my job. And maybe a week later he gets his promotion. You know, these things happen, coincidences and accidents.

And he goes before his God and says, great, you answered my prayer. Or he prays for something else. Please pray for my child who needs to be healed.

And the child is not healed. He dies. And he says, that was not the will of God.

I accept it. What is the difference between that and what most Christians pray? It's almost exactly the same. If it doesn't work, of course, it's not my fault.

I'm perfectly okay. Maybe it was not God's will. If it works, ah yes, God answered my prayer.

You ask yourself if this is not the philosophy you have for prayer, when it is answered and when it's not answered. It's a very convenient doctrine never found in scripture. Where do you find Jesus saying that? This is because we refuse to take the blame and say, of course, the fault is not with me.

I'm a perfect Christian. It was not God's will. Instead of saying, something's wrong with me.

Maybe I don't have godly fear. Jesus' prayers were heard because he had a godly fear, according to Hebrews 5, 7. And maybe I don't have that godly fear. And that's why my prayers are not heard.

God will do for me what he did for Jesus. But not if I don't fulfill the same conditions. If my aim in life is to make money, instead of saying, I do my best to keep my conscience clear, I say, I do my best to make as much money as possible in the world.

You think you're going to get the same results as the apostle Paul? Think again. He did his best to keep his conscience clear. You're doing your best to make more and more money.

How in the world can you both get the same results? But we don't face up to that. We say, oh, that was not God's will. If something happens, that is God's will.

So that's exactly how every non-christian says too. What is the difference between our praying to a living God and a non-christian praying to an idol? We need to face reality, dear brothers and sisters. And I believe if we face reality honestly, we'll find the level of our christian life going up.

I'll give you one example. I've often quoted this example, and you probably heard me before. I read in Philippians 4, four years ago, in rejoicing the Lord always.

And I looked at my life. I was rejoicing the Lord once in a while, or maybe a little better sometimes. And I had two options now.

I could either, you know, manipulate the word of God and bring it down to my level and say, well, it doesn't mean always, doesn't mean 24-7. You know, it means sort of generally most of the time or as far as possible or something like that. And I've succeeded in bringing God's word down to my level.

And I'm happy with my third-rate useless christian life. The other alternative I have is to leave God's word where it is and say, Lord, perhaps the fault is with me. I should be there and I'm here.

And that's what I decided. I said, Lord, I'm not going to rest till I come to this obedience, to this command, which says rejoice, not in my circumstances, that would be unrealistic, rejoice in the Lord 24-7. And when I made that acknowledgement of my defeat, then God began to deal with me and brought me there.

He'll do that for you. I tell you, it'll change your life completely. Can you imagine how thrilled your wife will be if you're never in a bad mood 24-7? Imagine what your home life will be like, if you're how excited your husband will be if you're never in a bad mood 24-7.

And you don't make excuses for it, medical excuses or any other excuses. Dear brothers and sisters, there is a life that the Holy Spirit can give us. It's called the life of Jesus.

According to your faith, be it unto you. Don't miss out on what God has for you. Say, Lord, I want this at any cost.

Concerning Jesus, it says here in verse 11, Hebrews chapter 5 verse 11, concerning this Jesus who came as a man, there is so much I want to say. Many times I feel exactly like the Apostle Paul or whoever wrote Hebrews. I don't know who it is.

I have so much to say, but it is very hard to explain because you have become dull of hearing. That means you guys are not serious about your Christian life. You're quite happy if everything is going smoothly in your family.

Your children have got a good education and are doing okay and they are healthy and they're strong and they're sort of generally coming to all the services in the church and everything is reasonably okay and the recession hasn't hit you too badly and you're earning enough for your family. So everything is okay. Well, you're not serious about your Christian life because there's so many other things wrong.

Your church is not as it should be. Your home is not as it should be. And you become dull of hearing.

You say, there's so many things I want to say about this, but I can't lead you any further. The time has come, verse 12, you should have been teaching other people these amazing truths, but you're still having to listen to the same old truths again and again and again and again. How long will you keep drinking milk? When will you start chewing and eating solid food? What is milk? What's the difference between milk

and solid food? Milk is the message of your sins can be forgiven.

Solid food, verse 13, is the word of righteousness, the word of holiness. It's for those who are mature, verse 14, who have their senses trained to discern between good and evil. Between good and evil, you know, means not just the good and evil that the worldly people can discern out, but being what is divine and what is human.

This is divine and this is human to live the way Jesus lived on the earth. I want to say that I believe there's a level of life which many Christians are missing out on, and I want to encourage all of you to pursue that. Dear brothers and sisters, we have only one life.

Let me conclude with a question that different people have asked me because they probably never heard any preacher speak on this like I have. And that question is, will we have regret when we go to heaven? Now, I know there are different opinions that believers have, and I'm quite prepared to, this is not a fundamental doctrine for me, I'm quite prepared to accept. I know some of my own co-workers in India have a different view from me on this.

They believe there'll be no regret in heaven for all eternity, that all tears will be wiped away from their eyes. And I told one of them, I said, that is the doctrine I would like to believe, but unfortunately I cannot with my understanding of scripture. I would have to be dishonest if I were to say I believe that.

I would like to believe it, but as I study scripture carefully, I find it very difficult. I'd have to be thoroughly dishonest with scripture to believe that I'll have no regret in heaven. And I said, I'll explain why.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3 that in the final day our work is going to be assessed, whether we built with gold, silver, and precious stones, 1 Corinthians 3 12, or with wood, hay, and straw. We're not talking about the foundation. We're all born again.

The foundation is Jesus Christ, verse 11. But on that foundation, what did I build? And then I spent my life in gold, silver, and precious stones is things that are going to last for eternity. I spent my life for things that last for eternity, not for reward.

I didn't do it for reward. I did it because Jesus loved me, and I wanted to show my love to him. Well, one day life is over, and we stand before the Lord.

Every man's work is going to be tested, verse 13, by fire. And the fire will test the quality of each man's work. And if a man's work is burnt up, verse 15, he will suffer loss.

What does that mean? He will suffer loss. Will he go to hell? No, no, no. It says he'll be saved.

He'll be in heaven. Same verse, verse 15. But he will suffer loss.

We're not talking about money now. This is eternal loss in heaven. He will suffer loss.

And imagine, I picture myself standing there, having been born again, having done the minimum necessary to get into God's kingdom, and spending all the rest of my life and time to make money and have a good time in this world, but doing the minimum necessary, attend the minimum number of services and meetings, and keep away from the minimum number of sins to make sure that I get a seat in heaven, and living basically for myself, like most believers do. And, okay, I make it to heaven. Will I have regret? Not because I don't have a crown in my head.

I'll tell you honestly, I couldn't care less for, I'm not waiting for crowns and mansions and all that. Where will my regret come from? In that day when I see my savior, face to face, and I see the nail prints in his hand, and it dawns upon me when my mind is enlarged and clear, what a tremendous price he paid on Calvary's cross. How much he gave up on earth, when I see the full picture of those 33 and a half years of suffering, all for me.

How he gave himself totally, totally, totally, to keep himself pure, so that he could die on the cross as a pure offering for me, for me, and he suffered the agony. How he didn't try to escape it in Gethsemane, went to the cross for me, and the full reality of it hits me. And I see how miserly I was in the way I'd give my time, or my money, or my service to God, always calculating, oh that's a bit too much, not so much, I've got other things to do.

You think I won't have any regret? I don't know about you, but I'll be so ashamed of myself, I'll almost say, Lord give me another chance, send me back to earth, let me live my life again for you. I know I cannot, I don't know about you, but when I see the depth of my savior's love in that day, I don't, I see a little bit of it now, but if I see it fully in that day, I for myself, I believe I'll have tremendous regret, if I have not lived totally for him on earth. If there's one single thing that I would withhold from him, if there was one single area in my life, where I sought my own honor, or my own will, I'd have tremendous regret in that day.

If there was one single area in my life, where I was not willing to deny myself, to live for him, to serve him, if I thought it was too painful, or too tiresome, because I've sought my own convenience, and I see how he lived, never seeking his own convenience, never always giving the best, giving completely for me, how will I feel in that day? I know I'll have tremendous regret, and I know that I will not be able to live my life again. Like that song says, by and by, when he holds out his hands, nail pierced hands, I'll wish I had given him more. I'll wish I'd given him more of my life, than I ever gave before.

And I say, Lord, please save me from that. Please save me from that sorrow, when I see you face to face. I don't care what I have to suffer on the earth.

I don't care what inconvenience I have to go through. I don't care if I don't make money, or if I'm poor, or suffering. I don't care if I don't have a place to sleep on.

But let me do all that I can, to show my love for you. Not for a reward. I don't want any reward.

I don't want a mansion. I don't want a crown. I just want to have the joy of knowing that I could say thank you with my life, for the way you gave your life for me.

I hope that is your desire too. Let's pray. By and by, when I look on his face, beautiful face, thorn-shadowed face.

By and by, when he holds out his hands, welcoming hands, nail-driven hands, I wish I had given him more. More of my life than I ever gave before. Lord, help us all to respond to your love, not in the emotion of this moment alone.

Free us from slavery to our emotions. Help us to live in our will, which is surrendered to you totally. To deny ourselves, not at this moment, but every moment of every day.

As we seek to follow you in the few days that are left, before you come again in glory. Give us grace to see the things that have eternal value, and to reject the things that are going to perish with time. We pray that

you'll make us wise, every one of us.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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