

The Light of Christs Judgement Seat

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living for God and having humility to understand the Bible, and warns of the consequences of not living for God at the judgment seat of Christ.

Duration: 55:55

Scripture: John 17:23, Acts 24:16, Galatians 1:10, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 6:4, 1 Timothy 5:8

Topics: "Godly Living", "Judgment Seat"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that pleases God above all else, focusing on the foundation of God's perfect love, maintaining a clear conscience, nurturing a godly family life, and engaging in ministry for the Lord. It stresses the significance of not seeking to please oneself or others, but to seek to please God in all aspects of life, including family relationships and ministry endeavors.

Transcript

So, the second verse I wanted to show you in 2nd Corinthians 5, I hope you will all be very diligent students of the Word of God. Very, very important. What I have said for many years, Almighty God who created us, loves us so much.

Among all the billions of books in the world, there's only one book that he wrote. Only one book. That our Heavenly Father wrote for us.

That's the Bible. If you believe that, you will read this book more than any other book. It's my personal testimony.

For 57 years, I've read this book more than any other book in the world. I've tried to know everything in this book. Even when I was working, I used to study this book every morning as a young man.

When I was working in the naval base in Cochin, and on the ship, every morning I would get up, first thing I did, kneel down, pray, open my Bible and read it. I'd recommend it to all young people. Last thing I did before I went to bed, read the Bible, study, kneel down, pray and go to bed.

It protected my life as a young man from many sins. So many people say, oh, I'm a young man, I'm struggling with so many sins. Try my method.

Study the Word of God, begin your day and end your day with God and see how God protects you. See how you sleep peacefully at night without your mind being filled with dirty dreams. Here is a book that will keep you from sin or sin will keep you away from this book.

You choose. Study the Word of God. There's so much in this.

Even today, after reading it for 57 years, I discover new things. Just a few days ago, I said, Lord, I want you to give me a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. I've been filled with the Holy Spirit many times.

But I said, I want you to give me a fresh infilling. And I said, I'm going to start reading Matthew chapter 1 all over again. And I want you to show me new things in the Gospel of Matthew that I've never seen in 57 years.

Believe it or not, He began to show me things that never struck me before. This is an amazing book. It's not like any other book.

That's why Jesus said in Matthew 11 25, Clever, intelligent people cannot understand it. If you are clever and intelligent, that is a handicap. It's like being lame.

You know, they have these Paralympics, Olympics for paralyzed people. I'm not saying you cannot run, but recognize that your intelligence is a handicap. Then who will understand it? Jesus said, babes will understand.

What does a baby have, which clever, intelligent people don't have? Is there any book in the world, any book in the world, which you can say, only babies can understand this book. Clever, intelligent people cannot understand this book. Show me a book like that.

It's only the Bible. You know why? Babies have got humility, which clever, intelligent people don't have. Rich people don't have.

There's a pride that comes with intelligence and cleverness. I'm clever. I'm intelligent.

I'm not saying I'm not. And I'm handicapped. But I'm going to run the race with the handicap, because I want to be like a babe.

Babes have got two things, which clever, intelligent people don't have. One is humility. So that's what Jesus was teaching in Matthew 11, 25.

To study the Bible, what you need is not intelligence up here, but humility. The humble man will understand the Bible better than the clever man. Always.

If I want an interpretation of scripture, I'll go to the humble man, not the clever man. If he's humble and clever, fine. But if he's only clever, no hope.

The second thing that babies have is a helpless dependence on others. See, a baby cannot do anything, cannot even feed itself, dependent on its parents. And that's the second attitude I must have when I come to the scriptures.

Lord, I'm a helpless baby dependent on you. You have these two qualities, humility and a helpless dependence. You will understand the Bible better than Bible scholars and scholars and preachers and

everybody else.

But if you don't have these two and just use... I find people who go to Bible college, that's full of knowledge up there. They don't have revelation. Because revelation comes to babies.

Those who are humble. I've had many people say to me when I preach to them, Oh, brother Zach, I read this so many times. I never saw it what you explained it to me.

Now it is so clear to me. I said, brother, just be humble. You'll see it yourself.

You'll see many more things in scripture. So that's the thing that we have sought to promote in our church, humility. It says about Jesus in Philippians in chapter 2. Let me show you that before coming here.

Philippians 2, three steps. Have you noticed this? Philippians 2, 6. From God, he became man, Jesus Christ. From God, he became man.

First step of humility. Second, verse 7. From man, he became a slave. That is lower than others.

And third, from slave, verse 8. He became like a criminal. Only criminals were crucified. He became a man.

He became a slave. And he became like a criminal in the eyes of people. It was humility, humility, humility.

That's why I always tell people this. The three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility. And that's what he was stressed in our church.

The greatest brothers and sisters in our church are those who are most humble. Who don't think much about themselves. But who value others.

They are the most spiritual and the most blessed. And people who don't boast about their abilities. We don't promote great singers and great preachers.

We want humble people. Who don't get offended. Who are not seeking position or honor.

We have three brothers, at least I think, sitting in this church. Who were once elders in this church. And when they ceased to be elders, did they get offended and go away? Show me a church anywhere where a pastor was removed from pastorate and he's still sitting there as an ordinary brother.

I'd like to see one. Let me know if there's anyone you find like that. Where even one pastor was removed from being a pastor and he still sits there as an ordinary brother.

You will not find it. Because they love that position so much. And this is not the only place.

You come to India, I'll show you other brothers who were elders. Because we have taught our elders are ordinary brothers. They don't seek position.

I'll give you an example from my own life. I have four sons. In our home, I always sat at the head of the table when my children were there.

They sat around. Today all my children are married. I go to their homes.

I never sit at the head of the table. Because I'm not the head of that home. Even though I'm their father.

Even if they ask me to sit there, I don't sit there. I sit on the side. In my home, at mealtime, I always prayed.

Or I asked somebody to pray. I was the head. Today I go to my children's homes.

They decide who's going to pray at the meal. If they ask me to pray, I pray. Sometimes they may ask their wife or children to pray.

I'm not offended. Not at all. I say, what are these things? I'm an ordinary brother all my life.

That's why I refuse to take a title from anything. Once some colleague in America sent me a letter saying, Brother Zak, you have served the Lord so long and we've been so blessed. So, one of the big Christian colleges in America, we'd like to give you an honorary doctorate.

Imagine being called Dr. Zak Poonen. Wow. I threw it in the trash.

I said, no, I'm not interested. Till the end of my life, I'll be Brother Zak. That's all.

You know these young children who call me Uncle Zak, Uncle Zak. I say, I'll allow you to call me Uncle Zak up to the age of 15. After that, you call me Brother Zak, okay? I don't want to be your uncle for eternity.

I want to be your brother. Yeah, humility, humility, humility. That's what we have taught.

And I thank God that we have wonderful brothers like that who are examples. People who come and clean the toilets in our church building early in the morning before anybody knows about it. And quietly clean and go back to their homes.

And this Sunday morning, people come, the toilet is clean. Nobody knows who did it. I love that.

I said, Lord, this is the type of people we want to build. We are building people for eternity. We are building Christians.

You know, so many churches, I've asked different churches. I say, what is the distinctive thing in your church? Some people say water baptism. Some people say we speak in tongues.

Unless we speak in tongues, we don't believe. And some people say baptism in the Holy Spirit. And so many different things.

I'll tell you what we want to say about our church. That we love one another. That's the main thing.

Not that we believe in tongues or we believe in healing or we believe in water baptism. We love one another. With the love of God in our hearts.

We care for one another. We'll help one another. But we're not a club.

In clubs also they help one another. But we love Jesus first. A church that loves Jesus and loves one another.

That's what we wanted to be. So 2 Corinthians 5, I told you, I'll show you the other verse. We already looked at this verse.

Christ died that I might never live for myself. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 15. He died that we should never live for ourselves.

Please remember this verse. The other side of the coin. Christ died for our sins.

The other side is Christ died that I might never live for myself. And if you're living for yourself, you're frustrating the purpose of Christ's death. I'll tell you, you think that if you live for the Lord, you'll suffer.

My father was a very God-fearing man. He was born again before I was born. So he brought us up in a good way, sent us to a good Sunday school from childhood.

But he never understood. He was very happy when he sent me to join the Navy and said, I want you to go to the top of the Navy. But then one day when I decided to leave my job, I told him, Dad, I'm not going to go to the top of the Navy.

I'm going to serve the Lord. He was happy. He said, Oh, if you're serving the Lord, that's great.

He was very happy when I left my job and I did not join any organization. I was going to serve the Lord. He saw me struggling with poverty.

He was happy. But then we started building the church. I gave up all my international ministry and started meeting with four or five people in Bangalore just to build local church.

I said, and my dad said to me, you've got such a tremendous gift of preaching. You can be like Billy Graham, go around the world. Why are you sitting here with four, six people and building the church? I said, Dad, I'm not called to be like Billy Graham.

I'm called to build a church. He couldn't understand it. You know, not everybody has light on the church, even though he's a very God-fearing man.

And he died when my oldest son was about 12 years old. And my youngest was maybe three or so. And he told me, he said, how are you going to educate these children when they go to college? You sit here, you don't take any money from anyone.

You know, it's very expensive to educate children in college nowadays. Must think about all these things. I said, Dad, if I don't seek the kingdom of God first now, even this hundred rupees I'm paying for school fees, I will not be able to pay.

But if I seek God's kingdom first and his righteousness and live for that, you think my father in heaven will make my children suffer? That he will not allow them to be educated? Do you believe there is a father up in heaven? Many people don't believe that they have a heavenly father. Theoretically, they believe that. But they don't believe that he loves them more than earthly fathers.

You know, once Jesus said, if you being evil, Matthew chapter 7, know how to give good things to your children. How many of you fathers are interested in feeding your children? How much you sacrifice? What are you guys making so much money in Dubai and Sharjah for? It's not for yourself. I know it's not for yourself.

It's for your children. You spend lakhs educating them. You want to build a house for them and so that they can live in Kerala.

And so many things you do. And you think you're a better father than God? You got to be crazy. You're an unbeliever.

I have a father in heaven. Who's a million times better than any of you fathers who care for your children. I told my dad, I believe if I seek the kingdom of God first, God will take care of my children.

He never lived to see it. He died before they went to college. My oldest son was in seventh standard when my father died and went to heaven.

But many years later, six, seven years later, when my first son finished school, he got a scholarship to study in college. I didn't organize that. I didn't give anybody any bribe or any such thing.

I don't believe in bribes. And like that, each one of my sons, I'm not saying education is the main thing. I'd have been very happy if they went as missionaries to North India and God is my witness.

I would have been equally happy. But you can't go as a missionary unless God calls you. I came out to serve the Lord because God called me.

So I would have been quite happy if my children, God called them. Oh, that would be the greatest honor. But what I say is God cares for us and I find so many believers don't believe that.

God cares for you. If you live for him and not for yourself, you'll be amazed to see how God cares for your children. I can say that today.

My oldest son is now 47 years old and my youngest one is about 39. Or 38 or 39 and God is taking care of them. Not only education, he's given them good wives and so many things.

It's not because I was carefully scheming and planning. It's because I decided one thing. Christ died for my sins.

I'll confess my sin to him. Secondly, Christ died that I might never live for myself or for my children. I will live for God.

And let me be a living testimony at the end of my life. That if you live for God, he'll take care of your family. I want you to be a testimony like that.

That at the end of your life, people will say this man lived for God. God took care of his family. What a fantastic testimony that is.

I'm not asking you to go into full-time work like I am. That is, I had a calling. But whatever you do, keep your secular job, but don't live for your job.

Don't live for a Dubai visa. Live for God and he'll give you the best in everything. You'll never be disappointed.

If he takes away something like Ishmael, it is what is bad for you. And you give up on Isaac, if it's good for you, he'll give it back to you. You know, when Brother Bakht Singh, who was the godliest man I met in India, proposed my wife to me as for marriage.

Because she was a medical doctor and I was a servant of the Lord with no bank account, no salary, no income. What do you think her father said? Naturally, what I would say as a father, I will never let you

marry a man who has no income and no salary. And how is he going to take care of you? That's what her father said.

And I agree with that. So I said, okay, it is God's will. God will work it out.

Her father was a believer. So I said, God can speak to him. And in three months, God spoke to him without meeting me.

And he told her, yeah, you can marry him. Who can do that? Tell me. I didn't go and convince him.

Don't worry, I'll take care of your daughter. And no, no, no, no. I didn't even meet him.

I never wrote a letter to him. I wrote a letter to God. I have a father in heaven.

It's amazing what God will do for you. I can tell you testimony after testimony after testimony. Of what God will do for you.

We must prove him. When you get into a tough situation, prove him. And you will see that he never lets you down.

When Jesus told Peter, come out of that boat and walk on the water. You think he would sink? You think Jesus will tell him to do something that will make him sink and drown? Impossible. My dear brothers and sisters.

Be a living testimony in your life. That there's a God in heaven who can be trusted. Who can be obeyed.

And that is the greatest inheritance you can give to your children. That's what I give to my children. A faith in a living God.

I tell them the stories. I tell my children the stories of what God did for me. They know it.

And that's what I give to my children. Give them faith. Do you know that is better than giving them a million dirhams? You think a million dirhams can solve all the problems in life? You're crazy.

Even a billion dirhams will not solve every problem. But faith in God. If you can give to your children.

Faith in a loving father in heaven. That is the greatest inheritance. You can give to your children.

Not even education. So live for him. Okay.

Now we go to the second verse. I want to show you. 2nd Corinthians 5. Verse 9 and 10.

In verse 10. It says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There's no doubt about it.

Everybody's sitting here. You better face up to the fact. That one day you will stand at the judgment seat of Christ.

Nobody is going to escape. Children. It's going to happen to you too.

You are going to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. When he comes and me. And what's going to happen there? Everyone.

Will be rewarded. You know, there's rewards in heaven. How will you be rewarded? Not according to the number of meetings you attended.

No. Not according to the amount of money you put in the offering box. No.

According to the deeds you did in your body. Whether good. Or bad.

The bad people get a reward, which is a punishment. And the good people get a reward, which is something good. But.

We say, how does God? Remember all the millions of things you have done. And all the billions of people that are in the world from the time of Adam. I mean, God's got all that in his mind.

Every single thing that every man did and thought and all that. No. You know where it is? It's in your memory.

When God raises up a man from the dead. In the final day, he raised people up from the dead. He'll come back in his body.

His memory will be there. And memory is like a videotape. The day you were born.

Your memory videotape started running. Recording everything you said. Everything you did.

Every thought you had. Every good or bad attitude you had towards people. It's all on that tape.

And it's running today. It's been running from the day you were born. Recording everything.

Because our ability to recover that information is not so good. We think it's not there. It is there.

Your ability to recover that memory is bad. Look, for example, as I grow older. I'm 76 now.

I can't remember so well. Like I could when I was 30. But that doesn't mean my memory is... Recording is still there.

Only I can't access that memory so easily. The recording head has got older. So it can't sort of access the information.

But the information is there in the hard disk. Completely. The only thing as we grow older, accessing is a little difficult.

But one day when Christ comes back. What does he have to do? This videotape of our memory. The Lord has just got to press a rewind button.

Goes back to zero. And starts playing your life. In the day of judgment.

You stand before the Lord. He'll press the rewind button of your memory. And from the time you were born.

It'll be seen on the screen. For all the world to see. All that you did.

All the things that you did in secret. Which your mommy and daddy never knew about. Or which your husband and wife never knew about.

All the things you did in secret. All the little pictures you saw on your computer. Good or bad.

It's all going to be there for the whole world to see. You better think about it now. And everything you said to people.

All the unrighteous financial dealings. It's all going to come on the screen. I'm not telling you stories.

It's not only written here. You turn to Revelation chapter 20. And I'll show you what it says there.

Revelation chapter 20. Verse 13. 12 first.

Revelation 20, 12. I saw the dead, the great, the small. Standing before the throne.

And the books were opened. The books means the scrolls in our head. Memory books.

And the book of life. And the dead were judged from the things which were written in their own books. That means in the... You know, in those days, in John, when he wrote Revelation, books were not like this.

This type of bound books is all after printing was discovered in 1400s. If you've seen these old pictures. The Bible was written on a parchment.

It's like a scroll. The old books were scrolls. If you wanted to go to the next stage, you turn the scroll and it'll move.

The whole thing was one scroll rolled up in two bars. That's how books were in those days. And the closest to that that we have today is a videotape.

Where one round round here and you wind it back. The old books were like that. So the real meaning of this verse is the scrolls were opened.

And rewound to the beginning. The tape was rewound to the beginning. To the beginning.

And they were judged exactly according to what is recorded on the tape. Very important to know that. Second Corinthians 5 and 10.

We will be rewarded according to. So think of that. You know, sometimes I use my imagination.

It's very good to use our imagination in our olden days. We used our imagination for filthy things. Why not use your imagination for something good now? So I sometimes shut my eyes and use my imagination and imagine the judgment seat of Christ has come.

Christ has returned. And I'm standing before him. My turn has come.

Zak Poonen. I stand before him. Okay, God presses the rewind button.

And the whole world is going to see my life from the time I was born. My record is not perfect. No human beings record is perfect.

We have all done so many wrong things. Some worse than others. Thoughts, everything.

Even the thoughts are going to be recorded. And everybody sees everything that went through my life. And I imagine, how am I going to feel? You feel like running away from there? Supposing it happened right

now.

You'd want to run away from this all. You think about it now. Is that a solution for all the bad things we did? Yes.

If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

To wipe out that part of the tape. Erase that section of the hard disk. Erase that part of the tape by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And it's blotted out. So when the tape is played. That bad thing that you did.

You know what date and time you did it. So and so date. And you know the tape is coming to that date.

Say hey. And you see it's blank. Praise God.

That terrible thing I did on that date is not there. Isn't it good? The blood of Jesus Christ has blotted it out. And then you think of the next date coming up when you did something else.

And it's blank. Because you confessed it. The blood of Jesus has cleansed it.

Make sure you confess your sins now. So that thing is blotted out. So some people say this is great.

And I can continue to sin even now and. Confess and the blood of Jesus will blot it out right. But in the final day when people see so many blank spots on your tape.

They'll be wondering what is this guy doing. Blank spot after blank spot after blank spot. That's going to be embarrassing too.

Even if the details are not mentioned. Because they'll know that something that was not good. In the early part of our life.

There may be a lot of blank spots. But as we get grow closer to the Lord. There should be less and less of these blank spots.

I want to come to a life where. There's zero blank spots Lord. Hardly anything to be erased.

Maybe an occasional thought or accidentally an occasional rude word. So rare. Then you know you're growing in the Lord.

That conscious sin is becoming less and less and less and less and less. Wonderful. But that day is coming.

So how shall we live when we know that such and such a day is coming. Okay, turn back to 2nd Corinthians 5. Verse 9. We therefore because this day is coming. Therefore.

We have as our ambition. Ambition is a great word. Many of you.

When you were young you had an ambition. To study and get a job to particular line. You wanted to be an engineer or an accountant or a teacher or a nurse.

Something you had an ambition. Good. You had an ambition to come.

To the UAE. And it was fulfilled good. What a lot of money you are willing to spend to fulfill that ambition.

Oh, here's another ambition, which is the greatest ambition of all. Whether at home or absent means whether I'm in heaven. Or absent from heaven on this earth.

It makes no difference at home or absent means my home is in heaven whether I'm in heaven or on earth absent from heaven. My ambition is the same. What is that to be pleasing? To my God.

That means everything in life. I have an ambition. Like worldly people have ambitions.

I have an ambition. I'll tell you honestly. I have had this ambition for many years.

To be pleasing to God. I haven't always succeeded. Because I'm learning.

You know, you learn with the computer and you make mistakes. You learn to ride a cycle and you fall down. But over a period you learn.

Then you learn like that. The Christian life also is a learning process. Then you learn and you make less and less mistakes.

So my ambition is to please him and that should be your ambition. If you want to be ready for the judgment seat of Christ. Make this your ambition that you want to please him in everything.

You want to please him. You want to please God. And I'll tell you something.

If you want to please God, let me give you one solution for that. One condition rather. Galatians chapter 1. In Galatians chapter 1 and verse 10.

Please turn with me to Galatians chapter 1 verse 10. Galatians 1 10 says. The last part.

If I try to please men. I cannot be a servant of Christ. If you try to please one human being.

You will not be able to please God. Remember that. Eve sinned.

Because she wanted. Her mouth was watering for that fruit. And the devil said to this through the serpent.

You will be like God. That's what he himself was wanted to be. Lucifer wanted to be God and he became the devil.

Now he tempted Eve. You eat this. You'll be like God.

You read Genesis 3. And he said, wow, I'll be like God. Okay, I want to eat it. But the Bible says in 1 Timothy 2 Eve was deceived.

That she could be like God. She didn't become like God. She became like the devil.

Adam it says in 1 Timothy 2 was not deceived. How did Adam sin? So I tell you. Now picture this in your mind.

Eve comes and offers the fruit to Adam. Says darling, you got to eat this. This is really fantastic.

And I'm imagining a conversation. And he says listen Eve. Do you remember God told us not to eat this? Oh forget it Adam.

This is good. No, I don't want to eat it. If you don't eat it, I'm not going to be happy with you.

Okay, you know how sometimes wives can speak. And then he said Adam says okay for the sake of peace in the home. I will do it.

Give it to me. Stupid fellow. To please his wife for the sake of peace in the home.

He displeased God. Now you all laugh at that. And all of you who laughed, you husbands who laughed.

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever done that? To please your wife and displease God for the sake of peace at home? Never do it. That peace is not a lasting peace.

It disappears like that. And you'll never build a godly home if you're seeking to please your wife or your husband. See I'm going to please God.

You remember how Job's wife came and told him. Look at all this suffering. This God you're serving.

Our ten children are killed. All our business is gone ruined. And now on top of that you got sick.

You got leprosy. What type of God is this? Curse God and commit suicide. Any of you who think you got a bad wife, be thankful your wife is not like Job's wife.

She was much worse. Job said, you foolish woman. You're talking like a foolish woman.

God can do anything. I accept it. He does good.

I bow down and accept him. You know how because he took that stand, God honored him and his wife. I believe his wife changed.

How do I know that? Because at the end of the book of Job, she again had ten children. Her first ten children died. And the same woman in her old age had ten more children.

You see Job's children are already grown up and set up in their own homes. Job's wife must have been a pretty old woman. Maybe a hundred years old.

I don't know. I think Job was about 130 when all that happened to him. God blessed her with children, ten children.

You honor God, God will honor you. Don't seek to please your wife. Don't seek to please your husband.

Don't seek to please any man. Don't seek to please your children. Never, never help your children out by doing something unrighteous.

Sometimes you get an opportunity to teach your children that. I remember when my children were studying for ICSC exam, 10th standard in Bangalore, many years ago. The difficult subject for my children was always Hindi.

Because we don't speak it at all. They'd get good marks in everything else, but Hindi will bring that average down. So they study, study, study.

They still can't get good marks in Hindi. They just about pass. So during that time, the rumor went round.

The Hindi paper is available if you pay a certain amount of money. I said, good opportunity to teach my children something. So I called my son who was doing, and I called all my children and said, listen, I want to tell you something.

If somebody gives me that Hindi paper free, I will not show it to you. Children, I will not show it. Because that's not the way I want you to pass.

And because I don't show it to you, you fail. I will say, praise the Lord. I will accept that.

Because to me, my aim in life is not to make you pass examinations here, but to pass an examination before God one day. And if I don't teach you those right values now, you will grow up to be a crook. You will not follow Jesus, and you will fail in the final examination at the judgment seat of Christ.

It's not the final examination. What you call ICSE exam is only a monthly exam. Final examination is coming when Christ comes back.

Never seek to please your children. Never seek to please your wife. Please God.

And you will bless your wife, you will bless your children. I've never sought to please people in my church. I'll tell you that.

I have spoken strong words to my closest fellow elders. Because I love them. Supposing I'm a doctor, a cancer specialist, and one of my elders comes to me, Brother Zak, can you check up? And I take a scan and I find he's got serious cancer.

What will I do? Oh, he's my friend. I don't want to disturb him. Will I say, okay, it's okay, you're perfectly all right.

What type of deceiver am I? If I'm faithful to him, I'll tell him, you've got cancer, brother. It's exactly what I do as an elder brother to my fellow elders. I speak the truth.

I learned from Jesus, who turned around to Peter and said, get behind me, Satan. You're interested in your own interests, not in God's interests. I haven't spoken such strong language to any of my elders.

I'll tell you why, because I don't love them so much as Jesus loved them. Only one who loves strongly can speak like that. Get behind me, Satan.

My love for my fellow elders is less. I speak strong words, but not as strong words as Jesus. But I will not seek to please man.

Because the moment I seek to please man, it says in Galatians 1, I cannot be the servant of Christ. So I give you one advice from 2 Corinthians 5. We are going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ one day. So, make sure that you never seek to please any human being.

Don't please yourself. That's what we read first. Basically, these two verses which we saw in 2 Corinthians that we looked at today are 1. Don't seek to please yourself.

2. Don't seek to please others. 3. Please God. 4. Live for him, not for yourself.

5. Seek to please him, and not to please others. This is very, very, very important. See, I'm preparing you for the final examination.

This is a coaching class. I have often said in Bangalore, we are like these, you know, people now do have coaching classes for medical college, coaching classes for IIT. Sometimes people spend a whole year in Chitrakoot or somewhere to be coached for medical college.

I see you come to our church, I'll coach you for the final examination. And if you take your studies seriously, I can give you a written guarantee that you'll get 100% in your final examination. You will pass.

A guarantee, if you take it seriously. If you don't take it seriously and you play the fool and come here like some people go to coaching classes and they waste their father's money and don't take it seriously, the final examination comes, they don't get selected. But if you're serious, whatever your troubles may be on earth, when you stand before the Lord in the final day, you'll pass.

I remember one new brother came to our church in Bangalore and he had come from some other church where he had heard all soft messages. The only hard message he ever heard was, if you don't tithe, God will curse you. So that's the only hard message he ever heard.

So he paid up regularly. And he came to our church and he never heard anything about money. But he heard about sin.

And it was so strong and hard that it disturbed him. And he went to another brother and says, Brother Zak preaches such hard messages. So I heard about it and I called him.

And I said, Brother, I put my arm around him and I said, Hey, today you may not realize why I speak so strong. But I'll tell you one thing. When you stand at the judgment seat of Christ, I guarantee you will look at me and thank me.

That's enough. I don't want your thanks today. In that day, I know you will thank me.

Because I told you things that would help you for the final examination, which all these other preachers and pastors did not tell you. So I'm not worried if you think I'm very hard. It's fine.

I'm willing to take that reproach. Because I love you. It's like, you know, a mother doesn't feed the children chocolates and ice cream the whole day.

Your child gets sick. You feed your child vegetables and even if they don't feel like eating, you force them to eat it. Because you know it's good for them.

If they have to take an injection, no child wants to go for an injection. Have you ever seen a child who loves to go for an injection? No, but you still take your child for injection and vaccination. And no matter how much they scream, you hold them down and let the doctor poke them.

Why? Because you love them. That's exactly how I seek to love my fellow believers. They need something which is good for them.

They don't understand. Very often they are like babies. They don't understand what's good for them.

Never, never seek to please man. Because I believe you'll ruin your children if you seek to please them. Don't give them everything they want.

Give them what they need. Why is it that the children of rich people are the most spoiled children in the world? Why? All over the world, the children of rich people are the most spoiled children in the world. I'll tell you why.

Because their father gives them everything they want. Because they have the money. And why is it that children of poor parents and all struggle and come up and accomplish something? Even in the world.

We had a president in India called Abul Kalam. And he was a top scientist in space research and finally became president of India. I've heard that when he was a little child, he was so poor that they didn't have electricity in their home.

He used to sit outside under the lamppost and study. This is the man who became India's top scientist and president of India. The children who are born with struggle, even in the world they know they grow up accomplishing something.

So, children, you give them everything they want, they're not going to grow up to be tough. I never gave my children everything they want. What they need, we give them.

Seek always to please God. How can I do things to make my child realize I want what is best for him. That is, I want to please God.

Encourage him to study the scriptures. If your children go away from you studying in a college, write to them regularly. I remember when my children were in college, from the age of 18, all my children went to college.

I would write to them every week. Every week. I would write to them, exhort them.

We didn't have any cell phones in all those days. And even phone calls were very expensive in the 1980s and 1990s. But I would write to them, write to them, write to them.

Do you do that? And the only thing I would write to them is to please God. If you want to please God, you really want your children also to please God. What do you train your children to do? Just to get a good education and a good job.

Tell me a few fathers. Tell me you fathers who have got children away from you today. How many of you write to them and exhort them regularly to follow Jesus? You say, yeah, I wrote six months ago.

That's not enough. You've got to write to them regularly. You've got cell phones, you've got so many facilities.

Don't you use them to exhort them, challenge them to live a life pleasing to God? So many children drift and fall away because the parents are not seeking to encourage them to please the Lord. This is what we emphasize in our churches. We believe the church, this is what I've taught for many years, the church is like a three-story building.

Three-story building. All CFC churches, we try to build as a, spiritually speaking, three-story building. The foundation is John 17, verse 23.

John 17, verse 23. God loves me as much as he loved Jesus. If you're not on that foundation, you can never build anything.

If you're always uncertain, does God love me, is he angry with me? No. That the world may know that you love them. Jesus was praying, Father, the world must know you love them as you love me.

That's the most wonderful verse in the Bible. That God loves me as he loved Jesus. I've proclaimed this around the world for 40 years now.

Teach this to your children and to everyone in your church. God loves you as he loved Jesus. He cares for you as he cared for Jesus.

When I'm sick, when I'm in trouble, I say to myself, God loves me as he loved Jesus. He cares for me as he cared for Jesus. When Herod's soldiers wanted to come to kill the baby Jesus, God cared for Jesus.

Before the soldiers could come, God took him away. The soldiers came, they could not find him. Do you know the enemies of the gospel have sent police to catch me in my house? God took me away before they came.

The previous night, the next morning when they came, I was not there. The enemies of the gospel have not succeeded. They will never succeed.

I'm not saying they won't kill me. They killed Jesus, they killed Paul, they killed Peter, maybe one day they'll kill me. I'm happy to go.

I'd rather die as a martyr than die of overeating or something like that. Oh, I say, if you give me the honor of dying as a martyr, boy, that's the ultimate final prize you can get. How many of you want to die a peaceful death? I don't want.

I don't want to die as a martyr, I tell you. I don't want a lot of people on a grand funeral. So many people must come for their funeral.

I don't want anybody to come to my funeral. I say, how many people came for Jesus' funeral? He was the greatest man that walked on the earth. Nobody came for his funeral.

He was quietly buried somewhere. All the things people seek after. Live for Jesus, 100%.

That's how God wants us to live. The foundation is God's perfect love for me. He cares for me as he cared for Jesus.

You'll never shake. Then, the first story is life with a clear conscience. A clear conscience before God and men.

Acts 24, verse 16. Acts 24, verse 16. I live with a perfectly clear conscience before God and before men.

I want to live with a clear conscience all my life. Not only before God, every sin confessed, but also that if I've hurt somebody anywhere in the world, I've asked forgiveness. My conscience is clear.

That's to walk with Jesus. That's my first floor, first story on this foundation. Then, second story on top of that is my family life.

To love my wife as Christ loved the church. I haven't come there yet, but I'm trying. Never to stop till my love for my wife is like the love of Christ for his church.

Self-denying, sacrificial, never complaining, never grumbling, always thankful for whatever my wife does for me. And to bring up my children like the Bible says. Bring up your fathers, bring up your children.

In the discipline and instruction of the Lord. That's the second story. Not most of my children, all my children.

If I had 24 children, I wouldn't be able to bring all of them. I wouldn't be happy with 90% following the Lord. No, 100%.

There's a song we sing in English called Will the circle be unbroken? By and by, by and by. The picture is of family today holding hands, father, mother, and all the children holding hands together in a big circle. In heaven, will there be a gap in that circle? One person missing? Because you trained that child to get a good education, but not to follow Jesus.

And he gets his degree and his PhD. And when you get to heaven, there's a hole in that circle. Because the most important things were not most important for you, for your child.

People have done that. They've lost their children for eternity. Oh, children have got a lot of money, they've got good jobs, big house and all that, but there's a gap in the circle in eternity.

You're a fool. Absolutely foolish. I'm not against your child getting good education, good house, everything.

Make sure they follow Jesus. First things first. Second things third.

So building your home, we have stressed and stressed that in the church. A pure home life. Godly home.

And then on top of that is our ministry, the church. Family is more important than ministry. Ministry is not more important than family.

I've traveled a lot when my children were small, because I had to travel to the villages, mostly to the villages in Tamil Nadu, encouraging people, having conferences, planning churches. But I always took time to be with my children. If they were taking part in a school function, I would be there.

If they had to study for their exam, I would sit at home and help them. Because I never wanted my children to grow up and say, Daddy was so busy serving God, he had no time for us. Let it never be said that about any of you.

Daddy was so busy earning money, that he had no time for us. I hope no child will ever say that about you. I say to you fathers, spend time with your children.

You know that most homosexual men, almost all of them, they became homosexual because they did not have good fathers who spent time with them. They did not have fathers who embraced them, loved them, cared for them. They had fathers who were fierce and just shouted at them and all that.

There are people who have done research on this, who have told me this, who have said this. There are papers written on it, that nobody is born homosexual. Nobody.

The biggest hospitals in America have scientifically proved it. Nobody is born homosexual. And there are people who have done research with homosexuals because they had bad fathers.

I hope none of you will be a bad father. Many of you sometimes have to leave your children in India and come to work here. Then take, you got a cell phone, speak to them regularly.

Speak to them every day. It's worth spending that money. Speak to them over the computer.

Skype is free. Keep in touch with your children. Encourage them.

Talk to them about the things that they have problems with. When they are 14 years old, these young boys have problems with sex. They want to know about sex.

Who should tell them? Are you father going to tell them? Or they should pick up that information from the gutter. You and I picked it up from the gutter. Our fathers never told us about sex.

We picked up that information from the gutter. You want your children to pick it up from the gutter? No, not me. When they became 13-14 years old, I wanted to introduce them in a godly way to these things.

Take that responsibility. Be a good father. Family is more important than ministry.

And then, ministry is the top thing. Do something for the Lord. Say, Lord, here are my services.

I am here, available for you. I am not going to neglect my life. I am not going to neglect my family.

But I will build your church. That is how we have built CFC churches through the years. And I praise God that as I get older, God is raising up younger people who are 50 years old, 40 years old, who are being gripped by the same truth, so that the work of God and the word of God will go forth from generation to generation.

We will continue in the evening. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, please help us to live according to the light of your word.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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