

(The Missing Messages in Today's Christianity) Money, Music and Psychology

by Zac Poonen

The missing message in today's Christianity is the emphasis on the Holy Spirit and living holy lives, rather than just focusing on noise and entertainment.

Duration: 57:45

Scripture: Amos 8:12-13, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of the law in the nation of Israel under the old covenant. He emphasizes that the law set Israel apart from other nations and removing it would make them like everyone else. However, the Pharisees misunderstood and twisted the law, accusing Jesus of not keeping it. The speaker also highlights the need for Christians to learn from the mistakes of Israel and avoid twisting God's word. He warns against the dangers of seeking money and fame in the church and encourages believers to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome temptation and solve their problems.

Transcript

We continue our study on the missing messages in today's Christianity. The great thing under the old covenant was the law. If you remove the law from the nation of Israel, listen, the nation of Israel would become like all the other nations of the earth.

Just one thing made them different. The Ten Commandments and the laws of God, which you read in Leviticus and Numbers, which God gave them. If you remove that, their life became just like the lives of others.

And that's why the law was a very big thing in Israel. But you know what happened? The Pharisees misunderstood the law. They twisted it to mean something God never intended.

So that when Jesus came, they accused Jesus of not keeping the law. That's amazing, how you can take something which God gave and twist it to mean something completely different. Why has God given us three quarters of the Bible as the Old Testament? So that we can learn from the mistakes of Israel.

Because the same thing happens in the Church. If you learn from those mistakes, you don't repeat them. So if law was the great word under the old covenant, in the new covenant the great word is the Holy Spirit.

Law was replaced by the Spirit. Moses went up to the mountain and brought the law down. Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit.

And just like the law was twisted to mean something that it was not supposed to mean, Christianity has twisted the doctrine of the Holy Spirit so that today it's not what God originally intended it to be. So many deceptions there are in this matter of what the Holy Spirit is supposed to be. God wants us to live a life just like He wanted Israel to live totally under the law.

Every day of their life was governed by the law of God. If they didn't keep the Sabbath, it was so severe a sin that God punished them. In fact, God told them that every 7 years you must leave the land without plowing it.

Give the land also a Sabbath once in 7 years. And in the 6th year God said, I'll give you 3 times what you need so that you'll have enough for the 6th year and 7th year and 8th year as well. Even though you can plow in the 8th year, you'll have plenty.

But the children of Israel did not obey that. They were greedy. They got 3 times in the 6th year and then they plowed again in the 7th year and they did not give the land a Sabbath.

And the result was, for 490 years they did not give the land a Sabbath rest. So God said, how many years were you supposed to give the land a Sabbath rest in 490 years? 70 years. So I'm going to send a whole lot of you to Babylon for 70 years and nobody will plow this land.

God keeps His accounts very exactly. And He may wait a long time, but He'll finally settle accounts with everybody, whether it's Israel or you and me. There is no partiality with God.

Because God had done nothing for 490 years, the Israelites thought they'd got away with it. But oh no, you don't get away with anything when you deal with God. You reap what you sow.

And there are many believers who think because something they did wrong was 20 years ago and it's not set right, God has forgotten all about it. Oh no, He hasn't. If you cheated somebody 40 years ago and you never set it right, one day it'll catch up with you.

God is very exact. I don't want anything to catch up with me at the judgment seat of Christ. I want to be absolutely clear, that's why Paul said, I keep my conscience clear before God and before men.

No human being on earth should be able to stand up in the final day and say, Lord, this man cheated me. This man owes me money and he never returned it. How are you going to take him to heaven? God would be embarrassed if that is true.

And we should not have anything like that. God is very exact. The whole of Israel's life was governed by the law.

So how should our life be governed today? By the Holy Spirit. Every day of our life, every movement of ours must be by the Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks about walking in the Spirit.

Walking is something we do as soon as we get up in the morning. We walk out of our beds and we walk all the time till we get back into bed at night. And every bit of our walk must be in the Spirit.

Even if it's not consciously. We don't have to be conscious of it all the time. It's like breathing.

We are breathing the whole day, even when we are asleep, but we are not always conscious that we are breathing. And even if we are not conscious, we must be walking in the Spirit means our whole life must be lived in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, governed by the Holy Spirit every day. The missing message in Christendom is that that is not emphasized.

Very often the ministry of the Holy Spirit is limited to what they call praise and worship on Sunday morning, music, some speaking in tongues, and some supernatural magic, and things like that. They call that everything in the Holy Spirit. No.

The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is to make us holy. I mean the Holy Spirit has got many other abilities. He is wise, He is compassionate, He is loving, He is humble, and God could have called Him any one of those names.

From all eternity His name could have been humble spirit, loving spirit, compassionate spirit, merciful spirit, gift-giving spirit. All of that would have been correct. But out of all the various names that could have been given to the Holy Spirit, way back in eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit chose Holy Spirit.

And that is significant. And that word holy is missing from Holy Spirit in today's Christianity. I remember once one Pentecostal man came to our Sunday service in CFC and said to me, You don't have the Holy Spirit here.

I said, How do you know that? Have you come and lived in our home and seen whether we live holy lives? Do you know anything about how we deal with money? Do you know whether we are living holy lives? He said, No, there is not enough noise here. Aha, I said, that is the difference. Your Trinity is Father, Son, and noisy spirit.

Our Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is the big difference between you and me. You are looking for noise.

We are looking for holiness. The Spirit is holy. Noise anybody can make.

A drunken man can make noise. You don't have to have the Holy Spirit to make noise. The prophets of Baal made a lot of noise.

It was not Holy Spirit. So, it is very important for us to know how the Holy Spirit has been replaced very cleverly by the devil in today's Christendom with an emphasis being placed on so many other things which have become prominent. What was to be prominent in Israel? The law.

Every day, what was to be prominent was the law. They replaced it with Baal and many other gods, Molech, and things like that. Today, every day of our life, we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Every day, if you are a mother, you must be a spirit-filled mother to bring up your child. If you are a preacher, you must be a spirit-filled preacher. If you are a student, you must be a spirit-filled student.

The Holy Spirit must govern every area of your life. And particularly in the ministry. What is the number one thing that is emphasized today in Christendom? It's not Holy Spirit.

It's money. You go to a church, you hear about money. You turn on the television, you hear about money.

Money has replaced the Holy Spirit in today's Christendom. Money has tremendous power. You know that.

People with money wield great influence, whether they are businessmen, politicians, crooks, these underworld gangsters. It's with money that they blow up. Terrorists have money.

They have millions and millions of rupees. And preachers also nowadays have millions and millions of rupees earned unrighteously. Earned in a way that Jesus would never have earned it.

Earned in a way that Paul would never have earned it. In some other way. The power of money has replaced the power of the Holy Spirit.

And it's very important that in our churches we see that clearly. Because if we don't see it clearly, we will not be able to maintain the witness that we have maintained for so many years in our churches, in this area. It's not a light matter.

I have been enough in Christendom today to see that particularly in Christian work, the power of money has replaced the power of the Holy Spirit. And people get the impression that God's work cannot go on because we don't have enough money. That's not the reason.

God's work does not go on because we don't have enough of the power of the Holy Spirit. And instead of pleading with people to seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, they are pleading with people to give money for God's work. And usually for building some grand church building or some pastor wants to live in grand style, it's usually some of these things which the early church were not bothered about at all.

God never wanted the money of His people to be spent in grand church buildings and to make pastors live in grand lifestyles. No. Where do you see that in the Bible? But this is the slow way Christianity has drifted.

And if you don't arrest that drift, if you don't have prophets to arrest that drift, it will go completely astray. I'll tell you that. In the Bible you read about certain servants of God and I want to show you some examples.

First of all, in the Old Testament, in 1 Samuel, I want to show you the example of Samuel. Samuel was a man who came in at a time when Israel was going completely astray. If you want to know the condition of Christendom today, read the book of Judges.

The main verse in the book of Judges is found in the last verse of that book. Every man did what was right in his own eyes. There was no leader and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

And that comes earlier on in the book of Judges too. That is the condition of Christendom today. Lots of Christians, I know lots of young people in our churches, in our churches, who do what is right in their own eyes.

They have no elder brother over them to tell them what to do. They are subject to nobody. There are elders who do what is right in their own eyes.

They are subject to no one. What is the result? Your church will be exactly as described in the book of Judges. Chaos, confusion, etc.

Immorality. Many things will be there. At this pathetic state, when things were going on like this for hundreds of years, Joshua had died.

After that it was terrible. You know, great men of God have risen up in history and when they have died, Christendom has come into the state of the book of Judges and then God raised up a man, Samuel. He was a prophet from his childhood.

And when he became an old man, remember, he started being a prophet from childhood. I don't know, maybe he was 10 years old and he started prophesying. It is one of those rare cases.

But when he is an old man, he calls all of Israel together in one Samuel chapter 12. And he tells them, verse 3, Look at me. Verse 2, the middle.

Look at me. I am reading the message translation. I am old and grey.

I have led you faithfully from my youth until this very day. Look at me. Do you have any complaints against me? To bring before God and His anointed? Have I ever stolen an ox or a donkey from any of you? Have I ever taken advantage of any of you? Have I exploited any of you in all these years from my youth? Now I am an old man.

Have I ever taken a bribe or played fast and loose with the law? You know, change the law to suit my own interest? Bring your complaints against me and I'll make it right. And the people said, Oh no, never. You have never done any of that.

You have never abused us. You never lined your own pocket with our money. You never lined your pocket with our money.

This is the message missing in Christendom today. Servants of God who can stand before people and say, tell me, where did I take advantage of you? Whose money did I take? Did I line my pocket with your money? Did I build my house with your money? Did I buy my scooter or car with your money? Or with church money? Who can stand up and say that? Such people are missing. Samuel could.

Isn't a servant of the Lord permitted to receive money from people? Wasn't Samuel permitted? He would not have been the prophet he became if he had allowed money to corrupt him. You cannot serve God and money. Not in the Old Testament.

Not in the New Testament. I want to give you another example in the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a man who built the wall of Jerusalem.

A picture of a man who builds the walls that separate the church from the world. And Nehemiah was a very faithful man. Nehemiah says in Nehemiah chapter 5 and verse 15 onwards.

Again I am reading in message translation. The governors, he was the governor of the land appointed by the king. He was a spiritual authority.

Governors who had come before me had oppressed the people by taxing them 40 shekels of silver every day for food and wine. The leaders who were there before Nehemiah had said, Listen, we are your

leaders. You got to pay us.

We serve you. We take care of you spiritually. You got to pay us for our food and we want to have a little wine once in a while.

You got to pay for that. And you got to pay your tax. The tax was like a type.

the people who were the assistant leaders, they bullied all the people unmercifully to get this money out of them. But out of the fear of God, Nehemiah says, I never did any of that. I had work to do.

I worked on the wall just like everybody else. I wasn't a supervisor. I worked hard just like everybody else.

Where do you find such servants of God today? We have a few outstanding examples in our churches. But outside of our churches, it's almost impossible to find. And all my men were not bullying other people.

They were on the job to do the work. And listen to this. We did not have time to line our own pockets with the money of other people.

I fed 150 Jews were 17 and officials at my table. He was a hospitable man. And in addition, you know, some people think, well, at least when I show hospitality to God's people, I should get money from the church.

For what? I fed 150 people and officials at my table every day. In addition to those who showed up from other places. You know, an elder brother has to be hospitable and all types of people land up in his house and sometimes stay in their house.

Here's a man who wouldn't even take money for that. One ox, six choice sheep, some chickens were prepared for me every day and every ten days a large supply of wine was delivered. Even so, I did not use the food allowance that was provided for the governors.

Because the people had it hard enough as it was. He saw the people were poor. He said, how can I take their money? To live in grand style myself.

I wish there were pastors like that today. Who look at the people and say, the people are poor. How can I take anything from them? How can I make them pay my hotel bill? How can I make them pay for my train fare or bus fare or anything? No.

They have it hard enough as it is. Let them use their money to take care of themselves. We don't want anything from anyone.

And he says to God, Lord, please remember me. Be good to me because of all that I've done for these people. I'm sure God blessed Nehemiah and I'm sure God blessed Nehemiah's children.

Because God is never in debt to any man. These are examples from the Old Testament. I want to show you another example in 2nd Kings.

In chapter 5. We read about Elijah. Elijah healed somebody but he wouldn't take money from him for his healing. Jesus healed the sick but he never took money from people for healing them.

Peter healed the sick but he never took money from anybody for healing him. You know many people talk about healing ministries and I always say this. Please show me one man with a healing ministry today who

will not take money from the people.

I'll travel to the other side of the world to go for his meetings. I've never heard anybody say about such a man to me. This is the missing thing in Christendom.

Missing people in Christendom. People like these servants of God in the Old Testament and New Testament. Naaman was a general of Syria who was an extremely wealthy man.

Next to the king in Syria was a man full of leprosy. He had a servant girl from Israel who said there's a prophet in Israel who will help you. He went all the way to Elisha.

Elisha would not even come out of the house to greet him. What a man of God. A general of a foreign country comes to your house and he sends his servant and says go and tell him to go and dip in the river.

Because he knew Naaman was a proud man. And he expected the servant of God to come and show his respects just like a lot of pastors would do today to some big shot. I remember hearing of a man of God in India.

One of those rare men of God. You know there were people in that town who were disturbed because their daughters and wives were throwing away their ornaments. This is many years ago in India.

And one of these people was a very influential official. He was disturbed that his wife and daughter were wearing white saris and throwing away their ornaments. So he got some police official, senior police official to try and frighten this man of God.

So this police official came up to this meeting hall and said I want to see brother so and so. The man of God was in prayer. Somebody came to him and said senior police official wants to see you.

He said tell him I'm talking to God. I don't know when I'll finish. It may be many hours.

He can wait. Oh, India needs to see men of God like that. There was only one man like that I knew in my life.

All the others are just bothered by somebody who's a big shot. They don't know God. They would leave God alone.

I mean if you were talking to the governor of Karnataka state and some cheap government clerk comes would you leave your conversation with the governor to go and talk to that clerk? Or would you tell him to wait? It's because today's servants of God don't know the greatness of God. That's why they're scared of influential people. No wonder they know so little of God.

Where can they build a church of people who know God? Eternal life is to know God. And if you don't know God Elijah was like that. He said go and tell him to go and dip in the river and that Naaman was so offended.

He lost his temper it says in verse 12 He was furious He said I thought this man of God would come out because I'm the great man and he would call on the name of the Lord and stand before me and wave his hand and he doesn't even come to see me. That's good when proud people like that are humbled by a man of God. And finally he got healed.

And he came back after he was healed and this time Elijah comes out. And it says in verse 15 that Naaman said please now I know this is the true God. Here take a present.

There was a large amount of silver and gold and clothes fancy clothes and all for Elijah. And Elijah said as the Lord lives before whom I stand. He was Elijah's disciple remember.

As the Lord lives before whom I stand I will take nothing. You go with all your money. I'm not interested.

How did Elijah live? As far as we know he didn't do any work. He was supported but he was supported by simple God fearing people. He would not take a money money from a rich unbeliever.

Even if he healed him. What a lesson. Such people are missing in Christendom today.

But Elijah had a servant called Gehazi. Now just like Elijah got a double portion of Elijah's anointing, Gehazi could have got a double portion of Elisha's anointing but he didn't. And you know why he didn't get it? You know we would have known today Gehazi is a great name.

We would have thought of these three great prophets. Elijah, Elisha and Gehazi. But we don't hear that.

We only hear about Elijah, Elisha and what happened to the third fellow in that trio? Something happened. Money destroyed him. He saw this and said what a fool my master is.

I mean he didn't ask for money. This fellow offered it. And he says my servant has spared this man.

Verse 20 As the Lord lives and he takes the name of the Lord. In the name of the Lord I'm going to go after him. And he goes after Naaman and says oh brother Naaman you know some bible school students have just come to join our bible school and they need some support.

And they need. Can you give them just a talent of silver and two changes of clothes just a little bit of money. And oh Naaman said of course take two talents.

And it says he urged him. That means you know like we Indians when somebody is coming to put more food into us we say no no no actually we want some more. And we want them to put it.

He said no no no no I don't want it. And then he said no no you must take it. Okay if you insist I'll take the two talents.

And he took two bags and two changes of silver clothes and they carried them before him. There was so much that this man couldn't carry it. He had to send two servants to carry it.

And then when they came to the hill when they came near Elisha's house he said hey I think I can carry it. He didn't want Elisha to see this. And he says when he came to the hill he sent away the servants and he took these bags and took it into his room and hid it and came with a nice smile before Elisha.

And Elisha said where have you been Gehazi? Oh I didn't go anywhere. I was just sort of resting. And he said you think I didn't see what happened? God showed me in a vision exactly what happened.

I saw you running after Naaman. I saw him turning around. And I saw you taking the money and bringing it back.

Is this a time to look after yourself? Verse 26 the last part. Is this a time to line your pockets with gifts? Is this a time to receive clothes and vineyards and all that in the name of the Lord? Instead of getting a double portion of the anointing you will get Naaman's leprosy. And not only you your children will get Naaman's leprosy too.

Go and ask Gehazi in hell today. Gehazi was it worth it? This extra silver you got in the name of the Lord and those fancy clothes you got. Don't you remember Gehazi how your five year old son came to you one day and said Daddy there's a white spot on my hand.

I don't have any feeling here. Mummy said it's leprosy. How did I get it Daddy? What will Daddy tell him? Because I ran after money.

That's what's happening today. Many children suffer. Come into Godless lives because their parents run after money in the name of the Lord.

And they use some Old Testament verse to say that God wants us to be rich. I remember when all this started, this prosperity gospel. I've been around in Christendom a little longer than you.

When I saw Christendom 45 years ago, nobody preached the prosperity gospel. But you know in the 1960s there was a great charismatic movement started outside of the Pentecostal churches. The early Pentecostal pastors were very poor people.

The devil destroyed them by making them rich through offerings from others. And there were many other God-fearing businessmen throughout the centuries who made a lot of money. Who made millions through their own business.

Hard work and did business. There was a man in America called Robert Letourneau. He was a multi-millionaire.

God-fearing man who gave 90% of his income for God's work. He earned a lot of money, but it was not through gifts from God's people. It was through doing his business.

That's okay. He didn't become a backslider, but these other people started a lot of people in many churches started getting the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And then from among them arose certain leaders.

I'll tell you the whole history. Some of you are not even alive then when this happened. In the early 70s.

And I was watching this whole development more than 30 years ago. And I watched it. And these leaders began to teach typing and heavy shepherding.

Heavy shepherding means you got to listen to me. I'm your shepherd. I'll tell you whom to marry, what type of house to buy, even what type of shirt to wear sometimes.

Everything was under a shepherd. You got to submit, submit, submit. And it became like a dictatorship.

Fellows were not free. The family came under the authority of the shepherd. And the type had to go to the shepherd.

10% of your income. In many churches they would have envelopes with your name written on it to make sure you paid your type. They would even ask how much is your income and 10% of that.

Before you pay your tax, 10% of that. And these shepherds had shepherds over them. And they had apostles on top who called themselves apostles who had many, many shepherds under them.

And the types would go all the way up to the apostles. Like today the bribes go all the way to a chief minister, you know. The same way types would go all the way up to the apostles.

The apostles became fantastically wealthy. Now, what to do with this tremendous amount of money? They used to buy jet planes to travel. And they used to buy houses by the lakeside for themselves to go in the summertime.

And fantastically wealthy. They would have so many Rolls Royce cars and all types of things. Because but they didn't know how to justify this.

Because they didn't know how Jesus would be like this. So they looked for verses in the Old Testament. And there were verses in the Old Testament of Deuteronomy 28 particularly how God would make you wealthy.

So they began to preach that. When you obey God, He makes you wealthy. Look at me, for example, he says, this preacher.

I remember I heard that one of those preachers said, when people walk down the street and see my Rolls Royce car sitting in my driveway in my house, they'll know there's a God in heaven. It's a pity that Jesus didn't have such things. When he wanted to teach a lesson from a penny, he didn't have one in his own pocket.

He said, can somebody give me a penny? I'll see whose image is on it. This is our Jesus. Peter didn't have money to give a beggar.

He tells the beggar, you know, the old days I was a fisherman. I had some money. Every time I came here, I used to give you.

But now I'm an apostle. I don't have anything. But I'll give you something better.

In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk. So, we see here, gradually all these leaders became very wealthy. And they would preach tithing and people, they'd get million, they became millionaires, multi-millionaires.

And that has progressed and progressed and progressed. Now it has become a doctrine. You know, let me show you an example of that in the book of, in the book of Jude, you read about the error of Balaam, in Jude verse 11.

The error of Balaam. You know, Balaam also was another prophet who went after money. And in 2nd Peter 2, verse 15, it says, these people have gone astray, these preachers, having followed the way of Balaam.

See, Balaam, I don't have time to show you that, he was a man who, I believe he was in connection with the true God. He even prophesied the coming of Christ. He said, a star will arise from Jacob.

He couldn't have done that unless he was in touch with God. But, when he, one day the king sent to him and said, hey, I want you to come and preach here. He said, no, I'll have to ask God.

God said, don't go. But the king knew how to get these type of preachers. He knew a little more money and they'll come.

So he sent some more honorable ministers and all to Balaam, to his door and said, hey, the king says, I'll fill your house with gold, come. Oh. So Balaam said, well, let me pray about it once more.

You know, these people who say, let me pray about that once more. So he prayed about it once more and God said, go. Why did God say go? Because when a man's heart is after money, God will not stop him.

He won't stop you also. He's already told you his will once. God doesn't change his mind.

But again you go to him. Like it says in Psalm, is it 106 verse 15? He gave them their request but he sent leanness into their soul. Yeah.

So Balaam wanted to go, he said, go. But the donkey knew God's will. And his donkey said, hey, I'm not able to go because there's an angel in front of me.

And finally the donkey spoke in tongues and spoke, that means a language it never learned, and said, hey, why are you beating me? I've never disobeyed you. He got angry with him. He said, can't you see the angel in front of me? He still went the way of Balaam because he went after money.

And he finally got possessed by demons and he was slain. In the book of Joshua he's called a wizard, a witch doctor. He got possessed by demons.

This man who started out so well. So you read about the error of Balaam in Jude, the way of Balaam in 2nd Peter chapter 2. And finally, verse 14 of Revelation 2, it becomes the doctrine of Balaam. See how the error of Balaam becomes the way of Balaam, becomes the doctrine of Balaam in 2nd Peter, I mean, Revelation 2, verse 14.

So, this prosperity thing has become a doctrine now. It's the doctrine of Balaam. And the Lord says, I have something against you.

You have some people there who hold to the doctrine of Balaam. It leads to idolatry. The idolatry of money.

In the New Testament, we have the example of Jesus, who never asked anybody for money. We read in Luke chapter 8, verse 2 and 3, certain rich women would support Him with money because He needed money for all these 12 disciples, and some of them had families back home. He never asked anybody.

When He got that money, He lived very simply. Do you know what Jesus used money for? Two things. John chapter 13, verse 29.

In John chapter 13, verse 29, we read that the disciples, when they saw Judas being sent away by Jesus, they thought that because Judas was the treasurer, Jesus was telling him, buy the things we need or give something to the poor. How did they get that idea? Because all through their life with Jesus, they saw Jesus used His money only for two things. Buy what you need, give something to the poor.

You want to follow Jesus? Buy what you need, give something to the poor. That's the way to use God's money. We say, how do I decide what you need? That is your decision.

Don't judge somebody else. Somebody else may need a car, you may only need a scooter. In some places, they may need two cars.

In some places where there's no proper bus service, they may need three cars because one of the children is working. I'm not here to judge anybody. Buy what you need.

Don't go by somebody else's need. What you need? And give to the poor. We're not here to judge what type of house a person lives in, what type of clothes he wears, what type of shoes he wears.

You get into that business, you'll become a Pharisee. I decided long ago, I'm going to decide for myself and I'm not going to decide for another human being in the world. It's their business between them and God.

He's not taking my money. Why should I question him how he spends money that God gave him through his work or his business? You know, some folks have that bad habit. I'm sorry to say some people, even in our churches, they'd go and visit somebody's home and they'd say, why does this guy have such a grand home? Did he take your money and build it? Let God, let him answer to God for that.

Why does he wear such grand clothes? Why does he allow his daughters to wear such grand clothes? He's not taking your money, man. Why are you bothered? I decided long, long ago that I would not be a busybody in other people's affairs. But I've got to be faithful with my own money.

Buy what you need, give something to the poor. That's how Jesus lived. And he lived very simply himself.

He would use very little on himself. He would not use money to go and live in some expensive way. The other example we have is Paul.

Paul said, you know, there are a number of places, you can read 1 Corinthians 9 and 2 Corinthians 11. Take those two chapters especially. He says, I know the laborer is worthy of his hire but I haven't used these things.

And he says, nobody will stop me of my boasting. It is something he boasted about for the glory of God. That he never took money from people.

Occasionally, people in Philippi, he didn't have a law because sometimes he was in need. And the people in the church in Philippi sent him money, he would take it. So he didn't have a rule.

He was led by the Spirit. In most churches he would receive nothing. From some church, occasionally he would receive.

That shows to me that Paul was not under law. He was led by the Spirit. And that's why it's written in Scripture that he, and when he got money from Macedonia and he tells the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11, it's a beautiful passage.

He says, when I was in need in your midst, he doesn't say the Lord supplied my need, which would have been a very spiritual thing to say. He says, no. When I was in need in your midst, 2 Corinthians 11, 9, some brothers from Macedonia came and helped me financially.

What down to earth honesty instead of using some super spiritual language which people use today. Oh, the Lord supplied my need. These are all the humbugs.

I know the Lord supplied, but why not acknowledge that the Lord supplied it through the church in Macedonia? Why do you want to take the super spiritual position as if you're a great man of God? Look at, be humble like Paul when he said, I was in need but I wouldn't take from you Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 11, 9, but some brothers came from Macedonia and fully supplied my need. I love the honesty of this man, Paul. I want to be like him.

Down to earth honest. Titus came, he says in 2 Corinthians 7, and I got encouraged. Look at the honesty of this man.

I was depressed. I was getting depressed. Titus came and, young brother, said something to me and I really got encouraged.

I like that. We are human. We are weak.

We need one another. And though we have a strict stance, I will not receive money from anybody, sometimes God humbles us and says, take that from that person. That's the position I have taken also.

Otherwise we would end up being arrogant people looking down at everybody else. Judas is the other example of a man who got money and cheated. See where he ended up.

Such people are missing in Christendom because money has replaced the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is on money. The second thing I want to say is music.

Music is another thing that has replaced the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the second thing that you see nowadays in great crusades and over television. Music, music, music, music, music.

And people like to imitate the rock musicians and come in vests and all and with some type of guitar and swing their hips. Where do they get these pictures from? From those rock musicians. From the godless servants of the devil.

They're imitating them. Are they imitating Peter or Paul in that? No. Can you imagine Paul coming with a black vest and something like that here and trying to strum and impress people? No.

Why not be dressed properly like Christians should be instead of following those godless examples you see on the covers of CDs? No. I've seen that. With all these metal buttons and all over that.

You can see that on Christian television. They say, we're trying to reach the young people like this. What young people? What are you going to do? You're going to be such a bad example to those young people.

Do you think Jesus dressed like that to reach the young people in his day? Christianity, a surrender to the devil. The devil has become their example. And they have all these flashing lights, red, blue, yellow, green, all types of things on the screen.

I can't imagine Jesus doing all that to attract people, anybody. This is all from the rock musicians. And they think they're reaching young people that way.

And what type of young people turn out as a result of this conversion? Half-converted, godless people who say, I believe in Jesus. Which Jesus? Another Jesus. Do they live holy lives? Do they overcome sin? Do they ever hear about victory over sin in these meetings? No, they don't.

I'd rather have 10 people who don't have all this. Jesus turned the world upside down with 11 young people under the age of 35. They didn't have all these gimmicks.

Peter didn't have all these strobe lights and all on the day of Pentecost. He didn't have some fellow with a vest and a guitar up there. And he didn't have money either.

Do you know God who made Abraham rich? God who made David rich? God who made Solomon rich? God who made Job rich? These are all Solomon initially and the others were all men of God. He could have made Peter rich. He could have made Paul rich.

He could have made Jesus rich. He could have made James rich but he didn't. Because in the new covenant money would be a snare.

People would be drawn by money. God didn't want that. Haven't you seen in India how many Christians are drawn, how many people are drawn to Christianity because of money? Look at the Bible schools and orphanages being run in this country.

It's a racket to get money from America. You've got to send reports out there regularly and say what all is happening? What all is happening here? Revival here? Revival here? Thousands being converted? That's why we decided when we started building our churches 31 years ago, we'll never send a report to anybody. We'll never send a photograph anywhere.

We're not going to send any videos of our meetings anywhere. And sometimes I go abroad and people say, Brother Zak, do you have any need in your church? I say, no, we don't have any need. We are quite okay.

I was introduced once in the United States. Here at last is one Indian pastor who never asked for money. We're not interested in that because we believe in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our work may be small. Let it be small but let it be pure. Tell me, would you rather have one healthy child or ten sick children? You tell me.

You mothers. I know, I'd rather have one healthy child than ten sick children or a hundred sick children. I'd rather have one small church with people who are disciples of Jesus Christ than thousands of people who claim to be Christians who don't know God.

To say, we have so many workers. How do you get so many workers? Because you pay them from America with all that money? We don't want that. We'd rather have a few workers who serve God, paying for their own expenses.

And that's how we've done it. Our work may not be very large compared to the work of others, but show me another church. A group of churches in India where they never take an offering anytime, thirty years, when none of the workers are paid anytime, when no reports are sent anywhere.

If there is some church like that, please tell me. I'd like to see it. We stand out as different because we want to proclaim there's something missing in today's Christianity in the area of money, in the area of music too, I want to say.

A lot of what is called praise and worship today is not worship at all. I have a whole message on that which is on our website called Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship. These are three different things.

Thanksgiving is giving thanks to what God has done for us. Praise is praising Him for who He is. And a lot of what goes on in our songs is thanksgiving and praise.

That's right. It's not worship. Worship is not something I can do in the presence of all of you.

Most of my worship of God is when I'm alone, in silence. You can worship with words, then go a little higher and worship with song, and the highest form of worship is silence. Speech, song, silence.

The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him. Worship is the surrender of our whole being before God, putting our head down, not showing our feet to God like these people who say they are slain in the Spirit.

I mean, in India, you know, if I show you my feet, what do you think of that? If I fall down before you and bow down to you, that's respect. But if I show you my feet, hey, and I show you both my feet, I can't do that here, but it's the biggest insult to you. Anybody in India knows that.

And look at the devil-making fools of these people who stand before God and show Him their feet. It's not how the Old Testament or New Testament did. John fell at his feet with his head down and worshipped.

He didn't show his feet to God. Do you know what the Bible speaks about being slain in the Spirit? Romans 8, 13. By the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body in the time of temptation.

That is the slaying in the Spirit I want to preach. Where you put temptation to death and your lust to death through the power of the Holy Spirit. Not this type of falling down and showing our feet to God and insulting Almighty God like that.

With all these psychological gimmicks. He doesn't solve people's problems. You know, when, out in the world, when people have a problem, they go to a bar to drink.

They spend two hours there drinking, drinking, drinking, spending their money and having a wonderful time with their friends and they are in what they call the seventh heaven. And they say they forget all their problems. They're having a wonderful time.

When they go back home, the problems are still there. They're still fighting with their wives. And they still love money and they still get bitter and they still get jealous.

What do they long for? Oh, I love to go back to the bar to drink with my friends. Many Sunday morning meetings are a worshipping bar. A praising bar where they come and praise and sing and sway and clap and all their friends are also like that, like a bunch of drunken people.

And they say, boy, this is wonderful. All my problems I can forget about. And after two hours they go home, they still shout at their wives.

The problems are still there. They still love money. They are bitter.

And what do they long for? Oh, I want to go back next Sunday to my bar to praise God. It's a deception. It's a total deception.

If you meet with God for two hours, it should change your life so radically that your problems should be solved. You should behave in a completely different way to your wife. Every area of your life should be

changed.

How is it's not changed? Something is wrong. Music has replaced the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you know that the devil had music? You read about it in Ezekiel 28.

He had tremendous musical ability. Ezekiel 28 is a chapter that describes the devil. And it says here that there are many things described about Satan here in Ezekiel 28 starting from verse 11, 12 last part, you had the seal of perfection full of wisdom.

You were in Eden. There was an Eden before Adam's Eden. In Genesis 1 verse 1, that Eden when God created it and he was covered with precious stones.

And it says here on the day you were created there was in the I think it's in the verse 13. It speaks about the flutes and tambourines. In some translations if you have an NASB you see the margin of it, the gold, the workmanship of your tambourines and flutes.

It says in the margin which is set here as settings and sockets, speaking about certain musical instruments, tambourines and flutes. And do you know who were the first people who invented musical instruments? The children of Cain. Genesis chapter 4, it says here in Genesis 4 that his his descendants Lamech took to himself two wives, one Ada and Zilla and Ada verse 20, Genesis 4, 20 gave birth to Jebal.

He was the father of those who dwell in livestock, tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all the musicians in the world.

Those who play the lyre and the pipe. The sons of Cain were the first rock musicians. We have many descendants of them today.

They went away from God and they became musicians. Music has a tremendous power. The devil had it, the sons of Cain had it and the devil's followers have it today.

We can have music in the church but how is it that in the New Testament you don't find much emphasis on it? In the Psalms you read a lot about it but in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is the main thing. If you have musical instruments, good. If you have money, good.

But it's not essential. We don't need to have keyboards. Do you know the early church? There were no keyboards a hundred years ago.

Many churches in the world, wonderful spiritual churches had no pianos, no instruments, no guitar, nothing. How did they survive? Power of the Holy Spirit. That has been replaced with music.

It's almost as though you can't have a church today without music. You can't have a church today without money. It is a deception.

There's something missing in Christendom today. And we need to allow our eyes to be open to see, Lord, something is wrong. And the psychological gimmicks that people use to sway people with.

Like I said yesterday to emphasize certain words and then you hear some preachers, they breathe heavily. The Lord says, like that. And people are moved.

There are tricks people use to move people and stir them. These are not the tricks that the apostles cared for. They had the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was not money. It was not music. It was not a prosperity doctrine.

It was not slaying in the Spirit. It was not emotionally working up people. It was not these feel-good messages.

You know, there are people who study psychology. There are a lot of people who go preaching today. They study psychology first.

And they know that you need to make people feel nice. And they preach messages that make people feel nice. Can you imagine going and telling Jeremiah or Isaiah things like that.

Don't say anything that will hurt people. There are people who came to Isaiah and said, don't preach like this to us. Preach soothing messages.

But those prophets wouldn't listen. They had to preach what God told them. God told Ezekiel, whether they listen to you or not, go and tell them what I tell you to tell them.

That was it. This is missing in Christendom today. The prophet of God is missing.

They wander from sea to sea seeking for a word from the Lord. It says in Amos chapter 8 verse 12 and 13. Not the word of God.

The Bible. That is there. But the word of the Lord.

The prophetic word. They won't find it. Those are the days in which we live.

May that word never be lost in our midst. And may we be a witness to this generation and may God raise up another generation in the years to come that will hold up the torch of the prophetic word in the church. Heavenly Father, apply these truths to our lives, we pray that your name will be glorified through us.

That each one of us will hear. That we will be a witness for you in our generation. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15707.mp3>

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-missing-messages-in-todays-christianity-money-music-and-psychology/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net