

(The Missing Messages in Today's Christianity) Understanding God's Full Purpose

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of understanding and applying the missing messages of truth in Christianity to achieve spiritual freedom and reflect Christ's example in our lives.

Duration: 58:13

Scripture: Acts 20:18-20, Acts 20:27-28, Acts 20:32, Acts 20:35

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of following the example of true servants of God. He encourages the audience to value and listen to those who demonstrate a genuine commitment to God's work. The preacher also emphasizes the need for the word of God to transform our thinking and make us more like Christ. He reminds the audience of the importance of living out the teachings of the Bible in their daily lives. The sermon concludes with a call to be alert and to continually seek correction and growth in our spiritual journey.

Transcript

So, our subject, as we can see here on the screen, is the missing messages in today's Christianity. We don't say that no Christians preach some of these things we're going to talk about, but we would say the vast majority, in many cases over 90% of Christianity today, has left out certain vital truths in the New Testament. Many Christians are going back to the Old Testament, which shows the shallow state of their own Christian life.

Because the Old Testament was the old covenant that God made with man. In the realm of science, it's like going back to the Stone Age. You know, there's an expression in English of going back to the Stone Age.

In the Stone Age, people didn't have electronic gadgets, they didn't have electricity. Man was very primitive, he didn't have proper houses. He lived, oh yeah, he lived, he had children, they ate food, so many things, but not the way we live today.

Is there anybody here who wants to go back to the Stone Age, in practical terms? But a lot of Christians are living in the old covenant, because there are certain wonderful truths in the new covenant that are never proclaimed. Jesus said, you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free. There's a lot of emphasis on the Holy Spirit today, but unfortunately, a lot of deception.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth. And he said, when he comes, he will lead you into all the truth. Turn to that verse in John's Gospel, chapter 16.

And you will see that the Holy Spirit has come to help you to see the things that you do not know as yet. Verse 13, when he, the spirit of truth, comes. There are many titles given to the Holy Spirit.

One of the titles is the spirit of truth. Truth means reality. It also means the truth of God.

How do you know that the spirit of God has come into your life? He will lead you into all the truth. Now, he was here speaking about the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit did not come in the way he came on the day of Pentecost.

Just like, you know, Jesus did not come to earth until he was born of the Virgin Mary, the second person of the Trinity. 33 years later, the third person of the Trinity came to earth after the second person of the Trinity went to heaven. So it was a particular time when the Holy Spirit came permanently to dwell on the earth and permanently to fill the inner hearts of God's children.

And you can apply that verse to yourself. When the spirit of truth has come to you and filled your heart, what will happen? One of the many wonderful things that will happen is, he will lead you and guide you into all the truth. Not part of the truth.

You must not be satisfied with part of the truth. How many of you will be satisfied with partial health? That 50% of your body is okay. Nobody, no sensible person will ever be happy that 50% of his body is okay when 100% of his body can be okay.

All of us strive for 100% health. The world is full of people striving to be 100% healthy. That's how doctors and hospitals make a lot of money.

Why is it Christians are not seeking to know 100% of the truth? If we don't know 100% of the truth, we will not be free. Most Christians are in bondage. Many a time when I speak to a congregation of people like this in many parts of the world, the word the Lord speaks to me is this.

These are slaves sitting in front of you. They don't know they are slaves. They are slaves to lust.

They are slaves to anger. They are slaves to bitterness. They are slaves to the love of money.

They are slaves to the spirit of competition. They are slaves to numerous things. But they don't even realize it.

And some who realize it are content to be slaves all their life. And what the Lord says to me is, I have not put you up there to preach to them. I send you up to that pulpit to set them free.

That's a difficult job. I mean if God only told me to preach, that's relatively easy. But if my task is to set people free, boy, I really have to depend on the Holy Spirit.

It's the Holy Spirit who can show you the truth. I want to tell you this. There are many people here in our Bangalore church who have heard these things for many, many, many years and they still haven't seen it.

Because they understand in their head what I speak with my mouth. They haven't opened their beings to the spirit of truth. So I want to say to you, if you want to know the messages that are missing in Christianity, and I probably mean missing in your life because you have not heard these things yourself, it's because you have not opened your being to the spirit of truth sufficiently.

Maybe you did a little bit. You did a little bit. That's how you knew that Jesus died for your sins.

A lot of people haven't opened their heart even to that. Thank God you got that. But there's more.

There's lots more. I mean, when I was, for 16 years of my Christian life, I never understood anything about the New Covenant except that Jesus died for my sins and my sins could be forgiven. So I know from my own experience, and God took me through that route for many years to teach me one thing, that you can be a Christian for a long, long time and you can even serve me and not know all of my truth and then you'll be in bondage.

And I was in bondage. I was in bondage for 16 years after being born again. How many of you will be honest today to say, I've been born again but I'm in bondage? That's the first step.

I said, Lord, I'm sick and tired of my bondage. I don't want to be a slave. Are you sick and tired? Then you need to know the truth.

You need to know those messages that are missing in today's Christianity which you have not heard or you have not allowed the Holy Spirit of Truth to lead you into all the truth and because of that you are not free. Lord depends on your knowing the truth. And the God of the world, the Bible says, blinds the eyes of people.

He has blinded the eyes of multitudes of people to know that forgiveness of sins is free. Christ died for their sins. He did not succeed in blinding your eyes to that truth.

But He's blinded many of your eyes to feel, listen, particularly young people, that if you give everything to God, your life will be miserable. Who told you that? The devil. How do I know that? Because I know that a lot of you haven't given everything to God.

Why haven't you given everything to God? Because you feel that your life will be miserable. All of us love happiness and fun and you feel that if you give everything to God, you'll miss happiness and fun. Well, I'll tell you this.

I'm a lot happier than all of you and a lot happier and will have a lot more fun because I gave everything to God. Anyone sitting here who's given everything to God will have the same testimony. God is not a spoilsport.

That's a lie of the devil. And I have decided to demonstrate by my life that the devil's a liar. That God is a good God.

He's not a spoilsport. He wants us to enjoy life, but not enjoy it in the cheap, dirty way. I mean, the man who commits adultery thinks that's enjoyment.

It's not enjoyment. Look at the remorse of conscience that he has after that. Look at the fact that his life can be hindered so much spiritually after that.

That's not fun. That's the devil's type of fun. God offers a clean type of fun which doesn't hurt us.

There's fun that can hurt you. And there's fun that doesn't hurt you. God gives us fun and enjoyment that doesn't hurt us.

So, don't think that more knowledge of the truth will hinder us. No, your life will be supremely happy. Do you know that the happiest person who walked on this earth was Jesus Christ? I'm convinced of that one truth.

And if I could convince you about one truth, that the happiest person who walked on this earth was the Lord Jesus Christ. How many of you here don't want to be happy? You got to be mad not if you say you don't want to be happy. I want to be happy all the time.

And I know the happiest people in the world are not the film stars, not the fellows who live in adultery, not the fellows who make the most money, not even the people who have wealth and cars. And these are not the things that make a person happy. No, it's Jesus Christ who never spoke in tongues and never had a car and lived in very simple circumstances and was a carpenter.

He wasn't a college graduate. He was the happiest person that walked on this earth. And I decided that's what I want to be.

I'm going to pattern my life after His. And none of these other people attract me. No, I'm not tempted by these other things anymore because I've discovered who was the happiest person in the world.

And if you discover that Jesus Christ was the happiest person in the world, you will long to be like Him because your life will be supremely happy. Your home life will be supremely happy. Every aspect of your life will be transformed.

But you've got to be convinced that Jesus Christ's life was the best life anybody lived on this earth. You've got to begin there. That's where you've got to begin.

That Jesus Christ's life was the best life that anybody lived on this earth. And so, the spirit of truth will lead you into all the truths. And that truth does not mean just the truth of the Bible.

It also means truth about ourselves. A lot of us want to know the truth of the Bible. In fact, many of us come for conferences, meetings to hear, I want to know something more, I want to know something more.

And the thirst for knowledge is good if you apply the knowledge to yourself. Listen to this. If you eat food, good food, the best food in the world, and it doesn't get digested in your stomach, you have problems.

But you eat simple food and it gets digested. You get health. All food that we eat must be digested and not digested six weeks later.

Within 24 hours, that food must be digested, otherwise you have a stomachache. You have problems. You vomit.

That's how the body is made. And if you keep on filling your stomach with food and none of it is getting digested, you will be a sick person. And that's why we have so many sick Christians.

And I tell you this, we have more sick Christians in our churches than in many other churches because we are getting more food than the other churches. And so we are stuffing ourselves with knowledge, and you don't apply it in your daily life, you are going to be a sick Christian. And you will be sicker than the people in all the other churches because they don't eat so much good food.

So don't think that just because we get a lot of good food, you are going to be very spiritual. And I've looked around our churches for 30 years to know that that is not true. And I used to wonder why.

I see here are people hearing the most wonderful truths that are preached in the land of India, and they are not becoming spiritual. And I discovered they are not digesting their food. They are just eating, and eating, and eating, and eating, and eating, and their stomachs are bloated up and they are becoming fat, not strong.

And they are sick, they are having stomach aches, and they are not spiritual. So I want to urge you, every truth that you hear, apply it, and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into all the truth concerning yourself. Lord, show me where I am proud.

Show me where I am selfish. That's what the Holy Spirit has come to show us. All the truth.

Notice this. It says here, He will guide you into all the truth, because, because, verse 13 of John 16, He will not speak on His own initiative, but what He hears, He will speak, and He will disclose to you what is to come, and He will glorify Me, for He will take of My life, and will show it to you. You know what the Holy Spirit has come to show? He's going to take from the life of Jesus, when He lived on earth, and show it to you, and say, that's how Jesus lived.

And you see the truth about yourself. And some other situation, He'll say, this is how Jesus used to speak. And you'll see the truth about yourself.

And then He'll tell you how Jesus spent His money, and you'll see the truth about yourself. And He'll show you how Jesus spent His spare time, and you'll see the truth about yourself. If you allow the Holy Spirit, to show you the life of Jesus constantly, you will discover plenty about yourself, that needs to be cleansed.

And one of the blessed advantages of that is, you will not judge other people so much as you do. You won't criticize your wife or your husband so much, because you're so busy cleansing yourself. You're so busy discovering all types of truth about yourself.

Can you imagine a man lying in a hospital, who's got 25 sicknesses, trying to get out of all those sicknesses, going around finding fault with all the other patients in the hospital? I've never seen that in any hospital. But I've seen a lot of it among Christians. They got 25 sicknesses themselves, and they open their mouth, and criticize this person, and that person, and the other person.

I say, brother, sister, what about your 25 sicknesses? Get rid of that first, before you think of all the other patients in the hospital. I tell you, you'd be healed a lot quicker, if you stop worrying about the sicknesses in your wife or your husband, or in the other brothers or sisters in the church. Leave that to God, and to the elders in the church.

They can handle that. You don't have to worry about that. You worry about the things in yourself.

Let the Holy Spirit lead you into all the truth in these days, and show you the missing messages, that would have revealed truth to you, which you have not heard. Okay. Let me turn you now to Acts of the Apostles, chapter 20.

When the Apostle Paul spent three years in Ephesus. I want to show you a few things here. The Apostle Paul is a wonderful example of a man of God.

Because in the New Testament, there are only two people who said, follow me. You know that? Only two people who said, follow me. One was Jesus himself.

The other was the Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 11.1, he says, follow me. In Philippians 3.17, he says, follow me, and follow other people who are following me.

My example. And today, I'll tell you this. We need many people, who will be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ.

You should make that your goal. That you should be able to turn around to others and say, follow me as I follow Christ. That doesn't mean you have reached the top.

For example, if we decided to climb Mount Everest, let's say. And Mount Everest is more than 29,000 feet high. You know, even if I climbed 100 feet.

29,000 feet is a long way. Even if I've climbed 100 feet, I can say to you, follow me, I'm climbing Mount Everest. I haven't reached the top.

But you are at zero. I can't tell the fellow who's reached 500 feet, follow me, because he's ahead of me. He has to tell me, follow me.

But I can tell the people who are behind me, who haven't even climbed up to 100 feet, follow me. And if you have followed Jesus even a little bit, you should be able to say to people younger than you, follow me as I follow Christ. Every one of us should be, if you are a Christian, you should be able to say that.

Don't you think you parents should be able to say to your children, follow me, my son, my daughter. Follow me as I follow Christ. Talk to one another like daddy and I talk to each other, or mommy and I talk to each other.

Do you want your children to talk the way you and your husband and wife talk to each other? Or you don't want them to talk like that? What do you say to your children? Please don't ever talk to each other like dad and I talk to each other. That's not for you, that's just for us. No wonder our children go astray.

We take them to church, we send them to Sunday school, we feed them with knowledge, but we have no example at home. These are the missing messages in Christendom. We are told that if you say follow me, you are proud.

Once the devil has convinced you about that, you'll never say follow me. But the devil couldn't fool Paul. Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

And he's not been able to fool me. It's not pride. You cover up your sin.

I said, no, no, no, no, we can't say follow me, we are humble. We say, don't look at me, look at Jesus. That's a way to cover up your sinful life.

That's a way to make sure you never progress, and you keep on saying, don't look at me, look at Christ. It's not humility. It's arrogant pride.

And if the devil can succeed in making you think that your pride is humility, boy, what a success that is for the devil. Paul was a man who was bold enough to say, follow me as I follow Christ. He told the Thessalonians, we made ourselves an example for you in 2 Thessalonians 3. And that's what he says to the elders in Ephesus in Acts chapter 20.

In Acts chapter 20, we read that Paul went to a place called Miletus in verse 17. He had already spent three years. He never spent so much time in any place as he spent in Ephesus.

And that's why the church in Ephesus was perhaps the most spiritual church among all the churches that Paul planted. Because when you read Paul writing to the Ephesians, there's almost nothing he has to correct. When he writes to the Galatians, he has many things to correct.

When he writes to the Philippians, there are two sisters there who can't get along with each other. And when he writes to the Corinthians, there are 101 things to correct. When he writes to the Thessalonians, there are things to correct.

But when he writes to the Ephesians, there's almost nothing that he says there to correct anybody. Because it is a wonderful church. He is trying to lead them on higher.

Because he spent three years there. It's a wonderful thing to have a man of God like Paul, preaching God's word to us, who lives the life. The sad thing in Christendom today is that it's very rare to find.

There are a few here and there, but they are very rare to find. But Paul was one of those. And he called the elders and he told them, What does he say? I'll show you later on how he preached about 2,000 sermons there.

Can you imagine what your life would be if you listened to 2,000 sermons of the Apostle Paul? If you had 2,000 CDs of the Apostle Paul's messages? You'd say, boy, you'd be the most spiritual person in the world. No, not necessarily. That's what I want to show you.

You can have 2,000 CDs preached by the most powerful preacher in the world, and you may still be carnal, if you're not careful. You can be spiritual as long as you are under the influence of that man who's challenging you and rebuking you and correcting you. But once that influence goes away, you become a carnal person again.

Which means that you did not allow those messages to sink in and become a part of you. You received those messages like food and then you vomited it out. You didn't let it sink in and make you spiritual.

So he says, you know, and you know, when he leaves them after three years, he doesn't tell them, you remember that sermon I preached on humility? And you remember that other sermon I preached on love? And the other sermon I preached on holiness? Not one word. He says, you know, from the first day, verse 18, that I set foot in Asia, how I lived with you. You know what he points out to them? Not my sermon.

And you remember that sermon I preached in that particular September 45 or something like that. No, no, no. He says, you know how I lived here.

You watched my life. I was with you all the time for three years. You saw me morning, noon and night.

You saw me in all types of circumstances. You saw how I lived. That was his example, how I served the Lord with humility, with tears, with trials that came on me through many people who tried to attack me.

And in the midst of it all, I did not hesitate to declare to you anything that was good for you. If you needed encouragement, I gave you encouragement. If you needed a strong word of rebuke and correction, I gave that to you.

If you needed discipline, I disciplined you because that was profitable for you. You know how I did not hesitate to tell you what was good for you. I did not care for my popularity with you.

He was trying to say, a lot of other preachers are only interested in their popularity. They only want to be popular with you. They are not your real friends.

Paul says, I was your real friend because I told you what was good for you. Whether it was encouragement or discipline or rebuke or correction. Whoever it was and I had no favorites.

You know who he is talking to? He is not talking to the young people in Ephesus. He is talking to the elders. He is telling the elders how I rebuked you, how I corrected you, how I encouraged you.

He says, because none of you are my favorites. I was interested in what was good for you. I never wanted to be popular with you.

And I taught you publicly in the meetings. I shared with you when I visited your homes. Privately, publicly, I told you the same thing.

Seriously testifying to everybody. Irrespective of what their culture was, which language, community there was. It made no difference.

What did I preach to them? Repentance. You know what Paul preached? Repentance. This is the number one message that's missing in Christianity today.

How many messages have you heard on repentance in the last one year? From anyone outside of our own churches. It's absolutely unheard of. People may say repentance in a general way and not specifically tell you what you have to turn from.

That's like, you know, your little three-year-old son has got all types of bad habits and you tell him, repent. He says, okay. He's still going to do the same thing tomorrow because he doesn't know what you're talking about.

You tell him the next day, I told you yesterday to repent. He says, I repented, dad. He still does the same thing.

You got to be specific. You can't talk rudely to mummy like that. You got to listen when you're told to do something.

When I tell you not to go and put your finger into those plug points, you're not supposed to do it. Be specific. It's for their good.

So it's no use just preaching repent unless you specify what they're supposed to turn from. Because the church is full of babes. And they'll remain babes if they're not told.

You try teaching, I mean, if you don't believe me, you try preaching repentance, just the word repentance to your children every day. They'll grow up to be vagabonds and scoundrels, disobedient, rebellious because you don't explain what repentance means. So just because some preacher uses the word repentance, don't think that, ah, he preached repentance.

Did he tell you what sin there was in your life that you need to give up? Then he didn't preach repentance. But Paul was not like that. He said, I preached repentance toward God and I explained to you what faith in our Lord Jesus was.

It's not enough to say faith. You tell your little two-year-old, faith. You must have faith in the Lord Jesus.

You've got to explain to them what it means. It's when a child understands. It's exactly like that in a church.

You've got to explain so they can understand what repentance is. And faith. And I believe that's another message which is completely, you'd say it's not missing.

We hear about faith all the time. Exactly. Counterfeit faith.

Faith for the wrong things. Not the faith that the New Testament speaks about. That's a complete, the New Testament faith is a missing message in Christendom today.

And to fool people, a wrong type of faith is being proclaimed. Another faith. Just like another grace.

Another Jesus. Another gospel. But Paul, he preached this and he says, now, you know, a person who preaches wholeheartedly like this suffers a lot.

It says I'm going to be going to Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit tells me that wherever I go, people will harass me, trouble me. You know, that's why people don't want to preach the whole truth. They'll be called heretics.

They'll be called false teachers, false prophets. They'll be harassed, hounded, criticized. People will write all types of things against them on the internet and websites and everywhere else.

And they don't want all that. They want to be popular. And that's why Christendom does not preach some of the strong things that are written in the New Testament.

Paul was not bothered. He says the Holy Spirit already told me that wherever I go, it's going to be affliction and bonds and maybe jail, etc. That's fine.

But he says it doesn't bother me. Isn't it great to be like that? I'm not bothered what people say about me or what people do to me. I don't even count my life as valuable to myself.

That's the type of man God needs and woman who can say, Lord, I don't care for my life. I don't care for my name. I don't care for my reputation.

I don't care for any of these things. I want to finish the ministry, the course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus. And I want to say to every single person here who was born again.

If you didn't know it, you can know it today. That God has a particular ministry for you. A particular plan for your life.

He planned that before you were born. Before your father was born. Before your grandfather was born.

Before Adam was created. He knew you by name. He knew that in the 21st century, you would be there.

You would be born sometime in the 20th century. And there you are in the 21st century. And God knew that you would give your life to Christ.

And He made a plan for your life. And the most important thing you must do. It's not getting married.

It's not building a house. It's not getting your children married. It's fulfilling the course and the ministry that Jesus had for you.

But you will never do it unless that's your number one passion. If your number one passion is to get on in the world and earn more money, well, you'll make that. But you may not finish the course and the ministry the Lord has for you.

And when I say a course and a ministry, you know that I'm not talking about being full-time Christian workers. Earn your own living like I do. Support yourself like I do.

And serve the Lord. But seek to fulfill the ministry and the course that Jesus has for you. You must believe that, first of all.

Don't say, I'm such an insignificant... Well, you may not be called to preach in the pulpit, but God's got a plan for you. Is the tongue the only part of the human body which has got a function? Is the eyes the only part of the human body which has got a function? What about all those small, small little joints? And little, little nerves and all types of things inside your body, which you don't even see. They've got a very important function.

And I want to say, if you are a member of the body of Jesus Christ, if you've given your life to Christ, and you have a very important function. The sad thing is that many, many Christians are like that man who got one talent and buried it under the ground. He never did anything with it.

Because he looked at the other person who's got ten talents and said, boy, I can't preach like him. I can't do all that he did. Do you know that if eleven people who had one talent got together, they'd have more than the one man who has one talent? Isn't that a bit complicated, that mathematics? Eleven people with one talent have more than one person with ten talents? It's true.

There are a lot of one-talent people in the church. If they all really fulfill their part, there'll be a tremendous lot accomplished for God than if we leave all the jobs to the few ten-talent people there are. God has put very few people with ten talents, very, very few, a little more with five talents, but hundreds and thousands with one talent.

And the sad thing is, in Christendom, and I hope it won't continue in our churches, these one-talent people have buried their talent, do nothing with it, except come to conferences and meetings. Now, you must

determine that from now on you're not going to be like that. You're really going to use your one talent along with others' one talent, and you're going to do something for God in your church, in your home, in your locality, for Christ in this country.

God needs you. And so he says there, There's a course and a ministry that I have, which I've received from the Lord Jesus, and in Paul's case it was to solemnly proclaim the gospel of the grace of God. In other words, the gospel of the new covenant.

I know God has commissioned me to proclaim the gospel of the new covenant, not the gospel of the law, which a lot of Christians are proclaiming, which makes people grumpy, long-faced, Pharisees, self-righteous, judgmental of others. It's all the result of the gospel of the law, which is not good news at all. It's a preaching of the law which has brought people there.

I preached it myself, in ignorance. Like Paul says, in ignorance, I preached a lot of things, but I got light. I hope you got light.

I fear that in some of our churches, probably many of our churches, there's a gospel of law that is still being proclaimed. And it can produce an outward appearance of a holy people. It doesn't really change people inwardly.

It's only the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of the new covenant, the grace that was not known on earth until Christ came. That is the gospel which we are to proclaim. And he says, now I know that I won't be able to see your face much longer, and it's good for us to remember, that some of the men of God who are preaching God's word to you, they're not going to be around forever.

Please remember that. We need another generation coming up to proclaim the same message, to have the same devotion, and who are also committed to fulfill that ministry. The sad thing is, in Ephesus, such a second generation never arose.

When Paul died, that was the end of the church in Ephesus. That's been the sad history of a lot of Christian churches. When John Wesley died, and the people who were his closest co-workers died, that was virtually and spiritually the end of the Methodist church.

When William Booth died, and his closest co-workers died, that was spiritually the end of the Salvation Army. That's been true of many, many, many groups. But it need not be like that.

God can raise up a second generation if I believe that God wants to lay hold of many of you sitting here, with the same passion, the same willingness to seek nothing for yourself. You want to be part of that second generation? Decide, Lord, I want nothing for myself. When I was converted, and I bought my first Bible, it's still there with me.

I wrote on that page, in the inner page, Lord, I want nothing for myself. It's easy to write it, but I've tried to live up to that. Lord, I want nothing for myself.

I want everything for your glory in my life. If you can do something with my life, do it. I said that to God when I was 20, 21.

You can say that to God, and you will qualify. Lord, I want nothing for myself. I don't want a name, and that day I even said, Lord, I don't want a wife, I don't want a house, I don't want money, I don't want anything.

Just take my life and fulfill the ministry which you have planned to accomplish through me, wherever it is. I thought it would be in Rajasthan first. That's what I thought.

God had some other plans. I was willing to accept God's plan. But God has a plan for you.

Please, my dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you like Paul says, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your bodies. Time is short. Jesus is coming soon.

There is not enough time to live for the world like you've been doing in the past. Present your bodies to God as a living sacrifice every day. And allow God to renew your minds day by day to become more and more like Christ.

Less and less the thinking of the world. You get the thinking of the world from newspapers, television, I'm not saying you can't read them, but don't let that, what's written there affect you. Say, Lord, I want the word of God to change my way of thinking, make me like Christ.

I know that you will no longer see my face. He says in verse 26, Therefore, I want to give you a testimony here. He says, after three years of being in your midst, I am innocent from the blood of all men.

Oh, that's a verse that's come to my heart many times. You know, as an elder brother, initially in Bangalore for many years, I had a responsibility for all the brothers and sisters here along with the other elders. And then as I pulled out of that responsibility, I had a responsibility for many other people, mostly the elders in other churches that God has raised up in this land and other lands.

And I have always sought to go by this verse. I want to be innocent of the blood of all men. When I was in this church, I wanted to be innocent of the blood of all people here.

What does that mean? That means nobody should say to me at the judgment seat of Christ, Brother Zach, you knew that I was not right with God and you never told me. Nobody will be able to say that. There are people in this church who sat here for many years whom I went up to in the past and recently and said, you're not born again.

I don't think you are. I don't know whether they listen to me. I know one person to whom I said that many years ago.

He just got offended and left the church. I know another person who came up to me. I didn't even ask him.

He came up to me and said, Brother Zach, I want you to give me a spiritual checkup. Boy, that sounds very humble. So I gave him the spiritual checkup and he got offended and left the church.

Don't come to me with that request unless you're serious about it. I'm innocent of the blood of all men. Nobody's blood is on my hands because I've told them the truth.

I remember I told another brother many years ago who thought I was very hard. I said, dear brother, I don't care what you think about me. I don't care whether you think I'm hard.

At the judgment seat of Christ, you will turn around and thank me for what I told you. That's enough. I'm willing to wait for that.

I don't want to be popular with you before that. But you know, that brother realized that I was saying it for his good long, long ago. And he's a very good brother in our church today.

He didn't have to wait till the judgment seat of Christ to discover it. Paul was like that in Ephesus. He was a very strict man.

You couldn't play the fool with the Apostle Paul. Maybe you could play the fool with the other elders in Ephesus but not with the Apostle Paul because he cared too much for your soul. He cared so much for your soul that you couldn't play the fool with him.

He saw eternity, the reality of eternity. And he saw the direction people were going and he told them, you're going in the wrong direction. He said, I'm innocent of the blood of all men because, here's the reason, because this is the only person who can be innocent of the blood of all men.

Because I declared to you the whole purpose of God. Verse 27, I did not hold back some of the truth which I felt about you just to become popular with you like some of the other elders in Ephesus. I told you the truth because I knew it was good for you.

I did not hold back anything of the entire purpose of God. It's like a good doctor who's more interested in your health than your money. Oh, you won't find many doctors like that.

You'll probably find my wife. She's one of the few I found in the world who are more interested in your health than your money. But most doctors are only interested in your money.

Paul was more interested in their health than their money. He never wanted their money but he wanted their spiritual health. And you know, you go to a doctor with a problem and he says, you know, there's something lacking in your diet.

You're not eating enough vegetables. Or you need more calcium. You need to take some calcium tablets.

Or he may say, you need more of this vitamin. Vitamin A or Vitamin C or Vitamin E. Something is missing. And he says, this is what I sense you are missing.

You got all the other vitamins. This particular vitamin is missing. That's how the missing messages in Christendom make us sick.

If certain vitamins are missing in your diet, if you're, for example, eating chocolates all the time, you're going to be sick. You've got to eat vegetables. You've got to eat some wheat or rice.

You need certain other things. It can't be all chocolates and ice cream and nice tasting food. You know, a lot of messages that lot of preachers are preaching today are like chocolates and ice cream.

And the little babies sitting there who don't know what's good for their health keep on eating the chocolate and ice cream and keep on paying for it to the preacher. You got to pay for it, I tell you. You're not free.

And they don't tell you what's good for you. And the end result is you're sick. And some of you spiritually die because certain vitamins are lacking.

Certain messages are lacking. And the doctor is not telling you the truth about what you need. Because he's more interested in being popular with you.

He's more interested in increasing the number of his patients in his church. Number of people who come to him for consultation. Aren't doctors interested in that? Well, preachers are interested in the same.

They won't tell you the truth. That's a sad thing. And I don't mean these, you know, some people who hear me speaking decide to be like me and then they preach in such a hard way without any compassion.

They're just trying to get a reputation. Oh, I couldn't care less for people. I don't care for money.

No, no, no, no, no. You got to have compassion. You got to love people.

Otherwise, there's a lot of difference between a person who preaches the same message out of love and another person who just preaches in order to show that he's some type of prophet. Yeah, we've had those types also in our midst. We imagine self-appointed prophets.

We imagine that they are going to preach the hard message and become a prophet like that. No, you can't. You got to start with compassion.

You start with a concern. Paul was like that. That's why he said, I spoke to you with tears.

He says in verse 19, we saw that. There were tears when he proclaimed the whole counsel of God because he saw these people were not listening to him. Think of a father who, think if the doctor was your father and he was telling you what is good for you and he's grieved.

I mean the average doctor is not grieved if you don't take the tablets he told you to take. But a father would be terribly sad. He says, my son, he doesn't seem to realize what I'm saying is good for him and he'd weep.

That's what we need in our churches. Fathers and mothers who speak out of compassion but speak the truth. And he says, I realized that I have to declare the whole purpose of God today up to you and that's what we're seeking to do in this conference.

The whole purpose of God. You see there in that picture a torn Bible. Parts of it removed because they are inconvenient for people.

That's a picture of the missing messages in Christianity. Now you would never dream of doing that physically to your Bible. How many of you would cut out certain verses or passages from your Bible? None of us would do that.

This is God's Word. I better not do that. But shall I tell you something? If you don't obey some of those things in Scripture it is like cutting it out.

You may not physically take scissors and cut out that verse but you don't take it seriously. It's exactly like cutting it out of your life. In fact you're a hypocrite.

You got it in your Bible but you don't apply it in your life. And that Bible is a picture of the way it is in some people's life. Certain verses cut out.

It's not important. Particularly in the New Covenant. Missing messages.

Vitamins missing in the diet. Or like the lower picture of a keyboard with a lot of keys missing. Some churches have got just a few keys missing.

Some churches have got many keys missing. Now which good pianist would be willing to play on that on that keyboard with a lot of keys missing? He'll get a bad reputation. He's making so many mistakes.

He's not making mistakes. The keyboard, so many things are missing. You wouldn't buy a piano like that, would you? With a lot of keys missing.

You wouldn't buy a harmonium or a keyboard with a lot of keys missing. You wouldn't try to play on that. Supposing somebody says, this is cheap.

This Yamaha is going for half price. It's just got about 5 or 6 keys missing. Take it.

Half price. 25%. Please take it.

You wouldn't even pay 25% for the most expensive model in the world if some keys are missing. Why do you accept a Christianity like that? With some keys missing. If you won't accept a keyboard with one key missing.

Why do you accept a Christianity with so many keys missing? That's really sad. But that's the tragedy in Christendom today. And the melody that's going on this is not reaching heaven because heaven says, hey, there's a whole lot of notes missing there.

Dear brothers and sisters, we're living in times when God's people are being deceived by the keyboard players. We're selling them keyboards which have a lot of keys missing. And that's the reason why you're not able to get a melody in your life.

You try. People have said, I tried, brother, so hard. You know, one of the easiest tunes to learn is Sweet Hour of Prayer.

It's a very simple, easy tune. Sweet Hour of Prayer, Sweet Hour of Prayer. It's a very easy tune.

But you won't even be able to play that if some of the keys are missing in your keyboard. And there are people who say, brother, I've been trying so hard to get this, to get this. I'll tell you, some messages are missing in your life.

You haven't taken them seriously. You got a Bible that's cut out. You got a keyboard with some keys missing.

And that's what we're trying to set right here. I declare to you the entire purpose of God. I gave you a keyboard with every single key there.

And now, He tells these elders, be on God for yourselves. First of all, be on God for yourselves. It's a great word to elder brothers.

You know who you need to take care of, first of all? Yourself. Only then can you take care of the flock. I've taken it very seriously for more than 30 years.

I take care of my own heart first. Otherwise, I will not be able to take care of the flock. I need to repent before God first, before I can lead other people there.

Because the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers. I would say that to fathers and mothers also. Do you know that the Holy Spirit appointed you as an overseer over your children? Take heed to yourself.

You're taking so much care for your children. The Holy Spirit says, take heed to yourself. You father, take heed to the way you speak to your wife.

You mother, take heed to the way you're speaking to your husband. Forget about your children. Take heed to yourself first.

Take heed to yourself and then to the flock which God has purchased with His own blood. One of those few verses where it makes it very clear that Jesus Christ is God. Have you heard that expression? God purchased with His own blood.

Does God have blood? It says there, God purchased this with His own blood. One of the clear verses in the Scripture that teach that Jesus Christ is God. Because He says, the other reason is that I know that after I go, I'm going to go away.

I've been here three years. When I'm going away, there are wolves waiting outside the door who are just going to come and tear you to pieces. Not one of those wolves dared to come in.

Paul said, when I was here, they were scared. They were scared of Jesus. They were scared of Paul.

Like that demon said in Acts 19, Jesus I know and Paul I know, but he told the sons of Sceva, who are you? And that's what the devil said to the elders in Ephesus. Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you? I know you, fellas. You're just interested in your popularity.

You just want to be known as a mild, gentle, good brother. You're a person who's partial towards your friends and hard on people who are not your friends. I know all about you.

You're not going to keep me out of your church. Dear brothers, elder brothers, get rid of partiality. Totally from your life.

Don't be partial to your children. Don't be partial to your friends. Don't be partial to anybody if you want to be a servant of God.

I'm telling you that after 40 years of being in the ministry. One of the biggest sins I have found in the ministry is partiality. Among many wonderful servants of God, who are so good in other areas.

Partial. If you want to be a true servant of God, eliminate it completely. Ask God, ask the Spirit of Truth to show you light on that.

You parents, see if you're partial towards one of your children. One one is your special favorite. You're not representing God to your children.

God is completely impartial. Completely. And if you're seeking a reputation for yourself instead of the good of the other, you ask yourself, are you seeking a reputation for yourself? Or are you seeking the good of the people whom God has put you over? That's what Paul was challenging.

He says, I know. I have sat here for three years, he says, and I've discerned all of you elders. I don't know how many elders there were whom he called.

Let's say there were five or six. Say there were six elders and he tells them, listen, I have lived here for three years and I've discerned all of you. None of you are able to keep that wolf outside.

They'll all come in. They're only scared of me, those wolves. They're not scared of you.

You guys are partial. You guys are seeking your own and seeking your own reputation and honor. I know you may not be seeking money because you earn enough, all you elders, but there are many other ways you seek your own and God won't back you up.

I'm sorry. Imagine talking to elder brothers like that. Paul wasn't bothered.

He was concerned about the good of the church and elder brother or younger brother made no difference to him. He was concerned about the church of Jesus Christ purchased by God with his own blood. And he says, not only that, not only the wolves will come in, something else is going to happen.

You fellas who are interested in your own popularity, from your midst, from you six of you, some of you will start drawing disciples after yourself. You'll want to be popular with them. It's popularity.

And this is going to destroy this church. And it happened. They did not take Paul's warning seriously.

Ah, proud fellow, thinking that he can teach us, thinking that he only spiritualizes, we are not. Okay. See what happened a few years later? You see the letter to the Ephesian church, the same church in Revelation chapter 2, the church is backslidden so badly that God says, I will no longer call you a church.

I'm going to take away the lampstand from your midst. I will not consider you even a church anymore. If only they had listened.

And I want to say to you, if only you'll be willing to listen to the word of correction, to the word of rebuke, instead of thinking that you are so senior and so spiritual that you don't need any correction, perhaps you can still be a blessing in your church. You can be humble enough to say, Lord, that word applies to me. If you as a parent can say, Lord, that word applies to me.

I want the spirit of truth to lead me into all the truth about myself. Pray that prayer. I have prayed that with tears to God.

Lord, please, please, please, don't give me any surprises at the judgment seat of Christ. God is my witness. I wept and prayed to God.

Lord, don't give me any surprises at the judgment seat of Christ. Show me the truth about myself before I reach there. I do that.

And God shows me all types of things about myself. All the time. I don't tell you all about it, but it's between me and God.

I discover so many things. I mean, if I go to the shower and scrub off some dirt from my body, I don't have to tell you that tomorrow morning there was some dirt on my hand, I rubbed it off. It's like that.

I want to keep my body clean and much more, I want to keep my soul clean. And my spirit absolutely pure. And I've said to God many times, and I still say it, Lord, if there's anything in my life which makes you sad, not just which dishonors you, but just makes you sad, please show it to me now.

As much as I can handle. Maybe something I can't handle yet, it's too much for me, show it to me next week or next year when I can handle it. But what I can handle now, please show me now.

I want to progress in my Christian life. I don't want to be, like Paul said, preaching to others and finally be disqualified myself. Do you know that there are many elders who are going to preach to others and are going to be disqualified in the final day? Paul was not in that category because he lived in the fear of that all the time.

God is my witness, I live in the fear of that all the time, and so I know it won't happen to me. But if you think that you can preach to others, and then God will let you go. Oh brother, the Bible says in James 3.1, My brethren, don't be many teachers, because we shall receive a stricter judgment.

God is going to judge us much more strictly if you have preached to others. I know, in all of us in this room, God is going to judge me with probably ten or a hundred times higher standard than He judges any of you. I know that.

If God judges you at this standard, my standard with which judges will be a hundred times bigger. I know that. You read in the Old Testament how God sent the Israelites into the wilderness because they failed nine times.

But He sent Moses out to death. Didn't allow him to enter Canaan because he failed once. Why? Was He partial? That He gave the Israelites nine chances? And He didn't give Moses even one chance? No.

To whom more is given, more will be required. And I know very clearly, God has given me much more than He has given all of you. And He will judge me by higher standard.

The same applies to many of you sitting here. Some of you who have come here and been with the church for twenty, twenty-five, thirty years. Can you imagine what a standard with which He is going to judge you compared to some of these others who started coming here last year? Oh, I wish you could see it.

I wish the Spirit of Truth would show you all the truth. Paul says, be on the alert. That's all I would say in closing.

Be on the alert, verse thirty-one. Remember that night and day for a period of three years, in my case I can say thirty-one years to some of you, I did not cease to correct you with tears. Again, he speaks about tears.

Now, I can only commend you to God, to the word of His grace. If you accept it, it will build you up and it will give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified. And he says, I am not a doctor who has wanted any money from you.

I didn't want your silver or gold or clothes and I worked with my own hands and I showed you how a true servant of God should be. Dear brothers and sisters, if you have seen such examples, value them. Follow their example.

Listen to their word. It will bless you. Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads before God. Heavenly Father, help us to apply the truths that we have heard to our own lives. First of all, Lord, be glorified in our midst, in our homes, in our churches.

We pray the Spirit of Truth will lead us into all the truth in the word and in our lives. And in these three and a half days, make it to be so, Lord, in each of our lives, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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