

# The Obedience of Faith and Love

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes that God's commandments are for our good and that true obedience leads to overcoming sin through faith and humility.*

**Duration:** 55:51

**Scripture:** Psalm 1:1-3, Matthew 6:24, Romans 12:16, Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:25, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Eternal Transformation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding that every commandment of God is for our good, both in this world and for eternity. It highlights the need to obey out of love and faith, focusing on the eternal benefits of obedience and the transformation it brings in our lives.

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## Transcript

One of my greatest longings is to be able to convince believers that every commandment of God is for their good. If I can convince you that every commandment that Jesus gave is for your good, for your eternal good and for your good in this world, you will just long to keep it. I'll tell you why, because you know when a doctor, when you've got a sickness and you go to some great specialist who's got a name for curing sicknesses like yours, and he says to you if you will follow my prescription and take these tablets every day, I can guarantee you a hundred percent cure from whatever terrible sickness you have.

And he says to you, I've proved that in a number of cases. You tell me, will you take those tablets? Will you pay any amount of money to buy those tablets for yourself or for your children? Definitely. You'd go to any extent, pay any amount of money and follow those prescriptions and husband and wife will remind each other, hey, you haven't taken your tablet today.

We'll be so eager to follow the doctor's instructions because we know he's got lots of experience of healing people and we want to be cured. Now my question is, why are we not equally eager to obey the instructions of our Lord and Savior who says, if you follow me and overcome as I overcame, you will sit with me on my throne in eternity. That's Revelation 3.21. Is there a greater honor we can have for all eternity than that? Is there any greater honor you can get on this earth than that? And yet the promise is not for everybody.

The promise in Revelation 3.21 is, if you overcome as I overcame. Turn to that verse please. Revelation 3.21. Now if this word was spoken to unbelievers, then we can say perhaps Jesus is telling them to

become believers because once you become a believer, you'll automatically overcome.

But it was not spoken to unbelievers. It was not only spoken to believers, it was spoken to the elder brother in a church. The senior most brother in a church and through him to the whole church.

Because it says in verse 14 of chapter 3, Revelation 3.14, to the messenger. That's the meaning of that word. To the messenger of the church in Laodicea.

The messenger was one of the elders in Laodicea who spoke the word most frequently. He was called the messenger. In every church in the New Testament, they never had a pastor.

You never hear of any New Testament church having a pastor. It's unheard of in the New Testament. It's one of the traditions of men like infant baptism and many other traditions of praying to Mary and things.

There's no difference between infant baptism, praying to Mary and a man calling himself a pastor in a church. Absolutely no difference. None of these are found in the Bible.

In the New Testament churches, they had elders. And one of the elders who spoke most frequently was called the messenger. Now the thing is most people don't respect the word of God enough to be able to follow it exactly.

For years they have followed a human tradition so they follow it. And once you compromise in one area, you'll compromise in many other areas of scripture. That's why we decided from the beginning we will not compromise in any area of scripture.

That's why we don't even take an offering in our churches because we never see Jesus taking an offering. Never. He had healing meetings and he never took an offering.

So we seek to follow scripture exactly. We never see the apostle Paul or Peter taking an offering. People give voluntarily, they accept it.

That's why we have voluntary gifts here. So what I say is, here is another area where we need to see what the Lord is saying is not only to the messenger. At the end he says in verse 22, he who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to all the churches.

Not just the church in Laodicea, but to all the churches that include CFC here. What is the Holy Spirit saying to CFC here? Verse 21, he who overcomes. It's an individual thing.

The church cannot overcome. The church will stand against the gates of hell and overcome that, but here he is speaking to the individual. You have a responsibility for yourself and you can't help your wife to overcome.

She has to overcome on her own. You have to overcome on your own. It's an individual thing.

It's like following Jesus. Each person is going to follow on their own. But if you overcome, I will grant to him to sit down with me on my throne.

You remember James and John, the disciples of Jesus, once came to Jesus with their mother and said, hey Lord, we don't want anything on this earth, but please give us a seat with you in heaven, on your throne, on your left and right side. And Jesus said, sorry, I can't give you that. My father decides that, but

he never said there how it would happen, except one thing he said, immediately after that, are you able to drink the cup which I'm drinking? You want to sit with me on my throne? Are you able to drink the cup which I'm drinking? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering and death that I'm going to be baptized with? He gave a little hint how you could sit with him on the throne and here he says the same thing.

If you overcome, you can sit with me on my throne and it says here, just as I also overcame and therefore I'm sitting with my father on his throne. You know, when you read scripture exactly and don't bring your own ideas or the ideas of Christian tradition, you read here that Jesus overcame. Now you don't have to overcome something if you don't have to fight.

Overcame means he fought the battle. It's not a victory that was given to him. You know, in the educational world, there is a honorary PhD doctorate and an earned doctorate.

Earned doctorate means you worked hard for many years and got a PhD and a doctorate. And here's another guy who probably never went to college, but the college likes him for some reason and gives him an honorary doctorate. He never worked for it.

He never did any examination. Which do you think is more difficult and which do you think you would appreciate? I would appreciate the man who earned it. Now, a lot of Christians have the idea we have to earn overcoming, but Jesus got it honorary.

He didn't have to fight. What an insult to say that he did not have to overcome anything because he was God and he lived on this earth without any problem. And because he was God, he just floated along this earth.

Temptation would just fall off him like water off a duck's back. But it doesn't fall off us like that. We have to fight and fight.

And how severe a battle we have to fight, for example, to overcome anger, to overcome bitterness, to overcome jealousy, to overcome lustful thinking. How difficult it is. It's not an honorary victory we get.

We have to fight. And there are believers who have lived on this earth and fought and overcome these sins. And if you say that Jesus never had to fight, just floated through this earth without committing these sins, but we have to fight, then we will stand as greater conquerors in heaven than Jesus himself.

Think of that. Because we can say we conquered something. Lord, you never conquered anything.

That is the Jesus many Christians worship. It's not the real Jesus. The real Jesus says, I overcame.

He fought a battle against temptation and overcame in order to be an example for us. He did not avoid all the battle and say, okay, you guys go into a battle. That's and says, follow me.

That's what Jesus said. So when we are told we look unto Jesus and run this race, it's because he's gone ahead of us. He overcame.

And if we overcome, and just by the way, he overcame and therefore he sat down with the father on his throne. In other words, he was in all eternity. He was with the father on the throne from all eternity.

But he came down to earth as a man. And now listen to this. The only way he could get back to that throne where he sat from all eternity was by overcoming every single day for 33 and a half years.

That's why it says here, because I overcame, I'm sat down with my father on his throne. Do you understand that? Paul speaks about people who worship another Jesus. A lot of Christians worship another Jesus who cannot help them, who is not an overcomer himself, who overcame nothing, who just floated through this world and who went to the father's throne automatically.

That's not the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible was with the father's throne for all eternity. But when he came to earth, the only way he could get back to that throne was if he overcame every single day, every single second for 33 and a half years.

What a battle he fought. This is the Jesus I worship. And this is the Jesus has given me such tremendous hope that I can follow in his footsteps.

And it's become better and better and better for me through these years since I believed that nearly 40 years ago. My life was changed when my eyes were open to see one thing that Jesus overcame. And it says in Philippians concerning Jesus, in Philippians chapter 2, that when he came to earth, he humbled himself.

And one aspect of this humility is that he faced temptation. You see, he did not have to face temptation, but it is part of his humility that he became like us so that he could face temptation. Philippians 2, verse 6, although he existed in God, he did not hold on to that, but emptied himself, emptied himself of all those privileges that he had as God.

He did not empty himself of the fact he is God. That is impossible. God can never stop being God.

So even when Jesus was on earth, he was God. That's why people worshipped him and he accepted it. No man can accept it.

That's why he could forgive people's sins. But though he was God, he never used his powers on earth. He lived as an ordinary man.

He never used his heavenly credit card to take any of the resources of heaven. He had it, but he didn't use it. In the garden of Gethsemane, when Peter tried to defend him, he said, Peter, put your sword back.

With one word, I can call 72,000 angels to come down to deliver me, but I will not call them. He had power, which he never used. This is the wonderful thing about Jesus.

He had power to turn the stones into bread, but he would not use it. He had power to jump off the roof of the temple and not be hurt, but he would not do it. He never did anything that we cannot do, because he became like us.

That was part of his humility. There was no need for that, but he became like us so that he can be an example for us. And then it says, he even became a servant.

He first became a man, verse 6, then he became a servant, verse 7, and then verse 8, he became like a criminal. He humbled himself in three stages, and here's the important word, verse 9, therefore, verse 9. Do you understand the meaning of therefore? Therefore means because he did this, because he humbled himself, humbled himself, humbled himself, therefore, that was the reason God exalted him and gave him

the throne, the highest place in the universe. So I ask you, okay, he had the highest place in the universe before he came to earth, but when he came to earth as a man, the only way he could get back to that highest place in the universe was by humbling himself every single day for 33 and a half years.

That's how he overcame. Have you seen these scriptures? Or do you read the scriptures superficially, carelessly, and just believe what people teach you? I've always been challenged by the Berean Christians in Acts 17. Even when the apostle Paul preached, it says they searched the scriptures to see whether what Paul was preaching was according to the scripture or not.

Wonderful example. That's why they never went astray. That's why there's no letter to the Bereans in the Bible.

Why? Because Paul never had to correct any wrong teaching among them. Because any preacher came along, the Bereans would say, well, praise the Lord, good to hear you, but we'll tell you next week whether we agree with you or not. We like to check the scriptures because they didn't have a Bible with them like we have.

Today we can check immediately, but they had to take one week to go to the synagogue, look at the handwritten Old Testament and check whether this guy is preaching the truth. So to see Jesus like this makes all the difference in our life. It says in verse 8 that he was obedient to the point of death on the cross.

The mark of humility is total obedience to God. Humility is not before men primarily. In human beings, we emphasize humility before men.

We say so-and-so is a very humble man. What do you mean by that? It means he doesn't have any airs about himself. He doesn't act like a big man.

He's willing to speak to the ordinary person. He doesn't try to show off to you or make you feel small. These are all our understanding of humility, which is very true, which is good.

Jesus had it. But Jesus' primary humility was before God and that you don't know. Actually, you don't know whether I'm a humble man or not before God because you don't know whether I'm obeying God in my thoughts, in the way I handle my money, in my private life.

You don't know how I speak to my wife at home. You don't know how I speak to other people. You don't know how I treat somebody who cheated me.

You don't know these things. So you really don't know whether I'm humble or not. You can see me on the outside and say, oh, what a humble brother.

It doesn't have any value. That's why I say the opinions of men are fit for the trash can. And I say that to you also.

Don't think too much of yourself just because somebody thinks you're a trash can. And go before God and say, Lord, what do you think? And humility before God is by obedience. He humbled himself by becoming obedient even to the point of death, which is the most difficult thing for us to do on the cross.

So today the Lord says to us, if you want to follow me, take up your cross every day and follow me. You can't take it up once for all. Every day you've got to take up your cross and follow me.

And to be obedient to the point of death, to the point of taking up the cross every day in secret, in private, in all my waking hours, every opportunity I get to die to myself, I accept it. Every situation where somebody puts me to death, I bow my head and say, okay, that is the humble man. Who knows? I don't know anything about you.

Some of you I've known for 40 years, but I don't know whether you're humble. I'll tell you honestly, I don't know whether you're humble before God. Most of you appear very humble before me, but I don't know whether you're humble before God.

And oh, my dear brothers and sisters, I wish you would throw the opinions of men in the trash can, whatever they think about you. Don't let that puff you up. Don't be a fool.

Get before God and ask him to show you whether you're obedient in the little things of daily life, whether you're obedient to the point of death, in the different situations you face every day, whether you're willing to die and follow Jesus. You know that. And the devil knows that.

God knows that. Even your wife may not know it, but you know it. What does your wife know about your thought life? What does she know whether you're dying to yourself in your thought life, when you're out there in your office or in the bus or somewhere? She doesn't know a thing.

She doesn't know you're humble or not. That's why I say throw her opinion also in the trash can. Live before God.

He's the only one with whom we have to do finally. And his opinion alone matters. And if you really fight this battle to live before God's face, you will experience true humility.

And then the proof of it will be God will give you grace. One Peter 5 says God gives his grace to the humble. And when God gives his grace to you, you know what happens? Romans 6 14 says sin cannot rule over you because you're under grace.

If any sin rules over you, you're not under grace. If you're sin, any sin you're still enslaved to, you're not under grace. I'll tell you the truth.

You may never hear another preacher tell you that, but it is the truth. When grace is upon a person, when he's under grace, Romans 6 14 is clear. Sin cannot rule over him.

He will rule over sin. And the only way to get grace is to humble ourselves before God. By being obedient in secret.

And that is why I said in the beginning, I wish I could convince everybody, every believer that every commandment of God is for your good. Don't we accept something which is for our good? Supposing you in your office, your boss calls you to the office and say, I'm going to triple your salary today. Oh, will you, will you rejoice in that? Sure.

That's for your good. And in the same way, every commandment of God, every commandment is like God saying to me, I'm going to triple your salary. I said, Lord, great.

I want that. Do you look at Jesus' commandments like that? See Deuteronomy and chapter 10, even in the Old Testament, even under the old covenant, the Deuteronomy chapter 10, Moses told the Israelites Deuteronomy 10. Please remember these words, my dear brothers.

Remember them, remember them. Deuteronomy chapter 10 and verse 12 onwards. And now Israel.

And I believe what God said to Israel, then you can say to you, put your name there. Put your name there. God is speaking.

Now you, what does the Lord your God require of you? But to fear the Lord your God, to walk in his ways and to love him and to serve the Lord, not half-heartedly, but with all your heart and all your soul. That's what the Lord requires of you. And to keep all the Lord's commandments and all his laws, which I'm commanding you today for your good.

Did you get that? Those three last words, which I'm commanding you for your good. It's not because God is going to get something by your obedience. God's not going to get anything by your worshiping him.

Millions of angels are worshiping him better than you and I. It's for your good that he tells you to worship him. It's for your good that he says, don't take any glory to yourself. When people give you glory, don't touch it, give it to me.

God says, for what? You think God wants glory? He's already got millions of angels and he's God of glory from all eternity before there was anything created. He doesn't want your petty glory, but he says, for your good. When people honor you, don't touch it, give it to me.

That's to protect me from pride, from protecting me from losing grace. That when people honor me, I immediately pass it on to God. So behold the Lord your God, verse 14, to him belongs heaven and the highest heaven and the earth and all that is on it.

Yet the Lord set his affection to love you. Think of that. Verse 17, the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, great, mighty, awesome, and he does not show any partiality.

I love that. Don't think you're a special favorite of God. Everybody's a special favorite of God, not just you, but he's given you commandments for your good.

And the 1,500 years after Moses said that, most people in Israel did not believe it or obey it. Even the man after God's own heart, David, when he saw about Sheba, instead of turning his eyes away and running back into his room, he completely forgot about God's commandment and committed two terrible sins, adultery followed by murder. But he was under the old covenant.

That's like children who are not even in the kindergarten. It's not serious. If a one-year-old baby spoils his diapers, it's not serious.

But if a 20-year-old has to go around with diapers and spoils it every day, that's pretty serious. That's the difference between old covenant and new covenant. It's pretty serious.

When you do something, which an old covenant person did, it's very serious. They were treated like little children. So, when you come to the New Testament, we read Jesus saying in John 14.

See, verse 14 is a verse that everybody loves. John 14, 14. Don't you love this verse? That Jesus says, if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

And yet, I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, how many of you can honestly say you've experienced it? Most of us have to say, yeah, if I'm honest, I have to say it doesn't seem to work in my life when I pray.

And I'll tell you why. Because you take that verse without reading the next verse.

That's why. You take a verse out of its context. If you love me, keep my commandments.

Yeah, that's connected to if you ask anything in my name, I'll do it. So, when I take those two verses together, what I get is, oh Lord, I love you. I don't want anything on this earth.

I'm not asking for a car or a house or anything. I want you. And I want to keep your commandments.

I love you and I want to keep your commandments. So, I'm going to ask for something in your name. If you ask anything in my name, I'll do it.

In the context, I'm asking you, dear Lord, in your name, I ask you, please help me to keep your commandments. That's the prayer of verse 14. If you ask anything in my name, in the context of verse 15, and the Lord says, really? Okay, I'll grant it.

Verse 16, I will ask the Father, and this is how I'll answer your prayer. He'll give you the Holy Spirit, who will be a helper to help you keep my commandments. And he'll be with you forever.

You'll always be able to keep my commandments. So, I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, to learn to read scripture in its context. Don't take verse 14 all by itself.

Take verse 14 along with verse 15 and verse 16, and you'll understand what he's talking about, and you'll find it always works. If you take verses out of its context, it won't work. But I found it works.

It really does work. If you love me, keep my commandments. And I say, Lord, I ask in your name, please help me to keep my commandments.

And the Lord says, I'll give you my Holy Spirit, and you'll be able to keep it. And it's really true, brothers. When God fills me with the Holy Spirit, I'm able to keep commandments like, put away all anger, A-L-L, all anger.

Ephesians 4.31. A commandment that is disobeyed by most Christians. Or, if you love money, you cannot serve God. Luke 16.13. How many Christians believe that? I'm not talking about earning money.

I believe, I'll tell you what I believe. We must earn as much money as we can with our abilities, without losing, seeking the kingdom of God first. Seeking the kingdom of God first, and His righteousness, being righteous in everything, we must earn as much money as we can.

Yeah, that's what Jesus taught about a man who went with one talent, and he got 10. Boy, he got a commendation from Jesus. And the lazy guy who kept his one as one, he got a rebuke.

So I learned from that, you must earn as much as you can. But we're not to love it. There's a difference between earning and loving.

There are people who earn nothing, like the beggars in the street here. They love money. Have you ever met a beggar who doesn't love money? I've never met one.

Some people think it's only the rich people who love money. No, every human being loves it, except those who have learned to love God. They are freed from it.

So that's a commandment. I love Jesus, and I want to keep that commandment. Don't be anxious.

Leave tomorrow's matters for tomorrow. Today's problems are enough for today. It's a command.

The same God who said, do not murder, do not commit adultery, said, do not be anxious. Is it a suggestion? If possible, don't be anxious. If possible, don't murder.

If possible, don't commit adultery. No. A clear cut.

Don't commit adultery. Don't murder. Sometimes you may be tempted to commit adultery, but you say, hey, no, I can't do it.

You may be tempted even to murder. No, I won't do it. You can be tempted to be anxious and say, no, I can't do it, because God has commanded me.

I love him, and I want to keep his commandments. I want you to turn to Romans in chapter 1. Romans is the great epistle that explains the gospel very clearly, right from chapter 1 all the way to chapter 12, and finally chapter 16, where Satan is crushed under our feet. So it's very interesting.

Romans 1 begins with a little phrase, and Romans last chapter ends with the same phrase. So the purpose of the gospel is, in Romans chapter 1, we are told in verse 5, we have received grace from God and been made apostles to bring about the obedience of faith in the whole world for Jesus' name's sake. What is the phrase? The obedience of faith.

You go to the last chapter of Romans, and it says, now this wonderful gospel, verse 25 and 26, which was kept secret for hundreds, thousands of years, my gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, Romans 16, 25, it's a mystery which has been kept secret, now is manifested, why? By the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, it has been made known in all nations leading to the obedience of faith. So the whole book of Romans is bracketed between these two statements, same statement, obedience of faith, obedience of faith. The whole book is about the obedience of faith.

There was no obedience of faith in the Old Testament. It was the obedience of fear. If you don't obey me, God says, I'll punish you with sickness and your enemies will rule over you and you become beggars, you'll better borrow, etc., all types of things in Deuteronomy 28.

But if you obey me, I will bless you and you'll be prosperous and you'll be healthy. It was the obedience of fear and the obedience of selfishness. God will bless me if I obey.

Okay, let me obey. Like today also that time gospel is preached, if you give your tithe to God, he will bless you in so many ways. It's the obedience of selfishness.

That is not the obedience in the New Testament. It's the obedience of faith. I believe that every commandment God has given, and by the way, tithing is not a New Testament commandment, forget about that.

Every commandment in the New Testament has been given to me for my good. For example, we read that earlier in the memory verse, Matthew 6 and verse 14. If you forgive men their sins, your heavenly father will forgive you.

But if you don't forgive men, your heavenly father will not forgive you. Now, I can look at forgiving a person two ways. This guy has done some terrible evil to me, but I better forgive him because I don't want to go to hell.

Is that the obedience of faith? No. It's the obedience of fear. It's second best, I agree.

Old covenant is better than no covenant. But old covenant is not new covenant. If I forgive someone because I'm afraid that if I don't forgive him, God won't forgive me and I'll go to hell.

It's good, but it's not the best. The good is the enemy of the best. You know what the best is? Obedience of faith.

It doesn't matter to me whether I go to heaven or hell. I love Jesus, and so I'm going to forgive everybody. It's completely different.

Many times you have heard me preach in the church, if you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you. And many of you have decided to forgive others. Good.

Now I want to encourage you to rise above the old covenant, the obedience of fear, to the obedience of the new covenant, the obedience of faith. Lord, I obey you because I love you. It doesn't matter to me one bit whether I go to heaven or hell.

I love you and I'm going to keep that commandment to forgive those who have harmed me like you forgave on the cross. See, when we stand before the Lord in the final day, we will discover it is not what we did that is important. That is important.

But we will discover in the final day that something more important than what we did was the question, why did you do it? That'll be the important question in the final day. What we did is of course important. If I go and slap somebody or cheat somebody, I have to answer for that what I did.

But why I did it, for example, preaching, you say that's not a sin. Of course it can be a sin. You know preaching can be a sin.

If I preach to make money, I don't think anybody does that in this church. But it's possible in this church to preach to get honor. That can happen in CFC too.

You can sing to get honor. It's as bad as preaching for money. In fact, it's worse.

I'll tell you why it's worse. Because I get the honor of I don't preach for money. And I get honor.

And I want that honor. That's worse. The other guy is open about it.

He says, I want money. That's why I preach. He's better.

Then this guy was seeking honor. Why we do something, you will discover in the final day. I'm preparing you for the final examination.

That's the day the Lord comes. And I'm telling you the subjects that are going to be tested in the final examination. Not just what you do.

10 marks for that. 90 marks for why you did it. Okay? 10 marks for what you did.

90 marks for why you did it. Have you got the proportion? The obedience of faith. I love you, Lord.

That's why I do it. It also is for my good. I know it.

You love me so much. I know you love me. So it's for my good.

I really believe that forgiving others is for our good. You're able to sleep better at night. You don't toss about at night thinking what that chap did and how you're going to reply to him.

All that disappears when you've forgiven him. That's for your good. But even more than that, it's the obedience of love for Jesus.

And every commandment of God is like that. For example, verse 24, Matthew 6, 24. No one can serve two masters.

No one means no one. And the two masters are God and wealth. Mammon is a word for wealth.

Wealth means money, property, real estate, stocks and shares. Anything that has got money value. He didn't say you can't have it.

Even Jesus had it. Judas Iscariot kept the bag for the money that people gave Jesus. Nobody gave money to Judas.

So Jesus had money, and he didn't spend it all the same day. He kept it for use next week. So it was like a savings account that Judas was keeping.

So that's okay to have it, but to love it and to serve it, you cannot love money and serve money and be a disciple of Jesus Christ. So the obedience of faith is, Lord, I believe that. I believe that I cannot serve you if I serve money.

I will earn money as much as possible, certainly. I will use money frugally, wisely, without wasting it. I will save money like you saved.

All that I can do, but I will not love it, and I will not live for it. I will not serve that as my master. I will only serve you.

It's an alternate master pulling me away. It's like you're engaged to this wonderful man who's going to be your husband, and another man is pulling you. Hey, come along with me.

Come along with me. Come along with me. That's how money pulls people away from God, and all of us face it.

All of us face it. I'll tell you, I've been a Christian for 57 years, and I have battled it, this love of money, for 57 years. It becomes easier and easier and easier and easier and easier, but if you think you're free from it, you're deceiving yourself.

I remember a man who was in our church, has left it now. He's quite a rich person. When he came to see me one day, many years ago in my house, I said, Brother, your problem is you love money.

He was quite offended. He said, Oh no, Brother Zak, I've been, I'm free from that. I said, wonderful.

I said, I'm not yet free. I'm still struggling. Okay.

And three months later, he was out of the church. What led him astray? Love of money. Face up to it.

Love of money is like an onion. You can peel off layer after layer, after layer, layer after layer. You can make it thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner.

There's very little left, but it'll get to zero only when Jesus comes. I haven't got to zero yet, but the onion is much thinner today than it was 57 years ago. Work on it.

Work on it. Determine that you will never love money. Or a word like, do not be anxious.

Verse 25. Don't be anxious about what you're going to eat, what you're going to drink, what's going to happen if there's a depression or a recession, or what happens if I lose my job, et cetera, et cetera. Where will I get clothes from? How will I educate my children? A second time.

Do not be anxious. Verse 31. First of all, verse 25, do not be anxious.

Again, in verse 31, do not be anxious. Again, in verse 34, do not be anxious. Three times.

When I read the 10 commandments in Exodus 20, I don't see the Lord saying three times, do not commit murder. Do not commit murder. Do not commit murder.

I don't see him saying three times, do not commit adultery. Do not commit adultery. Do not commit adultery.

I don't see him repeating these commandments in the commandments. But when it comes to this, do not be anxious, three times in about 10 verses. That shows that Jesus knew we will take do not commit murder and do not commit adultery seriously.

So saying it once is enough. But when we hear do not be anxious, we do not take it seriously. He knows that.

That's why he repeats it three times. And tell me honestly, isn't that true? Isn't it true in your life that you take the commandment do not murder more seriously than do not be anxious? That's why the Lord repeats it three times for you and me. It's a commandment.

But you say, I can't help it. It's like the chap who said, I can't help committing adultery. What to do? I'm not married, so I have to commit adultery.

I can't help it, Lord. Does it say that there's an excuse given for a single people to commit adultery in the law? No. You say, you don't know what pressures I'm under.

I get anxious. I don't care what pressure you're under. Whatever pressure you may be, you cannot commit murder.

You cannot commit adultery. You cannot be anxious. When you take it like that, it will work in your life.

But if you treat it lightly, oh, it's only a suggestion. If possible. If possible, don't commit murder.

If possible, don't worship idols. But we never say that about any other thing. Just for your information, do you know there's only one commandment in the Bible which says, if possible, that is a commandment.

If possible. I'll show you where it is. Romans chapter 12.

I've learned to read the Bible exactly, slowly, carefully, and it's changed my life. I would encourage you to read the Bible slowly, carefully, exactly. Romans chapter 12, verse 16.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. There has to be an if possible. Otherwise, I'll be living in torture all the time.

I'm trying to be at peace with somebody. He doesn't want to be at peace with me. But the Bible says, be at peace with him.

I've got to go running to his house every day. God says, no, you don't have to go running to his house every day. If possible.

Because that is a commandment dependent on another person also. So therefore, the Lord says, if possible, the only place where it says if possible is where depends on another person. If he doesn't want to be at peace with me, what can I do? Forgive him is easy.

It doesn't say if possible, forgive him. Forgive him. That's entirely up to me.

To be at peace with him, that depends on him and he doesn't want to be at peace with me. If your wife is the quarrelsome type or your husband is a quarrelsome type, you can't be at peace at home. What to do? But it's not your fault.

If possible, if possible, it's the only commandment which says if possible. So the obedience of faith is the obedience of love and faith is the way God wants us to obey. And when we realize that this is for our good, like he said, every commandment is for your good.

I don't know whether you realize that. People who love money are miserable. People are anxious, get all types of problems in their life.

They get ulcers in their stomach. God says, I don't want you to have ulcers in your stomach. You don't forgive others and you have headaches and all types of problems.

You get arthritis because you don't forgive somebody. I said, God says, I don't want you to get arthritis. Forgive them.

It is all for our good, physical good, spiritual good, eternal good. Why does God tell us to read the scriptures? Is that for our good or not? Some people think, oh, they say you must read the Bible every morning before you go to work. It's like you must eat your food every day.

What a terrible commandment. I have to eat food every day. You never say that.

If he sees it's for our good, you give a chocolate to a child and say, you must eat it. He says, Mommy, you don't have to tell me you must eat it. Don't say anything.

I'll just eat it. Because he knows I love this. Think if you go to commandments like that.

Let me read to you why God gave us the Bible. 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. Why God gave us the Bible.

If you got a copy of my commentary, that 1000 page commentary through the Bible, some of you got it. The very first thing I've written there on the first page is why God gave us the Bible. And it's an expanded explanation of 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17.

That's why God gave us the Bible. And you know, those who have bought that book commentary, I have suggested to them, read three pages every day. Just three pages, at least.

In one year, you'll finish the book, including some days that you forget to read it. And at the end of it, you will know the Bible better than you've ever known it in your life. Is that a very difficult thing to read three pages a day? Try and do it.

Scripture is given to us for teaching us, 2 Timothy 3, 16, for reproofing us, that means to give us a strong rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness, just like we go to a college to be trained in a particular profession. So that you, the man of God, the woman of God, may become perfect, complete, equipped for every good work in this world. You know, why do you go to college and get a degree so that you can be equipped to get a job? I never wanted to be said, I worked in the Navy for a number of years and I worked very hard when I was training in that, in the military academy.

And I never wanted to be said about me that I worked to be equipped to be a good naval officer more than I worked studying the scriptures to be equipped for his work. Never. Lord, if I could do that for a salary and for an earthly job so diligently, oh, I must do this a hundred times better to equip myself to be able to serve you.

I want to encourage all of you, especially young people, this commandment is for your good. Read the scriptures, meditate on it daily. It will go well with you.

In Psalm 1, it says, blessed is the man. Do you want this blessing? There are many blessings in scripture. Here's one of them.

Blessed is the man, Psalm 1, who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the path of sinners or sit in the seat of scoffers, but that's the negative things. The positive thing is blessed is the man who delights in the word of God, in God's commandments. The law of the Lord means his commandments.

He delights to read and study God's commandments and to keep them. And he meditates, Psalm 1, to day and night saying, how can I keep that one? I heard today that I must not love money. How can I keep that? I heard today I should not be anxious.

How can I keep that? I heard today that I should forgive others out of a good motive, out of love. How can I keep that? He meditates on that day and night. Lying down in bed, he thinks about it.

He will be like a fruitful tree planted by the streams of water, always green, plenty of fruit. Even the leaf never becomes green. And this is the best part of it.

Whatever he does, he prospers. I can tell you that after 57 years of being a believer, whatever I have done has prospered. I don't mean financially, that also, but spiritually, primarily.

I meditate on God's word. I've done it for 57 years. Not just read it, meditate on it.

How can I obey that commandment? How can I do it better? And I want to testify that God's word is true. Whatever you do will prosper. It's for your good.

Every commandment is good, for your good. Love your wife as Christ loved the church. Meditate on it.

How did Christ love the church? I want to love my wife like that. It's for your good. Wives, submit to your husbands as the church is to Christ.

It is for your good. I could go through the whole New Testament and tell you every commandment is for your good. Believe that.

It is for my good. And let your obedience be the obedience of faith and the obedience of love. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, how good you are. We're just excited to know you as our daddy. We have no fears or worries in the world.

Like a little two-year-old sitting on his father's lap without a worry in the world. We sit on your lap, our heavenly father. Many of us have problems and trials.

I don't know all of them. But I know you know it all. You know it all.

And you said that even the hairs on your head are numbered. Please help anyone going through a trial right now to believe that. That even the hair on his or her head is numbered and you care for them.

Don't let them believe the lie of the devil that their father in heaven doesn't care for them. Can a mother forget her sucking child? That she should not have compassion on the son of her womb. Thus says the Lord, even they may forget, but I will not forget you.

Be comforted, brothers and sisters. We have a loving father who is a father and mother all combined up in heaven who cares for us. Thank you, Father, in Jesus name.

Amen.

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