

The Path to Perfection

by Zac Poonen

The Christian life should be about seeking Jesus, not experiences or blessings, and finding joy and rest in Him.

Duration: 14:55

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, John 8:12, Philippians 4:11-13, Colossians 2:6-7, Hebrews 4:9-11

Topics: "New Covenant", "Christian Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the beauty of the new covenant, where the focus shifts from seeking blessings to valuing a personal relationship with Jesus. It contrasts seeking 'it' (blessings, experiences) with seeking 'Him' (Jesus Himself), highlighting the importance of finding satisfaction in Jesus alone rather than in expectations or experiences. The speaker shares a personal testimony of transitioning from seeking blessings to finding fulfillment in Jesus, leading to a life of rest, joy, and contentment.

Transcript

The wonderful thing about the new covenant is that we have been brought to a person. In the old testament they said the thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path but Jesus came and said I am the light. And you know we can be taken up with the word or with Jesus like we heard today.

We can be looking for his blessing or him and that's what makes the difference in our Christian life. You know that you've come into the new covenant when you've come to value this personal relationship with Jesus and daily walk with him which means more to you than any blessing he can give. The test of a good marriage for example is not that a husband admires his wife's cooking or the way she keeps the house or looks after the children.

Not what she does but herself. In the same way with a wife you know that you've got a good marriage when she's not just thinking of what all he can do for her and have a complaint when he doesn't do those things but if she's taken up with him and loves him as he just for himself. There are very few marriages like that unfortunately but that's a really good marriage and that applies even in our earthly life.

If you're taken up with what your husband or your wife can do then you'll be disappointed. But if you're taken up with the person himself or herself you'll have a happy marriage. Otherwise you have a lot of expectations from each other and those expectations are not always met then you're disappointed and you can inwardly even if you don't outwardly complain you can inwardly complain your marriage is unhappy.

I feel a lot of Christians have that type of relationship with Jesus Christ. They have a lot of expectations. I expect him to do this and do that and do the other thing.

I think even in the church people are disappointed when they have an expectation from others. Even older people can expect younger people to respect them and they're disappointed when they don't get it. It's a blessed life when you're free from expectations.

You're taken up with the person of Jesus himself. As I've often said the first book I studied in scripture when I was baptized in 1961 wasn't my choice but the Lord somehow led me to study the song of Solomon to see my personal relationship with Jesus Christ there and right from that time which is 50 years ago I found that little secret of having a personal relationship with Jesus meaning more to me than work for him or even reading the bible. I'll tell you honestly I don't get so convicted if I don't read the bible one day.

I feel terribly convicted if I lost my love for Jesus Christ one day. Far more important. I'm not looking for blessings but himself and if you're finding your Christian life unsatisfactory not what it should be not exciting as it should be.

I believe the Christian life should be so fantastically exciting. It is for me. I've been a Christian for 52 years and it's not boring.

It's exciting because I'm not taken up with things or experiences or blessings or with Jesus himself. I want to read to you something which some of you may have already read but it was written about a hundred years ago by a godly man who was comparing the difference between Christians seeking for an experience and Christians looking for Jesus himself. So he titles it are you seeking for him or you're seeking for it.

It is some blessing, some experience, some healing perhaps, some baptism in the holy spirit or victory over sin. Even that can be an it. There's so many it's that Christians are seeking after.

They'll be frustrated. Christian life is seeking after him. Like I said in a marriage you can seek for it in a wife or you can seek for her.

You can seek for it in a husband what he can do for me or you can be happy with him even if he does nothing. So he says it is a thing. Him, Jesus is a person.

If we receive it we will one day lose it. A lot of people have an experience and then they lose it and 90 out of 100 people who receive it one day lose it and that keeps them continuously then again seeking to receive and lose and that makes life very unsatisfactory. The thing, this it is not able to do the work of a person.

I read someone of somebody who lost it five times because he did not confess it publicly and anything that is so easily lost is not good enough for God's purposes. In fact it is so losable that we don't know exactly when we have it and when we don't have it. Am I filled with the spirit or am I not filled with the spirit? And so we find we have to seek it again.

Maybe with strong cries and tears we have to do that to retain it. The blessing is such a valuable thing that we must keep watching it and guarding and keeping it as that we have no time or room for any other work and we become religiously selfish in our endeavors to keep it. Usually people who have this it experience

are quite proud that I received it whether it's speaking in tongues or some revelation on some truth.

To keep it we must talk about it and preach about it and write about it. We must pronounce our Shibboleth correctly. We must associate only with those who believe in our it and denounce those who don't believe in it.

I don't have any controversy. I bear no ill feeling. I tried this it life for many many hard and weary and unsatisfactory years.

I received it and plainly and clearly received it. I sought for it and I got it according to my faith it was done. I received and so I walked as I was taught.

I was I prayed faithfully. No Roman Catholic could have been more punctilious in doing duty and fasting and I was faithful for this. I had to do this all to keep it and for years I fasted on Friday to keep this it.

Prayer and profession and fasting were not enough to keep it but this it was so slippery it would slide away and I would lose it and I thought I would die. Works good works were all brought into play and I did everything I preached and I fed the poor and established and did many things and I never read novels that by which I would lose it. I never went fishing or saw a play or a race or a game because I feared I would lose it.

I gave my money and time and talents freely to seek so that I could serve God and secure it. I tried to avoid laughing and I separated myself and condemned others and I wore simple clothes and lived a plain life. I went to meetings and conferences and so that I might receive it.

I held on like this for years and I thought I saw thousands receive it as I preached about this. I believed I was doing God's will and to think of anything more or better was a delusion. It became I would go to holiness meetings and hear only preachers who preached about it.

We became narrower and narrower in our way of thinking until we crowded out other believers and we said mean things about others because we had to do that to keep it. I wore out my voice and broke down my health. My life was a failure and in this time of dilemma when my heart and flesh failed me I was on the point of giving up everything.

A person, a person came to my rescue. It was Jesus. He quieted my soul.

He hushed my murmurings and complainings. He whispered to me in love that all the its in the Christian life could never satisfy me but he himself could. He spoke to me, gently suggested that I take him as everything.

I agreed and I said yes to him and that was all. It wasn't any new blessing. One thousand blessings would not have met my need.

The blesser came. Him a person and my life was changed. Now he abides with me.

He satisfies. All the doing is already done. I rest and rejoice in him.

The hardness that was in my life is gone. His sweetness has come and his gentleness has made me great. I am his and he is mine.

He never leaves me. He loves me. The him life is a thousand times better than the it life I know because I've tried both.

So beloved, receive him. You know the whole Christian life is supposed to be centered around Jesus and as long as we aren't seeking something other than him we're going to be disappointed. In the new covenant, perfection is to be taken up with Jesus himself.

Life becomes so relaxed and easy, the Christian life. I don't believe the Christian life was meant to be a strain and a struggle. There is a lot of place for sacrifice and self-denial and all that but in the midst of it all there is a rest, an inner rest where nothing disturbs you.

You know the bible speaks about a rest for the people of God. It's from that point of rest that we move on to perfection. It's not, I don't know how to describe it, there is a pressing on to perfection but there's a rest all the time as we are pressing on.

It's not a strain and a burden, it's a happy life. It's one where like Jesus could say as he was going to the cross, my joy I give unto you. There's a continuous joy and that's the way we know because like I've often mentioned in God's presence there is fullness of joy and for myself I have made it a rule in my life that when I don't have fullness of joy in my life at any particular moment I say Lord I'm in the wrong place because I'm not in your presence.

I'm taken up with something else and I shouldn't be and it doesn't matter if that happens or doesn't happen. I say to myself the only thing serious in life is sin. That'll rob me of God's presence so I don't want to lose God's presence.

It doesn't matter if some things don't work out right and I hope out for something and didn't happen or something I tried to do didn't work out, it got messed up, never mind I have him. It's like a husband telling his wife it doesn't matter if the chapatis got burned and the food was useless, we got each other. That's a happy marriage.

101 things go wrong in a home and a husband and wife are happy they got each other. Can you think of a marriage like that? Wouldn't you like a marriage like that? That's the only type of marriage I tell you which God wants his children to have. It's the same with Jesus.

I say Lord it doesn't matter if so many things don't work out the way I expect it. The healing I wanted in my body I didn't get, doesn't matter. I have you and when you have that type of relationship with Jesus you have entered into the new covenant even if you cannot explain it or teach it to anybody.

God bless you all.

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