

The River of God

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a sensitive conscience and growing spiritually by becoming more like Jesus, renewing our minds, and pressing on to perfection.

Duration: 54:43

Scripture: John 1:14, John 4:14, Romans 6:14, 2 Corinthians 1:20, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Philippians 4:4, Philippians 4:7

Topics: "Deeper Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of God to use anyone for His purposes. He shares a story of a young girl who became a catalyst for many people coming to the Lord. The speaker encourages the audience to be open to opportunities to share the gospel, even in unexpected encounters. He also warns about the dangers of being drawn to worldly pleasures and impurity, urging the listeners to find satisfaction in God's Word and living water. The sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and being mindful of the influences around us.

Transcript

Jesus was a great master at using illustrations, pictures to make the truth of God real and clear to our weak human minds. He told Nicodemus once, if I have spoken to you about earthly things and you can't understand them, you don't believe, how shall you believe if I tell you about heavenly things, John 3.12. So many of the things of heaven, the things of life in the Holy Spirit, the things of the divine life, of eternal life, because they are difficult for our human mind to understand and comprehend, Jesus used, the scriptures also use simple illustrations that we can grasp. The Holy Spirit as we saw in our last session is pictured like the breath of God, breathing, and the Holy Spirit makes our conscience sensitive, that breath, Adam had a conscience, but in the Holy Spirit, when Jesus breathes on us, it makes our conscience far more sensitive than the average person.

Everybody's got a conscience, the children have got a conscience, unbelievers have a conscience, but when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, it makes us more and more sensitive. That's how I know that I'm growing in grace. One of the pictures I, that God's given me in my own mind for this is like, we can say our conscience is like a weighing machine.

And in the early days, it's before in our unconverted days, it's very insensitive. You put a one ton weight on that weighing machine and the needle just about moves, but you got to put one ton before the needle moves. In other words, you got to do something pretty serious before your conscience really bothers you.

It wasn't like that when we were born. Little children have a very sensitive conscience. It's very difficult for a three-year-old child to tell a lie with a straight face.

You can immediately make out when a child, three-year-old is telling a lie, you can see straight away from his face that he's telling a lie. But you wait another 20 years and he can tell you a lie with such a straight face that you'll believe him because he's killed his conscience through the years as he's grown up, allowing himself to be influenced by the standards of society around him or by standards of other Christians around him who don't have a sensitive conscience. And then we are born again and Jesus breathes on us and gives us the Holy Spirit.

And then his purpose is that our conscience becomes more and more sensitive. This weighing machine, which where the needle moved only when you put a one ton on it, after a while you find that, boy, you put 500 kilos on it and it moves. That's pretty good.

One ton is a thousand kilos. And then after a while, even a hundred kilos, kilograms makes the needle move. And a day comes when one kilogram makes the needle move.

And lo and behold, a day comes when one gram makes the needle move. One milligram makes the needle move. This is spiritual growth.

If you want to know whether you're growing spiritually, this is the absolute infallible test that your conscience has become more sensitive to little things, things that you would ignore in the olden days. You're quick to go and apologize to your wife for one word, which may not even have hurt her, but which was not very kind or a lot of thoughtless behavior. Selfishness is so rooted in us that we are constantly doing and saying thoughtless things.

And we shouldn't glory in the fact, well, I've been filled with the Holy Spirit. Well, you should be more thoughtful about others then. Jesus was so extremely considerate and thoughtful.

One of the, one of those passages in scripture, which really loved, which I love to read and which challenges me is the way Jesus dealt with the Samaritan woman who was divorced five times. And there was now sleeping with a man who was not even her husband, not legally married. And I asked myself, you can ask yourself, how would you deal with a woman who you knew was divorced five times and is now sleeping with a man, not legally married to him? How would you deal with her? Would you keep on trying to point out how divorce is wrong and show her one scripture after another and learn from Jesus? Jesus said, learn from me.

I'm gentle in heart. A great goal in life is to become like Jesus. And these encounters that Jesus had in scripture are lessons we can learn from.

It's not that Jesus endorsed divorce. Jesus was behind the inspiration and Malachi chapter two way. He says, I hate divorce.

Old Testament. He hated it much more in the New Testament. But there's a lot of difference between hating divorce and hating a divorcee.

A lot of it. Jesus never hated people. It's impossible.

God so loved the world. The world was full of murderers, thieves, adulterers, adulterers, divorcees, all name it. He loved the world and he gave his son.

And so I see that Jesus is very thoughtful and our desire should be Lord. I want my conscience to become very sensitive, very easy to fool ourselves that we're becoming spiritual because we know a lot of the Bible. You know, we go to more services, meetings, church, and our Bible knowledge increases by leaps and bounds.

We study the Bible. We listened to numerous CDs of powerful messages. We listened to a message and say, boy, that was a powerful message.

All that's great. But Bible knowledge doesn't make anyone spiritual because if Bible knowledge could make anyone spiritual, the devil would be the most spiritual person of all because he knows the Bible better than anyone else. He knows every doctrine.

He can explain any doctrine better than any of us can. It hasn't made him spiritual. And I'm sure the devil can preach pretty powerful sermons and very interesting sermons with a lot of interesting stories.

I've heard a lot of eloquent preachers, Christian preachers who are not spiritual, but they're very eloquent. They can hold your attention for one hour. They love money.

How can they be spiritual? They're proud, unapproachable. How can they be spiritual? So I'm not impressed by eloquence. All I'm saying is don't let any of these other things become the means by which you assess your spirituality or your ability to explain a doctrine.

Then there are another group of people who glory not in explanations but in experiences. And I've mingled a lot with those type of people also. They're always glorying in different experiences they had, spiritual experiences.

This experience and that experience of the Holy Spirit or visions and dreams and angels. And I'm not impressed. To tell you honestly, I've heard a lot of these things, people falling down and all types of things.

It doesn't impress me one bit. To me, the test is your conscience becoming more sensitive to little, little things, little, little sins which other people don't even call sin. To little areas of spiritual pride where you look down upon others.

Do you find that? Do you find yourself ever... When was the last time, for example, you went before God and said, Lord, that was really spiritual pride on my part to speak like that to somebody. I looked down a bit on him. Lord Jesus, I never see you looking down on anyone like that.

You always look with compassion even on those you disagreed with. Forgive me. Can you remember the last time you confessed spiritual pride to the Lord or selfishness? Lord, that was very selfish of me to do that.

You know, when I got light on this, this matter of a more... that Jesus breathes on me and makes me more sensitive, I began to see that this is the whole purpose of God in recreating me in the image of Christ. He's going to make me more and more like Christ by renewing my mind to think like Jesus thinks. And that's the way you know you're walking with him.

See, my wife and I have been married very happily for 43 years now. And she knows a lot about me today and the way I think than she did 43 years ago when we were married. You can love a person a lot.

I think we loved one another when we were married, but she didn't know my way of thinking. Now she does. But if we had lived separated from each other, seeing each other once in a while, she would not have known my way of thinking, even if she loved me.

You can say, what am I meaning? You can say you love Jesus as his bride, but if you don't meet frequently with him and you don't live with him, you won't get to know his way of thinking. It's like a wife. You know, there are sometimes in the modern world, I know in India, there are some men who find jobs in another country because they are so poor, they can't get a job where they are and they have to go to another country to work, to earn their living, to feed their family.

They come home for one month in a year. They see their wife for one month in a year out of necessity because they can't find any job in their hometown and high rates of unemployment. They don't get to know each other much.

I mean, they love one another. They don't get to know each other much because they don't live together too often. I find a lot of Christians like that.

I met them. They are good Christians. They love the Lord, but they don't seem to know more of the mind of the Lord.

And I find a lot of preachers like that. I've heard good preachers, but they're pretty boring. And when I hear a boring preacher, I know this guy doesn't know Jesus, but Jesus was not boring.

Can you ever imagine listening to a boring sermon from Jesus Christ? Whether he spoke for five minutes or five hours, it'd be always interesting. See, I've been in preaching now for, I first started preaching nearly 50 years ago. That's no credit.

It's just a gift God gave me. It doesn't make me superior to any other believer. That's my particular gift in the body.

The tongue cannot boast over the hand or the eyes, so I don't get any credit for it. But I believe that in my speaking, I must seek to be more sensitive. Even there, I need to be more sensitive in the way I communicate to people.

And that's why so many years now, almost after every single sermon I preach, I go home and judge myself. I say, Lord, I want to be sensitive to what you have to say to me. What did you think about what I shared today? Did I waste people's time? Did I waste even five minutes of people's time? Did I speak too long? Did I say something just to get some honor for myself? Did I try to say something funny to get a reputation as some comedian or a clown or something? I'm not a comedian or a clown.

I'm a representative of Almighty God. I'm to be a spokesman for God. So there are many areas through the years that I've had to cleanse myself from things that the Lord shows me in my conscience.

That's not the way you should be speaking. I wish every preacher in the world would do that. They'll bless their congregations a lot more.

So it's not everybody has got to cleanse themselves. Husbands have to cleanse themselves to be considerate and thoughtful about their wives and their needs. In India, for example, our Indian culture is such that the husband thinks he's a big king and the wife is not considered an equal.

So he doesn't think so much about treating his wife as an equal and respecting her. And I've sometimes said I had to say to Christians in our churches, I see you guys are very eager to listen to God and you want to read the Bible in the morning and hear God speaking to you. It's good habit to read the Bible, to hear God speaking to you.

But picture this in your mind, your wife is struggling with three little children in the kitchen, trying to cook food and look after the baby and all that. And you're sitting reading your Bible in the living room and saying, Oh God, speak to me. Maybe you're studying the tabernacle or something like that.

And what God's trying to say to you is close your Bible and go and help your wife. You don't hear that. You say, Lord, what's the meaning of this brazen altar in the tabernacle? He doesn't want to tell you that.

You see how we can be deaf to God's voice. That's what I mean by a selfish bent of mind. And we don't even have a clue that we are deep in sin.

Selfishness is a sin. At that moment, I'm thinking I'm very holy because I'm trying to understand the deeper meaning of the brazen altar in the tabernacle. And God couldn't care less whether you know the meaning of that or not.

He's not trying to explain the doctrines and scripture to us. He's trying to make us more like Jesus every day of our life. That'll never happen if we don't allow our mind to be renewed, whatever you are and every way.

I say, Lord, I want to do it better. I mean, if you're in a profession, you've got to think of Jesus as a carpenter. He didn't straight away start off as a perfect carpenter.

He had to learn a trade just like anybody else as a young man. And I'm sure he pressed on to perfection and everything he did. He would never give a sell a table to someone who just even rocking slightly, make it as perfect as possible as we can follow Jesus in every area.

I often say that as a little boy, if his mother, Mary told him to go to the village, well, they don't have running water in the villages. You know that the only way to get water is from a well. He said, Jesus, go and get some water for me.

And he would go with his wooden bucket to the well. You know, he'd come back with a full bucket of water, not a half bucket. It's easier to carry a half bucket than a full one.

It's in little things like this that you see the character of a man, he's godly. You give him a job to do and he'll do it to the best of his ability to perfection. And there's where we need to ask God and say, Lord, am I lazy about it? God's given me the grace to write some books, but I'm not interested in writing many books.

I say, Lord, if I write a book, I want it to be as close to perfection as possible. I want to express the mind of God in a book so that it's clear and simple, accurate, according to scripture, so that people can be drawn closer to you. And when I speak, it's the same thing.

I say, Lord, can the little children understand me? I'm so excited when an eight-year-old boy comes up to me and says, you know, I understood what you said today. That excites me more than anything any older person can say. Because I believe that Jesus spoke in such a way that little children could understand, not only understand, but they could pay attention without being distracted.

We must seek to be sensitive in our conscience towards the way we relate to other people. Whatever ministry you're doing, you may not be a preacher. I'm just speaking from my own experience.

But whatever ministry, every one of us has got a ministry in the body of Christ. It may not be mine. It may be another.

But whatever you do, if you cook a meal, if you look after children, you must seek to do it perfectly, but to press on to perfection. And it doesn't matter if the people around us are not interested. It's none of our business.

I don't have to find fault with my other fellow believers in my church. You don't have to find fault with your wife or husband. You got to press on to perfection.

I've got a tremendous passion for this. It's right from the beginning. We have a verse written on our in the pulpit in our home church.

Let us press on to perfection. One of the great verses that is one of the first messages that we started preaching in our church 36 years ago when we started our church in my home. Just about eight people.

That's what we preached on. Let's press on to perfection. And that's what we are preaching today.

Let's press on to perfection. That's why he's given us the Holy Spirit. That is found in Hebrews 6 verse 1. There's no such verse in the Old Testament.

You could not press on to perfection in the Old Testament because you didn't have the Holy Spirit. Now we have the helper. We have to grow.

And even in this matter of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not a static thing. It's not a once for all experience. I think that's a mistake.

Many friends, many of our Christian fellow believers and other groups have made. They think of it as a once for all experience. Being born again.

That's a once for all experience. Sure. Like being born.

We're not born 10 times into the world. We are born once. So we ask a person, are you born again? You're not born again every day.

But when you ask a person, are you healthy? That's not a once for all experience. I mean, you may have been very healthy five years ago and you may be sick as anything today. And I know a lot of people who say they were filled with the Holy Spirit some years ago, but they're not today.

And you look at their lives, you can make out they're not filled with the Holy Spirit. And the devil's fooled them with a date. I say dates are not the important thing.

I mean, we came a little early here and walked down the cemetery and I thought it was full of dates. Dates are for dead people. I'm not interested in dates.

I'm interested in reality. I don't even know the date I was born again. I was born again on a particular day, I'm sure.

It's like when I was traveling from the United States to Canada a few days ago, my plane came and landed in Toronto. But at some point I must have crossed the American border, the American Canadian border. It wasn't a gradual process that took one hour.

It was in a moment. One particular moment I was in America and the next moment the plane was over Canada. But I don't remember the exact moment.

But does that mean I didn't come to Canada? I did. I mean, just because I didn't know the time doesn't make a difference. So you may not know the moment you were born again.

I don't. Many of my children don't. It's usually the case with those who are born and brought up in Christian families that they're not able to pinpoint the exact date when they were born again because, you know, they may have asked Jesus to come into their life 500 times.

One of those times was real. Which one it was, we don't know. It doesn't matter.

The important thing is you cross the border and you came over into that kingdom of light. So dates are not important. It's not just the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not once for all.

It's continuous. And in that continuous thing, it's not just in the same level. Now I'll just show you what I mean.

If you turn with me to John's Gospel chapter 3. John's Gospel chapter 3. We read here, Jesus said to Nicodemus, verse 5, John chapter 3 and verse 5. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is pictured here as water. Water and the Spirit can also be translated as even, e-v-e-n, born of water, even the Holy Spirit.

Just like when John the Baptist said he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire, even fire. That means it's the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not different from the baptism in fire. It's just a picture.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is baptism in fire. Born of water, which means born of the Holy Spirit. Water, even the Holy Spirit.

So the new birth is pictured as being born of the Holy Spirit. And a person like Cornelius was filled with the Holy Spirit the day he was born again. It can happen.

As soon as they are born again, they can be filled with the Holy Spirit. But our capacity when we are born again is something like a cup. In the Psalms, we read, I'll lift up the cup of salvation.

It's a cup and God fills it. And it can't be more than filled. I'm filled and I've been born again.

But then I'm not to remain like that. The cup can, God wants to expand the cup to become a bucket and a tub. And when the water in a cup, if you pour it into a bucket, it's not full.

It's got to be filled again. And when the bucket is full and you pour that into a tub, that's not full. It's got to be filled again.

So that's why we need to be filled again and again and again. But each filling is to a greater capacity. I should not have the same capacity in my life after five years of being born again as I had when I was first born again.

I mean, if I am always the size of a cup and saying I'm filled with the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, that's not God's will. God wants us, our capacity to grow. The newborn believer can be filled with the Holy Spirit like Cornelius on the day he's born again.

The Apostle Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit at the end of his life, but his capacity was way more than Cornelius's capacity when he was born again. Both are filled with the Spirit, but there's a difference between the fullness of a cup and the fullness of a river. Way a lot of difference.

Both are water, but quite a difference in capacity. So you see that how Jesus also spoke about that in the Gospels. He speaks first about being born of water.

That's the right at the beginning. We start there with a cup and we must long that the cup must be filled. In other words, if all of my life is surrendered to Christ, I can be filled with the Holy Spirit the day I'm born again.

But if I don't surrender myself completely, then of course it's a problem. Then I don't know what happens. I know what happens to a person who's totally surrendered, but a person who's not willing to totally surrender, I don't know and I'm not interested in finding out.

We go to the next example of water in the Gospel. Jesus used the picture of water three times in the Gospels of John. The first is here and then in John chapter 4, he uses the picture of water again.

Again, a picture of the Holy Spirit. This time he's talking to the woman in Samaria and in John chapter 4, he says verse 14, whoever drinks of the water that I give him shall never thirst, but the water that I give him will be now. It's no longer a cup.

It's a well. Boy, what a lot of difference between a cup of water and a well of water. It's become a well of water springing up to eternal life.

I want to say a word about eternal life, a very much misunderstood word and I hope your children can understand what I'm saying. Eternal life doesn't mean a life that never ends. Some people's definition of eternity is a never ending.

Eternal life means a life that never ends, but people who go to hell also have a life that never ends. It says they burn in the everlasting fires. That's not eternal life, because we've got a definition of eternity wrong.

Eternity is not never ending, but not having a beginning and not having an ending. That's eternity. We must look back to the past and the future to find eternity.

Has no beginning, has no end. That's eternity. Eternal life is a life that had no beginning and has no end.

Whose life is that? Only God's. Not the angels, not mine, not yours. So eternal life is just another expression for the life of God.

He's the only one who's got eternal life. No beginning, no end. And it's another expression for the divine nature.

And God communicates that to us when he breathes on us the Holy Spirit. It's amazing. God's own nature coming into us.

In the Old Testament, they didn't have that. They had laws by which God controlled them, because he could not give the Holy Spirit to dwell in man's heart. We read in John 7, the Holy Spirit was not given.

John 7 39, because Jesus was not glorified. In what way was he not given? Didn't David have the Holy Spirit? Didn't Gideon have the Holy Spirit? Didn't Samson have the Holy Spirit? Yes. On the outside, like a shirt, it says they were clothed.

Judges 6 34 says Gideon was clothed with the Holy Spirit. That's the expression used in the Old Testament. It was like a shirt.

I can put it on and take it off. And that's what used to happen. Saul, King Saul had the Holy Spirit, then he lost it.

And even Lucifer, the head of the angels, was anointed, then he lost it. So they didn't have the Holy Spirit in the way we can have in the New Testament, dwelling within and strengthening us from within. They didn't have that.

And so now we can have the Holy Spirit within, from within, and springing up to be a well of water that springs up to everlasting life, to eternal life, God communicating his nature within us, so that I don't have to live by rules and regulations. Rules and regulations were a temporary, you know, stopgap arrangement. You know, like in a school, until they wait for the permanent teacher to come.

Maybe the school has appointed a permanent teacher and that teacher is not available for three months. They tell another person, OK, you hang on here for three months till the permanent teacher comes. I mean, that was how the law was.

The law was a stopgap arrangement, a temporary arrangement till people could receive the Holy Spirit. Life of rules and regulations. That's not the way God wanted us to live.

You can live a pretty good pure life with rules and regulations. And the illustration I love to use is of a pig that is tied with ten chains. The ten commandments are the ten chains by which God controlled the pigs in Israel.

And if they walk through a dirty world, they wouldn't get dirty, because every time they move this side, God would pull a chain, that side, God pull a chain. And you can keep a pig pretty clean, even in the dirtiest environment, if you keep controlling it with chains. And you can keep a church looking pretty holy, if you give them a bunch of rules and regulations and keep controlling them with these rules and regulations, like a lot of churches do.

All the children look very holy, sitting there like ten soldiers, not doing anything wrong. Go to their homes and the children are well behaved, except when you're not there. And all the guests think, oh, what lovely children.

It's all rules and regulations. It's not nature. It doesn't come from within.

It's like training a dog to behave like a cat, to say meow, meow, meow. It won't always say that. You provoke that dog and the real nature will come out.

So that's how it is with a lot of believers. They're almost trained to behave in a certain way, to act in a certain way, and they behave like that when they come to church, speak nicely, because they don't want to lose their reputation. They're supposed to be not like the other churches, but we're supposed to be a holy church.

And so they behave like that, but they don't behave like that when they're at home with their wives, because they let their guard down and they behave like barking dogs over there. They don't meow anymore, like in the church. So that's how, you know, that's why there's so much of hypocrisy when you live under the law.

But if you tell a cat, you got to always behave like a cat. No problem, he says. You're never supposed to bark, okay? Cats are sure, I'll never bark, because it's nature.

God wants to communicate to us his nature. This is the wonderful message of the new covenant. Do you know that it is possible? I mean, you may think it's impossible, but it is possible to come to a life where you will never tell a lie under any provocation, where you cannot hate a person no matter what he does, where you will forgive a person no matter what he does.

This is divine nature. That's the life of Jesus. People spat on him, whipped him, crucified him.

He said, Father, forgive them. You really believe the life of Jesus? Is it just a nice pious term, life of Jesus in me? Christ lives in me? Eternal life. This is the life of Christ.

But there is a price to be paid for it, to have this well, eternal life like a well of water springing up, springing up constantly. It's not something I have to, you know, in India we have hand pumps, where they put a deep pipe into the ground. We call it a bore well that goes six, seven hundred feet into the ground, where the water is, the deep recesses of the earth.

And then with a hand pump, you pump that water up all these six hundred feet and you get a water coming out of a little faucet. You keep pumping. You can get water that way also, but it's quite a struggle.

Life under the law is a little bit like that. But here Jesus said a well, you know, these springs, have you gone to a seen a spring? Even there's no, nobody pumping that spring. It's just springing up, springing up all the time.

You go endlessly. There are tourist spots where they go to see these springs and all the time, it never seems to be, never seems to end. It doesn't spring up just when the tourists are watching.

This is springing up all the time. It's not like Christians who are just trying to act spiritual when others are watching them. It's all the time, whether the tourists are there or not, it's springing up all the time.

That's how a real spring is. And Jesus said, I will give you a well of water that keeps springing up to everlasting life, to eternal life. It's a wonderful way to live.

This is new covenant life, where my inner needs are satisfying all the time, where there's a fullness of joy. Psalm 16 verse 11 has been a great verse for me. In thy presence, O Lord, there is fullness of joy.

Psalm 16 verse 11. How do I know whether I'm in God's presence? I will have fullness of joy. And if there is any circumstance or situation where I don't have fullness of joy and grumbling and complaining, I know I'm not in God's presence right now.

Whatever my theology, whichever church I belong to right now, I'm not in God's presence because in his presence, there's fullness of joy. Now, if the devil convinces us, if the devil can convince you that such a life is not possible on the earth, you are doomed to live a defeated life all your days. I know he's convinced many Christians.

It is impossible to live this life on earth. And I can tell them you're in your entire life, you will never come to this life. But if you believe what Jesus said, that I will put a well within you that's springing up into eternal life all the time, you say, Lord, that's your word.

To confess the truth is to say the same thing that Jesus said. That's all. Jesus said he will put a well of water in me that springs up into eternal life.

I say, Lord, it's going to be true. It's so important, dear brothers. There's a great verse in second Corinthians one verse 20.

That's been a blessing to me. Second Corinthians chapter one, verse 20. It says here about all the promises of God that are available to us.

There's a song we sing in India, you know, in some of our churches, in some in one group of churches, they make everyone take up their Bible, lift up their Bible like this in the meetings. And I remember a godly brother who used to insist in every meeting. He's dead now.

One of the godliest men I knew, he would insist that everybody hold up their Bible before the church service message begins and sing. Every promise in the book is mine. Every chapter, every verse, every line, all our blessings of his love divine, every promise in the book is mine.

And I love that every promise in the book of mine is mine. Second Corinthians chapter one, verse 20. Second Corinthians chapter one, verse 20.

As many as there may be of the promises of God and the only place where I can find the promises of God is here in the Bible. As many as there are of the promises of God, they are all yes in Christ. Isn't that wonderful? Every promise is yes in Christ.

So I look at a promise as a check on the bank of heaven. And what it's saying is every promise is a check signed by Jesus Christ. Sin shall not rule over you.

Romans 6:14 signed by Jesus Christ. It's for you. The peace of God, which passes all understanding take Philippians 4, 6 shall keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus, free from all anxiety, signed Jesus Christ.

Amazing promises there are in scripture and statements of scripture, which don't look like promises rejoice in the Lord always. That doesn't look like a promise. It's a command rejoice in the Lord always.

By the way, I hope you know that the Bible doesn't have any suggestions. Is that a suggestion or a command? What do you think? Does he say try and rejoice in the Lord always or rejoice in the Lord always. This book doesn't have any suggestions, by the way, holy commandments.

If you think that is a suggestion, yeah, it's a good thing. If you can rejoice in the Lord always try it. It's a good.

No, that's not what it says. It says rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say to you rejoice not rejoice in your circumstances.

The Bible is realistic. We cannot rejoice in our circumstances. We may not rejoice in the weather, but in the Lord, in in the fact that God is always on the throne.

Whenever I'm tempted to be depressed, we're all tempted to be discouraged or depressed by some circumstances. I confess to the Lord. I say God, you're still on the throne.

That hasn't changed. Whatever the weather is like or whatever the circumstances are like, whatever my financial state is like, God is on the throne. Maybe you lost your job.

God didn't lose his. He's on the throne. Jesus Christ rules.

He's got all authority in heaven and earth. The devil was defeated. I confess this in my life.

My sins are all forgiven. Christ is returning for me. I know what the end of the devil is going to be in the lake of fire.

And I'm not going to live in depression or my circumstances or if the devil reminds me of my past failure. I saw a sticker once, a beautiful sticker, which said whenever the devil reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future. That's a good thing to do.

His future is in the lake of fire. So whenever he reminds you of your past failures, you remind him of his future and he'll leave you pretty soon. I remember a woman once came for prayer to our house.

And whenever I ask people to accept Jesus Christ as their savior, I also, I tell them after you've spoken to Christ, you must speak to the devil. You know, like you leave one job and go to another job. Don't you give a letter of resignation to your previous boss saying I'm quitting.

Well, you better give a letter of resignation to the devil saying I'm quitting. I'm no longer in your employee anymore. So that's why I tell them to speak to the devil.

Don't quit without giving your letter of resignation. So you said you got a different master now. So you've received Jesus as your Lord.

So I tell them I'll speak to the devil and tell him I don't belong to you. You were defeated on the cross. I always tell new converts to say that given your letter of resignation.

So I told this lady now tell the devil you were defeated on the cross. And she suddenly changed her voice. You're sitting at home with my wife and I were sitting there.

He said, I was not defeated on the cross. Boy, that was a demon inside her. Just like you read in the scriptures of the demon speaking to Jesus.

I suddenly realized it was a demon and not the woman speaking anymore. Well, when a demon speaks to me, I speak to the demon. I don't speak to the woman anymore.

So I told the demon, you're a liar. You were defeated on the cross. Of course you were.

Get out of her right now in Jesus name. He left like that with one word. He wasn't scared of me.

He was scared of the name of Jesus, by the way. And he left. Then I told this woman, now tell the devil you were defeated on the cross.

She was free. He said to Satan, you're defeated on the cross. I don't belong to you anymore.

Jesus Christ is my Lord. So it's a wonderful thing when we are tempted like that to confess the truths of scripture. God is on the throne.

Satan is being defeated. My sins are all forgiven. You try that the next time you're depressed or tempted to be depressed.

We should not be depressed. We can be tempted to be depressed, discouraged. Because you know, we live in a world of tremendous pressure.

Some of you mothers with so many with children and children can be sick and there's so many demands little children can. I know we've had four little boys growing up in our home and I know the pressures there were on my wife. It's very easy to get discouraged and depressed.

Particularly, we never had much money in our in when the early days when you're married or okay now, but those days we struggled and it's so easy to get discouraged and depressed. And when you get discouraged and depressed, you can get uptight and easily irritated with your husband or with others. And we have to overcome that and to say, Lord, I want to confess that you're still on the throne.

There's a beautiful chorus we sing in India. I've sung it for 60 years. God is still on the throne and he will remember his own.

Though trials may press us and burdens distress us. He never forsaketh his own. God is still on the throne.

He will not forget you. So I see that this is something that helps me to confess. The Bible says what you believe in your heart, we confess with our lips and we can have the promises of God.

Second Corinthians 120. All the promises of God, I just mentioned one or two are yes, but I don't know how you do with checks here in Canada. But in India, if someone were to give me a check and I presented to the bank, the bank always asks me to sign on the reverse.

I have to put my signature there. So the bank, the checks that the bank of heaven gives me here, the promises of God signed by Jesus Christ, I presented to the bank of heaven and I have to put my amen at the back. That's what it says here.

All the promises of God in him are yes, signed by Christ, to which we add our amen to the glory of God. It's so exact. It's exactly like a bank check.

I add my amen. It will be so. And just by the way, amen is a Hebrew word which occurs for the first time in the Bible in Genesis 15.

I'm in like baptized. So it's not an English word. Any of us say amen, but we don't know what it means.

You know what I'm in means for many people. I'm in means the prayer is over. We can open our eyes.

That's not the meaning of I'm in. I'm in means I believe what that brother just prayed and it will be. So when you say I'm into something, you prayed.

It's not signaling that prayer is over. I believe what I just said is going to be. So somebody else prays.

You say, you're saying, I believe what he said just now. You can't say amen if you didn't pay attention to that prayer. If I believe what he said and it will be so.

And the first time it occurs in scripture is in Genesis 15, six. The context is Abraham was a childless man, already 80 years old or more. One day God called him outside the tent and said, look up to the sky.

And he said, your children, you don't have any now, but you're going to have as many children as the stars in the sky. And that's millions. You know what Abraham said? He didn't say, how can it be? Don't you know, Lord, I'm 85 years old.

Don't you know that my wife is sold? No excuses. God said it. I believe it.

That settles it. I'm in. That's all he did.

And you know, you know that the seed of Abraham today numbers in the millions. God keeps his word. It may take time, but he keeps his word.

So all the promises of God are like that. I'm in. Okay.

Here's a promise. Listen, the water I give him will become like a well of water springing up into everlasting life, signed Jesus Christ. What are you going to say? Amen.

It will be so in whose life, my life, I'm presenting the check. It's got to be put to my account. When I present a check in the bank, it's not for somebody else's account.

No, thank you. It's in my account, my account, well of water is springing up, springing up. Rejoice in the Lord always in his presence.

There is fullness of joy. Psalm 16:11 also says at his right hand, there are eternal pleasures. The Bible also speaks in Hebrews 11 verse 25, 26 about the passing pleasures of sin.

Moses rejected the passing pleasures of sin. Psalm 16:11 says at his right hand, there are eternal pleasures. There are passing pleasures that sin offers us.

Internet pornography, five minutes, 10 minutes of passing pleasure. So many people are enslaved to it today. Young people, older people who look so holy in church on Sundays, enslaved.

Why? Because they haven't got the eternal pleasures of the father's right hand. Have you ever thought why the passing pleasures of sin, even though you know that's bad for you still seem to attract you that you want to taste a little bit of it now and then I'll tell you, please listen. When did the prodigal son want to eat the pig's food? When did the prodigal son want to eat the pig's food? Internet pornography is pig's food.

No doubt about it. Any type of pornographic material is pig's food. When did the prodigal son want to eat it? When he had nothing else to eat.

But when he came to his father's house at his right hand, there are pleasures forevermore. And he eats the fatted calf and that satisfied the food in the father's table. Do you think he had any little anchoring for that pig's food? Did he sit in his father's house in which, oh, I remember those days when I could eat the pig's food.

No. See, there's not even a desire to go back to that. I want you to understand something here, my dear brothers.

I'm serious. I'm not spinning theories. The reason why temptation, the passing pleasures of temptation are so attractive is because whether you know it or not, you're not sitting at the father's table.

You're not at the father's table. You think you are, but you're not. You go to the meeting services of the church and you sing and all that, but you're not at the father's table every day.

That's why every now and then you have a anchoring for the pig's food. It's because you're hungry and you can't blame that prodigal son for going for the pig's food when he's hungry. He's got nothing else to eat.

But boy, he had no desire for that when he was at the father's table. And I find that's the solution. If you drive out one demon, Jesus said, and you keep your heart empty, seven demons will come back and occupy that place.

What's the solution? Fill your heart with the father's food, and then you won't have a pleasure. You won't have a hankering for the pleasures that demons offer you. This is so important in our day.

There are a lot of Christians who say, I don't have television in my house. Great. I never had television in my house when I was bringing up my children that protected them.

But they have a computer and there are a hundred times worse things on the computer than on the television. What are you glorying in? You know what your children are watching when you're asleep? You got to be careful. There is a spirit of impurity that's spreading all over the world.

And unless we experience this well of water satisfying us, satisfying us with everlasting life, we will go and drink from dirty streams. You know, a thirsty man will go and drink even filthy water from the gutter. You won't drink filthy water from a gutter if you've got a well of fresh water springing up in your own heart.

That's why it's so important to be filled with the Holy Spirit continuously. This is the secret of the Christian life. But Jesus didn't stop there.

He went on from a cup of water to a well of water. And then he says in John 7, verse 38, that from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. See the progression from cup of water to well of water to rivers of living water.

What's the difference between a cup of water and a well of water? A cup of water will make you thirsty again pretty quickly. And you need to go again and get it filled. You know, like some people who are their whole Christian life is dependent on going from one certain Sunday service to another Sunday service.

And if they miss one Sunday service, they backslide. It shouldn't be like that. That's if you just got a cup of water, but if you have a well of water within you springing up, it doesn't matter if you're locked up in prison for the sake of the faith for 14 years.

That happens to some people in China and other places. They're locked up in a prison for 14 years. They miss a Sunday service, not for one week, but for 14 years, they don't backslide.

If you have a well of water springing up within you, but that's what's the difference between a well of water and a river of water. If you have a well of water in your, in your compound, in your house area, you're not dependent on the external source of water supply. Nobody can turn off your water supply because you got it right there in your house.

Nobody can turn off your joy because you got it right there within you. I mean, this is a wonderful encouragement that no human being can turn off my joy because I don't have an external water supply. I've got it within me.

Nobody can turn it off. But a river is something more. A well is for myself.

A river is for other people that this life that has satisfied me so much now springs up and it's not just a well. It flows out like a river to bless other people, not one or two. A river satisfies the thirst of hundreds.

Many rivers means thousands. Can you believe that one weak human being like you can become a source of blessing to thousands? Oh, you say, I'm not a great Bible scholar. You know that Peter was not a great Bible scholar.

He was just an unknown, uneducated fisherman living in Galilee and working on the shores of the lake. But think of what a blessing he's been to people for thousands of years, millions for these 2000 years. Think that God can pick up a man like that, uneducated, illiterate, never been to Bible school.

There were hundreds of people in Israel who knew the Bible better than Peter. But God picked up a man because he was sincere. He wasn't a clever man, but he was a sincere, humble man.

He turned to God and God filled him with the Holy Spirit and rivers of living water began to flow through him. That's why I'm delighted that God picked up ordinary people. In Jerusalem, there was a Bible school, a Bible college run by a professor called Gamaliel.

You know, Saul of Tarsus studied there. That was running when Jesus was in Israel. And if Jesus wanted Bible scholars to be his disciples, he should have gone there.

He could have picked up people from there, but he didn't. He didn't even call one of them from there. Later on in life, later on, after he ascended, he called Paul.

But there's one very significant thing I learned about Paul. Because Paul spent three years in Gamaliel's Bible school. When Jesus got a later hold of him, you read in Galatians chapter one, that God told Saul, I've got to take you to three years to the desert of Arabia to get all that Bible knowledge knocked out of your head and get you to be empty.

Then I can make you my apostle. It's a pretty dangerous thing to go to a Bible college because you'll have to spend three more years getting it all out of your head. God didn't pick up people from these Bible colleges.

He picked up ordinary people because he was not looking for Bible knowledge. He was looking for sincerity. He was looking for humility.

He was looking for wholeheartedness. He was looking for people who would say when he said, come, they would come. I mean, imagine I like Matthew.

Matthew is just completing his accounts for the day. And the Lord says, drop it. And he drops his pen.

And maybe he spent two minutes writing his resignation letter and say, I'm quitting. He leaves. You can't beat that for wholeheartedness.

I tell you. He didn't even wait till the end of the day. He didn't wait till the end of the month to get his salary or anything.

Jesus said, drop it and follow me. He closes his account book, takes a piece of paper. Fellas, I'm resigning.

Goodbye. And walks out. What about your salary up to date? Forget it.

Jesus called me. I've got to go. I'm not surprised that Jesus used such people who obeyed immediately.

When the Lord called, they responded. Rivers of living water flowed out from them in many directions. I'm saying this, my brothers, because these are the things that challenged me.

I said, Lord, I mean, you may not believe that, but I was never a gifted speaker. I never took part in public speaking in school or any such thing. I was a very shy, timid person, afraid to stand before people.

And I said, Lord, if you will use me, you can use me. You can have all there is of me. I have no ambition in life.

I don't want to be great. I don't want to be rich. I don't want to be famous.

But I want to live for you wholeheartedly. And you can give me whatever gift you like. I will spend my time studying the Bible and he filled me with the Holy Spirit.

And he can do the same for anybody. He can do the same for any of you. And I want to say to you, my dear brothers, allow the Lord to lead you from one degree of glory to another.

Second Corinthians chapter three, verse 18 says that God wants to lead us from one degree of glory to another degree of glory to another degree of glory. Have you noticed this progression that comes many times in scripture? Let me show you three passages. John chapter one, verse 16 of Jesus fullness.

Have we received grace upon grace? And I could expand that verse to read grace upon grace, upon grace, upon grace, upon grace. It's endless from his fullness. When do we finish? We exhausted the fullness of Jesus Christ of his graces yet? No.

He says, my grace is sufficient for you. Whatever your need, whatever your trial, you can be an overcomer. You can be more than a conqueror.

You can say like the apostle Paul, thanks be to God. Second Corinthians two 14, who always leads us in his triumph. It's not that I get victory.

He leads me in his triumph. It's not that I overcome. Jesus keeps me from falling.

Grace upon grace, upon grace. It's not a static thing. Let me show you another verse.

Romans chapter one, Romans chapter one and verse 17. He says in the earlier verse, I'm not ashamed of the true gospel. And this is the true gospel, the gospel of God, because it is a power of God.

That's a great verse. Romans 1 16. Many people know the gospel as a message of God.

It's not just the message of God. Romans 1 16 says the real gospel is the power of God. I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation.

Salvation is another misunderstood word. People say I'm saved. I asked somebody, are you saved? Yeah, I'm saved.

I said, brother, are you saved from anger? No, no, no, I'm not saved from anger. Are you saved from the love of money? No, I'm not saved from the love of money. Are you saved from anxiety? No, I'm not saved from anxiety.

What are you saved from? Said you were saved. Saved from hell? That's not found in scripture. There's no scripture which says Jesus came to save us from hell.

It says in Matthew one 21, Jesus came to save us from sin. Anxiety is sin. Complaining is sin.

Murmuring is sin. Internet pornography is sin. Being proud is sin.

Selfishness is sin. Bitterness is sin. Jealousy is sin.

Yelling at your wife and your husband is sin. What are you saved from? Jesus came to save us from sin. He didn't just come to save us from a wrong theology.

He came to save us from sin, from self-centeredness. So it's the power of God. And to be saved from sin, you don't need a message.

You need a power. So the gospel is the power of God to salvation from sin. And that gospel, Paul says, I'm not ashamed of.

Verse 17, because in this gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. Now listen to this expression, from faith to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, just like grace to grace, grace upon grace. It says you're from faith to faith, to faith, to faith.

It's a progression. It's like your child goes from first grade to second grade, to third grade, to fourth grade, to fifth grade, to sixth grade. There's a progression.

And one more verse, second Corinthians chapter three, verse 18, in the mirror, and the mirror is the word of God, verse 18, in the mirror, we see the glory of Jesus Christ. I love that verse because I'm not supposed to get a doctrine from Bible. I'm supposed to see the glory of Jesus Christ from the Bible.

A lot of people argue about doctrines. I go to the Bible to see the glory of Jesus Christ, to see the beauty of Jesus. In that mirror, I see the glory of the Lord.

If you find a doctrine in the Bible, you'll argue about that with other people. But if you go to the Bible and see the glory of Jesus, you know what will happen? The Holy Spirit will change you into that image from glory, to glory, to glory, to glory, to glory, to glory, until you become completely like Him. You see these expressions in Scripture? Grace upon grace, upon grace, upon grace, upon grace, from faith, to faith, to faith, to faith, from glory, to glory, to glory, to glory, from the cup, to the well, to the river, to many rivers.

It's a progression. And the way, the way of the cross, way of being crucified with Christ, the way of taking up the cross every day and denying ourselves, that's the way by which, in other words, in practical terms, what is the cross? In very simple terms, my will crosses God's will, and I die to my will. You say, Lord, I'll do your will.

I'd like to get angry with this guy who got angry with me, but I died to that. I'll respond to him like Jesus did, forgive him. I died to my choice.

I want God's choice. I don't want to please myself. I want to please God.

I don't want to be lazy, just thinking of myself. I want to please God and serve Him. And as I go this way of the cross every day, you know what happens? Over a period of time, my cup gradually becomes a bucket.

That's the way it grows. The cup, as I keep on taking up the cross every day, denying my will, the bucket gradually becomes a tub, and God keeps filling it, becomes a well one day. And over a period, it takes time, it takes years, the well gradually expands and becomes a river.

And before I know it, people are being blessed through simple words that we share. You don't have to be a preacher, I'll tell you that. You can be a mother, busy mother.

People come to visit your home, and a little river flows out to you to bless that person who came to your home, and the person goes away blessed. Maybe by one sentence, you said, somebody calls you on your cell phone, you speak a word that blesses them. Unknown people call you up.

I remember one brother, he got a phone call. Is that so and so? No, it isn't. I'm sorry, you got the wrong number.

Turn the phone off. Again, it rang a little later. Same person.

Is that so and so? No, it isn't. Now, excuse me, sir, you called me twice. I think God wants me to share something with you.

That's why you made this mistake. I'd like to tell you something that's very important for your life. But something that changed my life, something that flowed out from that man.

He was alert. An opportunity to share the gospel. I remember my wife doing this sometimes.

Somebody comes to sell something salespeople. Would you have a minute to listen to me? Yes, I have meant to listen to you. Do you want this, this, this, this, this? No, we don't need it.

Now, do you have a minute to listen to me? Share something with you, or give you a tract. I say, this is great opportunities that we have to share the gospel with different people and say, Lord, please, I'm so timid. I'm not a preacher.

But what a lot of opportunities we get to share. Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit. The rivers of living water will flow.

It may start as a trickle or a period of time begins to flow and bless many people. This is the life every single person sitting here. I remember one young girl in our church, young girl.

I don't know. Maybe she was in the first grade or second grade. And she in school, she made a friend with another girl in her class was a Roman Catholic.

They all they became very good friends. And so when the parents used to come to pick them up, they'd always see them together. And so the parents got to know each other because they'd always be pick up these two girls together from school.

And she or her father invited them to come to our church. Why don't you come because they were good friends. He came and that other family came to the Lord and that family invited his brother and he came to the Lord.

And he's the one who's now doing a lot of our video programs in our Internet ministry in our church. But if you trace the root of it, it was one seven or eight year old girl through which a little trickles become a little river. Now, who is there whom God cannot use? That girl has grown up and she's about 18 years old now.

And boy, it's so encouraging me to me to see when she gets up and gives her testimony in the church. I praise the Lord for what God can do to anyone. There's no one whom God cannot use.

May God bless you all. I'm very happy to be here. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Father, as we bow our heads before you, even if we can't remember everything that was said today, I pray the challenge will remain as we shall allow ourselves to be broken. We'll respond to the Holy Spirit every time he tells us to choose the way of the cross instead of the way of pleasing oneself so that our capacity can increase. So many of us, our capacity has remained the same for so many years.

It's not to be that way. We want our children to go from one grade to another in their education. We want our capacity also to increase.

Lord, please help everyone here and bless this church that from here, rivers of living water will flow in many directions in the days to come. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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