

# The Root Of Sin And Of Salvation

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and gentleness as key qualities for Christians to learn from Jesus. It highlights the need to be broken of pride and self-sufficiency in order to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit and fulfill God's purpose. Through the examples of Moses and Jacob, the message underscores the transformation that comes from being humbled and relying on God's strength rather than personal qualifications.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:5, Matthew 11:29, 1 Peter 5:5

**Topics:** "Humility", "Relying on God's Strength"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want to share something from you about where sin began and where our salvation began. If you understand this, I believe you would have discovered some of one of the great secrets of the Christian life. You have often heard me speak about that.

Turn with me to Ezekiel 28, verse just five words, very important to remember. Long ago when God created the heaven and earth, everything was perfect. There was no sin.

Every person whom God, all the angels whom God created, he created the angels and the head of the angels, we don't know his name. Everyone was perfect. But in that head of the angels, you find this statement, Ezekiel 28, verse 17.

Think of these five words, your heart was lifted up. In those five words is the origin of all the sin that we see in the world today. All of it.

It comes out in many forms, like sometimes some little germ inside us can cause many sicknesses. Here is the root of all sin. And I'll tell you this, whatever sins you may get rid of in your life, if you don't deal with the root, it will crop up in some other place.

You deal with the root, everything will be taken care of. Where is the root? Remember these five words and remember the reference, Ezekiel 28, 17. Your heart was lifted up.

There is a because after that and the because can be many different things in our case. In the case of the head of the angels, it was his beauty, his wisdom and the splendor of his position, his physical beauty and he was very, very handsome, good looking. That can be one reason for pride or wisdom, cleverness.

He was the cleverest of all created beings. And when we compare us, you see all pride comes through comparison. If the other angels were more beautiful than him, he could not be proud, but he was the most beautiful, most good looking.

If the other angels were cleverer than him, he could not be proud, but he was the cleverest. All pride comes through comparison. We compare ourselves to others, perhaps we are better looking, cleverer and we have a more splendid position means good job or good house or many other things that the world values.

If I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, even if you have accepted Christ, most of you have, your problems will remain all through your life until you hit at this root and keep on hitting it because it doesn't go away easily. And all, whenever you read of chaos, confusion, war, murder, sexual exploitation, kidnapping of children, remember everything originated from here. Everything, every evil you read of or hear of, all the evil other people have done to you or done to others, everything originated from these five words.

Your heart was lifted up. And if we are careful about this one area, we can protect ourselves from sin. Otherwise what we are getting rid of is certain external manifestations or external fruit from this tree without hitting at the root.

And I believe that many, many Christians are thinking they are holy because they got rid of certain external fruit and never hit at the root. They don't judge themselves at the root because the root is not visible. But anybody with discernment can detect spiritual pride in you.

Most people cannot detect that in you because they themselves are proud. You see, if someone is proud himself, it's not easy for him to detect pride in another. But if you walk the way of humility, it's very easy to discern.

Even when a person acts humble and speaks humble, you can see it's not genuine. And I'll tell you this, as I've observed Christians for 60 years in many countries, preachers, and even in CFC churches, I feel that very, very few people are serious about dealing with this root. And most people do not even see the pride that there is in them.

It's like a smell that comes out, you know, supposing you're perspiring and stinking, there's a smell which you yourself don't get, but which others can pick up. It's like that. Or when you get much older, your breath becomes bad because of age and you don't smell it yourself, but other people pick it up.

So it's not something we can cover up with perfume or something. It's something you've got to deal with at the root. So sin came from here.

And from here we read that he wanted to go above and go even further than he was, all the desire to exalt oneself and go up. And this is the reason why we read here in 1 Peter 5, it says in verse 5, the last part,

God is opposed to the proud. Those are the other words you must remember.

God is opposed to the proud. He is the enemy of every proud person and he's the enemy of all pride. So if there is pride in me, God hates it.

You know, all of it comes from pride and that root is what God hates. You may never commit adultery or murder in your life. You may be such an upright person that you don't even tell lies.

You're very upright in your office. But pride can still be there in your heart and I want to tell you with all your uprightness and all your honesty in money matters and your uprightness in your office, God is your enemy. He opposes you.

He stands against that pride in you and that is the main reason why many believers do not make spiritual progress year after year after year after year. Think of the time when you were converted and how many years have gone by now. We have come to the end of 2019 and begun 2020.

And if you don't want the rest of your life to be like the past without much spiritual progress, you better deal with this root. And remember God is opposed to all types of pride, even spiritual pride. Pride that you are a spiritual person.

Pride that others honor you, respect you, that you know the Bible or you can preach well or could be anything. God is opposed to the proud. Remember that all your life.

I'm thankful that I discovered that and that is also the reason why God does not give you grace. You cannot overcome sin without grace and it says here, God gives grace only to the humble. Verse 5. That is a law.

You know it's like because of gravity, water always goes down to the lowest place. If a road is up and down, when it rains, the water always goes down to the lowest place. The Holy Spirit is like that.

If the Holy Spirit is moving in our midst right now, He is going to enter the humblest person sitting here. And that's it. You don't have to ask the water to come down.

It will automatically come. If you are in the lowest place, it will come there. So this is how sin came.

And now I wanted to show you how salvation came. Because salvation is the opposite of sin. So you see in Ezekiel 28, 17, your heart was lifted up because of 101 things.

Now turn with me to Philippians chapter 2 and you see how salvation came. And don't say you heard me say this before. Ask yourself, have you understood it? That's more important.

We are not here to listen to new messages. We are here to be gripped by the truth of salvation. So I don't mind listening to a message a hundred times if that will help me to grip it.

Most sicknesses, the doctor will not tell you just take this pill once and you'll be alright. No. Take this pill for one whole week, three times a day.

Why did the Lord say, take up your cross daily? It's a prescription. Every day take up your cross and follow me. And I'll explain to you what that cross is right now.

Every day it's a prescription that our heavenly doctor and savior is saying, take this and you'll be okay. What if a patient does not take it? Well, then he's not going to be cured. Philippians 2, it says here, I've often said that with this one verse I can live my whole life.

One verse. Philippians 2, 5. Have this attitude in yourself which was in Christ Jesus. That's all.

That's the only verse I need to live my whole life on. From now if I don't have a Bible, if I've already read it and know how Jesus lived. Every situation.

Are you facing a complicated situation? Have this attitude which is in Christ. Are you facing a situation where you have to tell a lie or compromise or make money in an unrighteous way? Here's the answer. Have the same attitude that Jesus had.

Are you having conflict with some believer? Have the attitude Jesus had. Are you having a conflict with your relatives or enemies or anything? Have the attitude Jesus had. One verse is all you need for the rest of your life.

Have the attitude in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let that be in your mind always. It's the answer to every problem you can ever face in life.

Do you find some situation where you don't know why God is not answering your prayer? Well, in Gethsemane God did not answer Jesus' prayer. Have this attitude in you which was in Christ Jesus. He bowed and said, OK, I'll accept your will.

So what is that attitude? Here is that attitude. This is what you've often heard me say. The secret of the Christian life.

This is the opposite. This is where salvation came. We saw where sin came.

The root of sin is your heart was lifted up. And here's the root of salvation. Ask yourself whether you've got this.

Though Jesus existed in the form of God from all eternity, he did not consider equality with God as a thing to be held on to. We must read it slowly. He could have held on to that.

There was no need for him to give it up. Why should he give it up? Why should he give it up for a bunch of rebellious people here on earth who don't care for him and who rebelled against him and who he knows if he comes down there they'll kill him. Why should he give up that position? Would you give up your position? I mean, ask yourself whether you would take the position of an ant crawling on the ground because the ant is struggling with one grain of rice.

Would you be willing to become an ant to help that ant carry that one grain of rice? It's something like that for Jesus to become a man. We don't realize it. Sometimes we take it so lightly that Christ became a man.

And when people talk about it lightly and they're not humble people, they haven't understood A-B-C of Christianity. The first secret of the Christian life is Jesus became a man. He gave up what he held on to.

He had for all eternity equality to become a man. That's a tremendous step down. When you think of how powerful and almighty God is who created this universe and for him to come down as a helpless man on this earth and to be born as a helpless baby.

It's pretty humiliating to be a baby, you know. It can't do anything. Its diapers get dirty so many times a day.

It has to be changed. That's up to us with Jesus. Almighty God coming down with his diapers having to be changed and crying for milk and dependent on his mother providing for him, caring for him, lifting him up, cleaning him, bathing him.

He's Almighty God. I want to portray this picture before you so clearly so that you see where salvation originated. I really believe most Christians haven't understood it and that is the problem why they don't make progress in their Christian life.

I'm very thankful that God opened my eyes to see it. It made a tremendous difference in my life. It made a tremendous difference in my family life, my relationship with my wife, my relationship with my children and it made a lot of difference in my relationship with brothers and sisters in the church and all CFC churches.

To understand what does it mean when it says have this attitude in yourself that Christ had, that though he was God, though he had such a high position of Almighty power and there was no need for him to give it up, he gave it up to help rebels. I mean if he came down to help people who were very sympathetic and kind, that's one thing, but to help rebels. That's what you and I were before we were converted.

Don't forget that. He did not think he should grasp it. You know we have a tendency to hang on to something.

We say that's mine. This grasping mentioned in verse 6 is a mark of pride. This is mine.

Really? Who gave it to you? Were you born with it? You know how Job said when he lost his children, I never had any children when I came to the world. I never, when he lost his property, I never had any property when I came to the world. People complain about these things.

Why did God allow me to lose this and why did God take away my child and why did God do this? Brother, sister, what did you have when you came into the world? Who do you think you are? Who do you think you are to complain against God that why does God allow this to happen to me and why does God allow that to happen to me? Just think of what you were when you were born. Job said, I was naked when I came into the world. I had nothing.

And he said when I leave this world also, I'll go empty. And in between that period, God's given me children and property and all. He has every right to take it away.

You know, I often use this illustration. A mother takes her little child to somebody's house for a visit. You know, a four-year-old child.

And while he's in that house, those people are very kind to allow this little boy to play with the toy cars and little, little things that toys in the house that the other children play with. And when the mother leaves the home, she has to check the pockets of her child. You must remember that.

When you leave somebody's home, check the pockets of your child. Has he taken one of those little toy cars and put it into his pocket or something that he found attractive there? And when the mother finds that, she takes it out and says, son, when we came to this house, we had none of these things. When you go also, you must not take any of these things.

That's exactly what God says. My son, my daughter, when you came into this world, you had nothing. When you go, you'll have to leave it all behind and go.

It's only for a short time I allow you to play with these things here. You think they are yours. The way people possess their property and their money and their titles and their house and their position and fight for it and kill for it and all that.

It's as if it's theirs. It's like a little child allowed to play with somebody else's toy in their house and then fighting for it. No, this is mine.

I played with it for the last 15 minutes. So what? You didn't come here with it. Do we understand that? You understand that in a little child, but you understand it in your case as well, that God allows you to play with these little things for a little while.

That's all. And then you have to leave it when you go. He did not grasp.

I see that in a little child, you know. A little child is born with, you put your finger into a child's hand and it grasps it. It's born with that nature.

We have that nature right from childhood to grab things for ourselves. We grab money. We grab property.

When we want to get married, you want to grab a girl or grab a boy. It's all grabbing, grabbing, grabbing. That's not the way Jesus lived.

The life of faith is to open your palms and say, Lord, I will grab nothing. You will give me. And when you give me also, it'll be in an open palm that I keep it so that you can take it away anytime you want.

Grasping. Remember that word. He did not consider equality with God, which is the greatest thing in the world.

Equality with God. There's absolutely nothing to equal it. Whatever you think you have, it's got nothing compared to.

It's nothing compared to equality with God. And even that he didn't grasp it. My brothers and sisters, learn to live with an open palm.

Don't grab that thing which you, you say, I want to possess that position in the world or even position in a church. I've come across a number of elders, not here, but in the CFC churches who grasped that, who value that position. They grasp it.

They think this is mine. I deserve it. I honor it.

No, keep it in an empty, open palm, everything. Material wealth, position, honor that you got and all your qualifications and the wonderful job you got and spiritual, Bible knowledge and keep it in an open palm. Say, Lord, I did not come with these things.

You had everything and you did not grasp. I had nothing and I'm still grasping. I want respect from people.

Grasp it. Open your palm. Let them disrespect you.

Jesus was despised and rejected of men. The open palm is a very, very important aspect of salvation. Now that's the first step.

Though he was God, he emptied himself, humbled himself, became a man. And secondly, in verse 7, as a man, he became a slave. See, slave is the lowest level of work.

Not even a servant. A servant is paid, monthly salary. Slave, we don't see nowadays, but 2,000 years ago when the Bible was written, slavery was very common.

You go to the market and just like you buy furniture, you buy a slave. There were shops that sold slaves. And you want this muscular one and you got to pay so much and this thin, skinny one, you can have him but you got to pay less.

It's a price, just like price in the market. And if you buy that slave, it's like buying furniture. You can do what you like with it.

You can paint it black, blue, green. You can break it. And the slave was yours.

You could kill it. Nobody could question if a slave was killed. It's not like killing other people.

A slave had zero rights in society. In the Roman Empire, a slave had no rights. And so, becoming a man was okay.

You had a certain amount of rights. But even there, he humbled himself, second step and became a slave. Have this attitude in yourselves, which is in Christ Jesus.

I want to ask you, brothers and sisters, are you serious about being saved from sin? Are you really serious about becoming Christ-like? Are you really eager to become more like Jesus? Well, this is the way. Don't grasp. Give up your rights and go down, down, down, down, down.

Take the lowest place. And Jesus symbolized that on the last moments of his life. He sat at his disciples' feet, washing them.

You know who did that in Jewish society? Poor Jewish families did not have anybody to wash people's feet. But rich Jewish families always had a slave. And the duty of the slave was to stand at the door with a bucket of water.

And people wore sandals those days, chapels. And they would walk the dusty roads and their feet would all be dirty. And you know how refreshing it is to wash your dirt off your feet when you come into a house.

And there was this slave. When they sat down there at the door itself, the slave would take this bucket of water and a cloth. Every guest who came would wash his feet.

So Jesus was going to have a dinner with his twelve disciples. And he borrowed a house from a rich man. And he asked that man, who was a rich man, to make sure nobody else was in the room.

It was a private dinner with my twelve disciples. But the bucket of water has to be there. Because that's standard.

In every rich man's home at the door there will be a bucket of water to wash the feet. But because Jesus said, I don't want anybody else there, the rich man told his slave, you don't be there. Because he doesn't

want any slave.

He doesn't want anybody in the room. So the slave was not there. The bucket of water was there.

And all these disciples came in and they sit around the table. Their feet are all dirty. But there's no slave.

So Jesus takes that bucket of water and does what the slave did. And he did not think that was a great act of humility, which everybody must applaud and say, oh what wonderful humility that he takes this bucket. I mean if somebody did that today, some preacher did it, they would applaud it.

Sometimes you see pictures of the Pope washing the clean feet of some of his priests. I mean just for the photographs. But Jesus wasn't doing it for all that.

Nobody was photographing him there. It was a genuine act, not of humility. Please remember this.

He wasn't trying to show people, oh how humble I am. Today there are some churches where the elders will go and wash the feet of people. It's usually to show I'm a very humble person.

It's only for a few minutes. And after that they become the same proud elders they always were. It's all hypocrisy.

I'll tell you what Jesus was doing. He was not trying to show off his humility. He was, there was a dirty job that needed to be done.

And he was not doing it. And he did it. Forget about humility.

When a mother is wiping the dirty bottom of her newly born baby, because it's messed up the diaper, what is she doing? Is she showing, do you all see how humble I am? No. She wants to do it in secret. She doesn't want to do it publicly to show other people.

She's doing a job because she's a mother. She loves her child and she wants her child to be clean. That is why Jesus washed the disciples feet.

He wasn't showing off his humility. Pride in our humility is the worst type of pride and be careful of that. When you try to show off your humility.

You know when you go to people and say, well I'm just a sinner saved by grace. I thought of that when we were singing that song. And I said, Lord I want to mean this.

I don't want to just show other people, oh brother Zach is saying I'm just a sinner saved by grace. How people will think what a humble man I am. What garbage.

It's very easy to be like that dear brothers and sisters. That when you say those words, I'm a sinner saved by grace, it sounds so spiritual. But you may be just seeking honor for your humility.

Beware of that. That's the worst type of pride. Don't say it if you don't mean it.

But if you really understand it like Paul said in 1 Timothy, I'm the chief of sinners. He wasn't trying to show his humility. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he wrote what he really felt.

And I don't believe we should ever say those words I'm a sinner saved by grace if I don't feel it deep down in my heart that that's exactly what I think of myself right now. I'm not a sinner. I'm a sinner saved by grace.

I'm a saved sinner. Otherwise once upon a time I was just a sinner. But now I'm a sinner saved by grace.

But I never forget it is God's grace that saved me. So I'm just showing you how even in that, in an expression which sounds so humble, there can be pride. Like when people wash people's feet today, it's pride.

And I say what Jesus did was doing a dirty job that needs to be done. That's why I say when Jesus told his disciples, you ought to wash one another's feet. What he meant was not take off their socks and wash their clean feet.

Their clean feet don't need to be washed. It's already clean. Do a dirty job which needs to be done.

And in CFC that may be cleaning the toilets. So that's what Jesus is saying. Clean the toilets or the floor is dirty.

Volunteer to clean it. Not to show your humility. No.

But because it needs to be done. Just like you clean your baby's bottom or some dirt lying on the floor of your house. You're not showing your humility there to your children, mother or father when they clean up something or pick up the trash on the ground.

No. It's because it needs to be done. Because it's dirty.

Let's clean it. That is what Jesus meant. It's so misunderstood.

So let me warn you. Pride in your humility is the worst type of pride. He became a slave and throughout his life he lived like that.

You remember in John chapter six after he fed the five thousand. People were so excited with five loaves. They grabbed him to make him their king.

That's what it says. You read John six. And what did he do? It says he ran away.

He shook them off. He said leave me. And he ran off.

That's because he said I'm a slave. How can you make me a king? I didn't come here to be a king. He was the only one who walked on the earth who had a right to be a king.

But he knew that if he was a servant of God he had to be a slave. I remember years ago when the Lord called me to serve him. He said to me very clearly, if you're going to be my servant you have to be the servant of all men.

Of all people till the end of your life. You cannot complain if they make some demand on you as a servant. You have to serve them.

Of course there are limitations on how much you can do as one human being. That I agree. I mean even if you have a slave in the house there's a limit to how much he can do.

He can't do the job of ten slaves. So there's a limit to how much you can serve people. But never never think of anything other than you're a servant.

If you're a servant of God you're a servant of all human beings. The Lord taught me that 53 years ago when I quit my job. You cannot think of yourself as only a servant of God but a servant of all human beings.

See a lot of people who are preachers say boast I'm a servant of God. That's a big title nowadays. It's a shame.

People have disgraced the Christian message so much. He took the form of a slave. God became man, man became a slave.

So first step of humility, second step of humility. And then third, we read here, even we think slave is the lowest. Can you go lower than that? Yes you can.

In verse 8 he humbled himself still further. So there's a humility, humility and the third step of humility. He was willing to be obedient to God to the death on a cross.

The important thing is not just death. All of us die. All people die.

But to die on a cross in those days is similar to what we say today, hang him. Who is hanged? There are many murderers who get only life imprisonment. And there's a phrase in the justice system that says this is the rarest of rare cases.

So he cannot get life imprisonment, he must be hanged. So it's the rarest of rare, the worst cases that are hanged. So the Romans also were like that.

Some really bad criminals, murderers they put in jail. But the worst of the lot they crucified. This guy is not fit to live, this criminal.

And that was a regular practice among the Jews that like people are hanged today, they were crucified those days for everybody to mock and make fun of. And if Jesus had to die for our sins, there was no need for him to die on the cross. He could have died comfortably in a bed somewhere.

Or God could have allowed somebody to stab him to death while he was sleeping and he died for our sins. Why should it be in this shameful way like a criminal? Remember what our subject is, the root of where our salvation comes from. We saw the root of sin, your heart was lifted up.

Here we see the root of salvation, humility, humility, humility. That is even willing to be considered by others as a criminal when he is the holiest man that walked on the earth. That means he was a 100 out of 100 but they put him down, not 0, but they put him down as a criminal of the worst order and he didn't open his mouth.

He didn't explain, hey fellas, you know I am dying for your sins, I am not really a criminal, don't misunderstand, these other guys are criminals around me but not me. No, your salvation comes from this. That means you don't give explanations when people misunderstand you.

Ok, let them think of me as a criminal. I remember a man of God whom I respected much in my younger days, he told me one thing, he said, when I was young, 23 years old, he said, I'll give you one bit of advice

among other things, when people accuse you of things that are absolutely false, keep quiet, don't reply. Absolutely right.

Salvation comes from that because when people accuse you, if it is something you have done, then you have to accept it. But what if it is something you have not done and you keep quiet and everybody thinks because you keep quiet, you are guilty. Because Jesus keeps quiet on the cross, they said, if you are the son of God, come down and he doesn't say anything.

Ah, that means he is not really the son of God. Let them think that. You know, it is a wonderful thing not to seek honour from men when others are humiliating you, accusing you falsely, even punishing you falsely and you keep quiet.

Jesus was being punished falsely and you keep quiet, ok. And it says in 1 Peter 2, when he was reviled, he did not revile in return, but he committed his cause to one person he knew who judges righteously. He says, one day the father will judge everything righteously.

And I want to say, if you want salvation, full salvation, not 10% salvation like many believers have, decide that you will commit your cause to your heavenly father who will judge everything righteously and will vindicate you completely. I remember once telling the Lord this, when I heard something I had preached in a message, people were twisting it, people who were against me, there are lots of people like that, some Christians were twisting it and making it mean something which I did not mean, to put me in a bad light before others. And when I heard this going around a bit, I said, Lord, this is not what I meant.

It's very obvious, anybody who listens to the whole message can know that's not what I meant. But they take this one little sentence from that message and twist it to make it appear as though that is what I meant. So, giving a wrong picture of what I was saying and what shall I do? You know what the Lord said to me? The Lord Jesus, he said that, I've been misunderstood for 2000 years.

All over the world people are twisting what I say and making it mean as if I meant this. I keep quiet. One day everything will be sorted out.

Can you wait until then? I said, now I got the answer. I have to wait until Jesus whose words are twisted until he is vindicated. Vindicated means proved right.

I don't want to be proved right before that. That's what the Lord asked me, do you want to be proved right before Jesus himself is proved right? I said, no Lord. Then wait.

Wait till the judgment seat of Christ, let people misunderstand you and let people say things wrong and twist what you say. Forget it. Nobody will go astray except those who don't love the truth.

Those who love the truth will never go astray no matter what people say against brother Zach or his teachings. But those who don't love the truth, they will go astray and they deserve to go astray and I say let them go astray. Because the Bible says God deceives those who don't love the truth.

Do you know that? 2nd Thessalonians 2 verse 10 and 11. Those who don't love the truth and want to be saved from it, God himself will allow them to be deceived and he may allow them to be deceived by something you say. Okay.

So he was willing to become a man, become a slave and become treated like a criminal even though he was not. There is where salvation came from the highest point to the lowest point he came and there is the root of salvation. So if you are only thinking of the fruit of salvation without the root, you will be a hypocrite.

You will act holy, you will act humble, you will act loving, you will act kind and you know it is an act. You know that you don't really feel that way inside because you are not really saved. When you are saved you will behave kind because you are kind.

You will behave humbly because you are humble. You know I have often thought of these sales people. You go to a shoe shop for example and maybe particularly ladies and this salesman is trying to sell a shoe.

Do you want this one? No, this color is not right. Another one, another one. And after about 25 shoes the salesperson is fed up and finally that lady says, no I don't want any.

And the salesperson is so kind, thank you very much for coming ma'am. I hope you will come again. We are happy to serve you.

Inside the fellow is fed up. I hope I never see this lady again for the rest of my life. That is hypocrisy.

But he appears so kind. But you know many Christians are like that. When they act humble and nice and good and inside you detest the sight of that person.

Jesus wasn't like that. It came from the root. Humility, if it doesn't come from the root, it's worth nothing.

It's the same hypocrisy you see in sales people. Nice words because they want their customers to come back. That's all.

Or they lose their job. So here is where salvation comes. Now you understand that phrase, let this attitude be in you which was in Christ Jesus.

And now turn to Jesus' words, his own words in Matthew 11. In Matthew chapter 11, he says in verse 29. Matthew 11, 29.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. Learn from me. Very important words.

Have this attitude which is in Christ Jesus. Learn from me. What do I need to learn from Jesus? Not how to preach.

There are lot of Christians even in CFT churches who want to learn how to preach. You want to preach like some great preacher? What for? To become famous? To get a name that, oh, people admire my preaching? You'll ruin yourself. When we are young, we tend to imitate others.

A little boy will try to imitate his dad. And when you are newly born again, you tend to imitate. And we all tend to imitate some preacher.

But we should grow out of it. We shouldn't live in that. We must say, Lord, you made me unique.

I want to be myself. I've told people many, many times, don't try to imitate my preaching. God wants only one Zak Poonen in the world, in the body of Christ.

He wants one you. Don't try to be another person. Because if you try to be another person, you will never be what God wants you to be.

You will hinder God's work in your life. So, if you want to learn humility, learn it from Jesus. What are we to learn? Not how to preach.

I must learn humility and gentleness. Humility and gentleness are the two things that are never found in the human race. We are born with pride and hardness.

That hardness comes because of pride. We are not naturally gentle in the way we speak. We are naturally hard.

We have to learn to speak gently. Even husbands and wives who say they love one another, they sometimes speak so hard to each other. Yeah, you can be absolutely sure that Jesus was right when he said there are two lessons we need to learn if we want to be saved.

Learn how to be humble and learn how to be gentle. The two go together. Humility and gentleness.

Learn from me. There's nobody else you can learn it from. You have to go to Jesus and say, Lord, you're the only teacher.

You're not appointed other teachers to teach me humility and gentleness. Don't come to me brothers. I can't teach you.

I go to Jesus and say, Lord, show me in your life, speak to me and show me what humility is and what gentleness is. Now, don't misunderstand humility with the earthly definition of humility, you know, where you hang your head and act humble and all that hypocrisy. Or the earthly definition of gentleness where you speak in a certain way.

That's all honor-seeking. Get rid of that. If that, if Jesus was trying to appear gentle, he'd never have taken a whip and chased out all the people making money in the name of religion.

He was just as gentle when he chased out those money-loving crooks in the temple as he was when he forgave the woman caught in adultery. He was equally gentle. So you need to understand gentleness.

Don't learn gentleness from the dictionary. Learn it from Jesus. Otherwise you'll say, hey, that guy is not gentle.

Maybe he is. Not according to your definition, but according to Jesus' definition, he is a gentle person even though he may be whipping the money changers or calling the Pharisees a generation of vipers. Was he gentle then? Of course.

So, heaven's definition of gentleness is not found in your dictionary. Learn from me, not from your dictionary. Humility is not learned from the dictionary.

Jesus could say, learn from me for I am humble. You'd say, if a humble person will never even say that. According to human definitions, a humble person will not say, hey, see how humble I am and learn from me.

You'd say, who's that? What does he think he is? You'd immediately call him proud. Don't learn humility and gentleness from the dictionary or from psychology. Jesus says, learn from me.

So, you've got to look at the life of Jesus and see what humility is. When he was called Beelzebub, Prince of Devils, he forgave them. Father forgave them.

When he was crucified, Father forgave him. He had given up his rights, humility, gentleness. When the Pharisees said, stone that woman to death, he said, woman I don't condemn you.

He was always taking the side of the weak and the despised. In a society like the Jewish society where they despised women, I've heard, I don't know if it's true, but I've heard that some Jews would get up early morning every day and say, Lord, I thank you that I'm not a Gentile. I thank you that I'm not a slave and I thank you that I'm not a woman.

How do you like that? For pride. I thank you I'm not a Gentile. I thank you I'm not a slave.

I thank you I'm not a woman. I'm a man. Jesus came into that type of society and lifted up women to their proper place, which God, not above men, but equal to men.

Do you know that some of the main people who supported Jesus financially, do you know who they were? They were not men. Very interesting to see that. Say Luke chapter 8 and verse, see Jesus could not, Paul could do his own business like stitching tents.

All he needed to carry with him was a needle. He could go anywhere and stitch tents and earn his living, but Jesus needed carpentry tools to earn his own living. He couldn't do that.

He couldn't carry a carpentry shop everywhere. So Jesus was supported by people who gave him gifts voluntarily during the last three and a half years. And it requires tremendous humility, I'll tell you, to receive a gift.

A proud person will never receive a gift. A king will not receive a gift unless it is plenty of diamonds and gold and things like that. It requires real humility to receive a gift.

I'm not talking about these preachers who are always hankering after gifts. Jesus never asked people for money. He never took an offering.

He never sent a report about his work. That's why we follow those principles here. But when people gave him a gift, he accepted it because he had to feed 12 disciples and some of their family members like Peter's family.

So it says here, there were some, Luke chapter 8 verse 1, the last part, they were going around preaching and the 12 were with him. So 13 people needed to be supported. They were traveling.

They needed food. They needed to support their families. And how did that happen? Some women who had been healed of evil spirits, for example, Mary Magdalene who had seven demons cast out.

And another woman was Joanna, the wife of Cusa and Susanna. Three women's names are mentioned here, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna and many others women. They were contributing to the support of these 12 disciples and Jesus from their own private resources.

That is how Jesus lived for three and a half years. He didn't ask them. They voluntarily gave, sacrificially.

And Jesus humbled himself. Imagine Almighty God having to receive a gift from another person to go and buy food. Yeah.

He humbled himself to accept it. Learn from me for I am humble in heart. He didn't have a price.

No, no, no. I don't need anything from you women. He raised women to the level.

That's why after his resurrection, the first person who saw him after his resurrection was a woman, Mary Magdalene. So I just say that Jesus came. He was very gentle.

Gentle when he whipped people. Gentle when he forgave people. Gentle when he put his arms around the lepers whom nobody would touch.

Salvation comes from this. Now in the Old Testament, there are many examples of this. I just mention a couple of examples.

You know the story, so I don't have to show you the references. When Moses was born, there was a law in Egypt that all the male children should be killed. But in the wonderful sovereignty of God, God put a little idea in his mind into the head of Moses' mother.

Let's somehow save this child. Put it into a basket and put it in the river Nile, which is full of crocodiles and pray to God to somehow protect this child because otherwise the Roman soldier is going to come and kill the child in any case. Pray that somebody will, some Egyptian will pick up the child.

And this woman, Moses' mother did it because God had a tremendous plan for this little baby Moses. In Hebrews 11 it says it was the faith of Moses' parents that made them do it. When they saw that child, they somehow felt God has got a plan for this child.

We can't let it be killed. We can't let the child be killed. It's the attitude every person should have towards their child.

I want to ask all of you sitting here. Do you look at all of your children that way? No matter how many children you have? Do you feel, oh, I have too many children? Really? Which one do you want to be killed? Tell me. Which one do you want to get rid of? So many people want to get rid of that child when it's a baby or in the womb.

I said, just hang on. Wait till it grows up five or six years old, then decide whether you want to kill it or not. You change your mind.

Moses' mother didn't want that child to be killed. It says in Hebrews 11, she saw it as a good child. Every child is a good child.

And so God protected that child and God had a plan and Pharaoh's daughter came to the bathing place and saw the baby. It's all sovereignty of God and the crocodiles. God kept the crocodiles away.

It's amazing how God protects those who he has a plan for. I want to tell you, all of us are alive today because God's got a plan for your life and mine. Don't think it is because of your cleverness or some doctor treated you.

It's all rubbish. God has a plan for your life, otherwise you and I would be dead long ago. I know for that.

I don't know how many scooter accidents I have been saved from in the 42 years I rode scooters in this city. A lot of angels will tell me that when I go to heaven, they show me the videos in the city. Do you know you are going to have an accident here and I was there.

I didn't even know that. But I know there were many things like that I believe with all my heart. Same with you, even if you don't ride scooters.

Many, many accidents and things God has saved you and me from. It's not our cleverness. I want to tell you my dear brothers and sisters, it is because God has a plan for your life.

But as Moses grew up and he got educated in Egypt and Egypt palaces and he was rich, educated, powerful, strong, muscular, great preacher. It says that in Acts 7, he was very powerful in speaking. He could not serve God at the age of 40 because of one reason, only one.

He had position, just like Lucifer or the head of the angels, he had position, education, power, wisdom, wealth, but he lacked humility. And God says he can never be the leader of my people if he doesn't have this. He was the most qualified person in Egypt, but he was not fit to lead God's people.

And I want to say to you, that's the problem with many Christians who are in leadership today. They lack the number one quality for leadership, humility. They got Bible knowledge, they gone to seminaries, they got degrees, so many degrees after their name.

They are very capable speakers but they lack humility and God says no. He said no to Moses. And he'll say no to you, no matter what qualifications you have, Bible knowledge or whatever it is.

And God said, I've got to humble this man, otherwise I'll never be able to use him. I've got to plan for his life. And what does God do? God allows him, allows Moses to get angry at an Egyptian.

He saw hitting a Hebrew and he went and hit that fellow with one blow and killed him. See how strong he was? One blow on the Egyptian's face and he died. And the news went round that Moses has killed an Egyptian.

And Pharaoh heard of it and he had to run for his life. And in the sovereignty of God he lands up in a place to drink water and one local heathen priest, his daughters have come there to feed their flock. And some people come to fight with those women and Moses protects those women and they went and tell their father, this man protected us so that priest calls Moses home.

That's how he gets his food and he marries the daughter of one of those, that heathen priest who's not a Jew. And not only that, he had to live supported by that man, this great prince of Egypt. God is doing a work in humbling him.

Live in a desert, get rid of your idea of a prince and be a servant of a heathen priest, marry his daughter and live here, not for one year, I mean to live in your father-in-law's house even for six months will be a torture for most people. Live in your father-in-law's house for 40 years. That's enough to humble anybody.

And that is how God broke the man who was to be the greatest prophet that Israel had. That's how he was fed. His heart was lifted up.

Remember those words? His heart was lifted up. Moses, I'm the leader. I've been 40 years old, I'm muscular, I can speak well, I got such influence I can deliver the Israelites, sure with my influence I'll do it.

God says you don't know. He broke him, broke him, broke him so much so that at the burning bush when God met with Moses and said, God said you're going to deliver my people. You know what he says? Lord I can't speak.

You know Acts chapter 7 says he was a powerful speaker when he was 40. What happened in the next 40 years? God humbled him so much that he said Lord I don't know how to speak. Please send somebody else.

I can't speak. He kept on saying that. It was not artificial humility.

He really felt I am incapable of doing this job. And I want to say to you my brothers and sisters, it is when you come to that place that you've understood humility. I am incapable of doing this job of being a witness for Christ.

I'm incapable of overcoming sin. I'm incapable of, I mean, I say that to myself, I'm incapable of being an elder. The day I think I'm capable I'm doomed.

I will never feel like that. I'm totally incapable of being an elder. How in the world can I take this responsibility of God's work of all things? Then God said to him, now you're ready.

Now go and I'll be with you. And he did the greatest deliverance and led those Israelites through the wilderness of 40 years. Another example before Moses was Jacob.

He was a crook from the time he was born. Always grabbing, grabbing. He grabbed his brother's leg.

He was a twin. He was a twin who wanted to come out of his mother's womb first and they were struggling inside Rebecca's womb and somehow Esau pushed his way out and Jacob grabbed his leg and said, hey, I want to get out first. I don't think there's ever been a twin birth like that where one twin comes out holding the leg of the other.

That's unique, you know. And so they saw that and they named him Grabber Jacob. That's what it means.

And then he grabbed his brother's birthright and then through a lot of shrewdness he tried to grab his uncle's daughter Rachel, but his uncle was a greater crook than him, and gave him his older daughter. And I finally ended up with two wives. And then he, with his crooked ways, grabbed his uncle's sheep and property.

He was a grabber, grabber, grabber, till one day it says God broke his hip joint and he couldn't walk. He was like a 25-year-old man walking with a cane. He was older than 25, but because of the age of those days it's equivalent to a 25-year-old today walking with a cane.

Can you see a 25-year-old, have you ever seen a 25-year-old young man walking with a cane? It's pretty humbling. It really is. Any of you who are 25 years old, think of how you'll feel walking with a cane.

I feel it's pretty humbling for me at the age of 80 to walk with a cane, leave alone 25 years old and how God said you've got to walk with a cane. And Hebrews 11 says, he worshipped God leaning upon his cane. That cane that he leaned upon was a picture of I've got to lean upon God all my life.

And if you've learned that lesson, you've learned it. And God broke him, and then he told Jacob, now you are Israel, a prince of God. Till now you tried to grab, grab, grab, you could not become a prince that way.

So what is the lesson even in the Old Testament? What is God trying to do with man in order to accomplish his purpose? Break that pride, self-sufficiency, who you think you are. People who live like that ultimately destroy themselves, never fulfill God's purpose for their life, and usually end up in hell, along with the first person who said whose heart was lifted up. The person whose heart was lifted up first is in hell, will be in the lake of fire eternally.

And all those whose hearts are lifted up like that will join him, that is for sure. Call yourself Christian, call yourself born again, call yourself whatever you like. Have this attitude in yourself which is in Christ Jesus, which is the root of salvation.

Learn from me, he says, learn gentleness and humility. Let God break you. And the circumstances he allows in your life to break you and humble you, where people let you down and people disappoint you, I've gone through it in my life.

Many, many, many situations God has taken me through. I'll give you one example. When I left my naval job, I joined a group of assemblies that I thought I would be for the rest of my life, serving God with a man I respected the most in this country, an apostle.

It was a tremendous privilege for me to work under him like a Timothy. And I said, wow, I was only 26 years old, and I said, wow, this is a great ministry, God's opened up for me. And within three years, a lot of his co-workers were very jealous of my ministry, and somehow poisoned this man's mind and gave him a wrong picture about me, so that I was kicked out, literally pushed out, not allowed to speak in any of his churches, where I used to take special meetings.

And I was in Vellore. Those days, my wife and I, we had a little baby. And in the same church, which is one of his churches, where I took special meetings, and I would speak every Sunday.

Every Sunday, I was the speaker. I was told to sit at the back. So I sat at the back.

For the next three years, people would ask me, what happened, Brother Jack? And the Lord told me, keep quiet. Don't reply. Let them misunderstand you.

Let them think, oh, he's committed some gross sin. They don't want to reveal it. That's why he's been excommunicated and put out there.

And I sat there, and the Lord said, respect the elders here, even though they disciplined you like this, submit to them. And those are the years God really broke me. And he broke me through failure in my thought life, and struggling to overcome sin in my thoughts in many ways.

And it took me through a period of six years of that. And then one day, in January 75, God filled me with the Holy Spirit, when I was least expecting it. And life was completely different after that.

Not a sudden, like a rocket, but like a gradual climbing up a mountain. I didn't go up like a rocket, not even today. It's a gradual climb up a mountain, up and up and up and up.

And six months later, CFC was born, right in my house. Who did that? I cannot imagine that I could have planned that or, you know, planned my life, I'm going to do that. No.

I tried twice before to start churches, and it was a failure. Two Ishmaels I produced. Total failure.

And I vowed to the Lord, I'll never in my life start a church. I'm not qualified for that, because I tried twice and I failed miserably. And the Lord had to break me saying, you're a failure.

You cannot do it. I said, agreed. I won't even try it, Lord.

So what have I learned? God does not give the Holy Spirit to those who deserve the Holy Spirit. Oh, see, I prayed and I fasted enough. Now I deserve it.

Some of you are thinking like that. That's why you're not receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I'll tell you when I received the Holy Spirit, when I least deserved it, when I was at rock bottom, but when I needed Him, not deserved Him, but needed Him desperately, and had no qualification.

I couldn't even say, I prayed and fasted enough. Zero qualification, but desperate need. If you are there today, I want to tell you, God will fill you with the Holy Spirit.

But if you think I prayed enough, I fasted enough, why doesn't God give me? You have these complaints. I tell you, in 50 years, you will not receive the fullness of the Spirit. Don't think you have a right to go to God and say, I prayed and fasted enough.

You got to fill me with the Holy Spirit. When you come to the place of rock bottom need and say, Lord, I don't deserve this at all. I'm just a rotten old sinner.

I'm not just saying that to show my humility. I'm really convinced about it. I tell you, God will meet with you immediately.

It changed my life. The thing that changed the life of the early disciples was not Bible study, or Bible schools, or money, or some rich man sponsoring them. It was only one thing.

Those unlearned, uneducated, unknown, 12, 11 fishermen and laborers and that type of people were filled with the Holy Spirit and started a work that lasted for 2,000 years and gone all around the world. Try and do that any other way other than through the fullness of the Spirit. Impossible.

Learn something. How did Jesus use 11 people to start something that lasted for 2,000 years? That's why all of you are sitting here today and me too. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and that's because they learned humility from Jesus.

Water flows to the lowest place first. I hope that will be true in our lives. Let's pray.

Dear brothers and sisters, don't forget what you heard today. Go before God sometime. Sometime today before you forget it and say, Lord, I want to be in that place not just once but all my life, where you can continually fill me with the Holy Spirit.

The rivers of living water will keep on flowing from me effortlessly because I found the root of sin and I found the root of salvation. Thank you, Father, for the light we get in your word, the example of Jesus, the greatest of all. We worship you.

We adore you. In Jesus' name, amen.

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