

The Spirit and the Cross

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the essential roles of the Holy Spirit and the cross in understanding and living out true Christianity.

Duration: 56:58

Scripture: Genesis 2:1, Psalm 119:105, Psalm 119:130, Matthew 6:33, John 1:4, Hebrews 4:4

Topics: "Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of detachment from the attractions of the world and the importance of realizing that this world is not our permanent home. He uses the analogy of traveling in a train to emphasize that we should not invest all our resources and efforts in worldly pursuits. The preacher also highlights the danger of becoming worldly and losing the glory of God in our lives. He contrasts the Old Testament life, characterized by ups and downs, with the New Testament life, which is described as a shining light that grows brighter and brighter. The sermon also touches on the significance of sin entering the world in Genesis 3 and how it changed the nature of the earth.

Transcript

When we think of how the world was, or the earth and the heaven, when God first created it, and what changed significantly after man sinned, we see that in the first three chapters of Genesis, something which we need to see clearly, if we are to understand how God wants us to live on this earth. In the first two chapters of Genesis, there is no death of any sort. We could say there was some type of death, or shapelessness, emptiness, darkness in chapter 1, verse 2, but that's because of Genesis 1, verse 2, because of the sin of Lucifer.

But after that, after God began to move, there is no sin, no death in those two chapters. And then you come to chapter 3, is where sin comes in. And that's the world we are living in.

So there is something I want to show you here. First of all, right at the beginning of God's work on the earth, we find the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It's right there in the very second verse of Scripture.

And right at the end of Scripture 2, in Revelation, it says, the Holy Spirit says, come. That's one thing very, very important to recognize, that God's work always involves the Holy Spirit. And we cannot experience what God wants us to experience if we are not completely open to the Holy Spirit, if we are not clear in our life.

In fact, that's one of the things which the early apostles always used to check with people. There were people who were believers, they would go and ask them, listen, you guys have believed, but did you receive the Holy Spirit, or you just believed? Because those apostles found something missing in their life. So, I believe that is really true of many, many Christians who have, in their mind, understood all the truths of Scripture, and come to the meetings, understand the truths, they live good, upright lives.

They live good, upright lives like the non-Christians around them who live good, upright lives. There are many non-Christians who live very good, upright lives, except that these Christians go to a church and those non-Christians go somewhere else. But if the Holy Spirit is not working in our life, then we haven't understood what true Christianity is.

Every one of us must have the Holy Spirit's very clear working in our life, speaking to us, convicting us, giving us power to overcome the things we are defeated by, etc., etc. So, that's the first thing we see right at the beginning of creation, that the Holy Spirit moved, brooded over, and that's how He wants to work in our lives. And then we see that God said, let there be light.

So, when the Holy Spirit works in our life, one of the first things He gives us is light. That's the first thing, in the very first chapter, it's very, very important to see this. If we're not getting light, then the Spirit is not working in us.

Light on what Jesus is like. Jesus said, when the Holy Spirit is come, He'll shine the light on me and let people see things about me which they wouldn't know otherwise. Now, everybody in the world, even a non-Christian, can read the Gospels and know what Jesus did, like feed the multitude or walk on the sea or all those miracles.

Anybody can read. To read that is not what I'm talking about light, but to know something more about the person of Jesus and His inner life and how He walked, only the Holy Spirit can show you. If the Holy Spirit doesn't give you light, I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, you can come to the meetings here regularly, you will just increase in knowledge.

We must be open to the Holy Spirit. And Jesus said, it's only those who thirst who can come to Him and ask Him for the Holy Spirit. If you are really thirsty, I've never heard of anyone who was filled with the Holy Spirit, who was not thirsty for it, who was not desperately seeking God.

So, if that, and you know, it's not something that we experience just once, but we need to, the Bible speaks in the New Testament about walking in this light. And the Bible speaks in the New Testament about walking in the Holy Spirit. Walking in the Holy Spirit, walking in the light means there's a continuous progression.

We're not standing in the same place. We're making progress. And if I walk from here to any other part of this country, every day I should be making progress in getting closer and closer to that place.

So, that's the other thing I want you to see here. Now, once we come to Chapter 3, Chapter 3, before that, in Chapter 2, we read in Chapter 2 that there were two trees, and Adam could access the tree of knowledge and the tree of life freely. We read there were these two trees that God had put there in the middle of the garden, in Genesis Chapter 2 and verse 9. And Adam could have gone straight to the tree of life and taken part of it.

To me, that's a picture of life that God gives, eternal life through the Holy Spirit. So, Adam could have gone to that and received that life freely. But when he sinned, as soon as he sinned, we read in Genesis Chapter 3, a slight change came.

That God, when He drove, the last verse of Genesis 3, He drove the man out of the garden and He put cherubim, that means angels, and a flaming sword, which turned in every direction to guide the way to the tree of life. Now, neither Adam nor anybody else could come to the tree of life easily. You had to get past the sword to come to the tree of life.

That was one significant difference that happened after sin came. And we need to understand this, that in a world that is fallen, in a world that is under the curse, because the curse came in Genesis 3, in a world which is under the power of sin, you can't go to the tree of life without getting past that sword. And this has got a meaning.

The sword speaks about the cross, about the death of the cross. And that's the first time in Scripture that you see about the cross. And it comes as soon as sin has come into the world, that the way to life is now through the cross.

So, we see these, what did I say in the beginning, that the Holy Spirit operates and He's the one who gives us light. And in John 1, 4, we read that that light is the life of Jesus. I'll come to that in a moment.

And here we read that the way to life, you have to go through the cross. So, here are two things. One, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the other, the way of the cross.

And I want to say to all of you, if you understand and experience these two things in your life, you would have understood the most important things in the Christian life. You know, generally speaking, in evangelical Christianity, a lot of emphasis is placed on studying the Bible. That's good.

And I believe that's very important. And I believe it's the only book that God has written and given to us. And if you want to know God, you want to know His ways, you have to read this book.

And I have read and studied it, and I would not despise it. But, remember that all the great saints that you read off in the Bible, never had, that you read off in the Bible, never had a Bible themselves. Abraham didn't have a Bible.

Job didn't have a Bible. Enoch, who walked with God for 300 years, he didn't have a Bible. And even Moses, he had the book of the law.

It was just, first, Moses wrote just the five books of the Old Testament. First five books. Well, you don't get much out of that.

The Israelites got much out of that, because that was the law. And then even the New Testament Christians, most of them were running around from cave to cave, and there were no printed Bibles in those days. The first printed Bibles came around 1500 AD, which is just about 500 years ago.

So, how did people live for so many years without Bibles? How did God expect Christians to live for 1,500 years without the Bible? I mean, they couldn't have a quiet time with the Bible every morning, because they didn't have a Bible. You know what was most important for those Christians? The Holy Spirit. The way of the cross.

That is what makes a person spiritual. The reason I say that is because we live in a day when knowledge and information has been given great importance. And I found in our churches also, there's so much of Bible knowledge and information, understanding of doctrine and truth and all that, but not a sufficient dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, and not a sufficient understanding of the way of the cross.

And that's the reason why we don't have more spiritual people in our midst. It's true everywhere, in every church. When you come into the New Testament, do you know who spoke most about the cross? That was Jesus Christ.

He spoke about the cross frequently, about the cross in which He was going to die, and the cross that we would have to take up if we want to follow Him. He spoke about two sides of the same cross. One was the cross which He would die on, and the other is the way of the cross in which we would have to follow Him.

And after Jesus died and rose and ascended, do you know who spoke about this cross the most? Paul. He spoke about Christ being crucified for us, and he spoke about the other side of our being crucified with Christ. So this sword that is in front of the tree of life, when it refers to the cross, it's referring to this double cross, this one on which Christ died, which is very important.

That's what opens the way to the tree of life. And our being crucified with Christ, taking up the cross ourselves every day, if we want to access that tree of life. Now, it's not just in this one picture.

There are many, many pictures of this throughout the Bible. For example, when Jesus spoke about rivers of living water as a picture of the Holy Spirit in John chapter 7, verse 37 to 39, the first place where we see rivers of living water flowing after the Garden of Eden, there were rivers there. But after Genesis chapter 3, the first place where we see rivers of living water flowing is in Exodus 17, where Moses struck the rock.

You know, I've seen paintings of this from the time I was a little child. In Bible storybooks, you see a picture of this old man holding up a rod and hitting a rock and a little trickle of water coming out like a tap. And you see this little water coming out and about 20-30 people there drinking.

But as I thought about it, I realized it was not 20-30 people. There were 600,000 men alone between the ages of 20 and 60. Then you count all the young people and children below the age of 20 who were not counted in.

I'm talking about those who came out of Egypt. All those who were over 60 were not counted. All the women were not counted.

I think that population must have been about 2 million. 2 million is one third of the population of Bangalore. Can you imagine how much water 2 million people need who are really thirsty? It's not a trickle.

And in how much space do you think 2 million people would require to spread out in tents? And Bangalore itself, with all its double-story buildings and all, it's got to be pretty wide to have 2 million people. If you have 2 million people just on one level scattered across in tents, that would have been a few square miles, number of square kilometers. So you can't have just the water coming out a little trickle over here to feed all those people so many miles away.

It had to be a big stream that came out of the rock flowing in that direction and another stream in that direction, another stream in that direction and that direction and that direction. It was really rivers of living water that came out of that rock. That is the first place in the Bible where you see rivers of living water.

And how did it come? It came because the rock was smitten. We read in 1 Corinthians 10 that rock was Christ. That rock being hit was a picture of Christ being crucified on the cross.

And that's why the second time when they came to the rock, if you read the Bible in Numbers chapter 20, God said to Moses, this time don't hit the rock. Have you read that? Don't hit the rock because Christ must not be crucified a second time. He needs to be crucified only once.

Now Moses didn't understand all that, but there was very deep symbolism when God told Moses, don't hit that rock, speak to it and the waters will flow. But he got angry and he hit it. God was so angry with Moses that he said, I know for 40 years you were looking forward to entering the land of Canaan, but sorry, you cannot enter the land of Canaan.

God was very strict, very, very strict with his most faithful servant on the earth. You know, sometimes when we are strict in the church with someone or in some issue, a lot of believers say, hey, that's not the nature of God. That's not Christ-like.

I've heard a lot of people say that to me. Oh brother Zach, that's too severe. These are people who don't have a clue about what God is like.

They haven't read these passages where for one mistake, which we would think is so slight, God did not allow Moses to go into the promised land, what he was looking forward to 40 years. Boy, it's really something. I don't think I would have been so strict.

I'd have said, okay, this guy's been so faithful, let him in. But God said, no, you and I need to understand more about God. You could not hit that rock a second time.

Today, we have a generation of Christians who read a commandment of God and say, If we can keep it, we'll keep it. If we can't, we'll just disobey it and then confess our sin and ask the Lord to cleanse us in the blood of Jesus. It's like the student who says, I can't pass in this exam without cheating, but I'm a Christian.

So what shall I do? I shall cheat in the examination, get good results, and come back home and ask Jesus to forgive me. And then I've got both. I've got good marks and my heart is also clean.

Very clever, isn't it? Do you know that these are the people who will never make progress in their Christian life? First of all, I doubt whether such people are ever born again. It's something like saying, well, this poison tastes nice, so I'll take a little bit of it and afterwards take some purgative or something laxative and clear out my stomach. How many times are you going to do that? You won't have any stomach left after some time.

That's exactly what happens to a lot of Christians when they play the fool with God. Adam was turned out of Eden for one sin. Moses could not enter the promised land because of one sin.

Pretty serious. So what we see there is it's through the cross that the rivers of living water began to flow. Now what I want you to see is the very close connection between these two.

It's always there throughout Scripture, the way of the cross and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And where people understand only one, they've missed it. As I said, Jesus said, follow me.

Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ. And both of them spoke a lot about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Paul and Jesus spoke a lot about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and they spoke about the way of the cross.

You know, when we look at Jesus hanging on the cross, think of this verse in Galatians chapter 6. We sing that song when I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died. My richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the cross of Christ my God, all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

Galatians 6.14. Paul says, may it never be that I would boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Now here is one of the great secrets of Paul's life. Paul had many things to boast about.

He lists them in Philippians chapter 3. And you and I may have many things to boast about. And the more we think about the things we can boast about, the less spiritual we'll be. Because all those things we boast about are earthly things, earthly accomplishments, earthly abilities, earthly wealth or position or honor or all those things.

But Paul said, God forbid, may it never be that I should boast in anything. What can I boast about? That Jesus died for me on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, where not only he died, but on that cross I died to the world and the world has died to me. What does that mean? It means that, I think it's the living Bible which says that, it means that I have as little interest in this world as a dead man will have.

I'm not talking about our earthly necessities. No, we're not talking about a dead man doesn't need food, doesn't need clothes, doesn't need sleep. No, we need to distinguish between earth and world.

The earth is the earth in which we live and we have a lot of necessities on this earth. We all need food, clothing, shelter. Paul is saying I'm not bothered about my clothes or I'm not bothered about food or a place to live in.

No, he's not talking about that. He's talking about the world system. On this earth, there is a world system of which the ruler is the devil.

The devil, Jesus himself called the devil, the prince of this world. But when it came to the earth, Jesus said in Matthew 28, 19, all authority, 18, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me. But the prince of this world is not Jesus Christ, it's the devil.

One day, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of Christ. That hasn't yet happened. So, there is this whole system of the world where the Bible says, don't be conformed to this world.

That doesn't mean that you shouldn't wear shirts and pants like other worldly people wear or salwar kameez like other worldly women wear. That's not the point. It's not talking about that.

It's talking about don't let the world system run your thinking. Or like in J.B. Phillips paraphrase of Romans 12, he says, don't let the world squeeze you into its mold. See, you know what a mold is? It's a particular shape in which they pour plastic or metal and anything put into that comes out that shape.

So, the world has got a mold and we're living in it and it's very easy to get that shape if you're not careful. We got to resist it. And Paul says, I'm crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me.

Like here in the Message Bible, it says, I have been set free from this atmosphere of trying to please other people and fitting into all the little patterns that they dictate. You know, the way they want to do things. I'm free from all that.

What I want you to see, my brothers and sisters, it's so important is that when Jesus died on the cross, God was demonstrating to the world that in a world which is under sin, there is only one way in which anybody can live a life pleasing to him and that is if he accepts the cross in his life. That principle of sacrifice, that principle of sacrifice is the principle by which God runs his church in this world. That is not the principle by which the world runs its organizations and the life of the world is not operated by the principle of sacrifice.

It's operated by the opposite of the principle of sacrifice. And we can say that's the principle of business and profit. You know, in the book of Revelation, you read about these two cities towards the end of the book, Jerusalem and Babylon.

And if you read Revelation chapter 18, Babylon is described as a system which is business, business, business. Everything is business. I was recently passing through Singapore airport and it was very interesting to see how all these shopkeepers, and they're not Christians, most of them are Chinese, Buddhists or whatever it is, but they've got all types of decorations throughout the airport for Christmas.

Amazing. You know, they wear these little hats that, I don't know what type of hats they're called, this Christmas type of thing with stars and they have a big Christmas tree. I mean, these people are not Christians.

It's good business. They'll have Santa Claus and all, I suppose, in a few weeks to welcome the passengers going through the airport. This is the airport, international airport.

I heard a story of three children, three little children, small children, who were children in a classroom. After Christmas in January, the teacher asked them, tell us how you celebrate a Christmas. So one little boy got up and said, we are Catholics.

We held hands and danced around our Christmas tree, picked up our gifts, and then at night we went for midnight mass. Another little girl said, we are Protestants. We went for evening carol service and came back and danced around the Christmas tree and picked up our gifts.

And the third little Chinese boy said, we are Buddhists. Our dad runs a toy store and he took us to the toy store and showed us all the empty shelves with all the toys sold at Christmas time and all the money he made. And we held hands and danced around those stores and sang, what a friend we have in Jesus that he's allowed us to make so much money.

What a friend we have in Jesus. This is Babylon. You don't realize it.

It's what's happening in the world today. There's so much of the entire system of making money, whether it is through Christ or his teaching or anything, religion, make money, make profit, be a preacher, make money, join a church to gain something. That is the principle of Babylon.

The opposite of that is Jerusalem. If you went to Jerusalem, the most important part of Jerusalem was the temple. And if you went into the temple, the first thing you see there, right as soon as you enter the temple gate, is this huge altar covered with blood, blood all on the floor.

And you'll see animals being sacrificed there from morning till evening. Any day you went, it would be the same thing. I don't know, perhaps on the Sabbath day they didn't, but that's what it was.

And God instituted so many sacrifices. Every time you sinned, you had to sort of bring a goat. It was pretty expensive those days to sin.

Nowadays, it's pretty easy. You just go to Jesus and ask him to forgive. But those days, that's why the Jews were more careful about sinning than Christians are.

I mean, imagine if you had to pay 1000 rupees each time you committed a sin, I think we'd stop sinning pretty quickly. I don't know how much a goat costs, it must be something like that. But it was sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice.

Blood, blood, blood, blood, blood. So compare that with Babylon, where it's glittering money, money, money, making more, gaining profit. And here it is not gaining, but loss, loss, loss, loss.

I mean, kill and you lose another animal, you lose another animal, you lose another animal from your flock. Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. These are two principles.

And that's the meaning of the way of the cross. If you've understood it, you change your life. That's why Jesus said, now they didn't understand this in the Old Testament.

Nobody understood what this inner way of sacrifice, the way of the cross was in the Old Testament. They could just take the animal and kill it there and say, okay, but they couldn't understand anything. But now that the Holy Spirit has come, Jesus said, when the Holy Spirit's come, he'll show you so many things which I can't explain to you now.

You know, that's one of the things he said just before he went to the cross. He said, there are many things I want to say to you, he said, but you can't understand them now. Why couldn't they understand? Why could they understand 40 days later? They didn't suddenly become more intelligent or cleverer.

No, but 40 days later, the Holy Spirit came. Oh, then they could understand what they could not understand till then. So, then the Holy Spirit explained to them that if you want to follow Jesus, you have to walk the way of sacrifice that he walked.

And that is why you find in the New Testament, you see a tremendous difference between the great men of God in the Old Testament and the great men of God in the New Testament, particularly in the area of material wealth. Some of the great men of God in the Old Testament were very, very wealthy people like Job, Melchizedek. He was a king, very wealthy man.

Abraham and David and many of these people were very well off financially. These were some of the great Abraham, it's called the father in faith, Isaac. He was so rich and Jacob.

And even those Israelites in Canaan, Joshua, they possessed lands and they had so much of property. But when you come to the New Testament, the greatest people in the New Testament are all so poor. John the Baptist and Jesus and Paul and Peter and James and John.

Why this sudden difference? Couldn't God who made all those fellows so rich in the Old Testament also do that in the New? Sure. I mean, it's the same God. God hasn't changed.

But something happened on the day of Pentecost that people understood the way of sacrifice, the way of denying oneself, the way of dying to the attractions of this world and being detached, being cut off, so that they realize that like they sing in that song, this world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. Only passing through.

I mean, it's like, use an example, it's like traveling in a train. You may sit two days in a train to go to Delhi. The train's not your home.

You won't spend all your money beautifying that train or spend all your money for the two-day journey. We must have a grand two days in this train and spend lakhs of rupees for those two days and end up as a pauper when you reach Delhi. What would you call such a man? A fool.

That is exactly what many Christians are going to discover when this train journey comes to an end and we land up in heaven and we discover that we were taken up with the train journey. That's something which Old Testament people did not know. This world was their home.

Their song was, this world is my home. I'm not passing through. I'm here.

And they got property there. The Lord said, I'll give you a land of Canaan here and any earthly enemies here, I'll wipe them off. There was a distinct difference in the Old Testament towards the people of the world and the world system and everything compared to the New Testament.

Something happened on the day of Pentecost. They got light that this is the way God wants man to live in a world that is under sin, the way Jesus lived. The principle of sacrifice, the principle of self-denial, the principle of giving up rather than gaining and they understood that and it affected their whole way of life and because they were gripped by that and lived by that, they grew spiritually.

There was no backsliding in the life of people like Paul and Peter. All were gripped by this and they proceeded on that. Backsliding is all for people who have not been gripped by this.

And I want to say to you, I believe that many, many people in our churches have not understood this principle of sacrifice, have not understood the way of the cross, have not understood what it means to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, to have the river of God flowing through them, have not understood what it is to have light given by the Holy Spirit. Let me say something about light. In 2nd Corinthians in chapter 4, in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 we have a little commentary on the Old Testament passage we read, we read in Genesis 1. It's 2nd Corinthians 4 and verse 6, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that's Genesis 1 that we read, Genesis 1:3, let there be light, is the one who has shone into our hearts.

In other words, Paul through the Holy Spirit is saying, you know fellas, you know that the type of earth you saw in Genesis 1 verse 2, all dark and empty and shapeless, that's the picture of your heart. All children of Adam, their hearts are like that, dark, empty, lost the image of God, shapeless. And into that heart, into that world, God said, let there be light.

And he says, that is what God did when he sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Light came into our heart and we got light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. See this light shows us the face of Jesus Christ.

We see Jesus, in this light. That means we see what Jesus is really like, what the principles by which he lived his life become clear as the Holy Spirit shows us this light. Now in the Old Testament, it was not like this because there was nobody who could be a light.

You remember it says in the previous chapter, how Moses used to go up to the mountain and the light of God would shine on his face and he'd come down all radiant with that light. But then he would cover it with a veil. There were two reasons for it.

One in the Old Testament, it says because his face was so bright, people couldn't look at him. But in 2 Corinthians 3.12, it says another reason was that underneath that veil, the glory was slowly decreasing. He says the veil covered so that would not look at a glory which was fading away.

Here was a glory that he came with in the presence of God. And you saw him the next day, it was a little less the next day, it was a little less next day. After one week, you could look at his face.

He was quite okay. He was just like anybody else. That is Old Testament life.

You know you come to a meeting and God powerfully speaks to you and your face all becomes bright. Your heart gets lit up with the light of God. And you see the same person the next day.

He's cooled off a little. You see him the next day, it's cooled off a little more. You see him a week later.

He's just like any other worldly person. The glory has faded away. It's gone.

This is classic Old Testament life. Then he comes to another meeting. It's like going into the presence of God and again.

I mean, if it's a meeting where God really spoke, something begins to shine in their heart. And then next day, it becomes less, less, less, less. And so the life of an Old Covenant Christian is like this.

He goes to a meeting and he's all up in the mountain and then slowly down to the dumps. And then some other revival meeting, he goes up again, face starts shining again, and then it starts going down. And this is, in physics, they call this the sine wave.

This is the average Christian's life. But the New Testament life is described in Proverbs 4.18. The path of the righteous is like the shining light that shines more and more and more and more and more and more until the perfect day. It's not a sine wave.

It's straight up. It's not even level. It's go up and up and up and up.

And that's what it says in chapter 3, verse 18. The contrast to Moses' glory fading and becoming less and less and less and less. Here we read in the New Testament, it's a glory that becomes more and more and more and more and more.

Provided we allow the Holy Spirit to constantly say, let there be light. See the face of Jesus a little more. So let me show you an Old Testament verse, which tells us what the light was in the Old Testament.

Psalms 119, sorry. Psalm 119 and verse 105. Lord, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

What was the light in those days? God's word. Verse 130, the unfolding or the entrance of your word gives light. It gives understanding to the simple.

There was only one light that people had in the Old Testament. That was a written word of God. But in the New Testament, it says the light is in the face of Jesus Christ.

John 1.4, in him was life and that life was the light of men. So I want you to see this very clearly. In the Old Testament, it was a written book.

That was the light. In the New Testament, it's a living person of Jesus who is the light. In the Old Testament, they followed the book, the rules in the book.

In the New Testament, they follow this living person Jesus and the way he walked. Now it's possible for men, in fact, most Christians live by the book. Because either they don't have the power of the Holy Spirit in their life, they're not allowed the Holy Spirit to show them the life of Jesus.

Or they don't want to go this way of the cross. Jesus walked only one way. I can prove that to you.

Every day for 33 and a half years, every day, he walked the way of the cross. You know where it says that? In Luke's Gospel chapter 9. Luke's Gospel chapter 9 and verse 23. Now you got to read this verse carefully.

If anyone wants to come after me, in other words, someone wants to be my follower, someone wants to walk in my footsteps, anybody, anywhere in the world, you want to walk in my footsteps, there's something you got to do every single day. It says you must deny yourself and take up your cross every day if you want to follow me. So in other words, that's how Jesus lived every day from his childhood for 33 and a half years.

Since if you want to follow those steps, you got to take up the cross and deny yourself every day if you want to follow me, otherwise you'll never be able to follow me. You can understand all the doctrines in the world. You can have great understanding in your head and pray and sing like an angel and shout and all that, but you will not be able to follow me if you don't take up the cross every day.

Now if you do take up the cross every day and you can't sing for nuts, I mean you can't even sing two lines straight, that's okay. You'll still follow Jesus. Or you don't have much understanding of the Bible.

You can still follow Jesus. You know that being able to quote the Bible and all that, that's not such a great qualification. I love some places in the Old Testament it says, yeah someone somewhere has said, think of a verse like this.

This is the Holy Spirit inspired apostle writing in Hebrews 4 and verse 4. You know somewhere it is written concerning the seventh day, God rested on the seventh day. I say hey, you mean to say you don't even know that that is Genesis chapter 2 verse 1? Somewhere, somewhere said. It's amazing.

They didn't give so much importance to me knowing the Bible so well as to be able to quote it. Today we can quote, but we don't have that life. It's good to know the Bible.

If you're a teacher especially you need to know where it is. But what I'm trying to say is that these people, the man who wrote scripture, they couldn't even know where this verse was. Somewhere he says, somewhere I don't remember exactly which book it is, but it says God rested on the seventh day.

Every Christian knows that's in Genesis. But he's not ashamed to say, I really don't know, it's somewhere. But they got the life.

The point is this, they had the Holy Spirit and they took up the cross and followed Jesus every day. That's why had the life. We can major on so many other things like, you know, singing, attending meetings, reading the Bible and completely miss this way of sacrifice.

I remember when I was a young Christian and I understood this. I understood something of the way of the cross when I was 24 years old. I was seeking God for the power of the Holy Spirit.

I went to this church, that church, the other church and I didn't get it. And I came back to my room. I was in the Navy those days and the Lord showed me the way of the cross.

It changed my life. 42 years ago I understood something of the way of the cross, the way of sacrifice, the way of self-denial is the only way to follow Jesus. And I'm so glad that I understood that as a young man.

I wish you young people would understand it now. It'll change your life when you come to my age. You'll be able to look back over a life with great joy and no regret about the way you lived.

If you chose the way of the cross, when I had to choose a wife, I wanted to know if she understood the way of the cross. Most important, it's only when I discovered she knew that, that I chose her. Because it's pointless, one person understanding the way of the cross, the other person doesn't, lifelong conflict.

If you understand the way of the cross, choose a partner who understands the way of the cross. It's the way of life. It's the way of triumph.

And that's how it was when it says in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2, let's run the race looking unto Jesus. He doesn't say let's look unto Jesus who raised the dead or walked on the water. Let's look unto Jesus who endured the cross every day, despising the shame.

So that's the way we are to look. And it says that he endured the cross, despised the shame and ended up at the right hand of the throne of God. And that's where I want to end up too.

And that's the way to the throne of God is the way of the cross. You go all the way up there. I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, remember this.

There's a principle of sacrifice and the principle of gain and profit. That's the way of the world. This is the way of Jesus.

And in everything in life, you will, you'll see this. These are secret choices that we have to make before God. I have to deny myself a certain pleasure because I want to please God.

I deny myself a certain comfort, a certain convenience because I've got to do something for God. If I keep on indulging myself, indulging myself, that's why Jesus said we've got to learn how to fast. That's why we've got to learn how to deny myself.

A lot of Christians just indulge themselves. Everything they want, they get, they get, they get, they get, they get. And they think they're very happy Christians.

They're not. They're some of the most miserable Christians you ever meet. The happiest Christians in the world are those who have denied themselves, who sacrifice and sacrifice and sacrifice and sacrifice.

They are radiant because they've got light, the light of God. Now, the great danger when we follow a written word is that you can become legalistic and you won't even understand the meaning of that word. You see, now take this matter of 1 Corinthians 6. It says a believer should not take another believer to court.

Now, supposing you do want to take another believer to court to teach him a lesson, how will you get around that verse? You go to that verse, you can't get around that verse, you take the letter. You know the way out? See, he's not a believer. Ah, that's released me from that verse.

He doesn't behave like a believer. He doesn't have the fruit of his spirit. So he's not a believer.

I can take him to court. But instead of taking the word as the light, supposing you take Jesus as the light, and say, would Jesus take somebody to court because he's not a believer? Did he take the Pharisees to court because he called me Beelzebub? I'm going to sue you for defamation. No.

You see the difference that when you take Jesus as your example, you can never do anything wrong. But you take the word of God, you can, you know, twist it to mean what you want it to mean. And Christendom is full of examples of people who have twisted.

You know, you tell some young people, you know, you've got to be a disciple. You've got to hate father and mother. Ah, he says, that's exactly the verse I like.

I'm just sick and tired of my parents. I want to be a disciple of Jesus. I want to hate my father and mother.

I already do it. I've been a disciple of Jesus for many years now. I said, no, no, no, no, no, no.

You've misunderstood it. Jesus first honored his father and mother. Then only we can say, no, if you haven't first learned to honor them, you can't hate them.

See what I'm just taking an example of all the cults have taken verses, verses, they don't look at Jesus. They've got a verse for this, a verse for that, a verse for that, a verse for that. And they hit people on the head with that verse.

This is the danger of not allowing the Holy Spirit to show us the life of Jesus is the life. Let's pray. Let's bow our heads for a few moments before God and allow the word of God to sink in so that the Holy Spirit gives us light on the face of Jesus.

See how he lived his earthly life. Those who see that will become spiritual. Those who've just been challenged by a message today, I can tell you the glory will be a little less tomorrow, still less day after.

In a week it would have all gone. But if you allow the Holy Spirit to show you the glory of Jesus, it'll get glory to glory to glory. As time goes on, Heavenly Father, help us to see this and to walk this way that our Savior went all the days of our life.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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