

# The Way Into the New Covenant Life

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God for the power of the Holy Spirit in personal and church settings. It delves into the significance of anointing with the Holy Spirit, the need for daily death to self to experience God's power, and the covenant relationship with God through death. The speaker highlights the transformative power of choosing the way of the cross, dying to self in various life situations, and the continuous journey of learning to walk in the overcoming life.*

**Scripture:** Luke 3:21, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 12:4, Genesis 9:12, Genesis 15:17, Exodus 24:6, Philippians 3:3, Psalms 16:8

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit Empowerment", "Dying to Self"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I'm not looking for noise, I'm looking for power. So I decided to seek God in my own room, in our own church. I encourage people to seek God for the power of the Holy Spirit in their house, in their room.

Because I say, in an emotional meeting, where everybody's yelling and screaming, you won't know whether what you got was emotion or really the Holy Spirit. But when you're all alone in your room where there's no excitement or emotion, the Holy Spirit may give you emotion, may give you excitement, but he may not also. So, as I was seeking God, I was reminded of how Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

And that's the thing that challenged me. You know, Jesus lived such a perfect life for 30 years, and yet, he needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. He didn't become more holy when he was 31 than when he was 29.

But something happened in the River Jordan that changed his ministry. As I said, he didn't become holy yet, but he could cast out demons, he could heal the sick, he could do so many things that he couldn't do before. I said, Lord, maybe you're not calling me to heal the sick, I'm not calling for healing.

But I said, whatever ministry you call me for, I want to say to every single one of you, if you have repented of your sins and asked Jesus to come into your heart, the Holy Spirit is coming, but you may not be filled, you may not be anointed. I want you to pray that God will anoint you to fulfill that particular ministry that every single one of you, and I mean every single one of you, even your little children, you have a ministry in the body of Jesus Christ. And the church is the best place to exercise that ministry.

And it may not be some public ministry like I have standing up in front. It may be a very small ministry that's hidden, perhaps, like the hidden members inside our body, which are very, very important. I would rather lose my hand than my heart.

That's hidden, but more important. The hidden members in the body of Christ are very important. I don't despise them.

But seek God for this car. And I saw that when Jesus was anointed, he was anointed. I saw two things there.

One, it says in Luke chapter 3, he prayed as he went into baptism. And I know what he prayed for, because every prayer of Jesus was answered immediately. As soon as he came out of the waters, he was anointed.

So I know he was praying for the anointing as he was going in. He must have said, Father, anoint me. He was anointed.

Even he needed to pray. And the other thing I saw was that baptism is symbolic. John the Baptist tipped him in, and symbolically, Jesus was saying, I allow anyone to put me to death and bury me, because I know my Father will raise me up.

I don't mean just the death on the cross. Jesus died a daily death to self, to his self-will. He said in John 6, 38, I came from heaven not to do my own will, but to do the will of my Father.

So that means every day of his life, he never did his own will. He put his self-will to death. And sometimes that was through other people doing something to him, where his self-will had to be put to death.

He had four brothers who troubled him like anything and irritated him at home. He had to just die. He had to die for 30 years at home.

And that baptism was a symbol of what he has done all his life and what he was going to do for the remaining every day of the next three and a half years. And what the Lord showed me then was that Jesus received the anointing as he symbolically accepted death to himself. That death was a dying in faith, in faith that just as he knew that John the Baptist had lifted him up, he knew that in life situations, if I die to myself, there will be a resurrection.

My Father will raise me up. Many people pray for the power of his resurrection, but you can't know the power of his resurrection if you're not willing to die. There's no resurrection without a death.

Towards the end of Paul's life, he says in Philippians 3, I want to know the power of his resurrection, being conformed to his death. So that's what the Lord showed me. When you're seeking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you can have my power if you go the way Jesus went, the way of death to self from this day onwards for the rest of your life.

And if ever a time comes in your life where you feel this is not the way for you, my power will depart from you. And I heard that from the Lord 53 years ago, 1963. And I said, Lord, this is the way I want to go.

And I'm so young. I was only 23 years old. I was a very young Christian.

And I tried to understand the way of the cross, the way of death to self. I want to say to you today that is the thing that has preserved me, saved me, changed my life, changed my ministry, deliberately choosing in every situation the way of the cross. I didn't do it perfectly in the early days.

I'm still trying to understand. You know, for example, if someone gets upset with you, if you die, you don't get upset with them. Dead people don't get upset.

Dead people don't get offended with what people say or do, or what people don't say, which you expect them to say, or what people don't do, which you expect them to do for you. You know, we, even though we are Christians, we have so many expectations on each other. Husbands and wives, all the conflict.

Husbands and wives, because there's expectations. I expect something, and the other person expects something. And when that expectation is not met, there's anger.

Even if you control your anger, there are feelings inside that are not good. And the Lord is not teaching us some type of yoga to just control our words. That's good, but the Lord delivers us from the feelings inside as well.

To control our tongue is one step, but we must go beyond that. And the only way to go beyond that is to deliberately choose to die to the opinions of the world. I used to find every little poem about death to self, and I would sing that often and write it inside my Bible.

Things like death to the world and its applause. To all the customs and fashions and laws of those who hate the humbling cross. So dead that no desire may arise to appear good or great or wise in any but my Savior's eyes.

I said, Lord, that's the way I want to live. I used to sing that many, many times. So dead that no desire may arise to appear good or great or wise in any but my Savior's eyes.

And gradually the Lord began to show me more and more about what this death to self meant in different situations. Always the question that I would ask myself was, in this situation, how will a dead man react? You ask yourself that question. Here is a provocative situation.

How will a dead man react here? That's the meaning of dying to self. It's very simple. If you want to understand it, you can understand it.

Jesus said in John 7, 17, if you want to do His will, you will know the doctrine. That's the secret of understanding the truth. If you want, if God sees that deep down in your heart, you want to do the will of God, you will understand it.

And when people don't understand the doctrine of the overcoming life, I say, deep down in their heart, they don't want it. They love themselves too much. Their expectations, even among ourselves as believers.

It's a wonderful thing to live without expecting. I'm called to be a servant. A servant doesn't expect.

I remember in the days when, you know, our folks wouldn't come to the church meeting on time, to the church service. Our service used to begin at 9.30 and people would scroll in at 10 o'clock. And it always disturbed me.

People walking in late. And the Lord said that was because you were in the military. It disturbed you such a lot that you were coming late for the service.

And the Lord just showed me something there that really helped me. He said, I've called you to be my servant. And if you're my servant, you've got to be the servant of all men.

So don't look at these people as serving you who come to the service. You are serving them. Treat them as superior to you.

Philippians 2 says, consider all others. Everyone is more important than you. Not more spiritual.

You cannot consider other people as more spiritual than you. There's no such verse in the Bible. But Philippians 2, verse 3 says, consider others as more important.

That's why Jesus washed people's feet. Because he considered them as more important, not more spiritual. So, the Lord said, look at these people as kings and queens.

And you're their servant. And if a king says, I want breakfast at 9.30, you go there as a servant and keep the table ready at 9.30. Have everything ready. And if a king strolls in half an hour late, you don't ask him, hey, why did you come late? He's got the right to come late.

So the Lord said to me, all these are kings and queens. They've got the right to come whenever they like. You're the servant.

You've got to be there on time. And maybe one day, some of these people will graduate from being kings and queens and become servants. Then they will come on time.

So I was at rest. So I found that always I could find something in myself. Instead of expecting, they must be here on time.

I just find something in myself to die. I'll just give you one example. Or in some other situation, to ask yourself, how will a dead man react to this? And then I thought about the, you know, we speak about the New Covenant.

And you know, the only time that Jesus ever used that phrase, New Covenant, was when he came to the Lord's table. This is my blood of the New Covenant. Remember that when you come to break your bread? We did that yesterday.

That's the only time Jesus spoke about the New Covenant. The blood of the New Covenant. And he related it to death.

Blood. So there is the reason why many people don't enter into this life of the New Covenant is because they haven't seen that it is through blood. Through death.

You know this phrase in Hebrews 12 and verse 4, it says, It says earlier, let's look at Jesus our example and run this race. Consider him. And you have not, like him, resisted to the point of shedding blood in your

striving against sin.

He said, look at him. He shed his blood, Hebrews 12, verse 4, in striving against sin. That means, for him, sin was doing his own will.

We're not talking about adultery and murder. Anything where he did, if Jesus did his own will once, that would have been sin. We haven't come to that level to understand it, but that is the highest level of sin.

I do my own will. I don't want to do my father's will. He constantly fought against that.

And to the point where he shed blood. So when I see him shedding his blood on the cross, the value of that blood is according to Hebrews 12, verse 4, that he strove unto blood, to the shedding of blood, striving against doing his own will. All through his life.

And that is why that blood is so much meaningful. So when he says, the blood of the new covenant, I drink that cup, I'm saying, Lord, I'm entering into a covenant with you. That I also want to live this life of denying my own will, being dead in all situations of life, so that I can react like Jesus would.

Like Paul said, I'm crucified, it's no longer I, but Christ lives in me. You cannot understand the new covenant without accepting this, being crucified with Christ. And then I studied the covenants in the Bible.

And it began with, it's very interesting, you can read about that in Genesis chapter 9. You read about the first covenant that God made with Noah. And he tells him, this is the covenant. He had judged the world because of sin.

And he said to Noah, I'll never judge the world again for sin. Why wouldn't he judge the world for sin? The world has done more wicked things since the days of Noah. He said, I will not ever again send a flood.

Genesis 9, verse 12 and 13. He uses the word covenant. The first time that he uses the word covenant.

This is the sign of the covenant. I set my bow in the cloud. We call it a rainbow.

But God called it a bow. And I looked up the Hebrew word for it. I don't know Hebrew, but I looked up the Hebrew.

And I found the word used for that bow in the cloud is exactly the same as the word used for bow in a bow and arrow. Throughout the Old Testament. So what the Lord was saying is, I set a bow in the cloud to indicate that I'll never judge this world again.

There's no bow without an arrow. A bow is useless without an arrow. There's going to be an arrow, but the bow is pointing upwards.

And the arrow is going to be fired upwards. God is implying there, I'm going to take the hit. That's the meaning of that bow.

That's the day I understood what we call the rainbow means. So whenever I see that rainbow, I think of the covenant with God. It's not just a beautiful seven colors.

It's a beautiful seven colors because God took the hit that went from that bow. That's the first time he used the word covenant, and it related to death. The second time he makes a covenant, you read, he makes a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15.

I don't have time to show you all that, but you can read it sometime in verse 10. When God told Abraham to bring some pepper and goat and cut it into pieces, put half this side and half the other side. And there was a pathway in between.

He was making a covenant with Abraham. And it says, as Abraham became dark, in Genesis 15, 17, a smokey fire, a flaming torch, popped between his two pieces and cut them in half. That is the way God said, I'm going to die.

That's how I'm going to make a covenant with God. If you go to Jeremiah 34, verse 18, you read there that that's how he really made a covenant. I'm going to make a covenant with you, which means I'm going to be true to you until death.

So whenever you find covenant in the Old Testament, it's always related to death. Then you see the covenant God made with Abraham. It's circumcision.

Circumcision is a picture of death to the flesh. Philippians 3.3 says, we are the true circumcision. It's a cutting off, a cutting off of the flesh.

Again, a symbol of death. And later on in Exodus, when God gave Israel the Ten Commandments, He says that Moses took the Book of the Lord and cut some animals. He took the blood of the animals, Genesis 24, verse 6-8, and he sprinkled, he put it on the book and he sprinkled it on the people.

And he said, in Genesis 24, verse 8, this is the blood of the covenant the Lord has made. You see, every single time, covenant is related to death. Here it is blood.

Animal skin. That really showed me that if I really want to enter, you know, think of a covenant like getting married. You take your marriage seriously.

You've made a covenant in your life. And when you enter into this new covenant that you symbolize in the bread and the cup, you enter into a covenant with the Lord where you're saying, Lord, I choose the way of death. Every day of my life.

He said, you've got to take up your cross daily. And as I said, the Lord said to me that I could have the power of the Holy Spirit in my life. It would never go if I chose the way of death every day.

It would never go. And there are many times when I have wept on my bed in prayer and said, Lord, you can take everything away from me, but don't take the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And I know you'll never take it away.

And I want to say to all of you, believe me, it is the most precious gift you can ever have. The third person in the family. God himself.

It's like having Jesus with you all the time. Wherever you go, the Holy Spirit is with you. The Lord is with you all the time.

Like it says in Psalm 16, I've set the Lord always before me. He's at my right hand. I will not be shaken.

He's in front of me as an example. He's there before me when I speak to others. I'm conscious that when I'm speaking, Jesus is there listening to the way I'm speaking.

You'll never be able to speak rudely to somebody if you have the Lord's presence in front of you. And it's not something that... It didn't come to me in one day. It's so much of stumbling, like a child learning to walk.

A child learns in one year. I took longer than that. I was determined.

I want to learn to walk the way of the cross. You're not walking the way of the cross. You're always stumbling and falling after so many years of being a Christian.

I would say, you're not taking your Christian walk seriously. For a Christian, the walk is the walking the way of the cross. You've got to learn it pretty quickly.

We will stumble, but I never gave up. I said, Lord, I stumble, I fall, I'll get up, I'll repent. I'll say, sorry, I didn't do it right.

I lost my temper there. I got a bit upset there. You know, when I was disciplining my children, I know that discipline is right, anger is wrong.

But sometimes I have to say, I discipline my children in anger. And I would always lock myself in the restroom after that. And say, I weep there.

I say, Lord, the discipline was right, but I lost my temper. I was determined. I say, Lord, I don't care how long it takes.

I'm going to learn how to walk this overcoming night. Where anger will depart from me permanently. Dirty thoughts will depart from me.

I will really react more and more and more like a dead man. Because it's not like a dead man. Somebody else lives in you.

There will be a resurrection when there's that death. Remember this, even when you watch this baptism. What we did yesterday, the breaking of bread, was a symbol of death.

What you're going to watch now in baptism is a symbol of death. And those are the only two symbols that Jesus appointed. And isn't it interesting that God symbolized death.

And the way of death is so little preached and so little known. And I believe that's the reason why even people talk about the new covenant and not enter it. Because there's a blood.

You have to resist unto blood. And it begins in your home, with your wife, your husband, your children, and then in the local church. But I wish all of you will be gripped by this.

Because then you will be able to say one day, Father, I serve you. Sweetheart, be part of every death. There will be a resurrection.

You will experience something of the life of Jesus. He will love you. He will control you.

He will restrain your time. It's from within. It's not just the devil's yoga where you control your time.

It's from within that Jesus helps you to love that person who detests you. You choose the way of death. It's a reward God gives you.

You choose the way of death and God gives you a reward. So that's the way we should choose, brothers and sisters. I pray that you'll find it.

Like I've found it all these years. I'm excited to see more of it. So that our children can grow up and see and learn from us.

This is the way the vision goes. So that another generation can grow up to be a witness to the way of the cross, so that everyone is good and so that it's good. In Christ's name, amen.

May all of you be witnesses to that.

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