

(The Works of Faith) God Loves Us as He Loved Jesus

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes that God loves us as He loved Jesus, offering profound security and identity to believers.

Duration: 1:14:20

Scripture: Genesis 38:27, Exodus 12:6, Job 36:5, Psalm 139:16, Matthew 1:3, Matthew 6:33, John 20:17

Topics: "Faith And Works", "Eternal Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a life that is pleasing to God. He encourages the audience to consider how they are spending their time and to make sure they are not living for things that will have no value in eternity. The speaker shares his own reflection on his 43 years as a Christian and urges the listeners to not make the mistake of living for temporary things. He highlights the significance of using one's life to build the Church of Jesus Christ and to fulfill God's plan, even in secular jobs. The sermon also touches on the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the transformative power of these events.

Transcript

I'd like to read a verse in John's Gospel chapter 20. We know that it was a great day when Jesus came to earth as a little baby. God became man and dwelt among us for 33 years.

And in the Christian world we've done a lot, I mean, they make a lot about his birth and his life and his death on the cross. But I'm thinking here of what happened at his resurrection and generally speaking I find among Christians there is not sufficient understanding of what happened through the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit. And I want you to notice this here in John chapter 20.

At the resurrection Jesus said to Mary Magdalene words that he had never said before. In verse 17, Jesus said to her, stop clinging to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.

I don't know whether you noticed the significance of that statement. In all Jesus' ministry with his disciples, he never once called them my brothers. That's the first time he called them my brothers.

He called them my disciples, my servants. And once he went and said, I no longer call you servants, I call you my friends in John 15. The night before he went to the cross.

That's as far as he got. But three days later, three days later things had changed. After his resurrection he said, my brothers.

It's only then that they became his brothers. They were not the brothers of Jesus till then. Nobody could be a brother of Jesus from the time of Adam till this day.

And then, very many times Jesus used to speak about my Father, my Father, my Father, my Father. And he would tell them, your Heavenly Father will do this. But this is the first time that he used this expression, my Father and your Father, together.

In verse 17, my Father is your Father. We have come from the same Father and we are brothers. It's amazing.

And the full impact of that, I wonder whether we have understood. I don't know whether you know that Jesus, when he came to this earth, was called the only begotten son of God. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

But after his resurrection from the dead, he is never called the only begotten son of God. I don't know whether you know that. Never.

He is always called the firstborn. What is the difference between only begotten and firstborn? You know, when you have only one son, you say, that's my only son. When you have more sons, you say, that's my firstborn.

That's the difference. Right up until the time that Jesus was born, he was called the only begotten son of God. Immediately after his resurrection, and you see later on in the episodes, he is called the firstborn.

Now that's very important because it means that now, for the first time in the history of the universe, God has got other children. And Jesus is now the elder brother. In Romans chapter 8 and verse 29 it says, that those whom he foreknew, we thought a little bit about that yesterday, how in God's foreknowledge, he knew those who would in future times accept Christ as their saviour.

Those whom he foreknew, he also predestined, verse 29 of Romans 8, to become conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. So there you find that title again, the firstborn. That means that Jesus is an elder brother.

And that's another, you know, yesterday I told you how, or this morning, that there is a title of Jesus, which is not very well known among many Christians. And that was forerunner from Hebrews 6 and verse 20. Now here is another title of Jesus, which is not very well known among believers.

Elder brother. The firstborn among many brothers, or in other words, an elder brother. Now what's the significance of this as far as we're concerned? Before Jesus went to the cross, he prayed a prayer to his father.

And one of the things he mentioned in that prayer was a truth that is found in only one place in scripture. If you turn to John chapter 17 and verse 23, this is Jesus expressing his heart's desire to his heavenly father. And he says, Father, I'm praying that I should be in them and thou in me.

That they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that thou didst send me and didst love them even as thou didst love me. That Jesus wants the world around us to know something about us. That was his prayer to his father.

Now let's just think about us. Forget the rest of the Christians. We're thinking of ourselves now.

We're living in the midst of the world, people around us. What are they supposed to see and know when they meet us? One, they're supposed to know that the father sent Jesus into the world. But there's another thing they're supposed to know.

And that is that God loves us exactly as he loved Jesus. It's an amazing truth. There are many verses in scripture that teach us that God loves us.

But here is the one place in scripture that tells us how much he loves us. He loves us as much as he loved Jesus. It's an amazing truth.

When I was a young Christian, very insecure, shy, not bold to speak for Jesus and with anxieties and fears concerning the future. The thing that delivered me from all my insecurity was this one truth that God loved me as he loved Jesus. Now, I don't know whether that hits you as it hit me, but it really delivered me from all insecurity.

If you just stop to think about it. How much the father loved Jesus. You can think of so many things in his life.

And that the father loves me exactly the same way. You know, we can't have anything from God if we don't believe. The Bible says without faith, it is impossible to please God.

You cannot please God if you don't believe, if you don't have faith. When God says that he loves you as he loved Jesus, and you say, well, that's impossible. It's not possible for God to love a wretched sinner like me as much as he loved his pure son, Jesus.

Well, then it's impossible for you to please God because you don't believe what he says in his word. Because you look too much at yourself and how unworthy you are. Instead of simply believing that God means what he says, it's got nothing to do with what you are.

It's got to do with what God is. God loves you as he loved Jesus. And if you can believe that, it can change your life as it changed mine.

You know, a lot of us are very insecure. We probably, some of us had parents or fathers who loved us when we were good and behaved properly. Or probably compared us with other children who were better than us and made us feel inferior.

We live in a world where a lot of people make us feel inferior. We're not good enough. We're not as smart as them, not as clever as them, not as rich as them in many, many ways.

The world is a place where we're made to feel small, insecure, inferior. And we, as I said, we may have had fathers who appreciated us when we were good and maybe didn't love us when we were naughty and bad. And so we can't understand a father who loves us without conditions.

If you think that God loves you only when you're good, I want to tell you, you're sadly mistaken because it's not true. God loves you just as you are. He doesn't want you to change.

He'll change you. That's his responsibility. But he loves you as you are.

And he loves you as much as he loved Jesus. Now, when I understood that truth and I believed it, I believed it not because of anything in me. I believe it just because Jesus said it.

I say, he speaks the truth. And he said, the father loves me as he loved Jesus. I said, okay, Lord, I don't deserve it, but I believe it.

I believe with all my heart that you love me as you love Jesus, which means that everything you did for Jesus, you'll do for me. See, I have four sons. And one of the things I have tried as a father, and I'm a very imperfect father, is to be totally free from partiality.

Many fathers are partial. They like one of their children more than the others. And they give certain things to one child which they won't do for another.

That's because those fathers are not like God. God is without partiality. Do you believe that? Do you believe God is without any partiality? There is no partiality with God.

That means he loves all his children equally. And since I was a believer and I knew that I had to represent God to my children, one of the things I sought to do was to be totally impartial with all my children. That anything I did for my first son, I would try to do for all my other three sons.

Anything that none of them would ever be able to say that I did something for my first son which I was not willing to do for them. And they can't say that today. And I thought of that many times.

I'm such an imperfect father. Jesus said that the best earthly father, listen to this, the best earthly father is evil compared to God. Did you get that? The best earthly father is evil compared to God.

That's how good God is. And if an evil earthly father like me could try to be impartial, can you imagine how impartial God is? There is zero partiality with him. What does that mean? What did I do? What I did for my eldest son, I did for all my other three sons.

What does God do? What God did for his eldest son, he will do for all his other children. Who is his eldest son? Who? Jesus. Who are his other children? We.

Now let me ask you a question. Will God do for you what he did for his eldest son or not? You don't seem to be sure. Yes or no? Some are sure.

But I want to tell you he will. Otherwise you accuse him of being partial. And we know that God is not partial.

Whatever he did for Jesus, he will do for you. When I understood that truth, it brought tremendous security into my life. For example, right from the time of Jesus' birth, you remember how Herod was planning to kill him as a little baby in Bethlehem.

What did God do? He warned Joseph in advance and took Jesus away from that site before Herod could ever come there. Do you think he will do that for you and me? Yes. That's how much he cares for us.

There was a time we read in Jesus' life where they got so mad at him for preaching something from the pulpit in the synagogue in Nazareth. They stopped him in the middle of his sermon, pulled him down from the pulpit, stopped the synagogue service, took him out to the cliff on which Nazareth was built. And they took him to the cliff, we read in Luke chapter 4, to throw him down and kill him.

And do you know what the Bible says? I don't know how many people there were in the synagogue. Let's say even a hundred people. Can you imagine a hundred people being so mad with somebody that they grab him and take him to the top of a cliff to throw him down.

And do you know what the Bible says in Luke chapter 4? He just walked through the midst of them and went away. Now that wasn't a miracle. It was God arranging something.

Maybe these hundred people got into a discussion as to how best to throw him down from the cliff and they got into a little argument on that. And while they were discussing the best way to throw him down from the cliff and the argument was going on, he just walked away. And by the time they had decided he wasn't there.

Can God do such things for us? Why? Because that was not the way Jesus was supposed to die. We read another time when he was on a boat and the water was filling the boat and the storm was on the sea. But could he drown in that lake? No.

Because that's not the way he was supposed to die. There was a care that the father had over Jesus life because he was supposed to die on a particular day in a particular way. And it could not happen before that no matter what people tried.

Jesus couldn't suddenly get cancer and die at the age of 25 or something like that. That was impossible. Now my question is, do you believe that that's true of you as well? That if God has planned your life, no sickness, no cancer, no enemy, no accident, nothing can touch you till God's time has come.

It's an amazing truth that we are the young brothers of Jesus. That God loves us as he loved Jesus. This is the thing that brings security to you.

Nobody loves us like God loves us. You know there's something in man, something in all of us that wants to be loved. And we are afraid that if other people really knew us as we really are, they wouldn't love us.

So we hide a lot of things from other people because we are afraid lest they find out they won't love us if they knew us as we really are. But God isn't like that. He knows everything about us.

And he still loves us. He doesn't make a difference what your weaknesses are, what your failures are, the things you are ashamed of, the things that make you feel you are unworthy. You are unlovable.

Doesn't make the slightest difference to God. He loves you just as you are. And that's a wonderful truth.

I believe that that's what gives us such security that it delivers us from all fear of the future. All fear as to what man can do to us, fear concerning any health problem in the future or financial problem or anything about the future. It all disappears when we understand one truth that God loves us as he loved Jesus.

For many many years I have found my security in that and that I'm not an unimportant person to God. Jesus was not unimportant. The angels were watching when Jesus lived on this earth and he was important.

And I believe you are and I am. If we can understand that, it can bring tremendous security into our life. And it's only when we are secure like that that God can fulfill his purpose through us.

Very often there is so much of unrest and insecurity in our life which hinders God from being able to fulfill his purpose through our lives. That insecurity and unrest. And the devil keeps promoting that insecurity and unrest in us so that God's purposes through us are hindered.

So I believe one of the greatest revelations that Jesus gave to us was that God had become our father. That he loves us exactly as he loved Jesus. That he'll care for us just as he cared for him.

There are all those fears and anxieties that you have concerning the future. You don't need to have it all. Let me turn you to Psalm 139.

Psalm 139 says like this, Lord you were the one, verse 13, who formed my inward parts. You wove me in my mother's womb and I will give thanks to thee for I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are thy works and my soul knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret. Verse 16, thine eyes have seen my unformed substance. Now all these verses tell us that God saw me when I was a little embryo in my mother's womb and you too.

He knew that one day this little embryo that is so small that could only be seen under a microscope when it was first conceived would grow up. That's you. I'm talking about you now.

In your mother's womb when you were conceived you were so small that you could only be seen under a microscope. But God saw you at that stage and he was the one who watched your growth in your mother's womb because he knew that one day when you grow up you would give your life to Christ. And therefore you were precious in his eyes and he formed your inward parts and he formed your body when you came out of your mother's womb.

And if God was the one who formed you, you should have no complaint about the way he made you. A lot of people, a lot of God's children have an unspoken complaint against God for the way he made them. Some don't like the color of their skin.

They say God should have made it a little different. Or they feel their genes have made them too short or too tall or too thin. Or too fat.

God didn't make a mistake. He didn't make any mistake. He didn't make you like other people.

Definitely not. Because you're special in his eyes. And it doesn't matter what other people think about you.

I believe one of the most important things for us to do if we want to make progress in our life is to accept the fact that God made me in a particular way. And to have no complaints about it. Once we settle that, I believe we can make tremendous progress in our Christian life.

God was the one who determined who your parents should be, who your mother should be and who your father should be. He did not make a mistake concerning that. He did not make a mistake concerning the environment and circumstances in which you were to be born and in which you should grow up.

They were perfectly planned by God. And I'm very thankful for that. Even the time in which we were to be born was determined by God.

If we were born 300 years earlier, we probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to hear the gospel. For all you know. I don't think I would have heard the gospel if I was born in India 300 years earlier.

I'm thankful that I was born in the 20th century. And that was planned by God. I wonder whether you would have heard the gospel if you were born 300 years ago.

I have no complaint. And I hope you have no complaint about your parents or about any part of your physical being. Have you accepted yourself? Have you accepted yourself totally? And said, Lord, I thank you for the way you made me.

See, that's what Psalm 139 is all about. I have no question, Lord. I thank you that you allowed me to be born into this type of family.

God did not allow you to be born into some multimillionaire's family with a purpose. You may never have found him. You may have been lost with all your wealth.

You would have probably gone to hell. But God planned that you should be born into a particular family which led you to the place where you came to know God. Jesus is your Savior.

But that acceptance of ourselves is so important. Lord, it's delivered me from all comparison. A lot of people compare themselves with others and wish that they were different.

I've seen this in India. So many young people cannot accept the way they are. They wish they were a different shade of color in their skin or they wish they were taller or shorter or thinner or fatter or something or the other.

And they live with that for years. They have never come to a rest in that matter. They always wish that they were a little different, like somebody else, whom usually sometimes like some film actor or actress they've seen on a screen, on the TV screen.

God did not make you like that. God made you just as you are. And he had a plan in even that little detail in your life.

Take the birth of Jesus, for example. He's our elder brother. And God planned the birth of Jesus so exactly.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, that was planned by God long, long ago. It says in the book of Micah that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem 500 years before Christ was born. The birth of Jesus was planned so exactly.

And I believe that it was God's plan that by the time Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, there wouldn't be a single room available in any hotel or motel or inn or any such thing. Every room would be occupied. Do you think it was difficult for God, who planned the birth of Jesus for 4000 years, to have one little room available in Bethlehem for him to be born? You think that's difficult for Almighty God? Far from it.

That was the easiest thing in the world. But God deliberately planned that by the time Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, there wouldn't be any room available. So that his son would be born in a cow shed

with the cows and the donkeys.

You know why? Because he came to lift up the poorest of the poor. I met a lot of poor people in India. And the poorest people in India, I have never seen one that was ever born in a cow shed.

Never. Even the poorest person is not born in a cow shed or with the donkeys. Jesus came underneath everybody so that he could lift up everyone.

You know, we like to serve others. But do you know that if you want to serve others, you've got to go underneath them? And this is a mistake that a lot of Christian preachers have made. They stand above people and try to help them.

You can't do that. That's not the way Jesus did it. He came underneath everybody because that's the only way you can lift them up.

And that's why he was born in such a humiliating way. Because he came to be the saviour of everyone. He had to be one who lifted up everybody else.

He came to be the servant of everyone. So the father planned the birth of Jesus exactly. And it was the father who planned that Jesus should be born in Nazareth.

I'd rather grow up in Nazareth. Because Nazareth had such a bad reputation. People said, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? That's what they said in John chapter 1. And God said, ok, that's the city, that's the town my son's going to live in.

The town which has got such a bad reputation that people say, can any good come out of Nazareth? Ok, that's the place where my son's going to come from. Because he came to help people who may have grown up in towns with bad reputation. He came to help them.

And I don't know whether you've noticed this in Matthew chapter 1. Matthew's gospel chapter 1. Bible says, all scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for instruction, for reproof and encouragement, etc. How many of you got some spiritual profit out of the first 17 verses of Matthew? Have you read the first 17 verses of Matthew? It's all full of begat, begat, begat, begat, begat, so and so, begat, so and so, just a list of names. Have you ever got any profit from those verses? I never did for many, many years.

But that's sometimes because we don't see things that are written there. Now I'll share with you something, some profit that I got out of the first 17 verses of Matthew's gospel. If you read the first 17 verses of Matthew's gospel, you read the name of, this is the ancestral line of Jesus, right from the time of Abraham all the way to Joseph who was the husband of Mary in verse 16.

And in this ancestral line, out of all the names that there are of men, there are four women mentioned. And I want you to see the names of these four women. The first woman mentioned here is in verse 3. Now you got to know a little bit of Old Testament history to get the benefit of this.

Judah got twins through Tamar. But do you know who Tamar was? It was his daughter-in-law. It was through incest.

A father-in-law slept with his daughter-in-law and had two children. Now remember this, that there was only one person ever born on this earth who planned his family line. OK? You and I never planned our family line, right? We just were born and discovered what our family line was.

But there was one person that was Jesus from heaven. For 4000 years he decided which family line he was going to be born in. And he could have chosen a very pure, godly, good family line to be born into.

But he doesn't. He chooses a family line which has incest in it. Now you and I wouldn't like a family line like that, would we? But he came to be the savior of sinners.

So he chooses a family line where a father-in-law commits adultery with his daughter-in-law and two children are born. He says, OK, I'll choose that line. That's the first woman.

You know the second woman is mentioned here is Rahab in verse 5. Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab. Now do you know who Rahab was? Rahab was the most well-known prostitute in the city of Jericho. Now you go to Jericho's prostitute area and you'd ask for Rahab.

They'd all point her house to you. She was a well-known prostitute. And she married one of the Jews called Salmon and got a son called Boaz.

And Jesus deliberately chose that line. How many of us would choose a prostitute as one of our ancestors? And even if a prostitute was one of your ancestors, how many of you would put that on the first page of your biography? This is the very first page of Jesus' biography. And there it is.

You know, many of us are so proud of our pure, holy, ancestral line. Jesus had nothing to be proud of. He came to be the savior of sinners and not of a bunch of self-righteous Pharisees.

He came to save sinners, so He identified with sinners totally. You know the reason why we don't become more like Jesus? We are proud of a lot of things that have absolutely no value before God. I've seen a lot of people in India who are very proud of their holy, ancestral line.

It's a lot of garbage in God's eyes. We haven't seen it. And that's why we don't experience a fuller salvation.

We are proud of things we shouldn't be proud of. Jesus deliberately chose a line where there was incest and a prostitute. Okay, we go to the third woman.

The third woman mentioned here is Ruth. Verse 5, To Boaz was born Obed by Ruth. Now if you read in the book of Ruth, Ruth was a Moabitess.

That means she descended from Moab. Do you know who Moab was? You read about Moab in Genesis in chapter 18 and 19. Moab was born when Lot got drunk and committed adultery with his own daughters.

That's how Moab was born. Another case of incest. And from Moab came Ruth.

And that was the ancestral line of Jesus Christ. And remember he chose it. It wasn't accidental.

From heaven he was planning the family line into which he was going to be born. And he chose it. There's a case of incest.

I'll choose that line. There's a well-known prostitute. I'll choose that one.

And there's another case of incest. A father with his own daughters. Okay, I'll choose that one.

Imagine. And then one more. The fourth woman is mentioned here in verse 6. David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

That was Bathsheba. And there was another case of a man, David, who slept with somebody else's wife, produced a child, killed her husband, married her. Can you imagine this? And that's in Jesus' ancestral line.

Well, I hope you got some benefit from that passage of scripture now. To see the humility of Jesus in choosing such a filthy, corrupt line of the worst possible sinners. I have never heard or known of anyone whose ancestral line consists of repeated incest, prostitution, adultery followed by murder where you finish off the other person's husband and marry her.

All this in one line. And the son of God chose that line. You see his total identification with sinners there.

He came underneath all of us to show us that purity had nothing to do with your ancestral line. He was the holiest, humblest, purest person that ever walked on the earth. And he had nothing to boast about as far as his family was concerned.

I want to ask all of you sitting here. Are you proud of your family? Your family line? You haven't understood Christianity at all in that case. Your understanding of Christianity is pretty close to zero if you boast in your family line.

Jesus deliberately chose a family line that was humiliating and riddled with sin because he came to be the savior of sinners. And that humbles me. Everything in Jesus' life, I find the way he was born, the family line he chose, the humiliating way in which God allowed him to live on this earth, shows me that a lot of things which we glory in have got absolutely no value before God.

And a lot of things that sometimes we are ashamed of about our past or something, we don't have to be ashamed of. If we walk in humility and brokenness and purity before God, we are precious in his eyes. God loves us as he loved Jesus.

We know that God allowed Jesus to be treated pretty badly on the earth. They called him the prince of devils. Well, God could have stopped them.

I remember once when I was meditating on that passage in Matthew chapter 12 where it says that they called him Beelzebul, verse 24, ruler of demons. And Jesus said to them, verse 32, if you have spoken a word against me, you are forgiven. He had nothing against them.

It's okay if they called him ruler of demons or they called him many, many bad names. But it didn't bother him. So God's love for us does not mean that he will protect us from other people calling us bad names.

He loves us as he loved Jesus. And Jesus said, the world hates me because I don't belong to this world. I belong to heaven.

And the Lord said to his disciples, if you belong to heaven, the world will hate you too. They hated him. They called him the prince of demons.

I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, are you upset when somebody calls you a bad name? Are you upset when somebody tells a false story about you? I can imagine what they said about Jesus in Nazareth when he was a little boy. You know, here when you live in a city like Washington or something in the

United States, you don't understand how it is in a small little village in the Middle East. But Jesus was in Nazareth in little villages like it is in the little villages in India.

Everybody knows everything about the other people in a small village. Certainly 2,000 years ago it was like that. You know everything because there are so few people in your village that everybody knows everything about everybody else's family.

Everybody in Nazareth knew that Mary was pregnant before she got married and that her first son was conceived before she married Joseph. And they knew that Joseph was not the father of that child. The other children were Joseph's children.

And I can imagine how Jesus grew up and the people in Nazareth would point to him when he was a little boy. Because you know, unwed mothers were unknown in those days. Very rare to come across an unwed mother.

In fact, the Old Testament law was that if a woman got pregnant before she got married, she had to be stoned to death. That was the law. So it was a rare thing.

An unmarried woman getting pregnant was almost unheard of. So, a child born like that would be prominent, known. And imagine they pointed to Jesus and said, that's the one, that's Mary's son.

We don't know who the father is. And I don't know whether you've noticed this in the scriptures, that whenever they were happy with Jesus, they would call him Joseph's son. And whenever they were angry with Jesus, they'd call him Mary's son.

Have you noticed that? I'll show it to you. See Luke chapter 4? It's very interesting. When you read scripture carefully, you see these things.

Luke 4.22. It says, they were all speaking well of him in Nazareth. And they wondered at the gracious words which were falling from his lips. And they were saying, isn't this Joseph's son? That's what they said when they were happy with him.

What did they say when they were angry with him? Mark chapter 6, verse 3. Mark chapter 6, verse 3. It says, isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, brother of James and John and Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. When they were offended with him, they called him Mary's son. You know, there's an implication there.

We don't know who the father is. And Jesus lived with that reproach for 30 years. He was purer than any other child ever born.

But he lived for 30 years being misunderstood as an illegitimate child. Do you know why? So that he could be the savior of many illegitimate children. He came underneath everybody.

And if you are an illegitimate child, you can know that Jesus understands what you've gone through. If you were born out of incest, Jesus understands. If your mother or grandmother was a prostitute, Jesus understands.

This is how he became the savior of the world. And once we understand these things, we see God's tremendous love for us. He came underneath all of us in order to lift every one of us up.

I believe that this is the mistake that a lot of missionaries who have come to India in the last 40-50 years have made. The missionaries that came to India 100 years ago didn't make that mistake. But the ones who came more recently, they've come with money and power and stayed in five-star hotels to teach the poor people how to be saved.

Thank God Jesus didn't come like that. He came underneath everybody. He didn't come with wealth and riches and honor and all those things to serve people.

It's not easy to be a servant of God. We all like to serve the Lord, but it's not easy. I'll tell you that.

There's a price to be paid. If you want to serve people, you've got to go underneath all of them. You can't serve them from above.

Jesus came underneath. He was willing to pay any price to be born in any family line, to be born anywhere, so that he could be a servant of everyone. It's not just in the washing of feet.

In every aspect of his life, you see that he deliberately chose to go underneath, so that nobody would doubt his love. Nobody could say, you don't understand what I've gone through. He'd say, I do understand.

I know exactly what you've gone through. So that's how we live, with the reproach from childhood, when you see little children being ridiculed by others, made fun of. You can be pretty sure that Jesus has faced that.

And you know, we're called to be disciples of Jesus. When people make fun of us, we're supposed to forgive them. I remember once the Lord asked me that question, when people spread false stories about me and things like that.

They spread false stories about Jesus too. But in the Old Testament, you know, when Moses, his sister said something against him, Miriam, it says in Numbers chapter 12, she criticized Moses. And you know what she got? Leprosy.

Just for criticizing Moses for the type of wife he married. It wasn't a very serious criticism. But she got leprosy because you dare not speak against a servant of God like that.

But who is the greatest servant of God? Jesus. And what did they say about him? That he was a ruler of demons. And when they said that, do you know what they got? Forgiveness.

That's the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And the Lord once asked me this question. Do you want to follow Moses or do you want to follow Jesus? Do you want people who speak against you to get leprosy or forgiveness? That depends on whether you're a follower of Moses or a follower of Jesus.

That's all. It depends on whether you're a Jew or a Christian. I thank God I'm a Christian.

So in that case, what people who speak against me should get is what? Forgiveness. Right. I hope that's what you want.

I hope you're not hoping that somebody who did some harm to you is going to get leprosy or some terrible thing like that. God loves us as he loved Jesus. And Jesus came to demonstrate the tremendous love that

God has for us.

The care that he has. He came underneath all of us. So that he could identify completely with sinners.

So that no human being could ever say to the Lord, you don't know what I'm going through. And I want to say, my brothers and sisters, that's how we are supposed to show the love of God to other people around us. The way Jesus has treated us, that's the way we're supposed to show the love of God to other people.

So that no human being would ever feel small. Jesus came underneath everybody. And that's the mark of a Christ-like person.

A Christ-like person is one who never makes another person feel small. If you make another person feel small, you're more like the devil, not like Jesus Christ. There's a wonderful verse in the book of Job.

It says in Job 36. Job 36 verse 5. Job 36 verse 5. It says, God is mighty, but he doesn't despise anybody. Isn't that wonderful? God is almighty, but he doesn't despise anyone.

When you despise someone, you're not like God. You're like the devil. You can despise someone because he's different from you in some way.

Or you feel he's inferior to you in some way. But that's how the devil is. Not God.

God is the greatest ruler in the universe. He's the creator. And he does not despise even the weakest and the smallest of human beings.

He doesn't even despise the sinners. Whenever we look down on someone or feel that someone is inferior to us in some way, that moment we need to recognize that you're like the devil. You're not like God.

Because God doesn't despise anyone. And Jesus came to prove that by coming underneath everybody. And this is why the Pharisees, Jesus said to the Pharisees, how can you escape the damnation of hell? What was the reason? They looked down on certain other people as being inferior to them.

And the world is full of that. It's a wonderful thing, brothers and sisters, to recognize that God loves us exactly as he loved Jesus, and he cares for us just like he cared for Jesus. Every detail of your life.

I want you to turn back to Psalm 139. There's something else I want to show you there. Before we close.

Psalm 139. It says, Before I was born, verse 16. Psalm 139, verse 16.

It says here that the number of days I'm supposed to live on this earth have all been ordained for me and written down in a book before I was even born. The number of days that Jesus was supposed to live on the earth was not undetermined, it was determined exactly. 1,500 years before Jesus died, in the land of Egypt, on the 14th day of the first month, they killed a lamb and put the blood on the doorposts.

You know why? Because 1,500 years later, on the 14th day of the first month, Jesus Christ would be crucified on a cross. That's why it was planned 1,500 years earlier. The birth, the death of Jesus.

I find tremendous comfort in that. Remember what I said earlier. There's no partiality with God.

God loves all his children like he loved his firstborn. Everything he did for Jesus, he'll do for me. As he cared for Jesus, he cares for me.

The days of Jesus' life were preordained. The days of my life are preordained. I love that verse in Revelation chapter 1, where the apostle John was on the Isle of Patmos, and all the apostles had died by then.

About 20 years ago, they had all died, and John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, and he didn't know what the future held. He didn't know whether he'd be killed. And the Lord appears to him in Revelation chapter 1, and says in verse 17, don't be afraid, because, verse 18, I have the keys of death.

He was telling John, John, do you know that it's only when I open the door that you can die? Because I've got the keys of death. How many of you knew that? Jesus has got the keys of death. No one can open that door till he opens it.

He hasn't given that key to anybody else. If you're a child of God, totally surrender to do the will of God in your life. I want to tell you the good news, that no one can open the door of death for you till Jesus decides that.

You may come close to death, that's fine, but the door will not be opened till Jesus decides, and that's already written down. The day he opens it, that's the day you go through. There were times when Paul was imprisoned and came out of jail.

There was another time when he was imprisoned, when Nero cut off his head. That was the day that Jesus opened the door. So, that brings great comfort into our life, to know that God has determined every day of my life, including the day of my death.

And, this is what's encouraged me, that, like it says in Psalm 139, all the days of my life were written down in the book. You know that Jesus couldn't do anything he liked during his 33 years? There was a plan that God had made from heaven before Jesus came to earth. It was God who determined that he should live in Nazareth.

He couldn't go and live anywhere he liked. No! He had to be in Nazareth. Why is it Jesus never paid a visit to Rome? Have you ever thought of that? Don't you think a servant of God should once in a while have a little holiday and go and visit Rome or something like that? What's wrong in that? But it wasn't in the Father's plan, that's all.

There's nothing sinful about going to Rome, but it wasn't in the Father's plan, so he never went. He had the money. There was plenty of money in the bag.

There were so many people getting healed. There was such a lot of money in Judas Iscariot's bag, Jesus could have easily bought a ticket to go to Rome. He didn't do it, because unlike a lot of Christians, Jesus was totally dedicated to do the Father's will.

He would go only where the Father wanted him to go. He had no other ambition or plan in life. He didn't live for comfort.

He didn't live for money. He didn't live for honor. He didn't live for anything.

He lived only to fulfill his Father's will. And each day he sought what the Father wanted him to do, and he did that. He'd go where the Father told him to go, and he wouldn't go where the Father didn't tell him to go.

Think if you can live your life like that, dear friends. If you can recognize that God's got a specific plan for your life, from the time you're born, especially from the time you're born again, till the time you die. He's determined what you should do with your life.

He's determined whom you should marry. Someone who will help you to live for God. How you should spend your life, so that when you come to the end of your life and you look back, you won't have any regret over your life.

You know, when we are young, we don't think too much about the end of our lives, because we've got a whole life ahead of us. But remember that one day you're going to come to the end of your life, and when you come to the end of your life, you're going to look back as to how you spent your earthly days. See, I'm 63 now, and I look back over 43 years of being a Christian, and I have an opportunity to ask myself, how have I lived my life? I could have lived 43 years for many things, and a time like that's going to come in your life too, if the Lord doesn't come earlier.

And even if the Lord comes, you're going to have to look back over your life and see what you lived for. I'm very thankful that when I was 20 years old, along with the fact that I knew that my sins were forgiven, when I was 21 I was baptized, there's another truth that God revealed to me at that time. And that was that God had a specific plan for my life.

I didn't know what it was, I just knew there is a plan. And I got that from Ephesians 2.10, that God had beforehand prepared certain works for me to walk in. That was His plan.

But whether I'd walk in it or not, that was up to me. At each stage, He would give me the opportunity to choose whether I'd want to marry the one He wanted me to marry, or someone else, whether I'd go where He wanted me to go, whether I'd go after money or comfort or pleasure, that was my choice. There were many roads I could choose.

Or whether I would choose His will, whether I would choose that which would be of maximum use for the kingdom of God, for the furtherance of God's kingdom, for doing His will. Now many of you who are young, you've got your life ahead of you. If you can be gripped by one thing, that God's got a plan for your life, don't miss it.

I've seen enough young people who've made a mess of their life by a wrong marriage, or the choice of a profession which is just for something great in the world. I'm not saying we should all be missionaries or full-time workers. No, God calls only 1% of people to full-time Christian work.

He calls 99% of people to a secular job. But in that secular job, you can either live for yourself or you can live for God. That's the point.

Paul did a secular job making tents, but he lived for God. And if you recognize that God's made a plan for your life, a plan that's far better than anything you can ever make in your life, because He knows the future, He knows all the dangers, and He's allowed for all that, made a plan for all the days of your life. Your greatest longing will be, Lord, I want to find that plan.

And God will show it to you day by day by day by day. As you say, Lord, I don't want my will, I want your will. That's all you got to say every day to God.

God, I don't want my will, I want your will. Why are you so keen on having your own will? Don't you know that you can make a mess of your life with doing your own will? And you may discover that further down the line. And regret the number of people, Christians, who are living in regret.

Because at some time in their life earlier on, they wouldn't listen to God. They do what they wanted to do. In their stubbornness, don't make that mistake.

Say, Lord, you love me as you love Jesus. You got a plan for my life. I want to fulfill it, fulfill it, fulfill it, fulfill it, fulfill it.

You're going to come to the end of your life, you're going to look back. Don't have any regret that day that you live for things which are going to perish. Things which will have no value in eternity.

Remember this, when you get into eternity, what are the things that will have no value? What type of house you lived in. You think that's going to have any value in heaven? How comfortably you lived, how much money you earned. These things have got no value in eternity.

The only thing that's going to count in eternity is whether your life counted for God on the earth. Whether you used your life to build the church of Jesus Christ. Whether you devoted your life to that, even if you're in a secular job.

Whether you devoted your life to the only thing that's going to remain when everything in this world collapses. That's the church of Jesus Christ. You know once God told Noah, I'm going to send a judgment on this earth, the flood.

And the only thing that will survive this flood is the ark. You know what Noah concentrated on after that? Building the ark. He was not a full-time worker.

How could he be a full-time worker? There was nobody to support him. He had to work himself. So he used to get up a little earlier.

He had to take care of his family. But he also had to build the ark. And he built the ark from his own money.

Imagine how much it cost to build a ship. He built a ship with his own money. He had nobody to support him.

And he was devoted to that. And his three sons saw it. And they said, Dad is real.

He believes what he preaches. That's rare to find people who believe what they preach and live according to that. And that's why they also joined in.

This is the only thing that's going to remain when this world is destroyed. Well we're going to live for that. And their wives joined in.

What a family that was. And they didn't regret it. When everything else was destroyed, this one thing they lived for survived.

And now we've come to the end of time. The Bible says that the last days will be like the days of Noah. And that means the world will be evil like Noah's time.

But there's also going to be people like Noah in the last days. Who are going to live for only one thing. To build that which is going to remain when the judgment of God comes upon the earth.

And that's the church of Jesus Christ. That's the only thing that will remain. Everything else will be destroyed.

So I want to encourage you to live for the only thing that will remain when everything else will be destroyed. Your home, your money, your comfort and everything else will go. But if you have lived for building the church of Jesus Christ, that will remain forever.

And I believe that's what we should live for. Let's pray. www.cfcindia.com www.cfcindia.net

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