

Three Life Changing Truths

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dependence on God and living a life of continual dependence on Him to do God's will and accomplish everything He wants us to do.

Duration: 36:46

Scripture: Psalm 71:16, Psalm 73:26, Isaiah 46:3, Luke 6:38, John 15:5, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 13:6

Topics: "Dependence On God", "Christian Mercy"

Description

This sermon emphasizes three key points: Without Christ, we can do nothing of eternal value, highlighting the importance of humility and dependence on God. With Christ, we can do everything within God's will for our lives, focusing on faith and boldness in accomplishing God's purposes. Lastly, it stresses the need to be merciful to others as God has been merciful to us, encouraging compassion and understanding towards those who have fallen.

Transcript

Well, most of the time I speak without any points. Today, I'm going to have three points. So, can you focus that video on that verse, Without Christ, I can do nothing.

That's my first point. You know my other two points. Please focus on that verse there now.

With Christ, I can do everything. And then the third one is, be merciful to others, just as God has been merciful to you. There's a reason why we have put these verses up at the back.

Those are some of the truths that we emphasize here. First of all, without Christ, I can do nothing. What does that mean? I mean, some of you can make computer programs that earn a lot of money.

Some of you can do physical things and intellectual things, and some of you can play music so well. What does it mean when it says, without Christ, I can do nothing? It means I can do nothing of eternal value. Everything that you can do has got some value on this earth, whether it's in the realm of science or computers or music or anything, but of eternal value.

You cannot do anything if Christ does not enable you. So, we got to look at all the things we accomplished without Christ. It gets us a lot of honor on the earth.

In fact, a lot of preachers preach sermons without Christ. How do we know? They draw people to themselves. They preach in order to get admiration.

They preach in order to be respected, to get a name. And many people who don't have discernment, you see, most believers don't have discernment. My guess is that 75% of believers don't have any discernment.

They sit with their mouths open and say, wow, what a man of God. They're going to get a big surprise when Christ comes again and discover that that entire man's ministry was zero. You'll get a surprise.

You know, Jesus said that. There are people who are going to stand before him the last day and say, we did miracles in your name. Jesus said, I don't even know you.

Get away from me. Get lost. Go to hell.

Read that passage sometime, Matthew 7, 22 and 23. It'll really jolt you that people who, you know, so many television evangelists who do what I call magic tricks to fool people, which they say is the same category as the miracles that Jesus did. Far from it.

But many believers don't have discernment to see through that that man may end up in hell. I'm not saying he will, but if the Lord one day says to him, you did all this, but I don't know you, he'll go to hell. So, there are many things that we can glory in and in the church we teach that we must humble ourselves.

John chapter 15. John chapter 15 and verse 5. I am the vine and you are the branches. If you abide in me and I abide in you, you'll bear much fruit.

Apart from me or without me, you can do zero. Believe that? I believe it with all my heart. I didn't believe it in my early Christian life.

I thought I could do a lot of things, but the more I have grown close to God, I'm absolutely convinced I can do nothing of eternal value. I can't even preach a sermon if the Holy Spirit does not anoint me and give me words to say thoughts in my mind before I stand up to speak or while I'm standing up there. Those will be of eternal value, but anything that comes out of self-confidence will accomplish nothing.

In the Old Testament the Lord said every Israelite must be circumcised. It's a cutting off of the flesh. Otherwise he's cut off from the people of God.

Philippians 3.3 says circumcision means no confidence in the flesh. Cutting off confidence in the flesh. And that is the mark of those who have entered the covenant.

Circumcision of the heart. No confidence in oneself. No boasting in oneself.

Without Christ I can do nothing and the example Jesus uses is so great. Clear a branch in a tree even if it's brought fruit for 50 years it has to say if I'm cut off from the tree today after 50 years of experience of bearing fruit tomorrow I'll bear zero fruit. That is humility.

I don't know whether you have that type of humility that recognizes that anything of eternal value that came out of your life came only from Christ pouring out his spirit through you. All the rest that you accomplished in your life is wood, hay, and straw which will be burnt up. So let me encourage you to learn this lesson deeply.

Without Christ I will never, never do anything of eternal value. And that is why we need to pray. See people who are smart and clever and capable they don't pray.

Why do they need to pray? They can do a lot of things without prayer. Let me define prayer. Prayer is an expression of my helplessness to God.

As long as the doctors say I can fix this child of yours he'll just leave him to me. You don't pray. But when the doctor says I've given up all hope, no hope for your child, then we pray.

See prayer is when we have come to the end of human ability and strength and capability. You'll see that in your life. You pray only when all other possibility of solving the problem is gone.

But it's a wonderful thing if we can learn that you don't have to wait until you come to that desperate point all the time. Just pray without ceasing. That means live a life of continual dependence upon God.

To me prayer without ceasing is like the branch remaining in the tree all the time. That's all. Abide in me and let me abide in you.

That's prayer without ceasing. It means constant dependence upon God inwardly, even if we don't say it with our lips. Lord I know one thing.

I can do nothing without you. That will last. And I want to spend my life doing what will last.

There's a very popular expression that's known throughout the Christian world called only one life it'll soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last. But I've discovered through years through the years that many people do many things for Christ which will not last.

So I've changed it slightly. Only one life it'll soon be past. Only what Christ does through me will last.

Not what I do for Christ. It's not only one life it'll soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only what Christ does through me, what I do for Christ may not last. A lot of things going on today in the name of Christ I'll tell you is not going to last. Think of the final day.

Think of the day when we stand before the Lord. I think of it frequently. Lord, what's going to matter in that day? Like children, you know, the final examination.

What's going to be the result there? It doesn't matter if all the students thought you were very clever and the teacher thought you were clever if you fail in the final exam what's yours? The final exam. That's the thing that matters. So I need to recognize on this earth without Christ I can do nothing.

Nothing means absolutely nothing. That is the mark of a humble man. That is how Jesus lived on earth.

Humility is not to say, oh I've committed so many sins in my life. I'm a rotten sinner. If that is the mark of humility Jesus was not humble because Jesus never said I'm a rotten sinner.

And yet some people think the mark of humility is to say I'm such a wretch. I'm a rotten sinner. Think of that.

The humblest man who walked on the earth never said that. Humility is not saying I'm a rotten sinner. Humility is saying I can do nothing without God.

It lasts forever. Jesus lived like that. You know what Jesus said in John chapter 5? Let me read it to you.

Verse 19 Truly, truly I say to you, the son that's himself, can do nothing out from himself unless it is something he sees the father do. And he says in verse 30 I can do nothing on my own initiative. Why do we say Jesus is our example? Because he also could do nothing without dependence on the father.

He said as I abide in my father, you abide in me. In other words he's telling us I am like a branch dependent on my father. I mean not always.

In eternity he was the son of God. He was completely self-sufficient. But when he came to earth as a man he had to be an example for us.

In order to be an example for us he lived like the same helpless way that we are. Christ came in the flesh. 1 Timothy 3.15 says the church is the pillar and support of this truth that Christ came in the flesh.

1 Timothy 3.16 See these pillars are supposed to support something. And the true church is supposed to support one truth. Christ came in the flesh.

1 Timothy 3.15 and 16. And you look around the world and see how many churches are supporting that truth. They're not.

They're supporting some other truths on how you can become rich and how you can make a lot of money and all types of worldly things which everybody in the world pursues after. So that's the first truth we emphasize. Then we go to the second one which is with Christ I can do everything.

What does that mean? I mean I can't run the 100 meters in 9 seconds. I can do it in about 25 seconds but not 9 seconds. What do I mean by with Christ I can do everything? I can do everything that is in the will of God for my life.

Things outside the will of God I don't want to do. I have no interest. If God doesn't ever want to give me the gift of healing I have no interest in getting that gift.

I have no interest in laying my hands on somebody and saying you're healed. I have no interest in laying my hands on somebody and saying be baptized in the Holy Spirit. No.

If God tells me like he told Ananias to go and lay hands on Paul I'll do it but with Christ I can do everything. Without Christ I can do nothing. So when we say with Christ I can do everything it's limited to whatever is in God's will for my life.

You don't have to preach like other people because that may not be in God's will for your life. I've often told all my fellow elders and all our churches don't try to preach like me. God wants only one Zac Mullen in his church.

God wants one of you and one of somebody else. I'm not wanting to be like somebody else. I want to be myself.

You must be yourself. Then you won't be in competition with others. Then you won't be thinking can I preach better than him? Can I play the instrument better than him? You haven't understood.

With Christ I can do everything that God has planned for my life. Not what God has planned for somebody else's life. So don't ever desire to be able to do something which somebody else can do.

It's like the eye trying to hear. It's not supposed to hear. The ear is supposed to hear.

That's the meaning of the body of Christ. The eye is supposed to see. It should concentrate on that.

You're supposed to concentrate on what God's called you in the body of Christ to be and you can do it but only with Christ and you can do everything. Supposing God's planned 1000 things for me to do in my life. With Christ I can do all those 1000 things before I leave this earth.

So don't waste your life trying to do things which God has not planned for you. Competing with somebody, trying to show that you can match that person in some area. That's the way the world and a lot of us have wasted many years like that.

Don't waste any more time like that. Say Lord that's the plan you made for my life. For many years I was blind to it.

I did my own will foolishly. Wasted so many years. I've done it too but a time came when I said no more.

I want to from now on fulfill your will for my life. Then you may say what about the years that are wasted? Let me give you an example. The apostle Paul wasted 30 years of his life not just as a half-hearted Christian but as a whole-hearted hater of Christians.

That's how he spent 30 years going and catching Christians and locking them up in jail. I don't know how many Christians he sanctioned their killing. I don't know.

He wasted 30 years. He lived only up to 67. He was beheaded by Nero when he was 67.

But 30 out of those 67 years was wasted. Can such a man accomplish God's will? Fulfill all the things that God has accomplished and God has planned for him in his life? Yes. How do we know? Because Paul says at the end of his life in 2 Timothy and chapter 4 he says I have fought a good fight.

I finished my course. 2 Timothy and verse chapter 4 verse 7. I have finished. Not I finished 90%.

How can a man who wasted 30 years of his life finish his course? That's an encouragement to me. It's an encouragement to you. I can't say that I wasted 35 years of my life but when God filled me afresh when I was 35 years old with the Holy Spirit and 6 months later CFC started I can say to me that is like a new beginning in my life.

It was completely different. It was in an altogether different plane after that. That's when I really began to have faith that I can live this Christian life and began to take it seriously.

What about the years before? I can't say I did nothing. When we try to live without Christ helping us we do a lot of things but it's in hypocrisy. A lot of things on the outward without an inner life.

That's how it was with me. But Paul God knew that this man Paul is wholehearted and sincere but he's completely wrong and I will allow him to go astray. Not that God made him go astray but he was stubborn, proud, and God allowed him to see the folly of all that was there in the Jewish ways.

Then when he got converted he was radically converted. And so the remaining 37 years that's what God had planned for him and he accomplished it and he said I finished my course. I want to say at the end of my life that I finished my course.

I don't know when it will be but I want to finish my course. I hope that's your passion. I can do everything that is in God's will for me with Christ's help.

And that's why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. With Christ I can do everything means with the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ gives me I can do everything. That is how Christ is with me.

See it's the only time I can say the Lord is really with me is when I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. If I get up to speak without being filled with the Holy Spirit I'll get up and bore everybody. Christ won't be with me.

Or if I do something else, if I'm doing it without Christ it will not accomplish what God wants to accomplish. That's why you must seek in everything Christ must be there with me. That's why it's a good thing to ask ourselves if you're in a questionable thing I'm not sure whether I should do this or not.

Ask yourself can I do this in fellowship with Christ? You know many people use the phrase saying what would Jesus do? That sounds very spiritual but it's not always gives me a right answer. Should I build a house? What would Jesus do? I don't think he was ever interested in building a house. What about postgraduate education? What would Jesus do? He was not interested in postgraduate education.

I can make a lot of things like that. What about putting a fixed deposit in a bank? What would Jesus do? You can become a hypocrite saying I'm always doing what Jesus did and do all these other things that Jesus never did. That's not the way to do it.

I say don't ask that question what would Jesus do? Now I'm falling in love with a girl what would Jesus do? You're going to get crazy. That's not the answer. Let's be honest.

You know this WWJD people go with bands called WWJD what would Jesus do? It doesn't work. So what I've discovered is I just don't swallow everything that Christians preach. You've probably discovered by now that I don't swallow what all Christians preach.

I want to see if it's real. I say can I do this in fellowship with Jesus? That's the thing. Can I do this in fellowship with Jesus? Can I build a house there because I want to live in fellowship with Jesus? Sure.

Don't cheat anybody. Can I open a fixed deposit in a bank in fellowship with Jesus? Sure. Because the Bible says like an ant I must be I must prepare for the winter in the time of summer.

So the question is can I do this in fellowship so whenever you're doubtful about something just ask this question. Can I do this in fellowship with Jesus? Can I watch this TV program in fellowship with Jesus? Go ahead and watch it. Or maybe it's a movie.

Can I watch it in fellowship with Jesus? If you can't don't do it. I want to do everything that is in the will of God for my life and if you spend your time doing a lot of things which are not in the will of God what will happen is you won't have time to do the things which are in the will of God. That's why we've got to be disciplined in the use of our time.

With Christ I can do everything. I must have that boldness. I find a lot of Christians judge themselves so much, judge themselves and go to an extreme to that that they become very timid.

I mean they're always judging themselves looking inward and looking miserable but there must be a boldness about them. They must be able to say like it says in Hebrews 13 The Lord is my helper. Verse 6. I will never be afraid What can any man do to me? Can you say that? When you face a difficult situation Hebrews 13 verse 6. The Lord is my helper It says we got to say that boldly.

I will never be afraid Can you say I'll never be afraid? I'm not going to be afraid of men. I'm not going to be afraid of anti-Christian forces that may rise in this country. I'm not going to be afraid of difficult times that may come in the future I'm not going to be afraid of the predicted famine that will come when there won't be enough food in the stores.

I'm not going to be afraid of jobs are going out of, a lot of jobs are going to be lost and you may lose your job. I am not going to be afraid. Or you know at my age, who will look after me when I'm an old man? I'm not going to be afraid.

A lot of people say I've made sure that some of my sons live in the same town so that somebody will look after me when I'm old. That's not my confidence My confidence is in an almighty God who says I was the one who brought you to birth and I was the one who carried you all these years. You think I'm going to dump you in the last minute? Read it.

Isaiah 46 verse 3 and 4. For those of us who are getting old here. Isaiah 46 and verse 3 in the middle it says, the Lord says you have been born by me from birth and you have been carried by me from the time you came out of the womb to your old age I shall be the same as I was when you were a little boy and to your graying hairs I shall bear you. I've done it in the past I shall carry you in the future and I shall bear you and I will deliver you Is it better to have a confidence in a God like that or in some human planning? I'm not saying you shouldn't plan.

By all means plan for the future but let your confidence be in God. Not in all your human resources. There's a thing called plan A and plan B people talk about.

If plan A fails I've got a plan B ready I want to say I've only got a plan A that is God will take care of me. I don't have a plan B. If he lets me down I'm finished. Do you live like that? That doesn't mean I'm foolish or I don't plan for the future.

When I say with Christ I can accomplish everything God wants me to do. If you feel weak in your heart there are many verses. It's a wonderful thing if you study the Bible Psalm 73.

It says here my heart may fail but God is the strength of my heart for all those who are afraid of heart failure. Here's a verse for you. Psalm 73 verse 26.

God is the strength of my heart I'm not saying therefore you go and eat a lot of ice cream and ghee and all types of things and say God is the strength of my heart. Don't be foolish be wise be disciplined fast but God is the strength of my heart. There are many times I have said this.

You know times when I felt weak when I had to go for some meeting and Psalm 71 verse 16 in the King James Version. I will go in the strength of the Lord my God. In some other versions it's translated differently.

That's been a verse that I've quoted numerous times. The King James Version of Psalm 71 verse 16. I will go in the strength of my Lord.

You know there are times when I've had to go and preach somewhere and I've had to say that verse because I've already been preaching 10-15 times in the last previous couple of days and I say Lord I'm going to go in the strength of the Lord He's never let me down till today. I mean that may mean sometimes I have to sit down. That's okay.

But whatever is in the will of God I can accomplish. You must be able to say that and with boldness. I'm not going to live in fear of the future or what will happen.

Everything looks so bleak. No! The peace of God guards my heart and mind in Christ because I commit it all to Him. He is my help.

He will never let me down He goes ahead of me and He has said don't fear. Fear is not from God. Faith says with Christ I can do everything.

Whatever you're facing my brother, sister this is not you know the type of pep talk that positive thinking people say. Positive thinking people is just whipping you and somehow working you up to say something but your confidence is not in God It's not I can do everything. No! It is with Christ I can do everything.

There's a lot of difference if you remove those first two words. Positive thinking is brother you can do everything. Believe that.

You can accomplish great things. That's not what we preach. That's human self-sufficiency.

It will collapse one day. With Christ I can do everything because in positive thinking it does not allow for you to accept when God says no that you can't accept. You get a thorn in the flesh and the positive thinking chap will tell Paul come on say it.

This thorn will not last forever. It's going to go away tomorrow. Say it.

Paul says I tried to say that. It doesn't work. I prayed to God three times and God said I'm not going to take it away.

Positive thinking people can never accept no for an answer from God. A man who walks with God can accept no. Okay, I'll have that thorn in the flesh but I will still finish my course.

Paul finished his course with a thorn in the flesh. So don't be afraid. You must never be afraid.

I will not be afraid. The Lord is my helper. I find many believers in CFC don't have that attitude.

I want to encourage you to have that attitude. The Lord is my helper. With Christ I can do everything.

I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So when we live life like this with humility with such humility I can do nothing without Christ. And with such tremendous faith I can do all things through Christ.

The danger is that we can become very hard on other people who don't live at our level. Women caught in adultery. Samaritan women who are divorced five times.

Sleeping with somebody. It can be very hard on them. And I'm sorry to say some people become like that.

That's why we need the third one. Be merciful to others just as God has been merciful to you. We have to conclude with that.

As in Luke chapter 6. Oh by the way the second verse is in Philippians 4.13. I forgot to mention that. Philippians 4.13 is going back to the second point. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

That's the second point. I can do all things. The first was John 15 verse 5. The second is Philippians 4.13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

And the third is Luke chapter 6 and verse 38. Be merciful just as your father is merciful. How do you know your father is merciful? Because he's been merciful to you.

He's been merciful to me. Otherwise I wouldn't know it. So I have to be merciful to whom? I have to be merciful to other people.

Just as my father has been merciful to me. So really I mean a proper paraphrase of Luke 6.38 would be exactly what's written there. Be merciful to others just as God has been merciful to you.

It's a wonderful thing to conclude there. To say Lord this humility that keeps me recognizing I'm nothing and I can accomplish nothing without Christ. This faith that makes me bold to say I'm not afraid of anything, I can accomplish anything God wants me to accomplish will never make me hard on others.

Will never make me hard on people who have fallen in some deep sin, caught in adultery, or divorced five times, or a murderer who's murdered all his life hanging on the cross. I will be merciful because I recognize how much God has been merciful to me. How many mistakes of mine and blunders he overlooked and not only that, how much he covered up all your blunders from the eyes of others.

He has not allowed others to see your stupid, foolish actions. A lot of foolish, stupid actions we have done. Nobody in this church knows about it.

Thank God. God's covered it all up. Learn to cover the sins of others that you know.

Don't go and expose them. Don't be a gossip. Be merciful to others as God has been merciful to you.

No boasting, no condemnation. It's a wonderful life. There are many other things that God has taught us through the years.

I just want to mention something about these two books. These two books have been released in the last one year. Through the Bible, most of you know about it.

This is the result of 50 years of my Bible study, or 57 years, and I took about 15 years to write it. It's in audio, but this is made into paragraphs, etc. Now the advantage of this is it's a commentary on the whole Bible.

So when people read it and tell me, oh Brother Zach, I find this more interesting than the Bible, I'm not excited. I'm glad that this drives them to read the Bible, which they thought was a boring book. So if you think the Bible is a boring book, read this book and you'll find it's not a boring book.

I have encouraged people to read three pages every day. I want to encourage all of you to read three pages of this every day. And if you miss one day, it doesn't matter.

You don't have to read six pages the next day. Still read three pages. You will still finish in one year.

And in one year, you'll have such an overview of the Bible that will help you to understand God. The purpose of this book is not to help you to understand the Bible. It's to help you understand God who gave us the Bible.

That's why. It's the most important book in the world that you need to understand is the Bible. And this book is to help you understand God through the Bible.

I think it's the only... I've seen many commentaries in my life, but I've never seen a commentary of the Bible written from the New Covenant perspective. And that's why this is unique. Okay.

And it mentions a lot of the doctrines that we preach in this church are in that book. And this other book we published recently is called Hero of My Sons. And I would encourage every young man to read this.

And young woman. Because this mentions almost all the doctrines that we have preached in this church and taught in this church in the last 40 years. So, not just for young people, but if you want to understand all the doctrines we preach and to be established in them, here's a good book.

Again, I have suggested. It's got 62 chapters. And I've suggested to people to read one chapter only a day, which is two or three pages.

Again, if you don't exceed every day, skip a day and read it. But look up the verses. If you don't look up the verses, you won't get the most from it.

So I want to encourage you to get a copy of that. And, you know, we offer it at a discount here in CFC. I hope you're not overwhelmed by all that you heard today.

Whatever sank into your heart, take those. Digest it. The Lord will remind you later on of other things as needed.

But don't be timid. Be bold. Be humble.

Be bold. And say, Lord, without you, I realize I can do nothing of eternal value. And say, Lord, with you, I can do everything that you want me to do on this earth before I leave.

I believe, though I messed up many years of my life, I'm still going to finish my course. Say that to the Lord. And when God's done great things in your life, and you look at other people who are failing and blundering, be merciful to them.

If they have fallen into sins that you never fell into, be merciful. Don't judge them. Heavenly Father, help us to find that balance in our Christian life that Jesus had, the beautiful life that he lived.

Please help us each one to walk as Jesus walked on this earth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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