

(Through the Bible) John - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

The Gospel of John emphasizes the importance of life, simplicity, and the balance of grace and truth in our lives.

Duration: 58:16

Scripture: John 4:34

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon delves into various passages from the Gospel of John, highlighting the significance of Jesus as God's Word made flesh, the importance of surrendering to God's will, the need to work in alignment with the Holy Spirit, and the power of faith over seeking honor from men. It emphasizes the principles of waiting on God's initiative, not seeking glory from people, and trusting in God's timing for healing and guidance.

Transcript

Let's turn now to God's Word and to the Gospel of John as with the other Gospels. We look at the first few sentences to see what he's talking about. And here we read of something that is even earlier than Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. This is actually the first verse of the Bible.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Number of things we read there, we know that the Word refers to Jesus Christ because later on it says in verse 14 that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And it's very clear here in this verse that Jesus Christ is God.

He was God from all eternity. He was God when he walked on the earth in the flesh and he's God today. That's why we worship him.

That's why we pray to him. And that's why when people worshiped him on earth, he accepted that worship. No angel could do that.

No man could do that. He accepted it. And why is he called the Word? See, if I stand here and think my thoughts, you can never know what I'm thinking.

When I put my thoughts into words, you understand me. If God was in heaven or he came in spirit form, we would never understand him. But he came in the form of Jesus as a man so that we could understand him just like my words help you to understand my thoughts.

So that's why he's called the Word, the expression of God. You know, everything in the Bible is really very simple. If you look for a complicated understanding, you get complicated.

And that's why Jesus said this book is written for babes. Babes read it in a very simple way and understand it in a very simple way. Please remember that, that the Bible was written by fishermen like Peter who were not learned.

And today people write great pieces on what this fisherman wrote in order to get a doctorate in theology. It's amazing. You've got to have the attitude of the fisherman to understand this.

You've got to have the attitude of a babe wherever you may study. Come like a little babe. The great danger here is that if we try to understand the scripture with a lot of cleverness, then when we get up to preach also, we will try to show that cleverness to other people.

And those poor simple people are all complicated by what you say. I want to encourage you to remember that the Bible is a very simple book. Babes can understand it if your heart is right.

And Jesus, the teaching of Jesus is very simple. And the more you are like Jesus, the more when you serve the Lord, your teaching will be very simple. Wherever you folks go to serve the Lord, seek to preach like Jesus did in a very simple way so that even children can understand.

That is the most, that is the best way to proclaim the word of God. Don't ever become complicated in your life. There are enough complicated preachers and theologians in the world.

Please don't add to that number. You'll be one of those simple ones who preach the word of God like a little child to little children. Don't seek to get a name for yourself as a great clever preacher.

One thing more we see here, verse four, in him was life. The life was the light of men. That's so simple.

You know what light is? It drives away the darkness. And that's what life does. When the life of Jesus comes into us, it should drive away all the darkness.

It will if we allow it. But you know like the light of the sun, if you live in a room with all the rooms, all the windows and doors closed up, even though the sunlight is bright outside, you're living in darkness inside. And even if you open a small little ventilator, the light comes in.

And even if there's a little crack in the window, the light will come in. Even the light is longing to come in, even through a little crack. But another brother may open everything in his house, windows, doors, everything, and the light comes flooding in.

That's how the life of Jesus is. It's always there waiting to flood your heart. But the principle is, I stand at the door and knock.

The measure in which you open yourself, in that measure it'll come in. So when Jesus said, you are the light of the world, what did he mean? It's not our words. He doesn't say here in John 1.4, his words were light.

See, this is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament it says, Psalm 119 verse 105, thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. The only light they had in the Old Testament was the law, the word of God.

But today, the light is not this book. It is the word that has become flesh. Jesus is the light.

He didn't say my teaching is the light. He said, I am the light. And he didn't say your teaching is going to be the light.

He said, you are the light. In other words, the light is your life, not the wonderful things you teach. If there is no light in your life, whatever fantastic things you teach, it's no use.

Everything we speak must be backed up by our life, our personal life, our thought life, our financial dealings, our home life, the way we live with our wives, the way we bring up our children, our business life, the way we deal with other people in our office. If you're working in a secular office, the way you deal with co-workers, the way you deal with the youngest brother in your church, that will show whether you've got the life of Jesus or not. That life is the light, and that's the great loss today, I mean great lack today in our country that there's not enough people manifesting that light.

Verse 11 and 12, we are familiar with these verses, he came to his own, his own did not receive him, but as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God. I believe that's the right translation, children of God. King James, I think, says sons of God, even to those who believe in his name.

There's a difference between a child and a son. A son is grown up, mature, a child is just a baby born. When you receive Jesus as your savior, you don't become a mature son, you become a child, a baby.

You have to grow up to become a mature son. And the word became flesh, verse 14, and dwelt or tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth. There was a balance in Jesus Christ, grace and truth, the glory of God is balanced.

Truth speaks of reality, no unreality, it speaks of the laws of God, the truth of God proclaimed in his word, this is all truth. Jesus said in John 17, 17, thy word is truth, that's also truth, but that word which consists of commandments, laws, principles, must be covered over with grace if it is to be made attractive to other people. See the Pharisees had truth but no grace, and some people have grace but no truth.

But the glory of God is seen full of grace and truth. It's like in your body you have bones, which is a picture of truth, which are a picture of truth, and flesh, I mean this physical flesh, which is a picture of grace. Now supposing you had only bones, how attractive would you be? Supposing one day you're walking at night and you see a man, only bones walking up to you, skeleton, will you feel like running and embracing or will you feel like turning around the other way and running? That's exactly how people felt when the Pharisees came up to them.

All truth, all bones, bones, bones, bones, they just ran. And some Christians are like that. Truth, truth, truth, truth, truth, truth, all truth, truth, this is the law, this is the thing, you must not do this, you must do this, everybody runs.

Naturally, it's all bones. So should we get rid of our bones? No. I have all these bones in the body, Jesus had all the bones, but the bones, God is in his great wisdom has covered it over with flesh.

And then you see, oh, that beautiful face, how different it is when flesh is put on top of the bone. The most good looking man or woman looks horrible when the flesh is taken off. Do you think skeletons look any different from one another? Can you look at a skeleton and say whether that was a good looking man or an ugly looking man? You can't, they all look alike.

It's the flesh that makes the difference. So don't seek to approach people only with truth. The truth must be covered over with grace.

And then we make Christianity attractive to people. Now, when we are young, I've also been foolish like that in my younger days, I made lots and lots of mistakes, more than I think any of you will ever make. But I was also like this, just truth, truth, truth.

And I turned away a lot of people, including my relatives. I think a lot of Christians in India, believers, turn away their relatives by truth, truth. I won't have anything to do with you and I will not have any contact with you because I'm a holy man.

See, we drive them away from the Lord that way. Don't be foolish. Stand for the truth, but let that be grace.

On the other hand, there are some people who go to the other extreme. They're only grace. Can you imagine how I would be if I had no bones in my body? You know how I'd be? I'd just collapse.

I wouldn't be able to stand because it'd be like a jellyfish. There's a fish called jellyfish. It's got no bones.

Now, there's some disadvantages in having bones. I can't go through that window. If I didn't have bones, I could somehow squeeze myself and go through.

And so, some people who don't have any convictions, there are some Christians like that, they can fit in anywhere. Any denomination, any doctrine, square or triangular shape, round shape, anything, it'll go in because they've got no bones. So which is important? Which? Both.

Absolutely right. And the glory of God was seen in Jesus full of grace and truth. Never forget that.

Now, God helps us when we are young and we are foolish and stupid. I've gone through those days myself, as I said, that when I was very strong on grace, God would give me brothers who are very strong. When I was strong on truth, God would give me brothers who are very strong on grace.

That's good because I say, well, Lord, I can't manage this myself, but along with my brother, who is also a member of the body of Christ, together we can manifest grace and truth. He can't do it alone, and I can't do it alone, but together we can present the glory of God. And I think till the end of our life, we need to recognize that all of us are a little imbalanced on the side of grace or on the side of truth.

And our salvation is in the body of Christ, with other brothers with whom we work together, so that the total image of the church, which is the body of Christ, is full of grace and truth. See, none of us is the body of Christ. The only one person who is the body of Christ was Jesus himself.

He was perfectly balanced. The rest of us can find our balance only as we link up together with other members of the body of Christ. You have to work together with others.

I don't mean occasionally meeting them. I mean intricately linked with them, just like the fingers are linked to the body. Then your ministry will be fantastically effective, because you can present the total image of Christ.

And there is where we learn to accept other people who have another emphasis than ours. Okay, John 17, the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. That teaches us one thing, that there was no grace in the world till Jesus came.

The law came through Moses, that's the old covenant. Grace came through Jesus Christ, and there was no grace in the world till Jesus came. There is a verse in the King James Version, which says, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, Genesis chapter 6. That's not the same as disgrace.

The meaning of that word is he found favor. Grace, what is the meaning of grace? Now, the most commonly accepted meaning of grace by many Christians is the unmerited favor of God. But I'm sorry to say that's wrong.

Mercy is the unmerited favor of God, because if there was no grace till Jesus came, what did Abraham get? Not grace. But he got unmerited favor. Every human being gets unmerited favor.

Unmerited favor of God is mercy. There's a difference between mercy and grace. Mercy they had in the Old Testament.

Grace, it says here, came only through Jesus Christ, so it's something special. Please remember that. With mercy they got forgiveness of sins, as we read in Psalm 103.

With grace we get victory over sin. Mercy deals with our past life, the guilt of our sin. Grace deals with the future, giving me victory over sin, my grace is sufficient for you for every need you meet in the future.

So, learn to distinguish between mercy and grace. Grace never came till Jesus came to earth. And we read further in verse 33, John the Baptist.

I'm just taking a few verses, otherwise we'll never finish this book. It's a wonderful book. I think it's one of the best gospels.

Certainly to me the best gospel is John's gospel in terms of teaching. Luke's gospel gives a lot of incidents and a lot of parables and all, but in terms of teaching, John's gospel is absolutely outstanding. He talks about this wonderful life that God has for us.

And John 1.33, like all the gospels, they begin with this thing that John the Baptist said, you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. That's there in Matthew 3.11. We saw that. It's there in Mark 1.8. It's there in Luke 3.16. It's here in John 1.33. And it's also in Acts 1.5, where Jesus said it.

So, remember, as soon as you open the pages of the New Testament, the first five books of the New Testament all begin with one promise. You shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit, immersed in the Holy Spirit. See, there are two ways to be immersed.

One is by being put in a river, and the other is by standing under a waterfall. Both ways I get immersed. Baptism in water is being dipped into a tank or a river.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is being immersed under the waterfall of the river of God that flows from his throne, and is flowing down to earth, and I stand under that waterfall, and I'm filled. I want to stand there all the days of my life. And you know what the name of that place is, where the water falls? Humility.

If you remain in that place of humility all the days of your life, this river will keep falling on you, falling on you. But you know, that's why the devil always tempts us to move away from that place of humility. Some little thing you do for the Lord, you get puffed up, and you've gone away from that place, and you're not under the waterfall anymore.

You begin to think something high about yourself, and you move away from the waterfall. How tragic. Seek all your days to stay in the place of humility, where the waterfall will be upon you all the time.

He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit. Verse 39. Jesus, somebody, they asked two disciples of John the Baptist, came to Jesus, and where do you live? Jesus said, come and see.

Verse 39. In the Old Testament, the message was, come and hear. In the New Testament, the message is, come and see.

In the Old Testament, the message was, Moses has come. We are having special meetings. Moses has just come down from the mountain with a message from God.

Come and hear. In the New Testament, the message is, Jesus has come from heaven. Come and see the way he lived.

The Old Testament people followed Moses, and they were more interested in the message. The message I present must be impressive, accurate, good. In the New Testament, it's not the message, it's the man.

The man is the message. You are the message. So you say, come and see.

Come and see how I live with my wife. Come and see how I behave with my junior most co-workers in my church. Come and see how I treat the youngest brothers in my church.

Come and see, examine my bank account, my passbook, and my account. See how I keep my account. Come and see.

Come and see how I bring up my children. Come and see any area of my life. That is New Covenant.

It's much easier. Come and hear is much easier. You know, nowadays we have in India, so many preachers from the United States of America coming here to preach.

I'll tell you honestly, if I don't know how that man is living at home with his wife, whether it's his, whether he's divorced or how he's brought up his children, what type of church he's built there, I'll tell you honestly, I am not interested in listening to him. I don't care what fantastic message he preaches. I want to see.

I want to go to his home and see how he lives with his wife and how he lives with his children, how he's brought up his children. I want to see what type of church he's built. Is it a brotherhood or a one-man show? I want to see how he treats his junior most co-workers.

I want to see how he treats little children, like Jesus treated children, you know. I want to see how he treats young people. Then I will know whether he's a man of God.

I'm not living in the Old Testament to come in here. I live in the New Covenant and I only want to come and see. The only man I will respect is the man who can say, come and see, not come in here.

If you live by come in here, you will be an Old Covenant person. You'll build an Old Covenant church. This is the difference between Babylon and Jerusalem.

I told you about this difference. The Pharisees were building Babylon. Jesus came to build Jerusalem.

Babylon is built by come in here. It doesn't matter how you live. Here, here, this is the accurate truth.

Fight for doctrine, doctrine, doctrine. I say let's fight for life. The life, what's the use arguing about a doctrine? The doctrine should produce a good life.

If it doesn't produce a good life, if it doesn't produce patience in me, if it doesn't produce goodness in me, I've missed it. In him was life and the life was the light of man. John's theme is life.

Throughout the gospel and in his episodes, his theme is life. That life which was with the father was manifested to us. We can touch it.

For thousands of years, it was hidden. It came out in words, but now the word has become flesh and that word we can now see. That's why Paul could say, follow me as I follow Christ.

And all of you who serve the Lord should be able to say that. You know, sometimes you hear a look at Christ. That sounds very humble, but it's not scriptural.

Because Paul said, look at me, follow me. Why do people say, don't look at me? Don't look at me because I'm a bad example. Then you shouldn't be preaching.

Go and do something else. Go and do some business or something. Don't get up and preach if you say you're a bad example.

No, you should be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ. I've not become like Jesus, but I'm following. I haven't reached the top of the mountain.

That'll happen only when Jesus comes again, but I'm not sitting at the bottom of the mountain either as a bad example and saying, don't look at me. Don't ever get into this rut of saying, don't look at me. You should say, look at me.

See what the gospel has done in my life. I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It's changed my life.

It's changed my thoughts. It's changed my manner of speech. It's changed the way I live at home.

It's changed the way I deal with my money. It's changed the way I live with people. It's changed the way I behave in the bus.

It's changed the way I behave in the train when I travel, but everybody's selfish. Isn't that wonderful to be an example like that? It's the life that matters. In a world of selfishness, I heard of a brother the other day who had bought a first class ticket and gotten to a train and somebody had occupied his seat.

So you know what he did? He spread the newspaper and sat near the bathroom. And when the ticket collector came, he said, what are you doing here? You can't sit here. And he showed him his ticket.

He said, why aren't you sitting in your seat? He said, somebody was occupying it. And he was amazed that this man would be like this. And he was a foreigner.

And he said, why are you like this? He said, I'm a Christian. I don't fight with people. And that ticket collector got converted.

Was it through listening to a message? No. It was through seeing a light. It was a light that shone.

How is it with you when you travel in the trains, when you travel in the buses? It's easy to preach wonderful doctrines here and study what the ancient fathers taught and all that. But I tell you, when you travel in the train, that day you discover whether all these things you studied have got any value or not. It's real life out there in the world where we have to manifest the beauty and the humility and the patience of Jesus Christ to an ungodly, selfish world.

Think of that. Okay. We go to verse 47, where Jesus said about Nathanael, behold, a man in whom there is no guile.

What a wonderful testimony to receive from the Lord. Many times I've said to the Lord, I said, Lord, if you can say that about me, I'd be so delighted. That there is a man in whom who is transparent.

You know the difference between transparent glass and frosted glass? Frosted glass is like this. You can't see the other side. And many Christians are like this.

They're not transparent. A lot of things you can hide on the other side of the glass. And this side you show all as if you're a very holy man.

Behind the frosted glass, there's another life. But without guile means transparent, you know, clean glass, plain glass, where you can look inside and see everything inside. Come and see a man in whom there is no guile.

Have you read in Revelation chapter 21 that the Jerusalem, the church of God is made of, I mean, is like crystal clear glass. That's how our life must be. Clear glass.

Yeah. A man, not perfect. Nathanael was not perfect, but he was honest.

That's what God requires from us. Chapter two, we read in the marriage of Cana. Jesus, it says about Jesus in verse 11, this beginning of his signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee.

You know, John calls the miracles signs. That means every miracle was a parable. There was a parable in the miracle.

This was a sign, not just a miracle, but a sign. So we must read this miracle like a parable. It's got a spiritual message.

What is the spiritual message? However much wine you think you have, it will run dry. In a marriage, this was a marriage, however much wine you may have in the beginning, it will run dry and you will need Jesus to come and replace that wine. You cannot live forever.

Whatever you may have in marriage or in personal life. And when you come to the end of the wine in your life and the wine speaks of joy and peace and victory and righteousness, the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The wine speaks of the Holy Spirit's power.

Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when the wine runs dry in your life, what do you have to do? Just be honest like Mary was and said to Jesus, verse three, they have no wine. That's all you've got to be.

Be honest. You don't have to go to the vineyard and collect the grapes and crush it and make the wine. No, no, no, no.

Just go to Jesus and say, Lord, I have no joy in my life. He says, rejoice in the Lord always. I don't have it.

I don't have peace in my life. I don't have victory in my life. I don't have righteousness in my life.

They have no wine. And then Jesus said, I see something wonderful here. He could have created wine from nothing.

Don't you think he could have done that? There was six empty water pots there. He could have said, let that be wine. And all those water pots would have been filled with wine.

Many years ago, he said, let that be light. Why can't he say, let that be wine? But he didn't do that. This is a sign.

This miracle is a parable. He told those servants. And that's the first thing we notice.

He did not call the big shots to do the miracle. He never does his miracles through big shots. He does his miracles through servants.

Be a servant, and the Lord will do miracles through you. Have an attitude of a servant, and the Lord will do miracles through you. And he told the servants, basically, let's you and I do this miracle together.

Okay? You do the easy part. I'll do the difficult part. You pour the water.

I'll turn it into wine. And that's a lesson for us. How is the Lord going to work through us? He says, let's do it together.

You and I be partners. You do the difficult part. You do the easy part.

And I'll do the difficult part. It's wonderful. And then they did the easy part, pouring the water, and Jesus turned it into wine.

And when they served the wine, people said, boy, this is fantastic. We've never had wine like this in all our life. And they never knew.

But the servants knew, it says. They never knew, but the servants, verse 9, they knew that this was from Jesus. And I've thought of this in terms of ministry.

Many times I've gone to Jesus, and I said, Lord, what do I have to share with these people who are such needy people sitting in this church? What do I have? Tasteless water. It's all I have, Lord. But you can touch it and make it sweet wine so that by the time I serve it to these people, it'll be wine.

And when the people taste the message, they say, boy, we've never heard anything like this. And they don't know that I only gave some water to the Lord. He turned it to wine.

This beginning of science, Jesus did to teach us how to serve other people. Go to Jesus with your water and say, Lord, this is all I have. You've got to work hard.

You've got to work hard to fill up those six water pots of stone. If you're a lazy person, nothing will happen. If you're too lazy to study the Word, nothing will happen.

God never does a miracle through lazy people. But if you're a hardworking person, at the end of all your hard work, you fill the water pots with stone, and you say, Lord, it's still water. But I trust you to make it wine.

He can do a miracle. Okay. We read about his chasing out people from the temple in verse 14 to 20.

He found people selling oxen and sheep, making money in the name of religion. And it says in verse 15, he made a scourge of cords. Can you picture this in your mind? Jesus sitting in a corner and collecting various bits of straw or string and making a rope.

And that took some time. And the disciples must have been watching. What's the Lord doing? Making a rope here? He was making a rope to chase all these fellas out of the temple.

It was not only grace, it was truth. He was not only full of grace, but full of truth. He who turned the water into wine also made the whip to chase people out of the temple who were making money in the name of religion.

You may have to minister like that sometimes. It's not always water into wine. Sometimes you have to sit and make a whip and chase these fellas who have come to the church to seek their own, who are making profit in the name of Christ, who are not seeking the glory of God.

You got to chase them out and say, get out of here, go and do business in the marketplace. Don't come to the church and try to get a name for yourself. When you stand up in the pulpit, stand as a lion of God there.

And if people are not afraid of God, at least let them be afraid of you because you're a man of God. That's how you should be. I've told people in the church, the best thing is you fear God.

But if you don't fear God, you better be afraid of me because I'm not going to allow any nonsense in this church. I'm not going to allow you to come here and try to make profit in terms of honor or draw people up to yourself or get a name for yourself. If you don't want to be a servant and you don't want to humble yourself and you're not willing to clean the toilets here, there's no place for you in this church.

Here we are all equal. There's no senior or junior. We all sweep the floor.

We all clean the toilets. We are all brothers. Nobody bigger than the other.

And anyone who seeks honor, there are hundreds of other churches you can go and join, but not this one. You've got to be a man of God. Otherwise you'll produce another wishy-washy church like all the hundreds of churches that have brought dishonor to the Lord's name in this land.

So there's a need for this type of ministry, the wine and the whip. That's how we build the church. And further, it says in verse 24 and 25 that Jesus did not commit himself to everybody.

Many people believed in him, but he did not commit himself to anybody. Why was that? Because he knew what was in man's heart. You may believe in Jesus and the Lord may not commit himself to you because he sees that you're not totally committed to him.

Are you totally committed to him? Then he'll be totally committed to you. Chapter three, we read about being born again. One of the things that strikes me in chapter three is that Nicodemus came to Jesus by

night, verse two.

I'm always excited by that, that he could just walk into Jesus' house at night. Jesus was the most important person that ever walked on this earth. Do you agree with me? I believe that.

Was there anybody more important than Jesus? Was there anybody who had a greater job to do than Jesus Christ? Nobody. There are some people who think they're very important, but Jesus was the most important person that ever walked on the earth and you did not have to fix an appointment with the secretary to meet him. You could just walk into his house anytime, even at night.

He gave that impression to people. You can come and see me anytime. And Nicodemus walked in and Jesus took time.

I don't know whether it was midnight or whatever it was, Jesus took time to talk to him. If you serve the Lord, you must be willing. There were times when Jesus did not have enough time to eat food, it says in Mark chapter two and chapter three.

He didn't have time to eat food. Sometimes he didn't have time to sleep. If you're interested in food and sleep more than serving God, you better do business or something like that.

You can't serve the Lord. I'm really encouraged to see that. And Jesus spoke here about being born of water and the spirit, verse five.

The water is a picture of the Holy Spirit, just like fire is a picture of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus spoke three times of water in the John's gospel. First in chapter three, born of water.

That's like a cup of water. And then in verse chapter four, verse 14, he spoke about a well of water. And then in chapter seven and verse 38, he spoke of rivers of water, a cup of water, a well of water and rivers of water.

These are three stages in the Christian life. First, born of water. That means we are born again.

The Holy Spirit has come and produced a new life in us. Then the Lord seeks to lead us deeper to have a well of water in our life. A well of water means, you know, if you have a well in your compound, you don't worry about the corporation municipal water supply anymore, where they can turn it off or turn it on, makes no difference.

You got enough water in your compound. The Christian life is like that. We are not dependent on external sources of supply for our joy.

My joy does not depend on external circumstances. I've got a well inside that keeps me full of joy and peace all the time. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

But even that is not enough. God leads us to a third stage where this river flows out, this water flows out from us like a river in many directions and blesses many, many people. And don't ever be satisfied until you reach the third stage.

Okay. There are many other things you'd like to talk about, but there isn't time. Verse 30, he must increase, but I must decrease.

That was the secret of John the Baptist life and say that all your life, Lord, I want you to increase. And I want to decrease in my life more and more and more and more. One more verse for those who minister the word.

Verse 17, God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Don't ever preach in such a way that you condemn people. I remember in my younger days, I used to give out tracts like that on the streets and in the trains, and it was only condemning people.

And I'd say, well, I've given you a tract. Now, your blood is not on my hands in the day of judgment. It's your business.

What did I do? I gave a tract to ease my conscience that that fellow can not anywhere now point to me that I did not give him the gospel. I was not interested in his salvation. I was interested in clearing my responsibility that these fellows should not accuse me.

I didn't give him the gospel. What a selfish way to serve the Lord. God gave me light on that.

God did not send his son into the world to give out tracts and condemn people. He sent his son into the world to save them. I'd rather give one tract and save one person than give a thousand tracts and nobody be saved.

Please remember that. Even if you give out tracts, give it with the burden to save people, not to ease your conscience that their blood is not on my hands. Okay.

Chapter four, we read here, they came to Samaria, verse five, and they were hungry, all 13 of them, Jesus and his 12 disciples. And here's something interesting. Supposing we are going as a team to a village.

And when we all go as a team to a village or a town, and we are hungry, what do we do? We'll all go to the restaurant or something to eat food. That's normal. And that's what they always did.

But this particular time, Jesus felt a prompting from the Holy Spirit, said, let them go. You stay here. So Jesus always obeyed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

So he told the disciples, okay, you fellas go and eat and bring some food for me. I'm going to be here. And he was there.

And a woman came and she was saved. And the whole city was saved. How did it start? Because Jesus listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Don't go to the restaurant to eat your food. Let the disciples bring some food for you. I told you the other day, he was walking on the road and the Holy Spirit said, look up, there's somebody in that tree.

Does the Holy Spirit speak like that? Didn't he tell Peter, some people have come for you downstairs. Go. Go with them.

Don't doubt. We read in Acts chapter 8, the Holy Spirit said to Philip, in the midst of a terrific revival in Samaria, leave this revival. Go to that desert road to Gaza.

He goes there. Walking, walking, walking, walking, walking. I don't know how many miles to the desert.

And imagine leaving a revival and going to a desert. And there he met one Ethiopian eunuch traveling in the chariot, gives him the gospel, converts him, baptizes him. And that fellow takes the gospel to Ethiopia.

And thousands in Ethiopia get converted. There are Ethiopian Christians today. It started that day because Philip listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

And because he was so faithful in walking all those hours, God gave him a free trip back by lifting him up. And you read that in Acts chapter 8. That's lovely. I like to read that.

God gave him a free trip back. The return ticket God took care of. You pay one way and the Lord takes care of the other one.

So one of the things I see in the Acts of the Apostles is people who were sensitive to the Holy Spirit. And Jesus was like that. So that's what we see here.

And I want to see one more thing here, which is very beautiful. I'm not going into all these verses, but you know, Jesus said to him, to this woman, go and call your husband, verse 16. And the woman said, I don't have any husband.

Jesus said, that's right. You don't have any husband. You have had five husbands, verse 18.

And the one you're living with now is not your husband. He exposed her right there. And you know what she said? She changed the subject.

She said, Lord, this matter of worship, you know, verse 20. Our father, you know, I have a problem with worship. I'm thinking about worship.

Our father said we should worship here. And you say we should worship in Jerusalem. And if you were there, maybe you would have told her, hey, wait, wait, wait, let's talk about your husband first.

None of all this changing the subject. But there you see the graciousness of Jesus. He never went back to that subject, which embarrassed her.

He talked about worship. Be like that. When you find something you have said has embarrassed someone, the person is feeling a bit awkward, change the subject.

He was full of grace and truth. I tell you, I see the glory of Jesus in page after page of scripture. If you allow the Holy Spirit to show you the glory of Jesus, you can be like him.

And he changed the subject and he spoke about worship. And I'm glad he spoke about worship because he gave us one of the most profoundest verses on worship in the whole Bible because of his graciousness. Said God is a spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

What should be our attitude to when, you know, Jesus said two things here concerning God's will. When the disciples came back, he said, I've already eaten. I said, where did you eat? And he said in verse 34, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

I hope that is your food as well. My food is not to run around here and there and do so many things. My food is to see what my father's will is and finish it.

But at the same time, verse 35, I do lift up my eyes to see what the harvest is like. And I would encourage all of you to lift up your eyes, look at the harvest. It's white.

It's ready. You say there are four months. No, there are no four months.

It's already ready. And if you read verse 36, you'll receive wages and you will gather fruit for eternal life so that the one who sows and the one who reaps may rejoice together. Some people are called to sow.

Some people are called to reap. I'll tell you, my ministry has basically been reaping. It says here in verse 38, I often think of this verse in relation to my ministry.

I sent you to reap where other people have labored. Others have worked hard and you have gone in there and got the benefit of their hard work. I say that's right, Lord.

What do I mean? Many missionaries, starting with William Carey, who suffered so much, came to India 200 years ago. Many of them worked in Tamil Nadu for years in the last two centuries, very hard with very little fruit. Today, I go to those remote villages in Tamil Nadu and reap and reap and reap where those godly men from other lands sacrificed everything and worked so hard.

I have entered into their labors. I believe they will get a far greater reward than I'll ever get because I will be reaped and it has been very easy for me. But they have sown.

But one day, it says in verse 36, those who sow and those who reap will rejoice together. When an evangelist goes and brings people to Christ, he's sowing, bringing people together. He must work together with the mason who builds them together into a body.

There's no competition. Some people say you're stealing my sheep. What sheep? It's God's kingdom.

It's the Lord's sheep. I hope they are not your sheep. Your sheep will go to hell.

The Lord's sheep will remain and go to heaven. I remember the story of a drunkard who met the great evangelist D.L. Moody on a street and the drunkard said, hey Moody, do you know me? He said, I don't know you. He said, I'm one of your converts.

Oh, Moody said, you must be my convert, not the Lord's convert, if you are in this state. So that's it. Don't say my sheep.

Only the Lord can say my sheep. There's no such thing as stealing your sheep. I'll tell you, nobody has ever stolen my sheep because I don't have any.

You can't steal my money if I don't have any and you can't steal my sheep if I don't have any. They are all the Lord's sheep and if some of those Lord's sheep prefer to come to your church, I say, please go brother. Go right ahead.

If you grow spiritually more there, you should go there. You shouldn't be wasting time in my church. Don't ever be possessive.

In chapter four, I see a very beautiful thing here. I don't know whether you noticed this. You know, little, little things in scripture really excite me.

There was this man, this royal official from Capernaum, verse 46, whose son was sick and he came to Jesus and he said, he came from Capernaum to Cana, verse 46. Jesus was in Cana. That's a distance of about 15 miles.

He walked 15 miles from Capernaum to Cana and he said, see, my child is sick. And Jesus said, verse 50, go your way. Your son lives.

And do you know what time Jesus said it? Jesus said it at one o'clock in the afternoon, because we read that in verse 52. And it says, then he went home and he asked the, now read carefully and use your intelligence. Verse 52, he asked the servants, when did he get better? They said yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Then the father knew that was the very time at which Jesus said he lives. Now it doesn't take 24 hours to walk 15 miles. What do you learn from that? One o'clock, Jesus said he's well.

And only the next day he reaches his home in Capernaum. That shows his faith. He knew my son is well.

I can sleep here tonight and go tomorrow. Do you have that type of faith? That when Jesus has said your son is well, you don't have to rush back home to find out. You can sleep, go peacefully next morning.

Oh, I'm encouraged by these little things. Don't miss these things. You've got a map at the back of your Bible? Look up those maps.

Sometimes you get some wonderful truth by that. It's the glory of God to conceal matters. It's the glory of kings to find it out.

Chapter five, verse five. There was a man in Bethesda who had been 38 years in sickness. See, that's the condition of a lot of people today also.

Exactly like it says in verse two, in Bethesda lay a multitude of people who were sick, blind, lame, withered. There are many churches called Bethesda today and they are like that, multitude of sick, blind, lame, withered people lying there. And Jesus has to come and heal them.

And here was a man who was lying there for 38 years. Where else in the Bible do you read 38 years? Does it strike a chord in your mind? 38 years, 38 years, 38 years, anywhere? You don't know. You forgot what we studied a few days ago.

In Deuteronomy 2.14, it says they came to the borders of the promised land in Kailashbania after two years and they wandered for 38 years. This man was like that. He's a picture of a man under the law.

38 years trying. Lord, I tried to get into the pool. I couldn't.

I said, I'll make it next year. Couldn't. I said, Lord, I'll make it next year.

Couldn't. All the time. I never seemed to make it.

This is life under the law. I'm trying to get victory, trying to get victory. Finally, after 38 years, he gave up.

And then Jesus came. This sign is a parable. What is that? The Lord has to wait till you come to a zero point.

It says in those 38 years, all the men of war died. And in this 38 years, this man's effort and energy died. He had to come to a zero point.

The wine had to finish. This man had to come to a zero point. Then the Lord came.

And in a moment, you're healed. I wanted to show you some other things in verse. It says something about Jesus' life we see in verse 30.

First of all, verse 17. You know, the Jews were asking him in verse 16, why are you doing these things on the Sabbath? And here's another revelation. Why are you doing these things on the Sabbath? And Jesus said, because my father is working.

My father doesn't have a holiday. My father doesn't have a Sabbath. Did you know that? Did you know that the only Sabbath that God has enjoyed so far is the one described in Genesis chapter one and chapter two? Since Genesis chapter two, God has never had a Sabbath.

He's been working, working because man has fallen. And Jesus says, I don't have any Sabbath. I'm working.

My father works and I work. Jesus is a full-time worker. Do you know the devil has got no Sabbath? He's full-time working.

Works 24 hours. Christians are lazy. Jesus was not.

Another thing I want you to notice in verse 30, Jesus said, I never do anything on my own initiative. I never do anything on my own initiative. That means I never initiate something.

I always wait on my father. When he tells me to do something, I do it. If he doesn't tell me to do it, I don't do it.

Wonderful example to follow. John chapter five, verse 41, I do not receive glory from men. Verse 34, I do not receive any, the witness I receive, I don't receive testimony from men.

Jesus' life was such where he never received witness or testimony from any man. He said, my father gives a testimony about me and that's more than enough for me. But you, how can you all come to faith? Verse 44, who received glory from one another.

Do you know why many people can't have faith? Here is the answer in verse 44. When you receive glory from people, your faith decreases. It's like saying, if there's a hole in the vessel, all the water will go down.

When you seek honor from people, you will never be a man of faith. How many of you want to be men and women of faith? Make one decision today that you will never from today receive honor from any man. I prophesy in six months, you'll have more faith than you ever had in all your life.

You make one decision. Lord, I will never receive honor from any human being. I don't want it.

I will not seek it. I will not receive it when it is given. I don't want any honor.

I'll receive the honor that comes from God. Don't ever seek honor from men. Don't ever seek for the titles men give you.

Lord, I don't want that. What's the use of that title? Is it going to make, is the devil going to get scared? Is it going to make me more effective for God? I don't want honor from men in God's work. If you're out in the world, by all means, get all your titles because then only you may be able to get a job.

I'm talking about the Lord's work. In the Lord's work, I say, don't ever receive honor from men, any type of honor. Otherwise, the Lord will say, how can you believe when you receive glory and honor from one another? Chapter six, I wanted to read you these beautiful verses in verse 37 and 38.

You know, I first accepted the Lord, I think when I was around 13. I don't know. Some, some of you know the date of your conversion.

I know the date God called me for his service, but I don't know the date I was born again. I don't even know which year I was born again. That doesn't mean I'm not saved.

I'm like a man who doesn't know his birthday. If a man doesn't know his birthday, is he alive or dead? It doesn't make a difference whether he knows his birthday or not. The proof of having life is not remembering the date of when you were born again.

I don't. I, many times I tossed about and saying, Lord, I don't know. And then I'm not for sure whether you accepted me.

Then I got this verse 37. Him that cometh to me, I'll never cast out. And I dropped an anchor from that day, 41 years ago.

I never doubted my salvation. I said, Lord, I came to you. I believe you have accepted me.

You must be sure of your salvation. And the other thing it says in verse 37, which has helped me in my ministry is this. All whom the father gives to me will come to me.

All whom the father gives to me will come to me. So I don't have to go grabbing people. Those whom I'm supposed to serve will come to me and I will serve them.

The rest, maybe God has called somebody else to serve them. Let him go there. I don't want to grab somebody whom God has given to that man.

If God has given this brother to be shepherded by that person, why should I go and grab him? I'm not a thief. No, but those whom the father has given to me to shepherd and guide to eternal life, I will guide them and lead them. Let's stop there and we'll continue in our next session.

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