

Through the Bible - John - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

Jesus came to earth to deny His own will and do the Father's will, and to take up the cross and die to self.

Duration: 57:24

Scripture: John 6:2, John 7:24, John 10:28-29, John 13:35, John 14:12

Topics: "Women In Ministry", "Eternal Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the value of women and the need to learn to value them as God does. The sermon focuses on the story of the disciples going fishing in John chapter 21 and the message behind this sign. The preacher highlights the importance of coming to a zero point, where the disciples had no fish despite their efforts, before Jesus appeared and filled their boat with fish. The sermon also discusses the concept of being balanced, going in and out of God's presence to serve Him in the world. The preacher warns against being a mother for Satan's lies and encourages believers to work while it is day, as the time will come when they will not be able to work. The sermon concludes with the reminder that eternal life is to know God and Jesus personally and to partake of His nature. The preacher emphasizes the importance of praying for God's children and exchanging our lives for His.

Transcript

let's turn to John's gospel and chapter 6. John's gospel chapter 6. let's look at verse 38 which I believe is the one verse in all the Gospels that describes most clearly why Jesus came to earth. if you were to ask the average Christian why did Jesus come to earth, they will give you the Sunday school answer, He came to die for our sins. good, but that's not the full answer.

if you want the full answer find it in Jesus' own words in John 6 38. I came from heaven to deny my own will not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me. He came from heaven to spend his whole life on earth saying no to his own will and yes to the will of the Father.

what does that teach us? that means as a human being he had his own will and that had to be denied. that's the meaning of taking up the cross. where man's will crosses God's will, that's the cross.

and Jesus had a will of His own for example in Gethsemane He said I don't want to drink this cup. that was His will. the Father's will was you must drink the cup.

so He denied His will and He did the Father's will. in temptation, all temptation is to make you do your will. and if you say no to your will, take up the cross in temptation, you get victory.

you will do the Father's will. that's where you need the power of the Holy Spirit to put your own will to death. when it says put the flesh to death, it means putting your own will to death.

you cannot do it on your own. it's too strong. David could not kill Goliath without God's power.

Samson could not tear that lion without God's power. and you cannot put your flesh to death of your own will without God's power. that's why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus came not to do His own will but the will of the Father and that's where we are to follow Him all the days of our life. John chapter 6 is a wonderful chapter because it begins with verse 2, a great multitude and ends verse 71 with 11 people. verse 70 and 71.

and if you want to know how to reduce the size of your congregation, study John chapter 6. not many people are interested in that because everybody's interested in finding out how to increase the size of your congregation. now why did Jesus reduce the size of His congregation? Jesus was a great master at reducing the size of His congregation. like Gideon's army, 32,000 reduced to 300 and God has always accomplished His purposes with a few.

Jesus spent all His earthly life training 11 people and here we see how this great multitude was whittled down and many of His disciples left Him, verse 60. when they heard this they said this is a difficult statement and it says in verse 66, many of them withdrew and did not walk with Him anymore. now when many of your disciples leave you, what do you do? most preachers will go visiting them and say well brother please come back we don't want you to go away.

but Jesus said goodbye and let them go and then He had 12 people left and He said to them, He didn't say oh I wish you all won't leave me. it's not what He said. you all also want to go? what an attitude.

what an attitude to be in Christian work like that. I'm not here to grab anybody. I'm not here to hold on to people.

those who want to go can go. but I'm not going to lower the standard of my message. why are they going? they are going because they don't like this message of the cross.

Jesus spoke about the cross in chapter 6. He said about eating His flesh, verse 53, and drinking His blood. you know what that means? flesh and blood speak about the dying of Jesus and He was saying you got to die with Me. that's not the message commonly preached today.

today people are told Jesus will bless you, He'll heal you, He'll make you rich, He'll take you to heaven. how many want to come? everybody wants to come. but Jesus said come and you have to die.

how many want to come? it's difficult to find some hands raised when you get that type of invitation and that's why there were only 11-12 people left. so if you have a church where you preach blessing, prosperity, health, healing and Jesus solves all your problems and Jesus does everything good for you and He'll make you a rich businessman and your business will prosper if you honor God and all these type of stuff. you'll get a big crowd.

they'll be pretty useless though. but if you preach like Jesus did, that you deny yourself and take up your cross and your business may not prosper because God doesn't want you to make money. He wants you to build a church and you may have a lot of suffering, a lot of misunderstanding, a lot of tribulation, a lot of things like that.

very few people come. but that will be the body of Jesus Christ. how many people want to preach that? very very very few.

so don't be deceived by this prosperity preaching that goes on today. there are lots and lots of believers who don't actually preach prosperity but who believe it. they think that when God blesses them financially, that's the mark of His blessing.

I'll tell you something, there's only one mark of God's blessing upon you and that is that you're becoming more and more like Jesus Christ in your character. if that's happening, God is blessing you, otherwise God is not. you know when people say, oh brother, God is blessed.

I was a very poor brother and I became full-time worker but now God has blessed my children. and I say, you mean they become like Jesus Christ? no, they've got jobs in the Gulf. oh, that is what you mean by blessing you.

there are multitudes of heathen and atheists who are being blessed by God then. you think it's only Christians who are going to the Gulf? what all wrong ideas people have. somebody makes more money and he thinks it's God.

look at the multitudes of heathen and people in every religion who are making money. they also say their God is blessing them. but show me a person who's becoming like Christ.

that cannot be duplicated by all those people in other religions. that is the unfailing mark of God's blessing. what about health? there are heathen people who live up to a hundred years old.

the world's oldest man in the Guinness Book of Records is not a Christian. what is the proof? don't think long life and a lot of money is a proof of God's blessing. it is not.

Christ likeness. that's the thing. never never forget.

okay, that's how Jesus reduced the numbers. chapter 7, we read about Jesus telling his brothers. you know his brothers, it says in verse 5, did not believe in him.

his brothers despised him. none of his brothers believed in him. but after his death and resurrection, some of his brothers believed in him.

James and Jude, for example, they wrote two episodes, the brothers of Jesus. but during the time when Jesus was ministering, none of his brothers believed in him. they despised him.

they made fun of him. they told him, why don't you go to the feast? and Jesus said in verse 6, your time is always ready. the world cannot hate you, but it hates me.

you fellows are popular. I'm hated. why does the world hate me? because I stand up and testify against its sin.

you fellows are all diplomats. you won't tell anybody about their sins. so you become popular.

I believe that's a word for preachers. why is it you're a popular preacher? because you don't tell people about their sin. and Jesus says, why am I unpopular? because I testify that their works are evil.

I expose their sin. I expose their wrong motives. I expose their love of money.

I expose their adulterous thoughts. I expose their greed, their jealousy, their fooling around with girls and women. I expose that.

and I'm not going to tolerate any of that. they hate me. and they'll hate anyone who preaches like that today.

and so Jesus said to his brothers, go up to the feast yourself. verse 8, I'm not going up, because what's the reason? my time has not yet come. you fellows, your time is always ready.

verse 6, you can do whatever you like, because you don't have anybody authority over you, telling you what to do and where to go. he said, I don't operate like that. I have an authority over me in heaven.

when he tells me to go, I go. and so he has not told me to go, I'm not going. but then it says in verse 10, when his brothers had gone up to the feast, he himself went up secretly.

was he telling a lie? no. Jesus lived like these policemen with a walkie-talkie. here's the policeman on the street with a walkie-talkie.

and you ask him, aren't you going to the police station? he says, no, I'm not going. I've been asked to stay here. and you go.

and two minutes later, he gets an order, come to the police station. and he goes. and when you see him at the police station, you say, hey, five minutes ago I asked you if you're coming and you said you're not coming, you told a lie.

he didn't tell a lie. he lived by moment by moment directions from headquarters. that's how Jesus lived.

he doesn't tell lies. at that time when the brothers asked him, he said, I haven't had any word to go. when the father tells me to go, I go.

and the father did not want him to walk with his brothers all the way to Jerusalem and waste time in that useless gossip and conversation that would be going on along that. sometimes the Lord tells you not to go with certain brothers because they don't know how to spend the time in a profitable way. don't waste your time being with them.

it's better you go alone. so then a lot of things we learn from Jesus life, how we can live on this earth. okay.

chapter 8, we read about this woman who was caught in adultery. just one more verse before we come to that. in verse 24 in chapter 7, which I want to point out, which is a good verse.

do you know Jesus did not only say don't judge, he also said judge. you know that? that's in John 7 24. don't judge, but judge.

you must be balanced. you must not judge in one way, but judge in another way. if you don't judge, you'll be deceived on this earth.

what Jesus said is don't judge by outward appearance, but judge righteously. you have to discern whether that man is a true servant of God or not, otherwise you'll be deceived. judge righteously, but don't judge by outward appearance.

chapter 8 verse 1 is combined with chapter 7 verse 53. everyone went to his home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, because that was his home. and then you read about the story of the woman caught in adultery.

a beautiful picture of Jesus attitude to those who want to throw stones at others. the Pharisees were people who are always ready to throw stones at somebody else who had they felt done something wrong. there are a lot of believers like that.

their pockets are full of stones which they want to throw at somebody or the other all the time. sometimes they stand in pulpits and throw stones at people. fling verses to hit somebody sitting there or somebody sitting there.

don't ever do it. only Pharisees throw stones. have you heard preachers throwing stones from the pulpit? you know that that fellow is preaching to hit you? Jesus never did it.

don't ever do it. Jesus always had compassion on people who had sinned. I never see Jesus criticizing murderers, thieves, drunkards, women caught in adultery or any such thing.

I see him criticizing Pharisees who thought they were holy. I see him criticizing hypocrites. I see him saying that the hypocrites will go to hell.

and the woman who caught in adultery, he says I know you did something wrong but I don't condemn you. I can see that you're repentant. I have no stones to throw at you.

Jesus told the Pharisees who he who is without sin. let him cast the first stone. verse 7. and whenever you are tempted to throw a stone at somebody thinking you're holier than that person, I would tell you two things.

first of all remember the pit from which God pulled you out. don't ever forget that. and secondly forget that pit.

what about today? if you are without sin, take out your stone. and they all went away. you'll never be able to throw a stone if you remember the pit from which God dug you out.

and if you remember how much sin there is still there is in your life today. you'll never have a stone left in your pocket. your pockets will be empty of stones.

and for the rest of your life you'll never throw a stone at anybody. and you'll be a very blessed man. you'll be in fellowship with Jesus who never throw stones at anyone.

Christendom today is full of people who throw stones at others. expose wrong doctrine. expose wrong methods.

but don't ever speak evil of any man. and don't judge a man's motives because you don't know his motives. don't judge his private life because you don't know his private life.

people sometimes ask me, brother Zack what do you think of this preacher? this American preacher or this Indian healer? I say I haven't lived with him. so I don't know how he lives with his wife. I don't know what type of thoughts he gets.

I don't know what type of dreams he gets. how can you ask me? I don't know. you asked me to give you my opinion about his ministry.

that I can give you. whether is I agree that his ministry is Christ like or not, that I can tell you. but about the man, I will not speak evil of any man.

the Bible says don't speak evil of any man. if you want to preserve yourself and keep your mouth sacred for the Lord for proclaiming his word, make sure you don't speak evil of people. but at the same time be discerning about their ministry.

don't follow their example if you find that's not the way Jesus would serve. and so Jesus never threw any stones. and when they all when they heard this, they all left.

but Jesus was left alone and he did not throw any stones. John 8 32 is another lovely verse. you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

today there are multitudes of denominations and Christians who say I've got the truth. we've got the truth. we've got the truth.

how do you know whether somebody's got the truth? when a preacher says I'm preaching the truth, how do you know whether he's preaching the truth? here is the answer. if what he is preaching is the truth and you receive it, it will set you free. free from sin.

the context there was 33 and 34 is about being free from sin. if a man's preaching does not deliver you from the slavery of sin, that man is not preaching the truth. I don't care what doctrine he is preaching is not the truth.

because the truth will set you free from sin. to me that is the test. I want to be in a church where I hear the word of God that sets me free from sin in my life.

and I want to listen to a man whose preaching sets me free from sin in my life. from my thoughts, my words, my actions, my attitudes, my motives. that's how I know whether a man is preaching the truth.

Jesus has given me the guideline. it's there. why don't you take it? that's the way to test the truth.

not just by checking on a doctrinal statement. if a man doesn't speak the truth, you will remain in bondage. and any preaching that brings you more into bondage, touch not, taste not, handle not, this, this, all types of rules and regulations, that is definitely not the truth.

because it brings you more into bondage. okay, please think about that. verse 44, you are of your father the devil, he told the Pharisees because and the devil was a murderer from the beginning.

there's no truth in him. when he speaks a lie, last part of verse 44, he speaks from his own nature, he's a liar and the father of all lies. what is the devil? father of all lies.

when you as a Christian tell a lie, who is the father of that lie? who? Satan. who is the mother? you. and the child? the lie.

see, Satan cannot produce a lie, unless he finds a mother. please don't be a mother for Satan to produce lies. when you're tempted to tell a lie, you tell Satan, I'm not going to be the mother, go and find somebody else.

see, you can't have a child just as a father. the father needs a mother. and Satan is a father of lies and he's going around the world looking for mothers.

and sometimes he finds mothers among believers, who to produce that lie. please remember that. ok, chapter 9, verse 4 is a very good verse for our country today.

we must work while it is day, because the time is coming when we will not be able to work when it becomes dark. take the opportunity while it is day. while Jesus is in the world, verse 5, he's the light of the world.

now he's gone away from the world. who is the light of the world? Jesus said, you are the light of the world. so if I were to ask you a question today, who is the light of the world? today, don't say Jesus.

according to John chapter 9, verse 5, he was the light of the world only as long as he lived here. today, according to Matthew 5, 14 to 16, you are the light of the world. chapter 10 and verse 9 is a beautiful verse.

I am the door. if anyone enters through me, he will be saved. that's good.

and after he is saved, what should he do? he must be balanced. what does it mean to be balanced? he must go in and he must go what? out. that's balanced.

in to God's presence and out to serve him in the world. and then back again into God's presence and out to serve him. it's not that we ever lose God's presence, but we must take time to get alone with God.

not so busy going out, out, out, out, out, out, out. that's like walking on one leg all the time. it's like people in the convent or monasteries who are hopping on the other leg all the time, who never go out.

a balanced Christian has got two legs. he goes in and goes out. he worships God and he serves him.

he comes into the Lord's presence and waits on him, receives his word, shares it with other people. let there be a balance in your life. I think most of us could be in danger, mostly of going out, out, out, out.

that can be dangerous, because gradually we dry up. ok, we go to verse 28 and 29. these are favorite verses for those who preach eternal security.

they say, Jesus said, I give eternal life to them and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. and my father who has given me is greater than them all and no one can snatch them out of my father's hand. doesn't that look like eternal security? it certainly does and I believe in it.

but how does the verse begin? how does verse 28 begin in your Bible? what is the first word? what's the first word? and. and means, don't start reading in the middle of a sentence. no sentence begins with and.

that's the middle of the sentence. let's go to the beginning of the sentence and then you'll understand the doctrine of eternal security. verse 27.

my sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. so who are the ones who are never going to perish? those who hear his voice and follow him. what about those who don't hear his voice and don't follow him? there's no eternal security for them.

don't jump in the middle of a verse and take half a verse and preach a doctrine. extremely dangerous. I believe in eternal security for all the sheep who hear the voice of Jesus and who hear him and follow him.

and I also believe that the sheep who don't hear his voice and don't follow him are not going to have eternal life and they will perish. you may say that nobody can pluck you out of the father's hand. absolutely right.

but you can jump out of the father's hand yourself. that's a different thing. ok now let's turn to another verse.

chapter 11 verse 6. here he heard that Lazarus was sick. behold he whom you love is sick. they stayed two days longer in the same place.

God's ways are not our ways. if I hear that somebody I love is sick, I rush. but Jesus when he heard that somebody he loved was sick, he stayed two more days.

this is a miracle what he did there in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. and what did we see in John chapter 2? every miracle is a sign or a parable. and what is the lessons we learn from marriage in Cana, that miracle? you must come to the end of your wine.

come to zero. zero wine. then I will do the miracle.

what do we learn in the case of the man who was lying in Bethesda? you try try try try try try for 38 years till you've given up all hope. when your hope comes to zero, I will come and heal you. what is the lesson here? same lesson.

Lazarus was sick and a sick man can still do certain things. no he hasn't come to zero point yet. so the Lord says we got to wait.

we got to wait till he becomes weak, till he is bedridden and till he comes to a place where he cannot lift a finger and then he's dead and to make sure he's dead put him in the grave for four days then we'll come. there's a spiritual lesson in this. some of us are so strong that the Lord cannot come to help you.

you're too strong. he has to wait. you say Lord help me.

yeah he'll help you but not now not yet. you're too strong. what did Paul say? when I'm weak then I'm strong.

you have to come to a zero point. Lord I'm helpless. I'm useless.

do you want to understand the Bible? acknowledge that you're stupid in spiritual things. do you want spiritual power? acknowledge that you're weak. not just acknowledge, recognize it.

acknowledging is easy. recognizing is more difficult and God waits for all of us to be broken broken broken broken broken broken broken broken broken till we become absolutely weak. have you ever heard people say, I've sometimes spoken to people about anger.

they say brother what to do? I'm a very weak person. I can't get victory over my anger. I'm weak.

and I say no brother, no sister. it's because you're too strong that you get angry. not because you're weak.

if you're weak you wouldn't get angry. it's you're so strong. you know take a man who just goes to the hospital with some sickness.

first day is complaining against the nurses, doctors. there's everything is wrong. food is not good.

but next day is a little sicker and the voice has become a little softer. and after a week all the tubes here and there in the mouth only now and then he complains now. and gradually becomes so weak all the anger is gone.

when was he angry? when he was weak or when he was strong? why do you get angry? you're too strong. God has to make you weak. weak till you come to a zero point of death.

then the Lord comes and raises us up. and you see the principle is also the same. you do what you can and I'll do what I can.

what could they do? they could not raise the dead Mary and Martha. can you roll the stone away? okay we'll do that. you do the easy part, roll the stone away.

I'll do the difficult part, raise the dead. and after raising the dead you do the easy part of taking out all the grave clothes from him. this is the principle of Christian service.

you do the easy part the Lord says. I'll do the difficult part. we work in partnership.

you bring the water I'll turn it to wine. it's wonderful. the new covenant is a partnership with Jesus Christ.

I'm not alone. I've taken his yoke upon me. we work together.

we are two bullocks plowing the field together. I never want to do it alone. don't ever try to serve the Lord alone.

chapter 12 we read verse 24 to 26. beautiful words. the secret of fruitfulness.

do you want to learn how to be fruitful in your life? guaranteed fruitfulness. there's one secret of fruitfulness and that is fall into the ground and die. as a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies.

if it does not die it will be alone. if it dies it will bring forth not just fruit but much fruit. the way of the cross is the thing that is hardly spoken in Christendom today.

I want to encourage all of you be men and women who take up the cross every day and who proclaim the way of the cross to other people. the way of death to self. dying to my reputation dying to my honor, dying

to my will, dying to my choices.

dying, dying, dying. falling into the ground and dying. it's because you don't die there is no fruit.

when you die there'll be fruit in your life of character. there'll be fruit in your ministry of people being blessed and led closer to God through your ministry. the secret of everything is dying like Lazarus.

die spiritually. see the gospel message is this. you know that dead people can't sin.

isn't that right? supposing there's a man who's dead here and I kick him. what's going to be his response? if he's really dead. sometimes children play dead.

you kick them they wake up. believers are sometimes like that. but if they're really dead, how do you know whether you're really dead? no reaction.

supposing I tell this chap who's dead. you're a good-for-nothing useless fellow. no reaction.

you turn around him and say you're the most wonderful man I've ever met. no reaction. this is death.

it's a very blessed place to be in. the praise of men and the criticism of men are exactly the same to you because you live before God's face. I've died to this world and I live before God.

if he tells me he's unhappy with me that disturbs me and if he tells me he's happy with me that encourages me. but when people criticize or praise it makes no difference. dead to the world, alive to God.

that's the meaning of this verse. fall into the earth and die. there will definitely be much fruit.

choose the way of the cross. give up your own will. you know it's possible to acquire a lot of knowledge in the Christian life and not die.

knowledge will not bring forth fruit. if you die you bring forth fruit. some people think if I'm filled with the spirit that's enough.

no that's not enough. it's good for the rain to fall but if there's no seed that's dying there any amount of rain is not going to produce a crop. what's use of all the rain if there's no seed that's dying in the ground? you need the rain and you need the seed dying in the ground.

you need the fullness of the spirit and you need to fall into the ground and die. that's how fruit comes and that's the meaning also of this verse that's repeated seven times in the Gospels. verse 25.

the most repeated statement of Jesus in the Gospels and the most misunderstood one. he who loves his life will lose it. he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

if you try to save your earthly life, save your reputation, save your ambition, I tell you at the end of your life you'll be a frustrated discouraged man. but if you're willing to give it up for the Lord, give it up for the gospel sake, you can keep it to life eternal. verse 42 and 43.

many among the rulers of the Pharisees believed in him but they would not publicly confess him because they'd be put out of the synagogue. and look at these sad words. verse 43.

they loved the approval of men more than the approval of God. very very very sad words. how many people there are today like that? chapter 13.

we know how he washed the disciples feet in verse 5 and that's a good example for us to keep to the end of our life. being at the disciples feet to the end of our life. not sitting on their heads.

now verse 7 is a tremendous word of comfort if we apply it to situations when you face some terrific trial and you don't know why the trial has come upon your life, go to John 13 and verse 7 and see what Jesus says. what I'm doing to you now you don't understand. but one day in the future you will understand why I'm doing this to you now.

tremendous word of comfort. when you're going through some situation which you can't understand why the Lord is allowed in your life. what I do you don't understand now.

but hereafter you'll understand. ok. John chapter 13 verse 34 and 35.

the mark of God's people today. what is the identifying mark of God's people? it's not speaking in tongues. it's not praise and worship.

it's not correct doctrine. it's not evangelism. it's not teaching.

it's love. all men will know you're my disciples when you love one another. I give you only one commandment.

love one another. if you cannot love, you disobeyed the one commandment Jesus gave. and I'm not talking about loving people just in your denomination.

it's very easy to love people who can agree with us in everything. your love will be tested when you have to love somebody in another denomination who is born again but who doesn't agree with you. who's got another ministry to yours.

it's easy to love people who have the same ministry as you. who are the same community as you. who are the same language as you.

who are like you in so many ways. but God has put us in the church with different type of people, other communities, other languages. maybe you're educated and that fellow is not educated.

learn to love people who are completely different from you. then you know whether you got the love of God. learn to love people who don't love you.

who don't give you gifts. who don't praise you. who criticize you.

then you know whether you got the love of God. otherwise it's human love. to love people who give you gifts and who speak the same language and who praise you.

where in the world people love like that? but divine love is unique in this way. it does not require a response. human love always requires a response.

if that person responds, I continue to love. if his love dries up, my love dries up. but God's love is not like that.

God keeps on loving whether man responds or not. and when God floods my heart with his love, this is the mark that I can love people even if they don't like me. even if they disagree with me.

if they are born again and they belong to another denomination, fine. you know there are some denominations in Christianity who believe that speaking in tongues is from the devil. ok.

that means if I speak in tongues, I'm being motivated or inspired by the devil. can I love such people? I certainly can. no problem.

they are born again. they got a little wrong understanding about something. that's fine.

I don't have to hate them for that. I don't have to spend my time criticizing them. the test of my love is I can love somebody who even thinks I'm inspired by the devil.

can you do that? Jesus could through the power of the Holy Spirit. this is the mark of a true Christian. and this is the mark of a true Christian Church.

all people will know that you love one another. don't go to a church and say, do you break bread every Sunday? I say I'm not interested in that first of all. do you do evangelism? I'm not even interested in that.

do you have expository teaching of the Bible? they may not even know the meaning of expository. forget it. ask them something they can understand.

do you all love one another? hardly anybody asks that question. and yet that's the most important thing. please remember it.

chapter 14, 15, 16, 17 are all at the Last Supper. chapter 17 is the prayer and chapter 14, 15, 16 have got these tremendous teaching which could take many many sessions. let me just pick out a few verses.

John 14 verse 12. what does this mean? truly I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also. is that right? that the works Jesus did, we can also do? and if you were to ask the average Christian, can you tell me some of the works Jesus did? we'll immediately say, he raised the dead, he fed the five thousand, he walked on water.

how many of you have fed the five thousand and walked on the water and raised the dead? I've never met one man in my life who's done it. so what does it mean? shall I tell you some of the other works that Jesus did? when his mother told him to go and go to the well and draw some water and bring it, he brought it. he worked in the carpenter shop perspiring and his hands were all hardened through work.

that was also the work that Jesus did. when some poor widow wanted a stool made, he made the stool and gave it free. do you think of those type of works? he forgave his brothers who always irritated him.

that was also work. the works that I do shall ye do also. why do you think only of the last three years of his life? let's think of ninety percent of his life, thirty years, where he did such a lot of work.

those are the works we can do. help others. can you think of the number of people in Nazareth who were helped during those thirty years? and he who believes in me shall do the works that I do.

in one sentence, what are the works that Jesus did? the will of his father. John the Baptist never did a miracle. we read that in John's gospel.

he never did a miracle, but he did the will of his father. don't think you have to do miracles to do the will of the father. that depends on God's calling for your life.

supposing I say, unless you all preach like me, you're not doing God's will. that is stupid. as stupid as if somebody says, you don't do evangelism like me, you're not doing the will of God.

no. God shows you what you must do. maybe you're a mother looking up to look after four children.

look after them properly. I'm sure Jesus, when he was a little boy, looked after his younger brothers, the babies that were born in the house, helped Mary, his mother, to look after his younger brothers and sisters. Jesus did that when he was 10 years old.

those are the works that he did. can't you do that as a mother, look after your children? he who believes in me shall do the works that I do. and if God calls you to raise the dead, he'll give you the power to raise the dead.

and if God calls you to preach like somebody else, he'll give you the power to preach like that. that's ministry. but the works relate to our life.

and so think of the works that Jesus did. secondly, verse 12, greater works than these shall he do. greater works? that means I'll raise 25 people from the dead? no.

greater in terms of quality. we always think in terms of quantity. he didn't say more, he said greater.

there's a difference between more works and greater works. more works means quantity, greater means quality. quality of works.

can we do greater quality of works than Jesus did? what was the one thing Jesus could not do during his entire three-and-a-half years ministry? shall I tell you? he could not make even two disciples one with each other. all twelve were fighting to be the leader. even two of them could not become one.

not because of Jesus' fault, but because they did not have the Holy Spirit in them. in the Old Testament, nobody could become one. but after the Holy Spirit came, they could become one.

and that was the greater work, the building of the church as one body. Isaac Newton was a great scientist, one of the most brilliant minds in science. he's the one who discovered the law of gravity.

but do you know that compared to Isaac Newton, I may be a very stupid person, but with a computer, I can do more calculations in a very short time than Isaac Newton could do in 20 years. is it because I'm cleverer than Isaac Newton? no. because I've got greater facilities than he had.

that is the answer to this question. today, because the Holy Spirit has come, which had not come in Jesus' time, therefore we can do a quality of work that even Jesus could not do. it's not because we are greater than Jesus.

I hope you understand the meaning of that verse, which may have puzzled you for a long time. New Covenant, verse 15. don't keep my commandments because you're afraid of me.

don't keep my commandments because I give you gifts. if you love me, keep my commandments. in the Old Testament, it was not like that.

Deuteronomy 28 said, if you obey, you'll be blessed. if you don't obey, you'll be cursed. it's like telling a child, if you obey what daddy says, I'll give you a chocolate.

if you don't obey, I'll give you a stick. so with the chocolate and the stick and the chocolate and the stick, we make our children obey. that's how obedience was under the Old Covenant.

but when the son becomes 25 years old, you don't tell him, if you obey, I'll give you a chocolate. if you don't obey, I'll give you a stick. he may give the father a stick, if he talks to him like that.

we hope that by the time that child is 25 years old, he's obeying his father out of love. so the Lord also says in the New Covenant, he treats us not like babies, he treats us like grown-up sons. today, the Lord says, don't obey me because you're afraid I'll punish you.

don't obey me because you want a chocolate. obey me because you love me. if you don't love me, forget it.

don't do anything. that's New Covenant life. chapter 4, 15 and verse 16, the Lord says, you did not choose me, but I chose you.

never forget that. verse 19, if you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you're not of the world, the world hates you. verse 26 and 27, beautiful words.

when the helper comes from the father, the spirit of truth, he will bear witness of me and you will bear witness of me. I love that. you know what it means? it means that when I get up to preach about Jesus, the Holy Spirit also gets up.

I'm going to bear witness and he's also going to bear witness. how does that work? that means I say something and the Holy Spirit comes straight home to that fellow's heart and says, listen to that, that's from God. isn't it good to have the Holy Spirit working with you? oh what a difference it makes.

when you get up and preach, the Holy Spirit takes it home to people's hearts and says, listen to that, that's from God. you must long for that in all of your ministry. from your youth, I remember when I was in my 20s, I cried out to God for such a ministry and I see many of you in your 20s.

I urge you, cry out to God day and night for an anointing of the Holy Spirit upon your life, that when you get up and say something, the Holy Spirit will also back it up and take it to people's hearts wherever you go. that is how Jesus spoke. when he spoke, the Holy Spirit backed it up.

that's when Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit backed it up. when Paul spoke, the Holy Spirit backed it up. when you speak, make sure the Holy Spirit backs it up.

keep your conscience clear. stay in the place of humility where this waterfall can come. judge yourself, don't judge other people.

keep your heart pure. don't love money. follow what you've heard in God's Word in these days and seek for the anointing of the Spirit.

you bear witness and the Holy Spirit bears witness. we are co-workers. okay, chapter 16 verse 13, when the Spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all the truth.

the Holy Spirit has come to guide us into all the truth of Scripture and listen carefully, all the truth about yourself. what is the truth about myself? the Holy Spirit may show me sometimes, you're a Pharisee when you behave like that. you're a hypocrite.

or I remember once when I had to go and speak to a younger brother and correct him. in the church, someone over whom I had authority as an elder, he needed to be corrected for something wrong that was done. after correcting him, when I came away, the Holy Spirit said to me, what you said was right, but you didn't have to say it in such a harsh way.

go and apologize to him. he will guide you into all the truth about yourself. so I went back to that brother.

I said, brother, I'm sorry for the way I spoke to you. I shouldn't have spoken to you like that. what I said was right, but the way I said it wasn't right.

shall I tell you something, my brothers and sisters? do you want the Holy Spirit to bear witness with you whenever you bear witness to Christ? very simple. listen to him in daily life. when he tells you to do something, don't say, I'll do it tomorrow.

don't say, I'll do it this evening. don't say, I'll do it after five minutes. do it immediately.

what will be the result? when you get up to speak, the Holy Spirit will get up immediately and back you up. that's the reason why the Holy Spirit does not back many many people. they don't do God's will as it is done in heaven.

we pray, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. when God says, Gabriel, go down to earth and do this thing, Gabriel doesn't say, Lord, just wait five minutes, I'm coming. no.

whatever Gabriel may be doing at that moment in heaven, he drops it and says, I'm going. thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. show me a man or a woman who obeys God like that and I'll show you a man or a woman whom God uses to the end of his life or her life.

multitudes of people, they never obey God like that. they wait till tomorrow, wait till the evening. the Lord says, go and apologize to your wife.

they think about it. where in the world can such people serve God? not in a hundred years. be quick to listen to the Spirit and you'll find the Spirit backs you up.

love the truth about yourself. you are wrong. admit it.

humble yourself. go and ask forgiveness from the lowest youngest brother. go down and you'll find the waterfall is always upon you.

chapter 16 verse 33, the Lord says, I've overcome the world. you know, he also had to overcome. some people think Jesus didn't have to overcome anything.

he himself said, I've overcome the world. you know what the world is? how do you define the world? don't use your definition. give me a scriptural definition of the world.

1 John chapter 2 verse 16, all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. that's the scriptural definition of the world. what did Jesus overcome? he overcame the world.

think of that. he overcame and he says, you overcome now. chapter 17 verse 2, it's a word especially for those who are leaders.

it says about Jesus, he says to the father in prayer, father you gave me authority over all flesh, all mankind to give them eternal life. why does God give me authority over believers? not to rule over them, not to make them serve me, not like some pastors who got young fellows under them to go and buy vegetables for them and do all types of things. this is not why God gives me authority.

God gives me authority over people only for one purpose, not to make them my servants but to give them eternal life, to lead them to partake of God's nature. eternal life is another phrase for God's nature. eternal life does not mean a life that never ends.

eternity is not the definition of eternity is not time that never ends. the definition of eternity is time that never began and never ends. eternal life is life that never began and never ends.

who's got that life? only God. he may give it to me. it's his nature.

the only reason why God gives us authority is to lead other people to partake of God's nature. no other reason. I must never have authority over other people for any other reason other than to lead them to partake of God's nature.

then you'll be a true servant of God. verse 3, eternal life. what is eternal life? eternal life is to know God personally and to know Jesus Christ personally and thus partake of his nature.

verse 9, the Lord says I don't pray on behalf of the world but I pray for these people. there we learn that it's more important to pray for God's children than it is to pray for the world. some of you may think it's more important to pray for the world.

Jesus said I do not pray for the world. I pray for these people whom you have given me and through them I'll bless the world. verse 10 is a beautiful verse of exchange.

it's a good verse for all of us to do also. how did Jesus have such tremendous authority in his life? here's the answer, John 17 10. he said to the father, father everything I have is yours.

and the father said, ok everything I have is also yours. you want the father to say that to you? everything I have is yours. you got to say it first.

you got to tell the Lord, Lord everything I have is yours. but don't tell God a lie. say it only if you mean it.

sit down, count the cost, count all the valuable things you have in your life and say Lord I give it up to you. everything. some of you young people you may even have to give up your desire to get married.

are you willing? everything means everything. ambitions, money, time, energy. that's the exchange that Jesus made.

verse 23 is one of the most lovely verses in the whole Bible. it revolutionized my life as a young man. God loves us as he loved Jesus.

the last part of verse 23. many scriptures tell us that God loves us. there's only one scripture that tells us how much he loved us.

verse 23. God loves us as much as he loved Jesus. I praise God for the security that brought into my life.

I was a very insecure, timid, shy young man. when God opened and I'm feeling very inferior to all other believers. now when you see me stand up here you wouldn't believe it.

but that's because God changed me. he filled me with the Holy Spirit. not only filled me with the Holy Spirit, he taught me that he loved me as much as he loved Jesus.

and that's what brought security into my life. and some of you who may be like I was 30 years ago. timid, shy, insecure, feeling inferior.

you know what you need? you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. and you need to believe that God loves you as much as he loved Jesus. as he cared for Jesus, he will care for you.

okay we go to chapter 18 and verse 36. Jesus told Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world. if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight.

remember every time you fight, you're proving that your kingdom belongs to this world. all believers who fight with other believers are saying my kingdom belongs to this world. the mark of a man who is following Jesus and whose kingdom does not belong to this world that he is that he doesn't fight for anything.

be a person like that. Paul told Timothy, Jesus made a good confession before Pontius Pilate. this is that confession.

one more confession. chapter 19 verse 10, 11 and 12. Pilate said to Jesus, don't you know I have power to crucify you or to release you? Jesus said, you do not have power to release me or crucify me unless my father gives it to you.

that was the dignity Jesus had. Pilate got scared. says as a result of this, Pilate verse 12 tried to release him.

this judge, this magistrate was telling him, don't you know I've got power to release you or crucify you? and Jesus stood very calmly there and said, he didn't say please, please, please release me. he stood there with the dignity of the son of God and said, you got no power over me except what my father gives you. remember that in a time of persecution, when you face injustice somewhere, people are harassing you and maybe you stand in court.

believe that no magistrate, no judge can ever write a verdict against you without your heavenly father's permission. that is the good confession Jesus made before Pontius Pilate. ok, we read in chapter 20 verse 11 about Mary Magdalene waiting outside the tomb of Jesus.

and just let me mention one thing about Jesus' crucifixion. it says here that they wanted to take the body down from the cross, verse 31, chapter 19, 31, because the next day was a special Sabbath day. it wasn't a regular Saturday.

the next day was a Friday Sabbath, because Jesus was crucified on a Thursday. ok, chapter 20 verse 11, we read Mary waiting outside the tomb of Jesus. and notice that the first human being that ever saw the resurrected Jesus was Mary, a woman, a woman who was a sinner.

God picked out a woman, God picked out a sinner to give her the greatest honor, to see the beginning of the new creation on the eighth day, on the seventh day, on the eighth day, that's Sunday, when Jesus rose up from the dead, the beginning of the new creation, the old creation began in Genesis 1, the new creation here in John 20. who was the first person to see it? a woman, not a man, a sinner, not a righteous person. remember that.

learn to value women. God values them. chapter 21, we read about the disciples going fishing.

another sign, the closing sign of the book of John. what is the message in this sign? you have to come to a zero point. they started fishing at six o'clock in the evening, no fish.

nine o'clock, no fish. twelve o'clock, no fish. by two o'clock they are discouraged, but still they are trying.

four o'clock, no fish. they said okay, we'll give it one more try. five o'clock, they have come to zero.

we are going home. and Jesus appears and fills their boat with fish. what is the message of this miracle? you have to come to a zero point.

you have to come to an end of yourself. you have to come to an end of the wine. Lazarus has to die, 38 years have to go.

all your strength has to come down to zero. then the Lord will come. why don't you get victory over sin today? you're trying, trying, trying, trying.

no fish, no fish, no fish. you haven't come to a zero point yet. you have to fail some more.

you have to fail and fail and fail and fail and fail and fail till you come to zero. and then your boat will be full of fish. why? because if the Lord were to give you victory, before you came to that zero point, you'd be very proud of your victory.

and secondly, you'd look down on other people who don't have victory. the Lord can lift you out of a hundred foot pit called anger, and then you fall into a thousand foot pit called spiritual pride. that's not victory.

so when the Lord lifts us up and gives us victory, he has to give it to us in such a way that we remain humble about that victory, and we never despise anybody else who is defeated. that's why he has to allow us to fail and fail and fail hundreds of times before he gives us victory. one last thing.

when the Lord told Peter, you're going to suffer and die, John 21 verse 18 to 23, Peter said, Lord, what about this man, John? is he going to suffer and die? and Jesus said, that's none of your business. and sometimes we need to hear that word. when the Lord tells us, you're going to have a difficult time in your ministry, and you say, Lord, what about that brother? he's having an easy time.

what's the answer? that is none of your business. you follow me. you follow that word, and you'll be all right.

let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to live in the light of what we have heard today. all our days, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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