

Total Dependence Upon God

by Zac Poonen

The mark of true faith is total dependence upon God, which is essential for overcoming sin and living a life of obedience and humility.

Duration: 58:39

Scripture: Habakkuk 2:4, Mark 9:24, John 15:5, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 2 Corinthians 13:3, Philippians 1:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:19, 1 John 2:27

Topics: "Faith And Humility", "Total Dependence"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of total dependence on God, highlighting the need for discernment, humility, and faith. It discusses the dangers of relying on human wisdom, the significance of discerning spirits, and the power that comes through weakness and reliance on God's strength. The speaker uses biblical examples like Abraham, Paul's thorn in the flesh, and Jesus' crucifixion to illustrate the concept of living by faith and total dependence on God.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. We thank God that we have freedom in this country to meet together and preach his word. We must never take that for granted.

Our dear brothers and sisters in some countries are not able to meet so freely like this. Every week I receive an email that gives information about the latest state of persecution in different countries and it's very, very challenging. It makes me deeply grateful that we still have freedom in this land to meet and we praise the Lord for that freedom.

We pray the doors will continue to remain open for the preaching of the gospel. So today we want to continue our series on the marks of true faith. You remember the last two Sundays we talked about two of them.

One was a good conscience. One mark of a person who has true faith is that he always keeps a good conscience. Victory over sin may take time to come, but he's quick to confess.

A Christian is not one who never falls, but one who gets up when he falls and is quick to acknowledge his mistake to God and what is more difficult, to man as well. A person who's got faith will do that. If you don't do that, there's something lacking in your faith.

If you don't keep a good conscience before God and men, the Bible says you make shipwreck of your faith. There's a lot of counterfeit faith in the world. The true faith is that which is found in the scriptures and when a person has that, he's quick to acknowledge his mistake.

He doesn't try to cover it up like Adam. So which means that if you find it difficult to apologize to your wife, you need to seek God for faith. You don't have the real faith.

A person who has real faith has got no problem apologizing even to a child and that is where I believe a lot of Christians deceive themselves that they've got faith. 1 Timothy 1 is very clear. Verse 19, if a person does not keep a good conscience, he makes shipwreck of his faith and I believe a lot of Christians have made shipwreck of their faith.

The second thing we saw was faith brings the obedience of faith which is different from the obedience in the Old Testament. It's obedience that comes out of trusting that God is, every command of God is for our good and we obey him. Now today I want to speak on faith.

One mark of faith is total dependence upon God. When I say I have faith in God, it means I'm totally dependent on God, not partially dependent on God and more dependent on myself or somewhat dependent on God and on myself. I mean take this matter of forgiveness of sins first of all because that'll make it very clear.

Do you think a person sins are forgiven who believes that they are partially forgiven because Jesus died on the cross and partially forgiven because he's also done a lot of good things? How many of you believe that? Isn't it a total dependence on Christ alone? His work on the cross is the only basis on which our sins can be forgiven. That's what I mean by total dependence with zero works of mind. Now in the same way, the rest of our Christian life, the Bible says that righteous will live by faith.

Now many of us start the Christian life right but we don't continue along the right way. We start by recognizing that our forgiveness is entirely dependent on Christ's death on the cross but we don't believe that the rest of our Christian life we need to entirely depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to live the way God wants us to live and that's why Christians live a substandard life. Most of the Christians, I'd say more than 95 percent of believers I have met live far far below the standard God wants them to live and they are quite content with it.

I mean it's something like you're being content that your child is failing in second standard for 25 years. That's amazing. None of you, you'd be terribly disturbed if your child is 27 years old and sitting in second standard.

Why are we not disturbed when we're not making progress? Have you tried to find out the reason? If you find your child is weak in mathematics, you send him for special classes for tuition in mathematics so that he can pass and move on for the third standard. We need to find out what is the reason why we never seem to progress in our personal life or in our family life or in our ministry or in effectiveness. A lot of preachers in the world never seem to seek God why there is not a greater anointing upon their ministry.

They seem to be content with the level of anointing they had 20 years ago when they preached God's word. It's pathetic and some of them are sink even lower. There is a reason.

The reason is a lack of total dependence upon God. Exactly like we would tell a person who's not really born again. The trouble with you, your sins are not forgiven because you don't trust fully in Christ.

You're trusting partially in him and partially you think that all your sacrifices and pilgrimages will add to that and somehow forgive your sins and then you'll never be forgiven. We understand that clearly but that's the same answer I'd give to a lot of believers who are perpetually defeated or why there's a greater not a greater anointing and effectiveness in your life. Do you know that all of us are supposed to have a ministry in the body of Christ? Not preaching, not standing in the pulpit but every single member of the body of Christ has to have some ministry.

There is no part, not even the nails, no part of this human body that God made without a function. Every single part has a function but every single part down to the little nail functions because it is 100 percent dependent on the head, on the brain. You remove the brain and nothing in your body can function.

It's dependent on the brain. You can cut off your left hand, the rest of your body will function. You cut off your legs, many parts of your body will function but you cut off your brain.

That's the end. So it's total dependence. Why is it, for example, believers can't work together? Why is it husband and wife can't get along with each other? How many believers seem to accept it as normal that my wife and I will fight every day or at least once a month? That's normal.

How many believers accept that as normal? That is not the will of God. That's the will of the devil and if you are living like that you are accepting the will of the devil in your life. Now you say what can I do? My partner is like that.

Let your partner be like that. Why should you be like that? You can't make a noise without both hands cooperating to clap. If one hand refuses, there's no sound.

There will be no fight if one person and one partner refuses to fight. They say it's not only in the home, it's in the church, in the office or in you see how people fight in the buses and trains and on the roads and everywhere. There cannot be a fight if one person refuses to fight.

The reason for all this is, how is it on the other hand in our human body every part cooperates so well? Have you ever tried doing things with two hands together? So easy. You don't find one hand refusing to cooperate unless it's paralyzed. Paralyzed means it's not listening to the head.

It's not connected to the head. It's not dependent on the head anymore. That's the reason not only for failure in our individual life but also the reason why we can't get along with each other.

It's because of a lack of total dependence upon God. So, the one mark of true faith is total dependence upon God. Let me repeat.

Just like we totally depend on Christ's sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins plus zero. Plus zero. So, you're saying, Brother Zack, does that mean that I have to do nothing for victory over sin? Let me ask you, did you do nothing to get forgiveness of sins? You didn't do anything to earn it but you certainly had to repent and say and to come to the Lord and say, Lord, I believe and I receive you.

Didn't you have to do that? If people didn't have to do anything then the whole world would be saved and yet only one percent or less of the world is saved. Why is that? The work is entirely what Christ has done. He said it's finished.

You can't add to it. Faith is to depend on that. It's to receive what God is giving.

I don't have to produce anything but I have to receive. If you don't receive, you don't get the benefit. Forgiveness of sins is offered.

If I don't receive it, I don't get the forgiveness of sins. The power of the Holy Spirit is offered. If I don't receive it and I think I can manage on my own, I won't get it.

So, if you go back to the beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 3, many people have a question. Why did God punish Adam and Eve for such a small little thing like eating a fruit from a tree? I mean, supposing you told your little child don't open the fridge and take any of that food inside till I come back. When you come back, you find your little child has opened the fridge and eaten up some of the sweets or something you kept there.

What do you do? Do you send the child out of your house and say I never want to see you again? I mean, even a cruel father and mother wouldn't do that. You see, why did God send Adam and Eve just for eating a fruit from a tree? Yeah, there's more to it than that. You see, the tree was not just a mango tree or an orange tree.

God wouldn't have minded if it was that. Those two trees symbolize something. There is no tree in the world today called the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

There is no tree in the world today which is called the tree of life which God said if they eat of it, they live forever. It's obvious there was more to it than just a tree. So, let me explain to you.

These two trees symbolize two ways man could live. Let's take the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was created without the knowledge of good and evil.

He didn't have it. And he could have it in two ways. One was by going to God, being dependent on God and say God, show me what is good and evil because I could be wrong.

And the other is where you get information stored in yourself and I decide from then on on my own what is good and evil. That was the choice of these two trees. The knowledge of good and evil, the devil says, let me expand on what the devil is saying.

Adam, take this into yourself and you will be like God. Isn't that what he said? Genesis 3. Let me see what he said to Eve. Verse 5, Genesis 3, 5. When you eat this tree, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.

In other words, you will not be dependent on God anymore. You will know good and evil yourself. Did you get it? You missed that verse, right? That is what the temptation was.

To be like God so that we don't have to depend on God to know good and evil. We can know good and evil ourselves. That's what Adam was, Eve was tempted.

And she said, hey, that's great. I don't have to keep going to God every time in future to know what's good and evil. I can have the thing resident in myself.

It's like a battery that's all charged up. I don't have to plug in to the socket anymore. Everything in myself.

I don't need God anymore. I can live on my own. And what happened? She died.

So the lesson there is if you depend upon yourself, you're going to die. If you depend upon God, you will live. The other tree was the tree of life where you depend on God, where every time you go to God, go to God and ask him, please tell me what is right, what is wrong.

Tell me what's right. Now, what shall I do here? What shall I do there? Now, that's not the way we want to live, right? Now, let me show you in the New Testament how Jesus explained that. In John's Gospel chapter 15, I believe this is one of the clearest definitions of faith in the branches.

He who abides in me and I in him, he bears fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing. You see that? How does a branch depend upon the tree? It's helpless.

He doesn't say to the tree, I'll produce some of the fruit myself and you produce most of it. Okay, you produce 99% of it. I'll produce 1% on my own.

The branch can produce zero without the tree. This is one of the most beautiful pictures of faith in the New Testament. Total dependence.

Without me, you can do zero. I believe this needs to sink into our mind. If you want to understand faith, try and understand this.

Without me, you can do zero. Do you really believe that you can do zero without Christ? I mean of eternal value in terms of the world, you can accomplish a lot without Christ. Look at all the godless unbelievers and atheists who accomplish so many things in the world without Christ.

They're great scientists, great athletes, and great everything. But in terms of eternal value, it's going to be zero. Do you know that everything you have done in your life, everything you've done in your life, apart from dependence on Christ, you'll find when you get into eternity, is wiped out.

There's nothing left of it. You may have even a lot of things which you think are Christian things. Zero.

It's good to realize that at least now the righteous will live by faith. Live by faith means live in perpetual dependence upon God. You see, that requires a lot of humility.

That's why faith and humility are very closely linked. Pride goes with unbelief. I don't know whether you see that connection.

It's important to see it. Let me show you this great verse in Habakkuk. You know, this is the verse that's quoted three times in the New Testament.

Hardly any verses that are quoted three times in the New Testament. The righteous will live by faith. Habakkuk and chapter 2 and verse 4. Notice here what it says.

The proud person, his soul is not right in him. So, what is the opposite of proud? Humble. But the humble person, but that's not what it says.

It's not contrasting the proud person with a humble person. It's contrasting a proud person with a person who's got faith. You see the difference? The opposite of pride in this verse is faith.

The proud, the soul is not right. But the one who lives by faith, he'll be righteous. So, there you see the connection between faith and humility so clearly back there in the Old Testament.

And that's quoted three times in the New Testament to show us that true faith always goes with humility. And what does humility mean? Humility doesn't mean, you know, hanging our head down and walking in a stooping way, or wearing simple clothes, or living very simply, or riding a bicycle, or, you know, saying, I'm good for nothing, I'm useless, I'm nobody. You know, the greatest example of humility was Jesus Christ.

And he always walked with his head up, held upright. And he never hung his head down in shame. And he never walked around with dirty, ragged clothes.

And he never gave people the impression that he's very poor. And he never, that's all nonsense. A lot of poor people are the most proudest, the proudest people I met on earth.

And there's some rich people I've met who are very humble. It's got nothing to do with wealth. It's got to do with something else.

Jesus was not the poorest person in Israel. There were a lot of beggars and all on the street, and they were much poorer than him. But Jesus was the humblest.

And Jesus was not, humility was not manifest in saying, I'm useless, I'm good for nothing. He never said that, not even once. So don't, these wrong understandings of humility have made a lot of Christians act humble.

And acting humble is worse than anything. Real humility, if you want to know whether you're humble, here's the test. Are you totally dependent upon God for everything? Then you're humble.

If you're not, even if the whole world thinks you're humble, you're just a plain old hypocrite. Getting a reputation for humility, which you don't deserve. And the proof of that is God doesn't give you grace to overcome sin.

God gives grace to every humble person. Why didn't he give it to you? Because even though the world thought you were humble, God didn't think so. Ultimately, it's only God's opinion that matters.

For myself, I've discovered one thing some years ago in my life, that there's only one person who knows whether I'm humble, and that's not me. It's not you, it's God. He alone.

I can fool myself and I can fool you, but I can't fool God. And the proof that God believes I'm humble is that he gives me grace. Because he gives grace to every humble person.

And if he gives me grace, the Bible says, sin cannot rule over you when you're under grace. That's the proof that I've got grace. So, I remember times in my life where I fell.

Maybe I lost my temper a little bit or had a bitter thought against someone for some time. And I woke up and I said, Lord, why did I fall? Why did that bitter thought come into my mind? Why did I speak that rude word? I don't want to know why, because I know it's because I didn't get grace. If I had grace, I would never have had one bitter thought.

A person who's getting grace never has a single lustful thought. A person who's getting grace never gets angry. He's angry about the glory of God, but never concerning himself.

He doesn't get impatient. When these things happen, just honestly acknowledge you're not getting grace. I've learned to say that.

And then, so I say, Lord, I know I didn't get grace there. That's why I slipped up. Why didn't I get grace? Please show me where I was proud.

And then the Lord shows me. Somewhere in the last week, some situation where I thought too much of myself. Ah, thank you, Lord.

I can cleanse myself from that filthiness of the spirit. Filthiness of the flesh is easy to cleanse ourselves from, but filthiness of the spirit. So that next time, I can go down a little bit and be a little more empty of myself, so that I can depend completely on God.

So, dear brothers and sisters, remember this, the mark of true faith is not that your sicknesses get healed. The mark of true faith is that you overcome sin, which is a billion times worse than any sickness. And if you don't overcome sin, you don't have grace.

And if you don't get grace, it's because you're not humble. That proves you don't have faith, because I just showed you from Habakkuk, the opposite of faith is pride. So, we need to understand that.

Humility is not all these external giving people impressions. It's in my private life, I'm totally dependent upon God. I'm just completely open, you know, like the branch is completely open to the tree to let all the sap come in, no resistance at all, no constricting of the channel through which the sap comes in, completely open.

And it bears fruit effortlessly. You go to a branch that's producing so much fruit. I said, boy, how do you manage to get so much fruit when I see that other branch completely dry? The branch says, I don't do anything.

I just stopped giving any resistance to the tree when it tries to put sap into me. That's all. You know, the Christian life is supposed to be that simple.

It's when we think that it's by our effort that we're going to serve God and do something for God that we're mistaken. So, the choice that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden was, either I live with all the knowledge of good and evil within myself like God has, like the devil told. See, the devil didn't tell Eve, you will be like God with almighty power and great strength and all that, and you'll be able to run the universe.

No, no, no, no. He said, you'll be like God in one area. I mean, if the devil had told Eve, you're going to be like God and fill the universe, she'd have said, you're a liar.

But when he told her, there's one aspect of God's nature that you'll get. You'll be able to know good and evil on your own. You won't need God's help after that.

Eve fell for it, and a lot of Christians fall for it today. The other tree, the tree of life, symbolized a life of total dependence on God, where I'm dependent on God for knowing what is good and evil. Now, today, the equivalent of that is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

When I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit from within tells me, that's wrong, that's evil. A television program that looks quite innocent to most human beings, the Holy Spirit will tell you as a Christian, not for you. It's evil for you.

I turn it off. I don't watch it. A Christian TV program, which a lot of dumb, blind, ignorant Christians, even believers, sit with their mouths open and watch and watch and watch and watch.

The Holy Spirit says to a spiritual Christian, that's not for you. If you keep on listening to that, you'll get brainwashed into having the wrong type of faith. You'll get brainwashed into loving money more than God.

You'll get brainwashed into thinking that healing is more important than victory over sin. Turn it off. But most Christians say, no, there's nothing wrong in it.

I know it's okay. They are living by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and that's why there's so much of death in their life. That is a spirit-filled Christian.

The proof of death is this one example. They get depressed. They have bad moods.

Why is that? Because they don't listen to the Holy Spirit in these little promptings. But if you look at this other spiritual Christian who listens to the Holy Spirit, even when he prompts him not to watch a Christian TV program, he has the joy of the Lord 24 hours a day, seven days a week. How is that? Dear brothers and sisters, the knowledge of good and evil is not a simple thing like avoiding adultery and murder, which you don't need the Holy Spirit to tell you that.

Even worldly people have got that type of knowledge of good and evil. It's talking about a much more sensitive. It's like a weighing machine that registers milligrams, not grams or kilograms, but milligrams and decimals of milligrams.

Because the Holy Spirit tells you this is good, that's evil. What a wonderful way to live. I mean, think of the strictness with which in a good hospital, the doctors will scrub their hands in the surgery, in the operating theater to make sure that all the germs are gone.

And after they have done that, they put on sterilized gloves on top of that. Can you imagine how careful they are? Would you like to go to such a hospital? Or would you like to go to a hospital where a doctor just puts his hand inside your stomach and pulls out things and all? I don't want to go to a hospital like that. We're so careful with our body.

But something a million times more important than our body, our soul and our spirit, we're so careless. You know why the devil has blinded us about the knowledge of good and evil? We have inherited this poison that our forefather Adam and Eve our parents took into them. It's come down to us.

I know good and evil myself. Why do I need to go to God? For example, why don't people read, study the Bible more carefully? Why is it? Tell me honestly. Do you know that there's only one book in the whole world written by God? All of you would agree there.

But that's the one book you read the least. You read the newspaper more than you read the Bible. You read other novels.

You watch movies more than you read the Bible. You know why? Because you think you can know good and evil without studying this book. No wonder your spiritual life is in the level it is.

It'll be like that even for the next 50 years if you live. I guarantee it won't change. It'll probably get worse because this poison of which Adam took in.

I don't need God. I am clever. I know what is good and what is evil.

You think so. But look at the result. Look at the bad moods you get into.

Look at the loss of temper you get into. Look at the selfishness and the miserliness there is in your life. A miser is a man who doesn't know God.

Look at the stinginess with you are with you which you treat money when it comes to giving to God and blessing God's work and the lavishness with which you live spending it on yourself. That is the proof that you don't know what is good and evil. Dear brothers and sisters, knowledge of good and evil is not just knowing the Ten Commandments.

It's a lot more than that. This is what it means to live totally dependent on God. See now for example the story of Abraham in Romans chapter 4 we are told about Abraham's getting a child as a mark of faith.

You know Romans 4 is the great chapter on justification by faith and he is trying to prove that justification that is being declared righteous before God is by faith and not by words. In other words in total dependence upon God and it says here that God told Abraham that he was going to be the father verse 17 Romans 4 17. It says those of our first of all verse 16 the last part those of us who are of the faith of Abraham who is the father of us all.

He's not writing to the Israelites there who for whom Abraham was a physical father. He's writing to the Romans who were not Jewish people gentiles like you and me and he's saying Abraham is the father of us all spiritually speaking. He was an example to us of what faith really is and he says we are we are of the faith of Abraham.

That's the closest to the faith of Jesus Christ and as it is written a father of many nations I made you in the presence of God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. So he believed it says in verse 18 in hope against hope he believed that he would become the father of many nations and verse 19 without becoming faith weak in faith look at what he contemplated. He looked at his own body as good as dead.

Verse 19 because he was 100 years old. He looked at Sarah's womb dead. They've been married so many years no children.

Okay so what did he do? You got to see very carefully what faith is here. It's a beautiful expression of faith. We saw it in first example in Adam and Eve you know trying to know good and evil without God's help without the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Ourself deciding what is good and evil. That's the mark of a man without faith. Here's another example of faith.

When God gave a promise first of all he looked at his own body. No hope of having a child. He looked at Sarah's womb.

No hope of having a child and third it says in verse he looked in verse 20 at the promise of God. Ah and he said that's great. It doesn't matter now whether I'm 100 years old or Sarah's womb is barren.

Makes no difference. God has said I'm gonna have a child. Not that I'm gonna have a child.

Through that child nations will be born and he grew strong in faith. Verse 20 giving glory to God because he looked at the promise of God and not at his own body or his own abilities. That is faith where I don't depend on my own abilities but I look at the promise of God and I depend on that God is going to do.

What is it saying? He was verse 21. Here's faith. One definition of faith.

Being fully assured that what God has promised he's able to do. What a man has promised he's able to do may not work because the man may sincerely be willing to help you but he can fail. You know a surgeon may say I'll do a good job and cure you of this cancer.

He may not succeed even though he really wants to help you but when God says something there's no chance of failure. Zero. So he looked at the promise of God and he was absolutely convinced what God had promised he is able to do.

Therefore God said Abraham you're righteous. Why was he declared righteous? Just because he said what you said you do you I believe you can do and that faith that was credited that this righteousness was credited not only to him but for our sake as well. So you see there a definition of faith.

Now let's look at Abraham's development. God told him in Genesis 12 when he was 75 years old we read that God told him you're going to be a blessing to all the nations and he had no children. And after a while when he was about 86 years old or 85 or so he decided he had waited 10 years for the fulfillment of that promise and nothing happened.

Sarah was still not having any children. So he decided to help God out a little bit. You know how a lot of preachers today also try to help God a little bit like saying Lord I said the other day you know God is going through a tough time right now because of financial difficulties up there in heaven and you know it's a recession time in heaven and business is bad so all of you people must help God out and give him some money for his work.

God's work he will bless you in this time of recession. God is going through a recession and if he will help he will bless you if you will help his work in this time of recession. It's not a new concept Abraham thought of it first.

God is having a tough time trying to produce a child through Sarah. I'm capable. I'm not impotent.

I can have a child but Sarah God's having a tough time. Let me help God a little bit. I'll take Sarah as servant woman.

We'll have a child and they did. They got Ishmael. The preacher does succeed in collecting a million dollars.

He succeeds just like Abraham succeeded in getting Ishmael. All those tactics and clever words they make people collect money. I heard a joke the other day about a man who was wanted to collect a lot of money from people in his church you know he wanted to say who all will pay.

It's in America somewhere. Usually things like this happen there. How many of you will give a hundred dollars stand up each and there was a new pianist that day.

He said can you play some really moving melody on the piano. So while I'm giving this invitation for people to give a hundred dollars each. That pianist was smart.

So when the preacher was giving this invitation who all will give a hundred dollars stand up. He played the national anthem. Everybody said.

The preacher said thank you very much. And of course now these guys that stood up they had to keep their word and the pianist got the job also. These clever tricks.

Abraham also had a clever trick up his sleeve to help God out. He said I'll help God and he got Ishmael and he took Ishmael and said you know these words are in the old testament. Oh that Ishmael might live before you and God said rubbish.

Set him away. You'll never see him for the rest of your life and you take that work that you do for God with all these carnal tactics and say oh God bless it and God says throw it in the dustbin. It's rubbish but it's work for you Lord but it was not done in dependence upon me.

It was done with all your clever tactics and your own human methods manipulating people with psychological tricks. A lot of Christian work today is wood hay and straw that'll be burnt up in the day of judgment because it's not not because it's not good work it's not the thing is what was wrong with Ishmael ears were okay his eyes everything everything was okay what was wrong with him he's a healthy child he was not born in dependence upon God that's all that's all what's wrong with that work you're doing it's not done in dependence on God that's all God won't accept it however healthy Ishmael may be you need to understand this and so God said send him away and you'll never see him for the rest of your life Abraham.

Boy how sad do you think Abraham felt very happy that day do you think you're going to be happy when all your work gets burnt up at the judgment seat of Christ and say God says it is all nonsense it is not done in dependence on me it was done with the spirit of Adam and Eve the spirit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil I know what to do I know how to do God's work and I can do this and I can do that so God had to wait we read another 13-14 years I don't know whether you've noticed this very interesting passage how should we read the bible slowly turn to Genesis and let me find I think it's chapter 17 no 16 the last verse of chapter 16 the last verse Genesis 16 last verse Abraham was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael got it now don't stop these chapter divisions were made by men

so don't stop at a chapter division just move on Abraham was 99 years old when the Lord appeared to him what happened in these 13 years next verses Abraham was 99 did it ever strike you till today but suddenly 13 years is absent what was God waiting for he was waiting for Abraham to become impotent unable to produce a child he says Abraham you're smart right you think you can produce a child without Sarah fine I'll make it such that even you can't produce a child even if you want to takes 13 years okay let's wait 13 years takes time for a fellow to become impotent okay let's wait he waits and now Abraham even if he wants to have a child he cannot have through Hagar or anybody else God says now I'll give you the child of promise through whom Jesus will come and the next year Sarah becomes

pregnant Ishmael is born Isaac is born when Sarah is 100 years old that's the meaning of those 13 missing years you know what God is waiting for in your life brother sister long silent years God's saying nothing doing nothing and you wonder why he's just waiting for you to be important spiritual for Abraham to sexual importance for you it is spiritual importance where you come to say Lord I cannot do anything without you that's why I need to pray that's why I need to be dependent on you for everything that's why I need to pray about everything people who are spiritually who think they can do so many things they don't pray how I need to pray I can do a lot of things on my own prayer is all for those weak fellows I'm okay look at the result of your life faith is total dependence upon God in

helplessness like a branch in a tree for knowing good and evil or for producing fruit like Abraham in Adam's case it was to know good and evil that's where you got to begin Lord even to know what is good

and what is evil in this world I need a revelation of the Holy Spirit otherwise I'll be deceived I want to be dependent on God it's a gift which the new testament calls discernment you know what discernment is this spiritual discernment is the tree of life dependence on the Holy Spirit showing me what's right and wrong let me show you 1 John chapter 2 1 John chapter 2 and verse 27 verse 26 first and 27 these things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you and we have lots of that today particularly on Christian television lots of deception as but listen to

this when you listen to a preacher or preaching from a platform or listen to somebody on Christian television think of this verse as for you the anointing which you receive from God that's the Holy Spirit that's the tree of life if you come to the tree of life abides in you and you don't need anyone to teach you now don't misunderstand that don't take a verse out of its context if you don't need anybody to teach you why does it say in Ephesians 4 11 that Christ has appointed teachers in the church he's not talking about teaching the bible or teaching the things of God he's talking about teaching you concerning that deceiver notice the context concerning those deceivers verse 26 you don't need anybody to teach you whether that preacher is a deceiver or not you don't need brother Zach to

come and sit next to you and say don't listen to him you got the Holy Spirit inside you the anointing inside you will teach you about every preacher about all things and that is truth and there is no lie and as the anointing teaches you abide in him it is one of the greatest needs of our day to have to listen to the voice of the spirit that says I know there are many times when I have listened to some of these preachers who get exposed 10 years later 10 years later I hear them I've heard them 10 years earlier before they got exposed I say hey something wrong I don't know what is wrong there's something wrong with that guy I can think of numerous examples like that I listen to him and I sense in my spirit there's something wrong with that person and it's not because I don't agree with him

doctrinally there's something wrong with the person and later on it gets exposed the guy is fooling around with women or something which nobody knew for 10 years now how is it that such people remain as preachers in churches for 20-30 years it's because the whole bunch of people sitting there got no discernment even the elders have no discernment they accept this guy as their pastor and then suddenly he gets exposed that he's a homosexual or he's adultery or something you need discernment in these last days my brother sister you need to get rid of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and come to the tree of life discernment discernment I can't give it to you the holy spirit can give it to you if you seek to be filled with the holy spirit and abide in him he'll give you that discernment

let me show you another verse it's in philippians in chapter 1 verse 9 and 10 you read this verse read it slowly paul's prayer for these wonderful philippian christians who was one of the best churches that paul had i'm praying for you wonderful christians philippians 1 9 that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and discernment now we think love abounding more and more means giving money to the poor and giving money for god's work no no no no he's talking about love abounding in discernment to know whether that guy who's coming to your church is a crook a lot of people don't have that discernment jude says in his letter there are certain people who crept into your church unawares the elders didn't have discernment there they just allowed the guy to walk in not walk in he crept

in said the right words I remember in one of the one of our churches in another state the smaller ones I told them about one person when I went there I mean I go there only maybe two three days a year but I saw this guy and I said hey there's something wrong with this guy I don't think he's saying I think you better tell him anyway the elders thought they knew more than me I said okay fine finally he caused some

confusion and left on his own I said great but then there was another elder there after some time that fellow wanted to come in because he couldn't he accepted anywhere else and he and his wife you know buttered the elder and got back in I said to them I said be careful that guy will destroy your church why did you let him back in maybe you think you're more compassionate than

brother Zach who's so hard what happened sure enough because of that one person that whole church folded up completely closed down and now the believers have to travel 30 kilometers to go to another church what is the reason human compassion I pray that your love will grow in discernment Paul says I pray that your love will abound more and more in real discernment so that you may approve the things that are excellent not just the things that are good did you read that slowly so that you may approve the things that are excellent the good is the enemy of the excellent when you choose the good you may be missing the excellent the best I want the best you young fellows who want the best when you want to get married you young girls who want the best when you want to get married why not also

choose the best in spiritual life you who want the best when you choose a house and the best when you choose a job what about something more important than that the best spiritually I don't want what is good will you say to God I don't want what is good I want the best I want discernment that'll come through dependence upon God God give me discernment give me discernment how important young people when they consider marriage to have discernment discernment and you don't have the discernment going on some godly older brother for some wisdom look at the mess so many young people have made their lives by getting married without discernment human oh I fell in love well first of all you shouldn't fall that's what the bible says Jesus can keep you from falling you must rise up in love not fall

in love that's the spiritual way where I choose because God shows that is the person of course we can love the person with all our heart you love the person much better in all areas faith is total dependence on God you know when Paul was in danger of becoming proud once because God was using him mightily and he was doing fantastic things and God said ah there is a danger that my servant may now think that he knows good and evil on his own he may think that he can do because he's done so much and God gave him a sickness you read about in second Corinthians 12 he calls it a thorn in the flesh you read the first nine verses and he prays oh God heal me in Jesus name heal me in Jesus name I claim this healing I claim the promise to the Lord is my healer nothing happens you're not the first

person who had that experience by the way don't get discouraged Paul had it before you nothing happened it didn't mean Jesus is no power it just means that that sickness was necessary to teach Paul a lesson and probably necessary for you to learn a lesson too and he never got rid of it till the end of his life he had that thorn in the flesh he called it a messenger of Satan sickness is a messenger of Satan it buffeted him buffeted him he just couldn't get rid of it and finally he says the Lord told him verse 9 my grace is sufficient for you because my power is made perfect in weakness or as the living Bible says my power shows up best in weak people how do we get the power that comes through faith we got to become weak we got to be reduced to zero we got to be helpless like the branch in

the tree and God is using so many circumstances to break us if you resist that breaking you're delaying you're coming down to zero why do you think he has given you that difficult neighbor difficult boss difficult wife difficult children to break you brother sister why is he giving you those difficult circumstances to break you to humble you why is he put you into tight circumstances where you can't you don't have freedom to move like you could in the old days to humble you to break you learn to give thanks there and say Lord look what Paul said verse 10 I'm content with weaknesses with insults why does he allow people to insult

you with distresses with persecutions with difficulties I'm content I can imagine a man saying I'm perfectly content with all my difficulties with all my

distresses all the insults people give me praise the Lord because these things make me weak these things make me small and when I'm weak then I'm strong verse 10 and last part of verse 9 the power of Christ dwells in me why do you think Paul was such a mighty man because he was weak he allowed God to make him weak whereas when God has tried to make you weak perhaps you resisted so why does that guy treat me like that and you remain strong there is a reason why God has allowed your circumstances your peculiar circumstances your financial difficulties the difficult people you have to live with in your home in your office in your neighborhood God has allowed it to break you there's nothing impossible with God he can remove people overnight why doesn't he do it because he's doing a work in

you to break you if you understand that you will say I rejoice in it in conclusion chapter 13 verse you're seeking verse 3 13 2nd Corinthians 13 verse 3 you're seeking for a proof that Christ speaks in me who's not weak toward you but mighty he was crucified because of weakness Jesus became weak on the cross weak means he chose to be weak I can call 72 000 angels but I will not call them that's weakness we also are weak in him because we want to live by the power of God the secret of the Christian life is total weakness total dependence upon God so that we live only by God's power and not by our own this is the fundamental reason why many people do not live the Christian life the way they should the righteous will live by faith by total dependence on God like someone has said in Abraham's

case at at 86 it was difficult to have a child by 100 it was impossible then it was done so there are three stages in God's work difficult impossible done where are you have you got to the place where something is impossible then you got to the place where you're zero you can't do it then God will do it but as long as you think it's a little difficult you're still struggling to produce one more ishmael maybe the last one didn't work for the next one God will accept you can produce a hundred ishmael God will accept nothing he's trying to reduce you to zero God wants to bring us down to zero so that all the glory will be his I've seen that in preaching God's word a lot of people think oh brother zag is so gifted it's not brother you don't know me if I don't remain plugged in I'll be as dry

and boring and worse than the most boring preacher you've ever heard you remove the plug it doesn't matter the plugs been there 50 years current is gone this is what faith is keep plugged in all the time and recognize you have no electricity within yourself look at this lamps and all they are humble stay you don't have any electricity plug in plug us in we'll shine even after 50 years we have no electricity that is faith and imagine anybody can do it you can live like that the socket is there go and plug in humble yourself let's pray let's call before God in prayer Lord in this confused deceived world confused deceived christened teach us to live in dependence upon you so that we shall have discernment and we shall have power to live the way you want us to live make us weak that's our

prayer because we know how to pray now thank us for this we pray in Jesus name

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wyaK78T78dM.mp4>

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