

Understanding Dead Works

by Zac Poonen

Understanding God's ways requires repentance of dead works and cheerful obedience, which is essential for a deepening relationship with God.

Duration: 59:06

Scripture: Matthew 6:8, Matthew 23:8, Luke 10:42, John 5:19, 1 Corinthians 4:2

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Spiritual Discernment"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and following God's ways as demonstrated by Jesus. It highlights the need to listen to God, wait on Him, and do exactly as He commands without relying solely on human reasoning. The speaker stresses the significance of avoiding dead works, making needs known only to God, and following the example set by Jesus and the apostles in all aspects of life and ministry.

Transcript

So, we've been considering what it means to understand the ways of God. We saw yesterday that the ways of God are as different from man's ways as heaven is above the earth. And we also saw that under the old covenant, God could not reveal his ways to Israel.

They could only see his actions. But he did reveal them to a few people like Moses. And it's the same today.

We find there are Christians who are more taken up with God's actions. They're taken up with external things and miracles and things like that which in the Old Testament even backsliders experienced. Most of the people whom Jesus healed went to hell.

He healed thousands, but only 120 waited for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. So we can say even when Jesus was on earth, many saw God's actions, but very few understood his ways. And that has continued through all these 2,000 years.

There are Christians who want to see God's actions. That's what excites them. But they don't read the scriptures and find out that a lot of people who saw God's actions are in hell today.

It's an external excitement they're taken up with. But if you understand God's ways, there will be a lasting work in your heart that will last for all eternity. And what God could not reveal to the children of Israel, he

has now revealed to us as his children through the Holy Spirit, showing us his ways, heavenly ways, different from earthly ways.

One of the reasons why Jesus died, you know, most Christians know Jesus died only to forgive our sins. That's fundamental. It's like the foundation, very important.

But we also read that he died so that our old man may be crucified with him. And in his death, he defeated Satan. One more thing.

In Galatians chapter 1, he died, Galatians 1 verse 4, he died to deliver us or rescue us from this present evil world, that is this world system of this current age where the devil is the ruler of this world, there's a whole system in this world with its values. Jesus died to save us from that system, to save us from those values of the world. And I want to ask you who believe that Jesus died for your sins, has Jesus delivered you from the values that this world has? Yes.

That's one of the reasons why he died. Because there are two kingdoms on earth today. You read about one of them in Matthew chapter 4. We saw in Matthew chapter 3 how John the Baptist came and said the kingdom of heaven is near.

But then we read of another kingdom in Matthew chapter 4, a kingdom that is going to come into conflict with the kingdom of heaven. We saw about the kingdom of heaven yesterday. Notice here what it says in verse Matthew 4 and verse 8. The devil took Jesus to a very high mountain, and that is in his mind, it's not that Jesus walked up to a high mountain, in his mind.

Temptation always comes in the mind. In the mind the devil put a thought, turned the stones into bread. In the mind he put a thought, come to the top of the temple and jump down.

And Jesus overcame those temptations. And this is the last one. In his mind Jesus, he took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him in the spirit the kingdoms of this world.

That's the other kingdom. And if Jesus could be tempted with the kingdom of this world and its glory, don't think that you won't be tempted. You got to be pretty conceited and proud to think that the devil won't tempt you with something with which he even tempted Jesus.

If I were to ask you, will you be tempted by this world and its glory? I'd say yes. My savior was tempted. I'm not greater than him.

And if I think I cannot be tempted by this world and its glory, then let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. It's good to be humble and acknowledge my brother, sister, however spiritual you may think you are, however much you may think you have advanced in the Christian life, we still have not come to the place that Jesus was when he was 30 years old. We haven't.

We haven't overcome all the temptations Jesus overcame by the time he was 30. And even then, he was tempted with the world and its glory. And I've seen lots of believers who think they're not going to be tempted by the world and its glory, and I can see them gripped by the world and its glory in their life and they don't even know it.

That's the sad thing. If the devil can fool you into thinking that you will not be tempted in some area, that's the area you're going to fall. He tempted him by showing him the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And what is the glory of the kingdoms of the world? What are the things which the world glories in? You know, you and I have got a lot of worldly friends. What do you think of all the things they glory in? They glory in money, position, and power, and pleasure, and houses, and lands, and property, and their good looks, and all the things the world glories in, intelligence, everything else. We can be tempted with these things.

And the devil said to Jesus, I will give you all of this, not just one bit of it, all of it, but you have to bow down to me. So I learned something there. The kingdom of heaven is in conflict, not with hell and the demons only, but with the world system, a lot of which looks so innocent, which doesn't look sinful.

I mean, anger, sexual lust, and telling lies, and murder, and adultery, that's all sinful, but there is another realm which doesn't look sinful, which is part of the world and its glory. I have seen in some of our churches, some of you sitting here, who want to become elders. What is that? It's seeking the glory of this world, that's all.

Do you know the number one qualification to be an elder? You have zero desire to be an elder, and that's why many people are disqualified. The moment I hear that some brother wants to be an elder, I'll never make him an elder in his whole life, because I know he's disqualified, he's completely unfit, because he's seeking the world and its glory, position, power. You can seek it in the church.

Because there is an honor in being an elder, and those who are elders, if they glory in the fact that they are elders and they have power over others, they are completely unfit to be elders. If they preach in such a way that they have power over others, you're totally unfit. But like King Saul, they may continue to sit on that throne for some time, till one day God Himself removes them, and I've seen that happen.

So it's not only out there in politics and the business world, that the world and its glory are there, it's right in the middle of the church. The world and its glory, and remember this, the devil says, he offered it to Jesus and said, I'll give it to you if you bow down to me. So what we learn from there is, the only way to get the power and glory of the world is by bowing the knee to Satan to some extent.

Now whether you know it or not, if you have sought for and longed for the glory of this world and got it, I can guarantee you got it by bowing your knee to Satan somewhere. Nobody else in the church may know about it. You compromised somewhere maybe, you told a little lie.

You know, for example, in India, there are a lot of people who like to get a job abroad in some other country, and there's nothing wrong in that. The whole world belongs to God, and you can go anywhere. But they are so eager to get that, that they will make false statements in their application for a visa.

Yeah, I've seen that. There are people who go to another country and live there illegally because they are so eager to get the glory of this world, and they have bowed the knee to Satan. I'm talking about believers.

They say, oh, there's nothing wrong in that. Their excuse is, everybody does it. So, there's a lot of compromise, and the devil sits back and says, I've got these people.

What I could not make Jesus do, though I tried, I've got some of his so-called younger brothers doing now, bowing down to me in order to get something of this world that they could not get in righteousness and honesty. I got them to tell a little lie. I got them to bow down to me a little bit, to compromise just a wee little bit.

It could be in your job, where you do something slightly wrong, or cover up something, hide something in order to get some advancement or gain. Do you know that at that time, like Judas Iscariot, you betrayed Jesus for just a little earthly gain? Judas Iscariot bowed the knee to Satan for the sake of a little bit of silver. He betrayed Jesus Christ.

There are lots of Christians doing that today, just for a little earthly gain. They will tell a lie, they'll compromise, they'll cover up something, and they got it. The devil said, I've got power to give it to you, I'll give it to you.

Is there anybody saying here, you've got something like that? What are you going to do? Did you cheat in an examination and get a degree? Yeah, you got your degree. Nobody caught you. But how has your spiritual life been? What are you going to say to the Lord when you stand before Him? The one life God gave you, you pursued after something earthly.

You know, in India, people even give false birth dates for their children to put them into school early, so that their children can finish school early. What type of... I mean, the world's full of people who are bowing down to the devil. It's terrible when God's children do that.

What I want to say is, my brothers and sisters, there's a world system that is constantly seeking to come into the church and come into your life. You must remember, God's ways are heavenly. There are Christians who feel, if my ultimate goal is right, it doesn't matter how I get there.

There's a saying that the end justifies the means. That means, if my ultimate goal is something good, how I get there doesn't matter. That means, if my ultimate goal, for example, is to save souls and bring them to heaven, it doesn't matter how I bring them.

Some manipulation, some do a few wrong things in the way, ultimately get there. Well, that's the spirit of the world. They do all types of wrong things in order to get some right thing done.

And then we say, what is the right way? The right way is the way Jesus did it. There was only one perfect manifestation of someone who did everything according to God's way. And if you want to understand God's way, you look at Jesus.

How did he do it? He never used means which were wrong in order to get to an end that was right. How many Christians believe that the way Jesus and the apostles did it was the perfect way, that we must not do it any other way? I've been around in Christendom a long time, and I find there are very few people who believe that. The Bible says, Jesus said this, that the main power in this kingdom of this world is money.

And that's why Jesus said in Luke 16 and verse 13, you cannot serve God and money. The main power with which the devil tries to draw people is money. And I'll tell you something, there's nothing wrong in earning money, any amount, but if money has a power to attract you, you will never be what God wants you to be.

You will never be what God wants you to be. Money must have no power to attract us. You know, like a powerful magnet, a magnet can attract steel filings and metals, but things like paper, a book, will never be attracted by a magnet.

A magnet cannot pull this book, no matter how strong it is. It can attract steel filings and other metals, but it cannot attract paper. Money can attract certain people, but it cannot attract one who is devoted to Jesus Christ.

However strong that power may be, it's like a magnet, it cannot attract this book, it can't attract me. Have you come there? Then you can say, money is my servant. Otherwise, if you find that money attracts you, you make decisions on the basis of money, it's attracted you, you are to some degree a slave.

Because the devil says, come, I'll give it to you. It's all given to me. I am the one who decides to give it, and look at all the people he's given it to.

Look at the people whom he's given it to. He's got lots of servants in every religion who get a lot of it by compromise, and sometimes in Christian circles they say, we're doing it for the Lord's work. What is God's way in the area of money? The answer is in Jesus Christ.

Did Jesus, even once in his life, take an offering after he preached, or before he preached? Did he even once in his life, after he healed the sick, take an offering, before he healed or after he healed? Now the apostles followed Jesus Christ. Did the apostles ever do it, to take an offering, or pass a collection bag around? No. Where have these practices come from? They've come from Europe and America.

And most Indians blindly imitate the Americans. In fact, most of the world blindly imitates the Americans in whatever they do. That must be the right way.

The musicians imitate American musicians. The dancers imitate American dancers. In politics they imitate the American way.

And Christians imitate the Americans. They think that's the best way. India is full of it.

Indian Christendom is full of it. We say, but it's for a good cause. Exactly.

The end justifies the means. It doesn't matter how we get there. It doesn't matter if we don't do it like Jesus and the apostles did, so long as our goal is good.

That's exactly what the devil says. Don't worry about how you get there. The thing is to get there.

Imagine if Jesus had adopted that method. He would have violated every law of God while trying to save souls. Is it right to adopt any possible method to save souls? Oh, if that's the case, then you can hold a gun to their head and say, come on, yield your life to Christ.

You can be as stupid as that. In the olden days, some Christian missionaries of certain denominations did that. They converted people by the sword.

It wasn't a conversion. I want to say that to be a witness for Christ in this age means that I must have nothing of this world's values. When the devil says, I'll give you this.

What do you want? You want souls? You want to build your church? Bow down to me. I'll tell you how to have a big church. And you say, no, thank you.

I'm not going to adopt your methods. I'd rather live with a small church and follow the principles of God's word. In the area of money, what is God's way? Jesus taught us in the Old Testament, it was different.

It was an earthly kingdom. And the Lord taught them that you must come and give your 10% out there. And if you don't give the 10%, even the last prophet in the Old Testament said, Malachi, you'll be cursed.

But the moment you come to the heavenly way from the day of Pentecost, when the kingdom of heaven came, it's entirely different. Now God says, you don't have to give me anything. No tithe, no 1%, nothing.

God loves a cheerful giver. And if you cheerfully can give zero, that's all he wants. He wants happiness.

He wants cheerfulness. He doesn't want anything. He doesn't want your life.

He doesn't want anything that you cannot give cheerfully. Because what you don't give cheerfully is a dead work. You need to understand dead works if you want to understand God's ways.

In the Old Testament, they did not have this understanding. If you read through the entire Old Testament, the phrase dead works is not even found there. There was only good works and evil works.

If you paid your tithe, that was a good work. If you didn't pay your tithe, that was an evil work. But in the New Testament, there's another category, good works, evil works, and dead works.

And I'll tell you, 90% of Christians or 99% of them don't even know what dead works are. Do you know what they are? Do you? We need to understand God's ways. Dead works are works, good works, done with a wrong motive.

For example, preaching is a very good thing. You can preach to bless people, and there are many people who preach wonderful sermons to bless people, but if their motive is to get money, it's a dead work. If their motive is to get honor, it's a dead work, and particularly Christian singers and musicians.

It's much easier to preach a sermon for God's glory than to sing for God's glory. When we sing, we are so conscious of ourselves and our voice and the melodious nature of our voice. I suppose preachers can be tempted too, but singers much more, musicians much more, how well they can play.

And it may be wonderful singing, but if the glory is for oneself, it's a dead work. And you know what the Bible says in Hebrews, we've got to repent of dead works. You want to understand God's ways? Repent of dead works.

Motive is so important. You'll see in the final day when we stand before the Lord, the question will not be, what did you do? The question will be, why did you do it? Do you know the difference between what did you do and why did you do it? In the Old Testament, there was no question of why did you do it. Did you do it? Supposing a man was coming to pay his tithe and with a long face said to the Levite, I don't feel like giving this 10%, but God has said I've got to give it, okay, here it is.

He had obeyed the law. There was no law which said you must give your tithe cheerfully. No.

Because there was no such thing as dead works in the Old Testament. And if you have not understood dead works, my brother, sister, you are still under the old covenant. They didn't have understanding about dead works there.

They did not examine their motives in the Old Testament. And if you never examine your motives, you're under the old covenant. Another dead work is where you do something under pressure.

Somebody forces you, forces you to pay your tithe or put some type of pressure on you to do something. Come to the prayer meeting, go house to house evangelism, come out into the streets and preach with me and you reluctantly go with no desire to go. You may preach.

You may do house to house evangelism. The whole thing is a dead work. Come on, here are a hundred tracts, distribute them before next Sunday and you somehow manage to get rid of the hundred tracts.

Dead works! You may impress your leader who is stupid enough to tell you to do such things, but you don't impress God. God loves a cheerful giver of anything. Obedience, He wants it done cheerfully.

In the Old Testament, God treated us like, God treated people like babies, like little children. In the New Covenant, He treats us like adults. You read that in Galatians 3 and 4, I don't have time to show it to you, read it sometime.

Then we were like children, now we are like sons. The only part of Galatians 4, it says there, the difference between children and sons is the difference between Old Covenant and New Covenant, children! Children, we don't wait for cheerful obedience. If you wait for cheerful obedience, you'll never get your children to obey.

I never waited for my children to obey cheerfully. I said, whether you're cheerful or not, you better do what daddy says, that's it. That's the only way to get them to obey, even to come to a meeting.

If they said, if one of my boys said to me one day, I don't feel like coming to the meeting, whether we feel like it or not, you're coming. But when they grow up and become sons, I don't talk to them like that. Do you? Do you tell your 25 year old son, whether you feel like doing it or not, do it? That's the difference between a child and a son.

And that's the difference between Old Covenant and New Covenant. In the Old Covenant, whether you feel like it or not, you've got to keep the Passover. Whether you feel like it or not, you have to go to Jerusalem three times a year.

It was all like that. Whether you feel like it or not, you have to pay your tithe. Whether you feel like it or not, you have to give a sacrifice for your sin.

There was no question of whether you feel like it or not. But in the New Covenant, if any man will come after me, let him take up his cross. There's no such thing as you must take up your cross.

You must give. The reason I'm asking you is, dear brothers and sisters, have you understood this as a fundamental principle of God's ways? If you do something out of somebody manipulating you, it's a dead work. I believe most of the speaking in tongues that I have heard in Pentecostal circuses is all a dead work.

I've heard sometimes people speaking in tongues openly in the meeting and on the internet. And it's usually the same phrases, the same five or six phrases that are repeated by everybody. What is that? Is that a language? It's a counterfeit.

Ninety percent of the tongues I've heard is counterfeit because they were manipulated. There is a genuine gift of tongues. God gives it to those.

When God gave me that gift, I didn't seek for it. But for me, it's a language. It's a language, not a repeating of two or three syllables.

A language with which I can speak to God. Because I didn't seek for it. Nobody pressurized me into it.

Don't look for it. If God gives it to you sovereignly, take it. But where you're waiting desperately.

You know there are some people who desperately, oh, I've got to get into this tongues club somehow or the other. And then somebody will pressurize you into it. And you babble something.

They say, I got it. You got nothing, brother. You just deceived yourself.

But forget it. Some of those people who never spoke in tongues are a million times better than you. The Lord of dead works in so many areas.

For example, when a person is, somebody prays for someone and he's not healed. And he's told, no, you must confess that you're healed. It's a dead work.

How in the world can he say he's healed when he's not healed? Does God tell us to tell lies? But yet, I've heard this numerous times in Pentecostal charismatic circles. Oh, brother, confess. I prayed for you.

Now you're healed. Don't say you're sick. Say I'm healthy.

So much of deception. And so many people blindly accept it. When Jesus healed, prayed for a blind man, do you know that all the people Jesus prayed for were healed instantly except one? There was only one person in the gospels for whom Jesus had to pray twice.

He never had to pray twice for anybody. But why was there one case in Mark chapter eight where Jesus had to pray twice? And that was not because he couldn't do it in one shot, because he wanted to teach us a lesson, especially in the 20th century. And what was that? He prayed for this blind man.

He laid hands on him, prayed for him. He said, can you see properly? He says, no. Men and trees look alike.

Can you imagine how blind a man is if he thinks a man is a tree? And this guy says Jesus prayed for him. Jesus did pray for him. What did Jesus say? No, no, no.

Don't say you can't see. Say you can see. I mean, he feels like one of today's pastors.

That's what he would have said. Don't confess. I prayed for you.

I'm Jesus, son of God. I prayed for you. How can you say you can't see? Say I can see clearly.

Can you imagine Jesus saying that? That's what I say. A lot of today's Christian leaders are not like Jesus Christ. Why are so many Christians deceived by the teaching of these leaders? Remember what I said yesterday? If you don't study the Bible, you deserve to be deceived.

If you don't follow the example of Jesus, you deserve to be deceived. The example of Jesus is so clear. Jesus said, you can't see? Fine.

I'll pray for you again. I prayed for him again. Now can you see? Yeah, now I see everything clearly.

Let me tell you this, my brothers and sisters. Jesus never wants you to tell a lie. Jesus never wants you to say that you can see when you can't see.

Or that you don't have any pain when you have pain. Or that you're healed when you're sick. Don't be deceived by all these lies.

The devil is the father of lies. And if you confess that you're healed when you're not healed, you're listening to the devil, the father of lies. God never wants us to confess that we're healed when we're not healed.

We can confess our hope, sure. Hope is that which I've not yet seen. I will be like Jesus when he comes again.

To say that I'm already like Jesus, that's a lie. You can say, I believe God will heal me, that's okay. So these are many, many examples, I'm telling you, of dead works.

Works done with no joy. Works done reluctantly because some preacher pressurized you to do something. Get rid of it.

Don't become a slave of men. Understand God's ways, that God has no value for those things. Let me give you another example.

Supposing you go to God in prayer, or you put some money in the offering box, and you have not settled matters with your wife. You had a disagreement with her, and you spoke rudely, or with your husband, and you go to pray. I would advise you not to open your mouth, and not to put money in the box, because God will not accept your prayer or your money.

We used to have a verse on our offering box some time ago, which said, be reconciled to your brother first. Be reconciled to your sister first, in front of the offering box. You know, that means a man's going to put a few rupees into the box, and he suddenly sees that verse, and puts it back into his pocket.

We were trying to stop people from putting money into the box, and we still are trying to do that, because we say, if you're not reconciled, there's somebody against whom you have a tension. You hurt somebody. I'm not saying somebody's got something against you.

The world is full of people who've got something against Christians. I mean, India's full of Christians who've got something against me. Israel was full of people who had something against Jesus.

People are against Paul everywhere. I'm not talking about that. Have you hurt somebody? That's the question.

Not hurt somebody because you preached the word of God, but in a selfish way, you got angry with someone for something concerning yourself. If you put money in the offering box, it's no better than putting it in the toilet and flushing it down. God will not accept it.

You pray, your prayer will not go beyond the roof. You need to understand God's ways. In God's ways, God does not accept anything a person gives, prayer, money, service, nothing, if his heart is not clear in his relationship with other people that those whom he has hurt, he goes and asks forgiveness from.

Now if you go to that person and ask forgiveness and he says, I'm not going to forgive you, that's, your responsibility's over. Then it is between him and God. You've asked forgiveness.

Your responsibility's over. There are so much of dead works that are going on in Christendom, and if you want to go a higher level of dead works, you know this, what I've explained to you of dead works is the kindergarten level. As you go on with God, you discover dead works at a higher level and higher level and higher level, you can go all the way to PhD in the Christian life.

Let me give you an example. Supposing, you want to serve God unselfishly, sacrificially, you want to do something, and you don't spend time listening to God, you're busy serving him, it's a dead work. And the classic example of that is in Luke chapter 10 verse 38 to 42, Martha, busy, who was she cooking food for, not for herself.

She was sacrificing, making food for 13 people, Jesus and his 12 disciples, sweating away in that hot kitchen, working hard, working hard, working hard, working hard, but inwardly having a complaint against Mary for not coming and helping her in the kitchen. And she comes to Jesus and Jesus says, Martha, let me paraphrase his words, you think I want all your food? You think I'm impressed with all your sacrificial service? Not at all. Not at all.

You think I'm ungrateful to you for not being thankful for all the work you're doing for me in the kitchen? I don't want that work. I don't want all your service for me. Mary has known what is the one thing that is needful.

Luke 10 verse 42, one thing is needful, sit at my feet and listen to me and then do what I tell you. That's a higher level of dead works. I'll give you an example, supposing you're employed in an office and your first day you're going to work, you got a contract and you got selected for the job and you go to the office and as soon as you go to the office, you begin to do whatever you feel like doing, go to this table and pick up some file and start dealing with that and go somewhere else and do this, that and the other and you don't go to the boss and say, what do you want me to do? You'll be sacked in one day.

What do you do? You go to the office and say, what do you want me to do? That's what Mary did. If you had a maid servant working in your house and she never asked you what she's supposed to do, just went around doing all types of things, you wouldn't keep her for long. One Corinthians 4 verse 2 in the Living Bible says, the most important thing about a servant is that he does just what his master tells him to.

That's how Jesus lived his life. He listened. He listened.

Father, what do you want me to do? You read a great example of that at the end of Luke chapter 4, where there was a great revival going on. So many people getting healed through his ministry. Everybody wanted him there.

But before he met them, he had already met the father in the morning and the father had told him, go somewhere else. And so when the people pressurized him, you've got to stay here, Lord, it's a great revival going on. No, I have to go somewhere else.

If you can yield to the pressure of human beings without listening to the voice of God, all that you do for God will be a dead work. I faced a lot of that in my life. A lot of people pressurized me to go here, do this, do that, do the other thing.

Well, I say, sorry, I'll do what God tells me to do. I mean, you can think I'm unreasonable or proud or you can think whatever you like, but I'll only do what God tells me to do. I'll only go where God tells me to go.

And I've seen the result of that in the last 35 years, of not listening to the advice of men as to where to go and where not to go. And I've seen the blessedness in the last 35 years of going only where God tells me to go. And I'll tell you this, that's how Jesus lived.

These are God's ways. God's ways are not just run around doing something for God. Jesus taught us to pray, Father, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

How is God's work done in heaven? The angels don't go around doing something for God. You know, people sometimes tell others, new people, why don't you do something for God? Can you imagine Michael telling Gabriel, why don't you go and do something for God? No, heaven is not like that. They wait on God.

They do what many Christians don't do, waiting on the Lord. Those who wait upon the Lord shall exchange their strength, Isaiah 40, 31. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

While other people are just trying to climb that mountain, those who wait on the Lord fly over the mountain like an eagle and go to their destination a hundred times quicker than these people who are climbing up the mountain. It's much better to wait on the Lord and listen to what He has to say. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

Are you mounting up with wings like eagles and crossing mountains, or are you walking over that mountain? When you wait on the Lord and listen to Him, that's how Jesus was. I mean, see a classic example of that. The devil tells him, turn the stones into bread.

And he says, I mean, if he had used his reason, he'd have said, yeah, reason says, I'm hungry, I haven't eaten for 40 days, there's no sin in eating bread, God has given me power, I've been anointed 40 days ago, I have the power to turn stones into bread, I'm not cheating anybody, I'm not stealing anybody else's bread, these are just rocks, there are hundreds of rocks here, one rock disappearing and becoming bread won't make any difference, let me turn these stones into bread and satisfy me, I'm sure my father will be quite happy with my using my power like that. Jesus did not do it. He did not live by reason.

He told the devil, sorry, I haven't heard any word from my father to turn the stones into bread. If he tells me, I'll do it, but I haven't heard any word from him. So even though my reason says it's okay, I'm not cheating anybody, I'm not deceiving anyone, I'm not stealing, and I need it, all these things are true, but my father has not told me to do it.

How many Christians live like that? Most Christians live by, I need it, and if I don't cheat anybody, I'm not stealing, I go ahead and do it, I don't need to wait for God to tell me. Well I agree, that is the kindergarten level, when you're in kindergarten you don't wait for such things, but when you go on with the Lord, you do come to the place where you really want God to lead you in everything. Why didn't Jesus go for a vacation to Rome? Is there anything wrong in a believer having a vacation? I mean Jesus could have used a reason, I've been slogging away for one whole year, day and night, day and night, many sleepless nights, serving, serving, serving, serving, serving, I need a little break, I think I'll take a break and go to Rome.

I won't sin, do you think Jesus would have sinned if he had gone to Rome? No never, he wouldn't have sinned anywhere in the world. Why didn't he go to Rome for a vacation, just to relax as a servant of God who's exhausted? I'll tell you why, the Father never told him. He would not have sinned by going to Rome,

but he'd have missed God's will, and perhaps instead of staying three and a half years on earth, he'd have had to stay four years to complete the job.

How long does it take to go through school, twelve years? It can take fifteen years also, you know that. It can take twenty years. I know people who've gone to medical school, which should finish in five years, and take ten years to go through medical school.

And God has allotted a job for you in a certain amount of time, you can take ten times that time because sometimes you just do a lot of other things, which are not sinful, but you feel like doing it. There are a lot of dead works in Christendom, but you may say, oh boy, then my life will be full of tension. No, it won't.

Do you think Jesus' life was full of tension, that it was the most relaxed life any human being ever lived on this earth? Tension comes to you because you do your own thing. I can tell you, my life is not tense, no. If you listen to God, your life will not be tense.

When you listen to God, you come to rest. God's voice always brings rest, not tension. The reason I'm mentioning all this is, in Jesus I see God's ways, the way He did it.

But for that to happen in us, He has to break us. You know, one of the first things that you read about Jesus after He grew to the age of 30 was His going to the baptism. And we heard about it yesterday too.

Jesus could have reasoned and said, I don't need to be baptized. John the Baptist publicly saying, I preach a baptism of repentance. He called it a baptism of repentance.

What did Jesus have to repent of in 30 years? Not a single sin. He had nothing to repent of. Why did He need that baptism? There was no need.

He could have used His reason and said, if I stand in that line of people waiting to get baptized, people will think, ah, so perhaps there is some secret sin in His life also. I don't want people to misunderstand me, so I will not stand in that line. He never used His reason.

And the Father said, go and get baptized. Father, who shall I be baptized by? Somebody less holier than you. John the Baptist.

Less holier than me? He is going to baptize me? Why not I just go into a tub or something and baptize myself because there is nobody holier than me on the earth? No. Humble yourself. Go and be baptized by somebody who is not even one percent as holier than you.

And He comes to John the Baptist, and John the Baptist says, boy, I need to be baptized from you. No, Jesus says, I have to fulfill all righteousness. For Him, righteousness was obeying the Father, not His reason.

He never lived by reason. You know, from the time of our childhood, we have been taught to live by reason. And in many matters, that is right.

Many earthly things, it is right to use our reason. I am not saying we shouldn't, but when we get born again and are filled with the Holy Spirit, you want to understand God's ways, the Holy Spirit must now guide our reason. Till now, reason was the Lord of the house.

But when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit becomes Lord. And reason, we don't eliminate reason, reason becomes like the wife. And the Holy Spirit is like the husband.

Is a wife a very useful person to have? Yes or no? I say yes. But not if she becomes the head of the house. No.

Then you have a problem. Because God never made a woman to be a head. And God never made our reason and our mind to be the head.

It doesn't mean we shoot the wife. We don't shoot our reason. There are some people who say, leave your mind blank.

That's not Christianity. That's yoga, meditation, leave your mind blank. I don't leave my mind blank.

When I meditate, the devil will come in. I meditate on God's word. I use my reason, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

That's the wonderful thing about the New Covenant. They could not have it in the Old Testament. You see, the mistakes that people made in the Old Testament was all because of reason.

I told you about Abraham. He came to Canaan, and there was a famine there. He used his reason and said, what shall I do? I heard there's food in Egypt.

Let me go there. And he goes there and brings Hagar. And that's the cause of sin and problems right until today.

Because of the son he got through Hagar. But that's because he used his reason. It was a small step, just going to Egypt.

But look at the consequences that have lasted for 4,000 years. Do you know how many people you can mess up when you try to live by reason when God tells you to do something else? Now God has not told you anything, okay. But here God had told him, go to Canaan, as if God did not know that there was going to be a famine there.

We can't blame Abraham because he didn't have a Bible. He didn't have the Holy Spirit. We've got much more, and we do the same thing.

When these things are written for our instruction. Why did Jesus say words like this? This is God's ways, John chapter 5. See what he said in John chapter 5. He says in verse 19, truly I say to you, the meaning is the son cannot independently do anything. Only what he sees the father doing.

Whatever the father does, I do. So he's listening to his father all the time, and whatever the father tells him to do, I do. And he goes on to say that in verse 30.

I do nothing on my own initiative. That means when I'm thinking of doing something, I wait on the Lord. I wait on the father.

I say to the father, shall I do this? And you feel in your spirit, okay. That's why clever people pray very little. I've noticed something as I've observed Christians.

I mean, God has given me the privilege of working among very educated PhDs and doctors and engineers, and also among totally illiterate people who can't even read the Bible. So, God has given me the privilege of working among the whole range of highly educated to totally uneducated, and I've seen one thing. The cleverer you are, the less you pray.

Because you don't need, you're so clever, why do you need to ask God about everything? Whereas, people are not so clever, they don't argue about why should you pray, what will happen if I pray. They don't have so many arguments. They just read that Jesus said pray, so they pray.

And they get answers. They get revelation on scripture which PhDs don't get. Why is that? I mean, I've been amazed as I've observed people in our churches, how is it so many extremely intelligent, clever people don't seem to get any revelation from scripture.

When I hear them share, they are as boring as anything, and then I hear some guy who can't even speak English properly, who doesn't know a word of English, he gets up and there's a revelation in it, how is that? Does God have partiality? No. One is more aware of his weakness, that's why. Moses, the Bible says, was a brilliant man at the age of 40.

He was trained in the best academies of Egypt, and in those days when people made pyramids which even today's engineers are wondering, how in the world did they make those pyramids? Moses was there, learning how to make pyramids. And if God had told Moses to make a tabernacle for him at the age of 40, and God had given him the pattern, and if you've seen a picture of a tabernacle, it's one of the most unimpressive structures you can think of. Even that tent doesn't look like a decent tent.

And if God had given him the pattern, Moses would have said, Lord just leave it to me, don't you know who I am? I've built pyramids, I'll make a fantastic structure for you. And he would have made it. The only thing that would have been missing is that the fire of God would not have come on it, the glory of God would not have come on it.

That's how people build churches today. They say, we don't have to follow the pattern of Jesus and the apostles and all, we are in the 20th century, we can modify it, 21st century, we can do it in a better way, where's the glory? It's not there. It's a fantastic structure.

So what did God have to do? God had to break that man. Break him, break him, break him, and it took a long time, 40 years. And when God succeeded in breaking him, he said, now Moses, I want you to build my tabernacle like this.

It's going to be a very simple tent. And you read that beautiful expression in Exodus 39 and 40, 18 times, 18 times it says, Moses did exactly as the Lord commanded him. And at the end of the 18th time it says, the glory of the Lord came upon it.

It's been a great encouragement to me. I say, Lord, if I do it exactly like Jesus and the apostles did it, there will be a glory in my life. There'll be a glory in what I do.

There'll be a glory in the church that I build if I follow exactly the way Jesus did it, not the way the Americans did it, the way Jesus did it, the way the apostles did it, not the way today's great preachers are doing it, the way it is in scripture. So that it can be written about me at the end of my life that I did it exactly as the Lord commanded, there will be a glory. And that's why I say you need to study the scriptures.

You need to understand God's ways. How does God do his work? How did Jesus do his work? You know, one of the great conflicts and questions people have about us is, why do you say that we shouldn't make our needs known to anybody, financial needs and God's work? I say because Jesus never made his needs known to anybody. You say, how did Jesus live? Well, certain people gave him gifts.

You read that in Luke chapter 8, verse 2 and 3, some rich women gave Jesus money. He received money. There's nothing wrong in that.

Jesus did it. He used money, but he never asked anybody for it. He never told his needs to anybody.

Like I said the other day, even when he didn't have a place to stay the night, he didn't tell anybody, hey, can I come and stay in your house? He just went and slept under the trees. He would never make his needs known to anyone. I thank God he taught me that when I left my job in the Navy 44 years ago.

Never, never make your needs known to anyone. And even when you have nothing, let people think you have plenty. Then they won't treat you like a beggar and give you out of charity.

The Christian world is full of full-time workers who are just dignified beggars. They're not representatives of Jesus Christ. Which way did God do it? Jesus is the example.

Those are God's ways. This is so important, and I say that's why we never make our needs known to anyone. That's why in our churches we have never sent a prayer letter or photographs to show people in any other country to give us money for, you know, like letters people send, dear brother, we have completed the walls of our building, we still need to put the roof, please pray for us.

What do you think that means? It means send us some money. Full-time beggars disgraced to the name of Jesus Christ. Can you imagine Jesus writing a letter like that? The amount of things that go on today in Christendom, and it's all done in the name of Jesus.

It's not at all in the spirit of Christ. These are the reasons why we have to understand God's ways, and a little bit of gold is better than a pile of wood, hay, and straw. If you understand God's ways, you will do that which you do in your place exactly like Jesus and the apostles did it.

Why is it we don't call anybody a pastor in a church? I'm not against it, but I say I don't see any of the apostles calling anybody. It was a gift that God gave, but it was not an office. Oh, we say that doesn't matter.

For you it may not matter, but I want to do it exactly as God showed it in Scripture. This is how people ignore small things. I say you can do it, but not for me.

Today we have Jesus said don't take any titles like rabbi, this, that, and the other, father, and all that, and yet Christendom is full of people who call themselves bishop, and archbishop, and reverend, and right reverend, and metropolitan, and pope, and all types of things. We say what does it matter? Well, it does matter for somebody who wants to do it exactly like Jesus taught it. Dear brothers and sisters, there are many, many areas like that.

I've just given you a few examples. If you want to understand God's ways, look at Jesus and follow him. Put your feet exactly in his footsteps, and your work may not be a great work, but it'll be a work that God puts his approval on and sends his glory upon, and his anointing will be upon your life even if you live to

be a hundred years old.

That's what I want. Let's pray. Remember what Jesus said.

One thing is needful every day of your life, to sit at my feet and listen to my word like Mary did. Take Jesus' advice, be different from the Christians around you, and I tell you, your life will accomplish more than you've ever accomplished so far in your life. You will please God.

There will be a glory upon your life. Heavenly Father, help us, each one, to take these things seriously, not just to understand them, but to live the way Jesus lived. Thank you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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