

What Christ Accomplished on the Cross

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the profound mystery of unity in the church through the work of Christ on the cross.

Duration: 1:08:56

Scripture: Matthew 16:18, Romans 6:6, Ephesians 2:14, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14

Topics: "The Cross", "Christian Unity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the significance of surrendering to God and the mystery of the church, as revealed in Ephesians and Matthew. It delves into the challenges of uniting diverse individuals into one body, highlighting the difficulty of building unity amidst cultural differences and personal preferences. The sermon underscores the need to understand the profound impact of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, including the cancellation of our debt of sin, the crucifixion of our old self, and the defeat of Satan's power. It calls for a deep commitment to the way of the cross, leading to a transformed life and a heavenly perspective in all aspects of living.

Transcript

The first time that Jesus spoke about the church, the first time the word church is mentioned in the Bible, is in Matthew 16 and verse 18. Now in our last study we saw that this great mystery, which is hidden from ages, what is it? It's about the church. And I want to turn to Ephesians first before going to Matthew.

In Ephesians 2, you read there that this mystery is something where we saw in Ephesians 3 that the Gentiles, Ephesians 3, 6, should become fellow members of the body. As I said, that doesn't look like a great mystery that Jews and non-Jews should become one in Christ. But the point is, how do they become one? This is the mystery.

Individual Christians here and there, that's not a great mystery. People have accepted the Lord. You know what they say, save souls.

It's easy to go around saving souls. But to make them into one body, that's a mystery. And the mystery is not individual salvation.

I want you to understand this. It's the local body of Jesus Christ. And if you want to know how difficult it is to build that, just look around and see the amount of confusion there is in so many churches.

And the only way that it can be done is if we can understand what happened on the cross of Jesus Christ. It says when Jesus died, he made, Ephesians 2, 14, both groups into one. In the Hindu caste system, there are the upper class Brahmins and the lowest caste of, I don't know what they are, I'm not very familiar with it.

But there's a group called the untouchables. I mean, there are so much untouchable that I've heard that the upper caste people, if that person walks by and the shadow falls upon this upper caste person, he's got to go and have a bath. That's how much, that's why they keep these people at a distance.

And to bring even an upper caste and lower caste person who's come to Christ, one. See what a massive problem it is, even in India. And the Jews and non-Jews were far more separated than upper caste and lower caste in India.

The greatest difference in caste system in India is nothing compared to the way the Jews looked at non-Jews. Now we can read in the Acts of the Apostles that Paul said no, there shouldn't be any difference. But you try and go into the villages of India and convert the Brahmin and the lower caste person and say now you've got to mingle together and break bread together and drink from the same cup.

And then you'll see what a difficulty it was to make Jews and Gentiles together. We read it so easily in the scriptures. But it was a tremendous problem.

But when Jesus died, it says here, he broke down, Ephesians 2.14, this barrier of the dividing wall. And if that barrier is not broken down, you can never become one with another person. And he abolished this enmity there is in the flesh.

You know that there is an enmity in your flesh? You love yourself. You never fight with yourself. You never find your left hand hitting the face or right hand hitting the face.

You never fight with yourself. But you fight with your wife. She's supposed to be one flesh with you.

It says you've got to love your wife as your own body. If you want to know how difficult it is for two people to become one, go and ask any married couple, honest married couple, who will tell you the truth of how it is in them. How difficult it is to live at peace with one another.

Even for one month. It's possible. It's possible if you have understood the way of the cross.

If you have not understood it, even one week will be difficult. And imagine, this mystery is where people are so different like us to become one body. It's like this human body.

It's a real mystery, I tell you. That's why people shy away from it and say, no, the main thing in the church is evangelism, reach out to others and collect money and do social work and care for the orphans and care for the widows and never talk about becoming one. Because that is the most difficult thing of all.

It's like sending your child to a school where they never teach difficult subjects like maths and science. You go to a school and they teach you how to play marbles and about something about geography and little history. Will you send your child to a school like that? You wouldn't.

But that's what's happening in Christendom today. The most important subject is left out. But the easy ones are all talked about.

This is the problem. And we need to understand this. And when we proclaim the whole purpose of God, this is part of the whole purpose of God, that we have to become one.

In our marriage we have to become one. And in our church we have to become one. And we are so many different cultures and upbringings and differences of opinion.

So as I was saying, in Matthew 16 Peter got revelation that Jesus was the Son of God. So he said, Peter, in Matthew 16, he asked, Who do you people say that I am? Who do you say that I am? And Peter said in Matthew 16, verse 16, You are the Christ, the Son of God. And Jesus said, That's great.

You are blessed. Because it was not your human cleverness that revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven. And now I say to you, on this revelation that you got, it's like a rock.

On this rock I'll build my church. This is why the Roman Catholics have not understood this. They thought Peter is the rock.

Actually in the Greek language, one is Petros and one is Petra. Petros is a small stone. You're Peter, you're a small stone.

But on this Petra, this big rock, I will build my church. Actually he was drawing a contrast. And which was this rock? This revelation that you got.

This revelation that people never get in the Old Testament. Now, Peter, you need to get a revelation of the church. You got a revelation about me.

I'm the Son of God. Now, I'm going to build my church on this revelation. You got to see the church as a revelation from God.

I meet so many people who come to our conferences and hear about the church and one body and all that. They go back and nothing happens where they are. Because they haven't seen it as a revelation.

They haven't seen it as the most important thing. Supposing you're given a job in an office, a new job that you got and you go to the office and they tell you, the most important thing you have to do is this. There are certain secondary things and less important things.

And you spend the whole day doing the less important things. How long will you last in that job? They say, listen, you're supposed to spend 90% of your time doing this most important thing and you haven't done it. You waste all your time doing the 10% stuff.

This is exactly what is happening in Christianity. The great mystery is not bringing souls to Christ. The great mystery is how can God bring people who are so different from each other and make them one body.

I will build my church Matthew 16 18 and all the gates of hell means the powers of spiritual death. Hades is a word referring to the place of the dead. So gates of Hades means the powers of spiritual death.

The powers of spiritual death will try to crush your life out of you but they will not be able to do it. You will overpower it. That's the meaning of the resurrection.

Jesus overcame Hades and the power of death and the church is supposed to do that. See it's the powers of spiritual death that bring conflict in a church. That bring conflict in your home.

And they're always trying to overpower you. But Jesus said the church that I build, if you get revelation on it you will build a church the gates of hell will not be able to overpower it. Satan will not be able to come in and that depends on unity right at the center.

The leadership. That is why I keep stressing that if God is building a church in any place, he will usually start with two people who are dissimilar from each other. And he will make them one.

As a demonstration to Satan that here are two people who are completely opposite to each other and I have made them one. You know this is how it was in the church in Bangalore. Let me tell you a little bit that God began this work through Brother Ian Robson and myself and we are different in every possible way.

He's an Anglo-Indian and I'm a Malayali and you go through India you'll never find Malayalis and Anglo-Indians getting on together anywhere. Malayalis are a pretty proud bunch. They're the closest to the Pharisees I've seen in this land.

And I suppose the Anglo-Indians are like that too. But they never get along with each other. If you don't believe me just go around and see how many Malayalis and Anglo-Indians work together.

You'll never find it. You who are Malayalis here tell me how many Anglo-Indian friends you have. You don't have to go far to find out.

They just don't hit it off with each other in this country. And God in his great wisdom brought two of us together. And if you know him and you know me you'll see we are completely different from each other.

In every possible way. And God said I'm going to make you the beginning of church. But you'll both have to die.

To your own individual preferences and choices. And we are very different as individuals and in the beginning we were very careful not to hurt each other like you know in a marriage during the honeymoon period you don't argue with each other or anything. You keep quiet about everything.

But we got over that honeymoon period pretty quickly and then we began to be frank with each other. And we said now our bond is strong enough we can handle saying I don't agree with you. No scare.

We won't break up. And now we have experienced that for 41 years and I want to tell you not one single day have we broken fellowship in 41 years. And but we are different.

And we have expressed our differences. But we are one. And that is the main reason why in 41 years Satan has never been able to come inside our church.

Never. He's tried so many ways through the years. And he and I know that.

We have faced all types of problems from outside. But it never broke our fellowship because right in the leadership the two people had become really one. We don't agree with each other in everything.

Let me show you what the Bible says in Ephesians 4. We want to find a scriptural basis for everything. Ephesians 4 it says I want to put two verses together. And the two verses are Ephesians 4 verse 3 plus verse 13.

So read verse 3 and verse 13 together. It reads like this. Be diligent, that means work hard to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace until we reach the unity of the faith.

So we haven't reached the unity of the faith. But until we reach the unity of the faith which is until we agree 100% on every single thing, what should we do? Preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. It's very honest here.

Ok, you haven't arrived at that perfect understanding of all the details of the faith. Never mind. Preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace until we arrive at the unity of the faith and the perfect knowledge of the Son of God as a mature man to the measure of the stature of which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

That's coming. But that's a long way off. But until we reach that perfect measure of a mature perfect exactly like the Son of God verse 13, that fullness that belongs to Christ.

Till we get there, what should we do? Preserve the unity of the spirit. And that's what I would say to every married couple here. That's what I would say to every elder.

You don't have to have the whole church united. That's almost impossible. But if you can have the leadership united, that will spread.

And there's a little core that starts with 2 and becomes 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 8. And there's a core that's kept increasing in Bangalore. It's not just 2 now. A core of people.

And it's not all the people who came right at the beginning. Some of the people who came at the beginning are not even here. And some who have sat here for years are not in that core.

But there are others God has brought who are really willing to pay the price. And I'll come to in a moment how to build this core. That's what's preserved the church.

That's like saying in a family what will preserve the unity of the family? Children quarreling with each other aren't important. Every home children quarrel. Husband and wife should not quarrel.

That's exactly what I'm saying. Because husband and wife are the leaders of the family, the elders in the family. If they are perfectly united, let the children quarrel like anything.

That family will be strong. The devil will not be able to come in that home no matter how much the children quarrel. But the moment the father and mother start quarreling, the children being united is no use.

There'll be a divorce. The family is broken up. So what do you think the devil is aiming at? He's not aiming at the children fighting with each other.

He knows he'll accomplish nothing there. He's always aiming to bring a division between husband and wife. He's always aiming to bring division among the elders.

Because if he succeeds there, he's broken the family. Paul said we are not ignorant of the schemes of Satan. And that's why we don't find body being built.

First of all, why is the church called the body of Jesus Christ? Why is that title given? There are many titles to the church. The bride. Do you know Israel is also called the bride of Jehovah? People of God.

Israel is called the people of God. A holy building. Israel is called a building.

And many titles. A kingdom of priests. Israel is called a kingdom of priests.

But there's one title never never given to Israel. Body. Never.

You read the whole Old Testament. Many titles given to the church are given to Israel but not body. Body came only after Jesus Christ came in a body.

So when the church is called the body of Christ, it is supposed to do the same thing that the first body of Christ did. What did the first body of Christ do? Immediately people say he did miracles. No.

Don't you think he did a lot of other things than miracles? He preached. He obeyed Joseph and Mary for 30 years. He was a carpenter.

He made tables and benches. Can you tell me in one sentence that sums up everything that Jesus did? He did the will of his father. In that one sentence that includes his obeying Joseph and Mary.

It includes his being a carpenter. It includes his going to the cross. It includes his preaching.

It includes his miracles. It includes everything when you say he came to earth to do the will of his father. In order to do the will of his father, he says in John 6 and verse 38, I deny my own will.

When we say that Jesus came like us, that is another mystery. Great is the mystery of godliness. 1 Timothy 3.16, Christ came in the flesh.

What does it mean Christ came in the flesh? He did not have sin in him. He did not have any lusts in him. He did not have unconscious sin in him.

Then how was he like us? He had a self-will like us. And it was a will that was contrary to the father's will. John 6.38, I came from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of my father.

What does that sentence plainly mean? In plain words, it means my will was not the will of my father. Doesn't it mean that? I did not do my will, but I did the will of my father. What does it mean? In heaven, from all eternity, he could say, I do my own will, because it is the same as the will of my father.

That's what he said for eternity. But the moment he came to earth in our flesh, there's something he took on called my will. Otherwise he could not have been like us.

Just to make him look like us and have blood and flesh and bones, that's not enough. The most important thing he had to be like us was my will. That is why he was tempted like us.

If he did not have this thing called my will, he would not have been tempted like us. That is the beginning of sin. You see in a little child, for example, even one year old, that one year old is not tempted with sexual sin, not tempted with the love of money, not tempted with an unforgiving spirit, not tempted with jealousy, not tempted with all the things that we call sin.

But what does it have? Parents tell me, self-will. And you see that very, very quickly. You heard me tell that story of that little boy whom the father told, sit down.

And he said, I won't sit down. Sit down. I won't sit down.

The father takes a stick. He sits down. He says, but daddy, inside I am still standing up.

Now the question is, how do you make that inside fellow sit down? That is what God wants to do. And I want to tell all of you, you can obey God on the outside, but inside you there is something which wants to do your own will. Unless that is crucified, you will never be able to follow Jesus.

You can sit down on the outside and sing all the right songs and do all the right, but inside there is someone standing up. That's a thing called my will. Jesus crucified that.

That's how he could say at the end of my life, I finished your work, father. You think it is easy? It says in Romans 15 and verse 3, Christ did not please himself. Have you read that? He never pleased himself.

Are you tempted to please yourself sometimes? How many times? In one day? Is it because you want to please yourself that you answer back to that fellow who got angry with you? In your home or in your office? To please yourself. It's because you want to please yourself that you indulge in what you look at on the computer or do something else or read some news article which is only going to provoke your lust. You want to please yourself and Jesus never pleased himself.

Think of living one day without pleasing yourself in anything. It's a feat. If you can come to the end of the day and say, today I never pleased myself in anything.

I only sought to please God and to bless others. Jesus lived like that for 33 and a half years. It wasn't a strain.

It's a strain in the beginning. You see how little children, when you teach them swimming in a swimming pool, they stand by the edge of the swimming pool for a long time. I remember my son teaching his little boy swimming once.

I went with him to the swimming pool and he put the floaters, things that prevent them from drowning on him. He was only 2 or 3 years old. He put him on that little diving board and the boy would look down and scared.

The father went from behind and pushed him. He got all struggling. But he had these floaters so he didn't drown.

He came out of the pool and he ran back on the diving pool and began to jump in and out again and again. Now he was excited. In the beginning, swimming is difficult.

If any of you have learned swimming, you struggle, struggle, struggle and then you see these people who even just lie down on the back as if it's a wooden floor or something. It's amazing how they do it. They enjoy it.

We think denying yourself and doing the will of God is such a struggle. In the beginning it is. But after a while you'll really see how wonderful it is.

How people love to go swimming. That which they were so hesitant to do in the beginning. That's how it is.

Christ never pleased himself. He lived the most wonderful life. If you believe like I do that the most wonderful life anybody ever lived on this earth was Jesus Christ.

Not David who was very rich or Solomon or Abraham, Rich Abraham or Job. Jesus. The most wonderful life.

If I really believed that, I'd say, Lord, I want to live like that. Tell me the secret of that life. How is it such a blessed life? We say Christ is my hero.

You really want to follow him? You want to find the secret of his life? I'll tell you. Here it is. He never pleased himself.

He never did his own will. Whenever the thought came that it was a temptation, he put it to death. He said, no, I will do my father's will.

That is the secret. And you can have it. You can live that way at home.

Every single day. Your home will be like a little heaven. At least from your side.

And if your wife also decides to live that way, your home will really be like heaven. And yet, people know that and they don't want it. And think if in a church more and more people live like this.

The fellowship between them will really be heavenly. And it's a greater testimony when we can disagree with each other and still not break fellowship. I once asked the Lord this question.

I said, there are so many areas in which Christians, even born again Christians, disagree. For example, baptism. There are people who say you can be baptized as a child.

Yeah, there are some born again people in the Catholic Church and the CSI Church. Really born again people, but they take an infant baptism. Then there are people who say you must be baptized in the name of Jesus.

We baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And then there are disagreements about baptism in the Holy Spirit. Should we speak in tongues or not speak in tongues? There are people like the Seventh-day Adventists who say you must keep the Sabbath.

So many disagreements. Should we have a pastor or should we have elders? See, all these things need only one line answers. And I said, Lord, if there was one more chapter in the Bible, you know, Revelation chapter 23, which has infant baptism is wrong.

Problem solved. People who are filled with the Spirit don't have to speak in tongues. Problem solved.

There should be no pastor in a church, only elders. Problem solved. And you just need a chapter with about 30 verses.

So many problems in Christianity would be solved. I said, why didn't God add such a chapter? Didn't He know as He looked into the future the amount of conflict there will be? Will the church go through the tribulation or not go through the tribulation? Verse 6, the church will go through the tribulation. Problem solved.

What is the other problem you have? I'll give you the other verses. Whatever it is. Just one chapter.

Why didn't all wise God who knew the whole future not put that chapter in the Bible? The Lord gave me an answer. It blessed me. The Lord said, when people don't see eye to eye with each other, when they don't agree with each other, their love is tested.

And they can show their love in a greater way when they don't agree with each other than when they agree with each other. And I've seen that in working with my fellow elders here. But my love is tested not because they say yes, yes, yes.

I don't say yes, yes, yes to them and they don't say yes, yes to me. Thank God. We love one another when we disagree.

Not because we hate one another, but I view things in a certain way and they view things another way. And I say, we don't know who is right. God has put us together.

It doesn't matter. We love one another. Our love is tested.

You know, if you have got a wife who is completely the opposite of you, you can be absolutely certain God only chose that wife for you. Yeah, my wife is completely different from me. Completely, in many ways.

She is so friendly with everybody. I make enemies everywhere I go. I remember one man who knew us very well and he was not very happy with me.

He used to come to our church now and then. He sent a greeting for my birthday. And the best thing he could think to say about Brother Zach on his birthday was, Brother Zach has got a good wife.

I tell you honestly, I remember on my 50th birthday, somebody read that out. I said, great, I agree with that. No, we are different.

So when newly married couples or people who are engaged to get married come to me, I draw a little diagram for them. I draw on a piece of paper, I draw an egg. And I said, now I am going to break that egg with my hand.

And here is the broken egg. I draw two halves with all the jagged edges. Jagged edges are pretty pokey.

You try and take one of those broken eggs and put it on your cheek, it hurts. And I say to this boy and girl, do you know you are like that? You think you are all very nice and you love one another, but you got all these pokey edges that would hurt each other. But now I am going to put them together.

And see, wherever there is a jagged edge here, there is a depression there. And wherever there is a jagged edge here, there is a depression here. It's a whole egg again.

See, that's how God wants to make you one. Dissimilar, but exact opposites, becoming one. That is how God builds the body.

But you must allow for that person to be different from you. And work with that person in his differences. For example, take this simple movement of an elbow.

It says in Ephesians 4, there is a great verse there, speaking about building the body of Christ. Ephesians in chapter 4, it speaks about verse 16. The whole body, Ephesians 4, verse 16, is fitted and held together.

Think of a body. We are not fitted with screws and nuts and bolts. No.

We are fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies. And, according to the proper working of each individual part, makes the growth of the body building up of itself in love. You know what a joint is? The shoulder is one joint.

You know it's working perfectly when there's no noise. Here's another joint. Think of this as one brother, this is another brother.

They work perfectly. When this muscle says, I want to pull, the muscle on the other side says, I yield. When the muscle on this side says, I want to pull, the muscle on this side says, I yield.

But if both these muscles are stubborn, this muscle says, I want to pull, and the muscle says, no, no, no, it's my turn to pull now. You go around with the hand like this. You don't even think about it, but the joint is working so wonderfully.

Think of a husband and wife work like this. You want to pull? I'm ready to yield. You want to pull? I'll yield.

But when there's noise, you know whenever there's noise, it means arthritis. It's called arthritis. There's a lot of arthritis in many families.

They move, but it's a pretty painful movement. Even in a church, it shouldn't be like that. That which every joint supplies.

You know how many joints there are in the fingers? So many. All joints, no sound. Perfect.

This is why the church is called the Body of Christ. Israel was never called by that name. Because they could never be this.

Why? Because they did not have the Holy Spirit. Only one prophet had the Spirit upon him. Today, every one of us can have the Holy Spirit which brings the life of Jesus into us.

And when the life of Jesus flows, it connects us to the head, Christ. We function perfectly. You know why these things are working together? It's not because they're very intelligent.

They are both obeying the head. The head tells this muscle, pull. And the head tells the other muscle, yield.

And then the head tells this muscle, pull. And the head tells this muscle, yield. And they're obeying immediately.

Think of someone playing a keyboard. Head is saying, come on, play. They're all working so perfectly.

It looks so effortless, but everything is an order from the head. Instantaneous obedience. That's how someone plays the keyboard.

This is why the church is called the Body of Christ. Is your church functioning like this? Is your home functioning like this? You see how the devil has blinded you to this? So now we come back to Matthew 16. The first time that Jesus spoke about the church.

See something else also. The first time that Jesus spoke about the church. He also spoke about the cross.

See the connection there? Matthew 16, 18 is the first time he ever used the word church. I will build my church and the gates of hell are going to fight against it, but there's going to be a solution. From that time.

Verse 21. From that time when he spoke about the church, Jesus began to tell them how he must go to the cross and suffer and die, be killed and be raised the third day. And Peter, a great loyal Peter saying, Lord, I will not allow anybody to catch you and kill you.

This will never happen to you. And look at the Lord rebuking Peter. Get behind me, Satan.

You're a stumbling block to me. Your mind is not on God's interest. Your mind is on man's interest.

Can you imagine Jesus rebuking someone, calling him Satan? When all he did was showing his love, saying Lord, I'll never let anybody kill you. I will never let anybody touch you. A man expressing his love like that.

I mean, if I were there, I'd say Peter, I understand your love, but I have to go to the cross. But that's not how Jesus said it. Why does Jesus use some strong words? Because he wanted them to understand how serious a mistake it is to avoid the cross.

To say, don't go to the cross, like Peter was saying, is the voice of Satan. That's what he wanted us to see. And that is the voice of Satan, because your mind is only thinking of your interests, not God's interests.

I learned something from that. You know what I learned? Every time I hear a voice in me saying, don't die to yourself on the cross, I know it is the voice of Satan. You know where I learned it? Here.

This is where I learned it. I thank God that Jesus turned around and told Peter, get behind me, Satan. I've learned something from my whole life that the voice that tells me not to die to myself is the voice of Satan.

And further in verse 23, the voice that tells me not to die to myself is that which makes me seek my own interests and not God's interests. And I learned from there that God's interest is that I should die on the cross. All that I learned from that one verse.

I thank God for that. And then Jesus said, it's not only me. Verse 24, if you come after me, you've also got to die on the cross.

And if you try to save your life, verse 25, from going to the cross, you'll finally lose it. This is a mystery, the way of the cross. When I was 23 years old, I was working in the Navy.

And I found a great lack of power in my life. I knew the Bible, I studied the Bible, but there was no power. And the brethren assembly I went to never taught about power from God.

So somebody who was a believer told me, hey, if you want to know about that, go to the Pentecostals. They're the ones who talk about spirit baptism and power of the cross. So I went to some Pentecostal pastor and both of us, and we were seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit, and he said to me, this is in Kerala, he was supposed to be a man who had great ability to lead people into the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And he told me, keep saying hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. You say hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, after some time your tongue will trip and you will speak in tongues. And

then you were... So the other brother did it.

I don't know what happened. I said, I'm not going to do that. I know the Bible.

I know the apostles were not just keeping on saying hallelujah on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit of God fell upon them. They spoke in tongues.

And I said, listen, in any case, Lord, I came back home. I had been to the church. I saw a lot of noise and everything, and people babbling something back and forth.

Two, three syllables. And that was it. And they called that speaking in tongues.

And I came back home, and I said, Lord, I don't want this. I don't want this type of rubbish. I don't want this type of tongues.

I want the power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, I get angry. I want you to control my mother tongue before speaking in other tongues.

Other tongues can wait. Let's control the mother tongue first. That's what I want.

So I never went back. I never in my life joined a Pentecostal church after that. But I began to seek God.

And I prayed, and I fasted, and I sought God for the power of the Holy Spirit. And the Lord showed me how He Himself in the river Jordan went down into the water. He allowed John the Baptist to bury Him and came up.

And I learned from that that Jesus was submitting to somebody killing Him, burying Him, believing that the Father would raise Him up from the dead. That was the symbolism of baptism. And as soon as He came up, the Spirit of God came upon Him, and I got my answer.

And the Lord said to me, if you choose the way of the cross, death to yourself, let people crucify you, bury you, I will raise you up. Don't resist it. See, if you resist when somebody is putting you into the water in baptism, you'll never be baptized.

So, submit, and my power will rest upon you. And the day you stop going that way, you lose my power. Now, we have spoken about this so many times, but we really have to die.

There's a dear brother, Arian here, a friend of mine. He told me a lovely story yesterday. I'll tell you for the benefit of all of you.

There was some place where they were acting a drama of the crucifixion. And they had one fellow standing like this. And people had to pretend to spit on him and all that.

And while he was hanging there, this one chap standing there actually spat on him. And he said, you wait till I come down from the cross. I'll teach you a lesson.

That's what happens with a lot of people who say, I want to die with Jesus and all that type of stuff. Till somebody actually irritates you. And all that acting disappears.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have to die. Not pretend to die, not act as if we are dying. It's not a drama.

It's a real thing. If you want to follow me, you've got to take up the cross and die. And God will raise you up.

Let people spit on you. Let them abuse you. Let them kill you.

And the Lord said to me, if you choose the way of the cross, you'll have my power rest upon you. But the day you decide, no, I've had enough of that, my power will depart from you. And that is so imprinted in my mind.

You know the Lord said that to me in 1963. 53 years ago. Yeah, more than that.

1963. And I've never forgotten it. There are many times I've wept in my bed and said, Lord, I never want to go any other way.

I'll go the way of the cross. And no matter what happens, whatever people do to me, I will not retaliate. I will not fight back.

Whatever they do, they can take me to court, they can kill me, they can do whatever they like. I will not fight back. If you hate them, that is a way of fighting back.

I will not hate. If you wish evil for them, even if you don't say it, like this fellow who was acting, you just wish. I'll teach him a lesson.

You just wish that. You haven't died. There's a verse which blessed me when I used to meditate on this matter of dying from the Old Testament, which it says, you know, in the book of Job, Job says, you know, I wish I had died at birth.

Job, in chapter 3 and verse 11, and he describes there what death would have been. If I was like a miscarriage, he says in Job 3.16, that means I died as a baby. And then he describes what death is like that, and I said, Lord, if I really die with Christ, it'll be something like this.

Verse 17, the wicked will cease from raging and the weary are at rest. This wicked man, Zakponin, will stop getting angry. And I will be at rest.

And I'm a prisoner and I'm at ease and I don't hear the voice of the devil anymore. The taskmaster. And the slave, verse 19, is free from his master.

Great. I said, I want to die. I want to die with Jesus.

And I can't say that I followed that faithfully all these 53 years, but I understood the principle of it. Sometimes I would slip up and fall, get up and repent. And it took me time to learn how to really die.

And things would come and I would get discouraged. And then after a while, as I developed a ministry, unfortunately, I got taken up with my ministry. And I did not, I sort of ignored my life.

You know, when your ministry becomes very important, it's a great danger. It happened to me. I began to be accepted and traveled here and there.

I began to slacken off in my inner life. And that's when I began to seek God again. I said, Lord, I'm a hypocrite.

I want you to meet with me. Fill me with the spirit again. And that's how he met with me a second time.

What I want to say is, there's a very close connection, like there was in Jesus' baptism, between his choosing the way of death and the Holy Spirit coming. And many of you are seeking for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, I believe. I was.

I want you to see there's a very close connection between the way of the cross and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And I believe that is what our dear Pentecostal charismatic friends have missed. They've understood the importance of the fullness of the Spirit, but they haven't seen that the death of the cross is very closely connected.

The Spirit drove Jesus to the cross. It says he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. It says in Matthew 26, after the Last Supper, they sang a hymn and went to the cross.

He went to the cross. Do you know that's one of the things he did after the Last Supper? They sang a hymn. Imagine singing a hymn before going to the cross.

He was so excited. And I say, Lord, that's where I want to go. But over the period of years as I've struggled and failed and I've gradually come to understand that the way of death is the way of life.

If we die with him, we will live with him. So I want to say something about the cross. What has happened on the cross of Jesus Christ.

Briefly. First of all, let me show you Colossians chapter 2. Colossians chapter 2. It says, on the cross, when Jesus died, verse 14, he cancelled the certificate of debt which was against us. Every sin that we commit is like a debt that I owe to God.

I commit a sin, okay, I owe something to God. Do you know in the Old Testament how God taught that? When you sin, you must bring a goat and kill it. Brother, how much does a goat cost? 2,000 rupees? 3,000 rupees? Imagine if you had to pay 3,000 rupees every time you committed a sin.

You'd stop sinning pretty quickly. They had to bring a goat and kill it. And so, when I see sin as something serious, it's a debt.

Okay, I owe 3,000 rupees to God now because I sinned here. Then a little later in the day, I sinned again. Okay, another 3,000 rupees.

And then afterwards, I got angry with somebody. Another 3,000 rupees. Then I had a dirty thought.

Another 3,000 rupees. By the end of one day, I'm already in debt for some million rupees. And I've lived like that for so long.

What a massive debt I've got to God. That's what he was teaching those people. Bring that goat.

Bring that bullock. Sacrifice it because you sinned. He was teaching them that you're in debt to God when you sin.

And what a massive debt we have accumulated from the time we were born. And it says Jesus took that whole certificate of debt and tore it up on the cross. That's what he did on the cross.

He cancelled that entire certificate of debt which was against us. And he took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. It's picture language.

But our debt is gone. Imagine if you had a debt of many billions of rupees. And you're always afraid to see the man to whom you owe money.

He comes that way, you go this way. That's how we ran away from God. Why are people afraid to go to God? Because he's the one coming to collect the debt.

That's why they're running away from God. And to see that it's gone. Somebody paid that billion or trillion rupees and I'm free.

Boy! How grateful I should be to that person for the rest of my life. He paid my debt and set me free. That's the first thing that happened on the cross.

And how did he do it? By shedding his own blood. Giving up his life. It was not just rupees.

It was a life that he gave up. You know there are some groups that teach that Jesus was not God. He was only a man.

Or he was an angel. Jehovah's Witnesses and different groups like this. Christadelphians and Mormons.

There are different groups. They always have a problem with the deity of Christ. But do you know if that Jesus Christ was not God.

Think of it. Supposing he was the highest of created beings. Let's say.

Created being means not the creator. And I have sinned. And almighty God makes someone he has created kill him for my sin.

Tell me even a human judge will not allow it. That's completely against all principles of justice. Supposing I sin and my father or mother come and say no no no I will die in place of my son.

Which judge in the world will allow that person to be hanged in place of me. Cannot be. And you are trying to say God is unjust to kill some holy angel for me.

That cannot be. Number one reason. Number two.

Even if God permits one holy angel to die for me. He can only die for one person. He can't die for billions and billions of people who have sinned.

No no no. Ok you allow one person to die for one then. Billions of angels have come to die for all the billions who have committed sin.

The second reason why it cannot be a created being. Third. Dying on the cross is not the price for my sin.

Physical death is not the punishment for sin. Because if physical death is the punishment for sin. When I die I have paid the price.

Everybody who died should go to heaven because they died. So if Jesus only physically died. I say you don't have to die for me Jesus.

I'll die myself. What is the punishment for your sin? Hell. And if Jesus did not suffer hell on the cross.

He has not paid the price for my sin. But he did suffer hell. Do you know what hell is? Hell is to be forsaken by God.

And that's what Jesus experienced for three hours. Hell is not physically a place. It may be but the important thing is forsaken by God.

And that's what Jesus experienced on the cross for me. That's what he struggled with in Gethsemane. Father take this cup away from me.

It wasn't physical death. He was not afraid of physical death. He would be ready to die a million times for me and you.

But the separation from the Father. Oh Father do I have to go through that? You and I have been together for eternity. And some angel can tell him but Jesus it's only for three hours.

And you'll come back together again. No I don't want to lose it for one second. See we don't have that type of attitude to losing fellowship with God.

We just tell a lie or get angry with somebody and lose fellowship with God. You fight with your wife and you don't talk to her for one hour. You don't have fellowship with God for one hour.

It doesn't bother you. Afterwards you go and apologize. But you've lost fellowship with God for one hour.

It doesn't bother you and me because we don't value it. Jesus didn't want to lose it for one second. Because he knew this is the most important thing in life.

And you become a spiritual man when you realize that fellowship with God is the most important thing in life. I never want to lose it even for one second. And Jesus struggled with that in Gethsemane.

And I can imagine the Father saying to him Okay Jesus. You don't have to go to the cross. You have lived a perfect life.

Come from Gethsemane straight up to heaven. But Zathunen will go to hell. He said Zathunen will go to hell.

Okay Father. I'll go to the cross. The day the Lord opened my eyes to see that.

I wept and wept and wept and wept. I said Lord now I know. I see your love for me in Gethsemane.

When I was a child I saw it on Calvary that you died for me. The whip and the beating and the crown. Now I see in Gethsemane the mature understanding of what the cross was for Jesus.

He suffered hell that I might never go there. And you know what it brought in my heart? Tremendous hatred for sin. I said Lord I cannot sin again.

Because I know what it did for you. Not just the physical agony of beating and all that but you went to hell because of my dirty thoughts, because of my anger, because of my unforgiving spirit. I'll never want to do those things again.

Because that's what crucified you. It's I who drove that nails into your hand. That's what he suffered.

So he did face hell. So, if he faced hell, the next question is, fourth, is three hours in hell enough? Because only three hours he was forsaken. At the end of three hours he was again, fellowship was restored, he said father.

At the beginning of the three hours he never called him father. You know why he called him my God, my God, my God? He never, in his eternity, he never called him as God. All his life on earth he never called him God.

He always said my father, my father. But when he stood there hanging with my sin, he was standing as a criminal before the judge of the universe. And he could not call him father.

Because zakhun and sin, and sins were on him. He said my God, my God. I don't know why you're forsaken.

Because, you know, when a man goes to hell, he can't think. I mean, I can say it's for my sin, God. But he's in hell now.

He can't even understand. Why have you forsaken me? As if he didn't know. If he was in his senses, he would have known.

But he's facing hell. When you get to hell, you don't understand anything about God. Why have you forsaken me? But one thing he said, even if you have forsaken me, which I don't understand, you are still my God.

He didn't say oh God in a defiant way. My God. I don't know why you've forsaken me, but you're still my God.

That is submission. And I say, Lord, you did that for me. But three hours is not enough.

Because the punishment for sin is eternity in hell. Can a man suffer eternity in hell? In three hours? No. But an infinite being can suffer the pains of eternity even in one second.

Because infinity into one is equal to eternity into one. That means eternal punishment can be experienced by an infinite being even in a moment. So if Jesus was a created being who is not infinite, then my sins are still there, unpunished.

So these are the four reasons why I say Jesus could not have been a created being. He was Almighty God who took my punishment. I say that because nowadays there are so many clever people who have so many questions.

My debt is gone. But there's something else that happened on the cross as well. Paul says in Romans 6 that my old man was crucified with him as well.

Romans 6 verse 6 My old self was crucified with him so that this body that commits sin can be done away with so that I might never be a slave of sin anymore. Now this is going one step further. The first was cancelling the debt of my past.

For that he suffered eternal hell in those three hours. Now we're talking about the future that I might never be a slave of sin. That also is taken care of on the cross.

He took me into himself. Why? How did he do it? Because I was chosen in Christ and you also if you're born again. Ephesians 1.4 Before the foundation of the world.

You know that God knows the future. Maybe you accepted Christ last week. When did God know about it? Did he know about it last week? Or did he know about it earlier? Did he know about it before you were born? Did God know about me that when I was 19 and a half years old I would accept Christ? When did God know that? When I was born? Before I was born? 100 years before I was born? 2000 years before I was born? Ephesians 1.4 says before Genesis 1 verse 1 before because God never learns anything.

You know that? God never says, oh, I learned something. Is that going to accept me? No. He knew that from eternity.

That is God. Way back in eternity he knew that one day I disobeyed him so many years but one day I would yield my life to him. You disobeyed him for so many years but God knew that one day you would obey him.

So he chose your name from eternity past. If this is you and if this is Christ, he put you into Christ when? Not when you accepted him. That's when it actually happened but when did it happen in God's mind? In eternity past.

You're there in Christ. You're not even born. Even Adam has not been created yet but you are there placed in Christ in terms of the future.

Christ comes and dies on the cross. Hey, you are in him and you die with him. Christ is buried and you're buried with him.

Christ is raised from the dead. Hey, you're in him. You are raised from the dead.

He goes up to the heavenly places and you are there. Ephesians 2.6 We are seated with him in the heavenly places in our spirit. In my body I'm here on the earth.

But Ephesians 2.6 I'm seated with Christ in the heavenly places. That is why it says set your mind on things above. Look at things from God's viewpoint.

When you look at things from God's viewpoint, you will not fight about these silly things that people husband and wife fight about at home. You leave it. You'll say in heaven I'm not going to fight about it.

I look at this from heaven's viewpoint. I'm not going to fight about it here. Your whole life will be changed if you recognize that you were placed in Christ in your Ephesians 2.6 I'm seated in the heavenly places in Christ.

This is what he accomplished on the cross. And when you accept this position the other thing that Jesus accomplished on the cross Colossians chapter 2 is he defeated Satan on the cross. In Colossians 2.15 he took away the armor of all these evil rulers and authorities and defeated them.

In Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 14 it says he became like us that through death he took away the power of Satan and Satan was defeated on the cross. You know that Satan is scared, not of you and me but of

Jesus. I've always seen that when casting out a demon he's scared of Jesus.

If your life is clean you know the demon once said Jesus I know and Paul I know your name will also be there he also I know. Because his life is clean he knows that Satan was defeated on the cross. You never have to fear Satan.

Any of you if you meet a demon possessed person and your life is clean tell that demon to go in Jesus name. One word. I've seen that again and again and again.

With one word the demon goes. Every time we have seen it. You can do that too.

Because he was defeated. That's why I always tell believers to speak to the devil and tell him you were defeated on the cross. All these things happened on the cross.

That is how we build the church. That's why Jesus spoke about building the church and taking up the cross together. The gates of hell, the powers of Satan cannot touch your church.

If you choose the way of the cross. In your personal life in your home life in your relationship in the church. Look at all these people in some churches seeking for position.

Wanting to be elders. Do dead people seek for position? The very fact that you are seeking for a position shows you are not dead. And I have to say to you what Jesus said to Peter.

Get away Satan. Your mind is set on your own interests to be somebody in the church. Not on God's interests.

You are a stumbling block to Jesus Christ. Dead people don't seek their own interests. Dead people don't seek honor.

Dead people don't get offended if somebody does not, somebody rebukes them or somebody does something evil to them or even spits on them, calls them the devil. Do you get offended? With something in the church? Somebody didn't smile at you, somebody didn't do this, somebody didn't do that. You know what I should say to you? Get away Satan.

Your mind is set on your own interests. You are a stumbling block to the church in your hometown. Why? Because you don't die.

We preach in this church the power of the Holy Spirit and the way of death. The two go together. But I've seen that though we preach this for so long very few people are gripped by it.

Their life becomes heavenly. The only thing that can release us from the earth is the cross. The cross slew Jesus and he was released from the earth and the cross slays you and me.

We are released from the earth and we'll be seated with Christ in the heavenly places. Think how your marriage will be if husband and wife are both seated in heaven and they look at everything from heaven's viewpoint. You think you'll be fighting so much with each other if you're seeing everything that happens from a heavenly standpoint? Not at all.

You'll bring the atmosphere of heaven into your home but the only way to get there is by dying. Even Jesus went up to heaven through death and you and I can go there too. That is the full message of the

gospel.

And such people can build a church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Let's pray. Think about what you just heard.

You don't have to judge your wife or husband or anybody else in the church. Ask yourself whether you have chosen this way of death that Jesus chose wholeheartedly to your own will. Or there's something inside you standing up saying I will not sit down.

I will not die. Then you're a stumbling block to the work of God. Even if you're an elder brother, you're a stumbling block to the work of God.

You've got to repent. This is the reason why you're not filled with the Holy Spirit. Choose the way of death and the fullness of the Spirit will come very soon.

Heavenly Father, I believe there are at least some here who are seeking you with their whole hearts who want to go this way. Oh God, please give them an assurance in their heart that you heard their crying. You'll meet with them.

You'll fill them with the Holy Spirit and the rivers will flow through them. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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