

# What Christ Did for Me (Zac's Testimony)

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen shares his testimony of how he came to faith and how he learned to live by faith, trusting in God's word and sovereignty.*

**Duration:** 1:00:30

**Scripture:** Exodus 22:1, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 23:43, John 7:38, Acts 2:4, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 2:2

**Topics:** "Personal Testimony", "Surrender To God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the disconnect between the captivating nature of worldly entertainment and the perceived lack of interest in church and sermons. The speaker questions why God, as the creator of intelligence, does not help make church and sermons as interesting as secular television programs. The speaker emphasizes the importance of taking God's word seriously and ignoring the opinions of others and one's own reasoning. The speaker also shares personal experiences of surrendering ambitions and giving all to God, highlighting the emptiness of worldly pursuits compared to a life dedicated to God.

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## Transcript

We read the testimony of the Apostle Paul three times in the Acts of the Apostles. One is where Luke himself describes it. Luke wrote Acts of the Apostles in Acts chapter 9, under the scripture.

And then, twice, when Paul himself gave his testimony, in Acts 22, when he was testifying to the Jews, and later on, in Acts 26, when he was testifying to King Agrippa, where he gave testimony concerning his salvation, how he was initially saved on the road to Damascus. We don't see him giving a message there, because his testimony itself was a message. And then, particularly in 2nd Corinthians, and also in some other passages of scripture, we find Paul giving his testimony concerning his inner life.

2nd Corinthians especially, if you want to know the inner life of the Apostle Paul, that made him the man he became. Mighty servant of God, you have the secret in 2nd Corinthians, the type of life he lived, the principles he lived by. And other passages also, like 1 Corinthians 9, 2nd Thessalonians 3, Acts chapter 20, where he gives his testimony concerning his attitude to money.

These things have encouraged me to give my own testimony at different times. I've usually been very reluctant to give a personal testimony. In fact, out of maybe nearly 2,000 tapes we have in India on different subjects, 2,000 of my tapes, different languages, I don't think there's even one which contains

merely my testimony.

I've been reluctant to do that because of one reason. It's much more difficult when giving a testimony to give the glory to God alone than it is when preaching a message. And I know that the most important thing that every servant of the Lord who stands up to preach the word has to be careful about is to ensure that people are not drawn to him, but to Christ.

If I have drawn people to myself, I would consider myself a failure in my ministry. But if I have drawn people beyond myself to Jesus, then I have been a success. I see a lot of people who are drawing people to themselves, and it's the one thing I have feared throughout these 29 years of being in churches, and that's one reason why we have about 70 elder brothers who look up to me like a spiritual father, and I almost never write to them because I'm afraid of this one thing.

Lest they look to me for every little thing instead of clinging to the Lord. I say, listen, I'm available, but you don't have to depend on me. I want you to grow up quickly and lean upon the Lord.

And so it's with a lot more fear and trembling than in preaching that I stand today to give a testimony. And I want to say one more thing, and that is another reason why I've been reluctant to give my testimony is because some people who have been tremendously helped by my ministry, or who admire me a lot, you can't help that, can make that like a standard to follow. And I wanted to say right at the beginning that there's only one standard to follow, and that's Jesus Christ.

Only one example. And if you see something in a man that helps you to follow Jesus, follow that. There may be other things in that man which you cannot follow because no man is perfect, and if you know me close enough, you'll discover lots of areas where you shouldn't be following me.

But most of them could be areas where I myself don't have light. You know, all of us have got blind spots. We don't see ourselves in certain areas.

And the other thing is we're pressing on to perfection. Like I read somewhere, somebody said, if I'm here, if I can teach you something, it's because I've been a patient in this hospital a little longer than you have been. I'm not the doctor, I'm not the nurse, but one of the patients has been here a little longer, so I can show you where the rooms are and where you go for your x-rays and things like that.

So that's all. Jesus is the only doctor who can help us. And no man's life is a standard to follow.

God works in different ways. God doesn't make people who look exactly alike, like made out of cookie cutters. When a man builds a row of apartments, they all look alike, but along the same road, when God plants trees from the same type of seed, each tree is different.

That's the difference between man's work and God's work. Man's work is uniform and dead. God's work is with variety, but with life.

So remember this, that it's the general principles in any man's testimony, whether Paul's or anybody else's, that we are to follow. And God deals with each of us differently because each of us is precious in God's eyes. Every single one of you is a special child to God.

And no one is His special favorite. I'm no special favorite, you're no special favorite, but you're a special child of God. And He loves you specially.

He doesn't put you in a classroom and teach you all together like human teachers. He gives each child individual attention. He knows where you're weak, which subjects you're weak in, and He helps you.

He gives you extra coaching in those subjects. So if you find certain temptations coming your way frequently, you know why it is. Because God sees you're a little weak in that subject, and He wants you to pass.

He wants you to come through. He wants you to be a person. I was born in a Christian family.

It was when the Second World War had just started, November 39. And my father was already born again. But it was a family, I mean, it's a church very similar to the Roman Catholic Church.

It's called in India the Syrian Orthodox Church. I grew up in the part of India where, I mean, I belong to that community in India where we've had Christianity for 2,000 years. The Apostle Thomas came to that part of India in 55 A.D. He took the command of Jesus seriously to go to the outermost parts of the earth and be His witness, and he came to India.

And he was killed in India. But because of that, we've had Christianity in that part of India for 2,000 years. That doesn't mean that I can trace my ancestry all that time, but I know at what stage people became Christians.

I'm sure before Thomas came, they were all Hindus, but they became Christians. And it's mostly nominal Christianity. But my father was a believer, and so from my earliest recollection, when I was a little boy, I grew up in the capital city of India, in Delhi.

He sent me to a Sunday school where I heard the Gospel, to a Brethren Assembly Sunday school. So I had the privilege of hearing the Gospel from childhood. And because it was a God-fearing family and having heard the Gospel from childhood, I didn't do any serious crime.

God protected me from the common sins that many people fall into because of this type of upbringing. And so one of the problems that such children have is they don't have a crisis in their being born again. Being born again is a crisis, but many people like me cannot pinpoint the date or the time or the hour.

In fact, I don't even know the year. And the reason is because I must have asked Jesus to come into my heart, I don't know, 100 times, 500 times, I've got no idea. I've got no... I lost track of how many times I did that.

I don't even know from what age, perhaps from the age of 13 or so. And the reason I can't say is because I was never sure. I would go to a meeting, I'd hear the Gospel that I'm a sinner, and I had no problem accepting that, that I wasn't this gross type of sinner like other people, but I knew that I was a bad boy inside.

And I knew that Jesus died for me and I asked him to come to my heart, but nothing happened. You know, I heard other people speak about lights and electric shocks, and I never seem to get anything like that. So I never heard a voice from heaven or any such thing, so how do I know? How could I be sure? So just to make sure, I didn't want to go to hell.

So just to make sure, the next time I was meeting again, I'd say, Lord, please come to my heart. And it went on and on and on and on and on and on for years. Now, I remember sometime after I was saved, I

attended a meeting where I heard a murderer giving his testimony in India.

It was fantastic. He said how he was a gang of murderers and he pulled out people's intestines and all that graphic description of what all he did and then how he was going along to murder somebody and he saw some girls and he decided to follow them first. They went to a meeting and he got converted there.

I sat there and said, boy, I wish I had a testimony like that. I was young and I was stupid. And, you know, because I was seeking honor.

You know, you got a lot of honor if you get up and say you did all that type of stuff and then you got converted. And I didn't have the wisdom that time to think that that was just seeking honor, that I wanted a testimony like that. But later on when I got a little wiser, I said, well, thank God I didn't pull out anybody's intestines or do anything like that or harm anybody in any way.

But, you know, some people are discouraged because they don't have a spectacular testimony where they had a great crisis and crash, bang and all that and all of a sudden they became new people. Well, it didn't happen like that with me. And, you know, through the years what I discovered that a lot of people who hear those type of testimonies sit and wonder, well, what can God do with me? And I don't have that type of conversion.

And I discovered through the years that my unspectacular type of conversion where I don't even know the date or the year helps a lot of other people who are not helped by that other type of testimony. So, you know, God allows us to come to Christ in our own way because there are certain people whom only you can help with your testimony. And He doesn't want you to be like anybody else.

So I learned that right at the beginning of my Christian life. I would say over a period of at least six years I didn't know if I was saved or not. If you had asked me, I'd say I hope so.

And so I can fully understand when somebody says today I don't know whether I am saved or not. I hope so. I can sympathize with that fully because I went through that for years.

But I'll tell you another thing and that is in all those years when I was unsure I never grew spiritually. I don't know whether I was saved or not but I certainly didn't grow. And then I can only... I joined the Navy.

I joined the Navy at a very young age. When I was 15 years old I finished school and joined the Indian Navy as an officer. And I was earning a good salary.

And I saw the emptiness of the world and it's an amazing thing that because of that that early Sunday school of teaching and God-fearing home upbringing it kept me from gross sins even when I was in the Navy. And even though I don't even know whether I was saved. But I saw the emptiness of the world pretty soon and I was very thankful for that.

Then one day, I still can't explain how and that also I don't even remember the date I've got a rough idea it was sometime in July 1959 I was just reading I had a habit of reading the scriptures chapter a day or some passage of scripture every day. And that day I came to this verse in John chapter 6 and verse 37 where Jesus says All that the Father gives to me shall come to me and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out. And I've come to see something that even faith is a gift of God.

Because I just got faith that day. I don't know how. I read that verse I've probably read it before I've probably read it many times.

And as you read it today it may mean nothing to you. But to me that day it meant everything. And I read it and I said well Lord I've certainly come to you many times just once.

And I felt as if the Lord was saying to me Him that cometh to me I'll never cast out. And as if the Lord was saying well if you've done your part you think I haven't done mine? I've accepted. But it wasn't a voice.

You know I want to tell you for encouragement in my whole life I have never once heard the audible voice of God. I've never seen a light. I've never seen an angel.

I've never been taken up to heaven nor had any of these experiences. I'm an ordinary person just like you. And the reason I've wanted some of these experiences sometimes to tell you also just like you.

And the Lord's as I understand it right now I feel the Lord's allowed it like this so that I walk by faith and not by sight. And you know one of the verses that's tremendously encouraged me in this matter it's an amazing verse. In John chapter 20 it says when Thomas said I will not believe unless I see.

And Jesus appeared to him and then Jesus tells him in John chapter 20 and verse 29 Thomas because you've seen me you have believed blessed are they who did not see and yet believed. And that taught me that a faith that comes through hearing an audible voice seeing a light like some people testify I don't question them but maybe they did see a light. The apostle Paul did.

So some of it is genuine some of it is because they've got a very vivid imagination. But I discovered from this verse that it is actually better according to Jesus you are more blessed if you can believe without these external you know voices and lights and signs. And I think most Christians belong to this more blessed category.

Because sometimes you can hear some great preacher stand up there and say well he heard the voice of God or he saw a vision and you can sit there and feel so inferior and say boy I wish I could see that. Remember this verse then, you are more blessed because you did see and you still believed not because you didn't see but you believed even though you didn't see if you don't believe you are not more blessed. Please remember that.

It's a tremendous thing to live by faith. Faith is a great thing. So I said Lord I believe your word that you accepted me and I don't know what happened I had no experience nothing but when I look back now over 45 years it was like my dropping an anchor and my ship has been moored to that place never once have I doubted my salvation from that day onwards.

I don't know whether you've seen ships that anchor. I've been in the navy you know when a ship is anchored down there in the rough sea the ship will swing right around go in a circle around that anchor but it never loses its grip down below on the earth below. So my life has also swung around there have been a lot of tossings and turnings and ups and downs but the anchor has always held that I was absolutely sure that I was saved my sins were forgiven so that was the beginning and from that time onwards God's been leading me step by step through many things one thing I can say that when I gave myself to the Lord at that time it was total 100% I didn't give myself a little bit and then sometime later a little bit the picture I got in my mind was that the Lord had given himself completely for me on Calvary's cross and I felt the least I could do was to give myself completely to Him I saw myself even though I hadn't done gross external sins

I saw that I didn't see sin as clearly then as I see it now, I see sin a million times more clearly today and that's not an exaggeration a million times more clearly today than I saw it when I was first converted 45 years ago and that teaches me that you don't need to see sin so clearly you can't see sin so clearly when you're first saved, you got to get close to God to see sin clearly and you don't have to see sin as all as gruesome awesomeness, I mean wickedness to be converted if you see that it was your sin that crucified Jesus Christ on the cross if if you can hear your voice among those people who shouted crucify Him, crucify Him can you recognize your voice there? if you can see your hand hammering those nails into His hands and feet by what I mean by that is I'm just using picture language that it was your sin my sin because of which He hung on the cross, I hope you know that it was not the nails that held Him to the cross but your sin, mine as He hung there He thought of you and me when He was in Gethsemane and He thought of some other way of getting out of that situation, Father can I escape this? can you let this cup pass from me and one hour He struggled with it the thought that came to me was if I go away from here what will happen to Zach? what will happen to you? and He said ok, I'll go through it have you seen it like that personally? that He saw you you, you got to see it personally Lord Jesus you saw me you knew my name even though I didn't exist then your Almighty God He knew my name before you came from heaven you knew my name and you thought of me when you were in Gethsemane and you did not take that escape route go straight to heaven but you decided to go through the cross for my sake and you gave all what am I going to give? 50%? 10%?

I decided to give all and I don't regret it I can say to all of you young people to give your all when you are young totally completely you won't regret it I look back over my life and I have no regrets I had great ambitions when I joined the Navy my aim was to rise up to the top and be the Admiral of the Indian Navy and I was working towards it I topped my class and I said I'm going to get there and then Jesus came into my heart and changed the direction of my life completely he showed me all this is empty it's vapor you know like the steam that comes out of your kettle you see it you look this way and you turn back and it's gone all the honor of the world is like that all the comfortable life that a man can live with all the money he earns is like that all the pleasure you can get with

a lifetime of sin it's like that in a moment it's gone if you can see that when you were 19 or 20 like I was you are really blessed because you got a whole life ahead of you if you can just see that when you are 70 that's also good because you got at least a few more years but it's much better if you see it when you are a young teenager that all of that is empty it's all empty it's a tremendous deception of satan when he makes you think that there is something in that vapor in that steam vapor the bible says what's your life? it's like a vapor it's there a moment and gone the next so I'm very thankful I could see that all the honor of the world and everything I was living for aiming for, my ambitions my hopes, my plans were all like vapor and I said Lord I don't know what you are going to

call me to do but you can have all of my life 100% from today the next step the Lord that I was told by others I should take is water baptism I didn't take that for a long time because somebody gave me this argument you know first of all I studied the scriptures I knew there are some people who are baptized as children and some people are baptized as adults and I said Lord I want to see what your word says and I read the word of God and I found there is another verse about child baptism so I knew that baptism was necessary but then somebody told me hey listen in these churches with baptized believers everybody is a believer but in this church where you are coming from they are all nominal Christians they are not born again if you get baptized they will throw you out and you will never get

a chance to witness to them over there and the other ones who need to hear not this group of baptized believers they already say it I was young I didn't know the verse which said trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean to your own understanding so I said hey that is a good argument that that's right these are the fellows who need to hear and if I get baptized this church will throw me out so I better stay here so for one and a half years I didn't obey God because of this human reasoning you know very often I have seen believers who they argue their way out of a command of God with a human reason and if they continue like that thankfully I continued only for a year and a half I tell you they are doomed I don't know whether you are using your human reason to argue against

something which is so clear in God's word I want to say you are in a very dangerous position you probably don't realize it that's the reason why you never seem to progress I did not progress in those one and a half years I had come to salvation I was sure but there was something holding up and every time I knelt down to pray I felt God was saying if you are not listening to me why should I listen to you right that was also logic if you are not listening to me why should I listen to you well after a year and a half I got frustrated and I said Lord I don't care which church in the world throws me out I am going to obey your word and that's been my attitude since then I began to study the scriptures and I said Lord if I ever see a single thing in this book which everybody in the world says

it's different I will do what your book says I don't care if every church in the world teaches something else I don't care if every Christian in the world teaches something else and practices something else I am going to follow your word and if there is anything in my life any tradition that I have got which is contrary to your word I will throw it away in a moment and I will do what your word says and that's another thing I have tried to follow for more than 40 years and I want to say it's blessed me tremendously it's made me experience some of these wonderful promises in scripture and I know why a lot of Christians remain frustrated even though they go to conference after conference after conference and meeting after meeting after meeting it's because they are not quick to obey and if

you don't have that habit I want to encourage you to develop it now be quick to obey now if you are not sure whether God has said it wait wait 50 years if you like but once you are sure God has said it some people say how do I know this is the Bible is God's word well if you got a problem with that settle that first but don't be a hypocrite and say this is God's word but well I don't think I should do that that's hypocrisy then say I don't believe it's God's word we got to be honest or you believe something there is not there are people Christians who say that's not for today that's for first century be honest and take a pen and scratch out that verse and say I don't that's not for today you'll have a pretty scratched up Bible after sometime I don't have anything scratched up because I

just want to be honest it's for today so it's because of dishonesty God sees these fellows are dishonest they say this is God's word and they treat it so lightly you wouldn't treat a court order lightly you wouldn't treat an instruction from a sheriff or a police person lightly or from the government or the FBI or something sent you something like an instruction you would obey it immediately oh but this is God's word we say and you don't tremble at it God doesn't even look at you you know I want to tell you a little secret it's not a secret it's written in Isaiah 66 God says I will look and the meaning is I will look with favor Isaiah 66 verse 2 if you want God to look upon you with favor I want God to look upon me with favor all the time I know I can face the whole world if God almighty

creator of this universe looks upon me with favor that's the only thing I want I can stand against 6 billion people in the whole world they are like the dust in the balance the bible says that all the people of earth

are like the dust in the balance you know in a weighing balance sometimes there is a little bit of dust it doesn't even move the scales and God says all the people in the world are like the small dust of the balance and if almighty God is on my side I don't have to worry just make sure God is on your side make sure God can look upon you with favor and God will look upon you with favor it says in Isaiah 66 verse 2 when you tremble at God's word you read something and you tremble oh God I haven't obeyed that yet what an arrogant person I am to think that I can think about it

whether to obey you or not oh the number of arrogant proud conceited snobbish believers who think that they can question God's word I am not at all surprised that God punished them saying you will never grow in your Christian life you don't deserve to grow if you don't tremble at God's word you are a hypocrite you say this is God's word and you don't tremble at it then be more honest like that atheist and say I don't believe this is God's word there is just some fellow called Isaiah wrote this or some other chap called John wrote it that guy is more honest he doesn't tremble but if you say this is God's word I would recommend that you start trembling at it and the Bible says that demons tremble because they know the reality of God you just start trembling from today at the words of God

that you have not obeyed and see the difference it can make in your life I guarantee in one year you will progress more than you progress in all your Christian life because God will begin to look upon you with favor any little thing don't bother about your pastor or your preacher or your brother or uncle or priest or XY or anyone else believes it or not it's not important because God said it that's it the same thing with God's promises it's like one man of God I heard he put it like this God said it I believe it and that settles it it's the end of the matter no further discussion and that's why God used that man greatly so that's one thing I learned at that time that I had to take God's word seriously and I had to completely ignore what other people said and what churches said and

especially my own reason the arguments of logic and things like that and so I decided to get baptized and when I got baptized immediately the Lord showed me the next step see I've discovered that God doesn't show us the blueprint for our whole life he's never shown me the blueprint for my whole life he shows me the next step and I'll never see the second one till I take the first one and you'll never see the third one till you take the second one and you'll never see the 56th one till you take the 55th one and maybe there are a lot of steps ahead of you that you could have taken in the last few years and God doesn't show it to you you think you can see it yourself you'll never see it till God shows it to you there are obvious steps that I never saw till God had mercy on me, showed me you

want to see the next step, I'll show it to you, take this one first and for me at that time the step was just simply getting baptized in water and getting thrown out of that church I belong to, that was it I'm willing to be thrown out of anything if God accepts me so the next thing God showed me after that was making restitution to the people I had wronged in my previous life in my unconverted days I had cheated the government of taxes and the Lord said you got to repay it so I sat down and calculated how much I had to repay the government in taxes I had cheated and I wasn't very sure I was unsettled about two first one was about 20% more than the other and which do you think I finally decided on like you, the lower one I said I think I'll you know our love of money in our flesh makes

let's choose the lower one which is 20% less than the other one one day I was reading my normal bible reading and I read there in Numbers 5 verse 7 that if you do something wrong and you make restitution you must do it in full and add the 20% and give it to the one who is wrong how directly can God's word speak to you it is absolutely amazing it is almost as though Moses wrote that 3500 years ago inspired by

the Holy Spirit knowing that there is going to be one fellow who is thinking about whether to add 20% to that restitution and he puts it in there yeah I've had one or two amazing experiences like that God's word is so powerful but I'd never have seen it if I didn't have a habit of reading God's word every day do you have that habit? do you know what you're missing? just by not reading

God's word every day, letting God speak to your heart I thank God that as soon as I was born again I started crying out for the milk of God's word like it says and that's the thing that sustained me the milk became meat after some time and it's made me grow so if you don't have that habit I want to encourage you to develop that habit it says in Psalm 119 in verse 105 God's word is a lamp to our feet and that means it's like you know if you're walking along a dark pitch dark road at night and you've only got a small torch light with you if you don't have a torch light you don't see the whole road in front of you you just see enough for the next step and if you want to see further what do you have to do? you've got to take that step and then the light shows you a little more then you take

that step and you see a little more and progressively you go miles along that road a thousand miles there's an old Chinese proverb that says a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and then another and then another and so is the Christian life and so has it been with me step by step as I've taken ones the Lord's shown me other ones and I thank the Lord for the way he's led like that step by step then once I was witnessing to somebody, a fellow naval officer and he began to ask me about when I was witnessing to him he was a Muslim they don't believe that Jesus died they believe he just swooned on the cross and that the cool air of the tomb sort of revived him so he asked me when I was witnessing to him, he said was Jonah alive or dead in the whale's belly?

I said he was alive well he said, didn't your Jesus say that as Jonah was in the whale's belly so he would be in the heart of the earth so was he alive or dead in the tomb?

I got stuck I didn't have an answer I went back to my room and I said Lord I am so ashamed of myself there must be an answer to this I don't know the answer this guy's really got me and I decided that day that I would study the scriptures and that if there's an answer to any question in the Bible I would know it and if there's an answer to any question in my life for which the answer was in the Bible I would know it and I studied and I never stopped you know it was a Muslim man who challenged me to study the scriptures how God used that it's really amazing I know the answer today the heart of the earth was not the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea that's on the surface of the earth the heart of the earth was where paradise was located and that's where Jesus was alive when his body died but his

spirit was alive with a thief on the cross in paradise and the heart of the earth for 3 days and 3 nights however that's besides the point but once I began to study God's word I found a tremendous burden in me to share little that I knew I knew very little if I was in grade 1 I could teach those who were not yet in grade 1 a little later if I moved up to grade 2 I could teach those who were in grade 1 it's a progressive thing if you keep learning and obeying God can teach you, God can use you to teach many other people more and more and progressively I saw that God was giving me grace to understand scripture as I spent hours and hours and hours everyday reading his word meditating, studying using a concordance, studying, studying, studying and I was doing a secular job I've never been to

a bible school or any such thing, I'm thankful for that but in the midst of my secular job I'd get time to study the word and obey it and little by little God gave me understanding about many things and as I during my vacation times from the navy I used to travel to other places and preach God's word along with other

servants of God and I found gradually that God was giving me an ability to speak his word now I didn't have that ability naturally I was not the type of person who would get up and take part in public speaking in school or anything like that, I was very shy, timid reserved, I'm like that except when I had to get up and speak God's word and I said Lord, I find I know the word but I don't have power I need power it's so difficult for me even to preach a brief sermon, it's a

struggle I have to prepare so much and with so much struggle maybe I can preach half a sermon and yet your word says rivers of living water will flow out of those who believe in you and I knew that I needed something more than the knowledge of God's word I knew that I needed the power of God's Holy Spirit if I were to serve him, I saw that that was what those early Christians had which a lot of Christians around me at least in the assembly I was in didn't seem to have, they had a great intellectual knowledge of God's word, they could explain this and compare this with that and argue about this and that and the other but they didn't have the radiance of the beauty of Jesus Christ in their life and they didn't have I mean the sermons I heard in those assemblies were so boring, absolutely

boring, I went to another assembly it was equally boring there, I knew there was something wrong with, something is wrong here this is not the way, we can't say that Jesus is in a meeting if the whole thing is boring you know for example a television program how can people, children even sit and watch a television program for 2-3 hours and not get bored who gave that television program producer that intelligence you say that was your father your father in heaven created that intelligence in that person to produce such a fantastic program that grips people's minds for so long and your father will not help you to make church so interesting that it will grip people for even one hour, something is wrong your connection with your father is wrong it's true that that person's intelligence came

from the creator who happens to be your father and mine and I thought if this creator could give that person the ability to produce a worldly secular television program which is mainly meant to lead people astray and grip people's attention for so long or a movie for example why can't this father help me when I'm doing his work to make church and a message and a sermon more interesting than that TV program that was the challenge that came to me and that's the challenge that still is before me that Lord, I want to speak God's word in such a way that not even one minute is boring and you can do that because I know of a lot of people who produce television programs for 2 hours and not one minute is boring and if you gave those people that ability of course it's not the devil who gave them,

the devil they're using that ability which God gave for the devil, that's another thing but the ability was given by God and this God is my father and this work that I'm doing is God's work that fellow is not doing God's work, he's doing the devil's work, I don't know whether that challenges you but it's challenged me continuously so many of our young people, so many of our children are driven away from church because they honestly say Dad, it's boring and they're right, it is boring don't you think we have failed our children, we have failed our young people to catch them by their neck and say come on you gotta come to the meeting, you don't have to catch them by their neck and put them in front of a television to watch that why is that?

I think we have failed the Lord because we're too lazy to seek God for the anointing of the Holy Spirit we think we can do it we can't anyway I know I need the power of the Holy Spirit then people told me, oh you go to this particular group they're always talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit I said ok, I didn't know anything about them but I went there it was like a lot of noise and things that didn't particularly attract me, it didn't seem to be the sweet gentle spirit of Christ and I came away from there and I saw a lot of them

loved a lot of money too, ooh what a tremendous love of money, and I said that can't be the spirit of Christ, Jesus didn't love money he never asked people for money, when I see these fellows, they're always asking for money so I don't want that spirit,

I don't want to get a spirit that comes upon me that asks people for money no, that can't be the right thing you know if you keep your wits about you when you go around to these different Christian groups that itself will protect you, you don't need great discernment or any such thing and I came home and I said Lord I don't want that but I do want what Peter, James and John got on the day of Pentecost that I want, and I began to seek God and it didn't happen overnight, but I can tell you that over a period of time God met with me and that changed the direction of my life one of the things that happened at that time was I had this great burden and I felt a great burden to serve the Lord full time, I was still in the as I was reading scripture one day the Lord spoke to me about Isaiah 49

that was my daily portion, it was such a clear word to my heart where He was calling me out to serve Him and just when I was thinking about it and another servant of God whom I respect very highly in India came to me at exactly the same time and asked me whether I was considering quitting my job, it was like a confirmation from outside of what the Lord had already called me for, and I saw something similar later on when I studied the scriptures in Acts chapter 13, where you know when they were all praying together, the Holy Spirit said obviously through some servant of God there set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have already called them so Saul later on became Paul, had already got a call from God, but he was waiting for a confirmation and here comes along

another servant of God and says, hey, I think you're called, which the Lord confirms our call by a godly older brother giving us advice and I'm very thankful for that confirmation that came from another source and that taught me more of my dependence on the body of Christ that I was not called to a lone sort of ministry so I decided to resign and I put my resignation to the Indian Navy and they refused to accept it because when I said the Lord Jesus Christ has called me for his service, they couldn't care less who the Lord Jesus Christ was, they said he trained you to serve us, you've got to serve for 20 years so they said no and a lot of other believers in my home church there who didn't believe that I was called, they said see Zach, you were wrong, it was all your imagination, you're

not called, you just felt like quitting, that's all, and I was absolutely confused, I was 24 years old and I didn't know where to turn most of the believers around me discouraged me but there again, I found scripture helped me and I sought the Lord, Lord what does this mean, I thought you called me and I felt the Lord say to me what did Moses do when Pharaoh said no I knew the answer, he went back again Pharaoh said no again, he went back again, then I knew what I'm supposed to do, there's an answer in scripture to every single problem you can ever face in life, I found that in 40 years, every single problem, if you know where to find it, and I went back and after 2 years they let me go it was quite a miracle and that was 37 years ago it's nearly 38 now and when I came out to serve the

Lord full time I thought full time workers, Christian workers it must be, being in their midst must be like being in heaven what a shock I got when I came closer to churches and all the politics and people trying to push other people down and people running out for money and I got a rude shock when I saw all these things and it was so difficult to find occasionally I would see some really godly saint, but they were so few, most of the people I met were crooks I'm sorry to say that, but it was true they were lovers of money they were lovers of honor they were seeking to make a living for themselves and all these type of things and I again became a very lonely person and I was defeated by sin also at the same time I'd go to different

much older people and say brother can you help me in this

they wouldn't give me an answer and I didn't know where to turn I never heard anyone preaching about victory and that's what I needed I mean here were people on speaking on what the tabernacle meant and all this, that was not my problem I didn't want to know what the tabernacle meant I wanted to know how to get victory over dirty pots, they said tell me that, don't tell me what this high priest garments stand for and all that so you know I began to think boy these fellows must be very holy guys, they don't seem to have the problem I have but later on I discovered it's because they didn't want to talk about those things unless they were defeated themselves, that's the reason I went to one older brother and said brother can you just tell me how to get victory over dirty pots and he changed

the subject immediately I got the answer that means he didn't know what the answer was and that's the condition with a lot of people, I was a young person and I didn't know whom to turn to and I struggled and God began to show me and the thing that finally changed my life around was when I saw this great truth, that Jesus became a man just like me so there are two things that have first was my assurance of salvation after that there are two things that have really changed my life I would say one was the baptism in the Holy Spirit believing in God for the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve him, for example the supernatural gift of what I call prophesying, which is what I'm doing right now, preaching God's word in a way that edifies encourages builds up, it's a supernatural

gift, it's not given to everybody it's given to those whom God calls but everybody can have some gift in the body in my case, the bible says covet to prophesy and I coveted to prophesy, never in my life coveted a house or land or money, but I did covet to prophesy and I've done that for all these 40 years if you don't value something, God doesn't give it to you if God has called you to preach, I would encourage you to seek God for the supernatural anointing of the Holy Spirit to be able to preach that word effectively in a way which is more interesting than any television program, it should be like that, if it's a genuine anointing of God's Holy Spirit and I long for even a greater measure of that anointing in my own life but it was not just in preaching, that's one thing and the second

thing is the humanity of Jesus Christ the fact that Jesus became a man just like me, was tempted just like me and did not use his resources as God though he was God, he did not use those resources he lived as a man, otherwise he couldn't be an example for me so that he could say follow me, he used the power of the Holy Spirit which he offers me as well these are the two things that changed my life, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the supernatural gifts that accompany it and seeing the humanity of Jesus that he was just like me, and that's why that's been the major themes of my message everywhere I was in a in 74 I was at the rock bottom of my I hadn't seen these two things clearly, I was not really fully baptized in the Holy Spirit I had some measure of anointing but not as much as I

wanted I hadn't seen at that time clearly that Jesus came in my flesh and I was absolutely defeated I was preaching but I was defeated and defeated and defeated and I said Lord I can't continue like this you've got to do something otherwise I'll quit preaching altogether and go and do a secular job, I'll still be a Christian but I won't preach because I don't want to be a hypocrite and that's the time when the Lord told me, asked me whether I'd be willing to get up in that Baptist church where I was preaching every Sunday and get up and confess that I was a hypocrite publicly publicly and I said Lord I'm willing, I don't care what anybody thinks about me I want to finish this hypocrisy, I don't want to pretend that I am something which I'm not and that was the day the Lord turned my life

around January 1975 my whole life turned around that day and it's never been the same since the Lord met with me that day, filled me with the Holy Spirit and then I began to preach the baptism of the Holy Spirit in that church and pretty soon they kicked me out that is the best thing they ever did and so I'm very thankful to them and so I left and I didn't know what to do my wife and I were at home one or two other families decided they'd also leave because they were blessed a lot by my fellowship ministry and we started a meeting in our home August 1975 I didn't know what lay ahead we didn't plan to start a church we were just a bunch of people who were kicked out of somewhere ok, we decided to pray and wait on the Lord and from there through the years God has our own church has grown to

over 200 people where we live and to 40 other churches that God has planted, particularly in remote villages in some places where there's never been a church in 2000 years so and I can tell you honestly you folks may not believe it and it's not false humility I know it had nothing to do with me it was God working supernaturally through His Holy Spirit for me that's an absolute reality, every time I speak I know it's not me, it's the Holy Spirit and when I see what God is doing in different places it's not me, it's the Holy Spirit so I want to encourage you to believe that God can do that through anyone but God doesn't force you into anything at each point He'll ask you, are you willing to give up that I know at one time what God had to give me to give up was greatness in the world I

wanted to be a great man and that's the time I got converted and I said Lord I chucked that and after some time the next thing God asked me to give up was being great in the Christian world because in India I was getting more well known and all that and God said are you willing to chuck all that and just be great before me I said sure so sometimes God may put a test before you are you seeking somebody's approval are you seeking somebody's honor are you trying to please some man, some group of men some church, some leader well God will never lead you forward till you say Lord I don't care for the approval of any human being Paul said if I seek to please men, Galatians 1.10 I can never be a servant of Christ so that's the only thing we have to do and God does not ask you to be able but

available if you are available He'll give you the ability that's what I've discovered through the years and so life has been very exciting it's been very wonderful how God led me to be married to someone who had similar desire to follow the Lord we have four boys all of whom are born again and that also is not because we did everything right I think my wife and I did a lot of wrong things as parents made lots and lots of mistakes but we pray that we can say we kneel down and ask God to forgive us our sins our failures our failures as husband, wife, father, mother and ask God to have mercy upon us and bring up our children for His glory despite all our mistakes and that's what He did so I can't say that I did it all perfectly as a father I didn't I didn't know I didn't have anybody to

teach me when I was a young father what I should do or how I should bring up my children I saw my need and I cried out to God so you don't have to be discouraged if you made a lot of mistakes in your life I made lots and lots of mistakes I don't have time to tell you all the mistakes that will take a few days but there were many stupid things that I did as a young person many many stupid things but God has been tremendously merciful to me and all the time He filled me with the Holy Spirit was when I was at rock bottom to teach me that God doesn't give the Holy Spirit to those who deserve Him or who think they deserve Him or because they have reached some great peak I was not at a peak when I look at my Christian life, God filled me with the Holy Spirit when I was at the lowest lowest

lowest lowest point in my entire life I needed the power of the Holy Spirit God fills with the Holy Spirit those who have a need not those who have attained some great peak where do they need anything I needed

power desperately and I want to say to all of you if you are in a place of desperate need and you are willing to acknowledge it you are not bothered about the shame of publicly saying that you have been a failure you have been a hypocrite you have been giving an impression to people who know you that you are a great saint when you are not one or you are having a great marriage when you are not having a great marriage fooling people I want to say to you take the first step today to be honest and take another step and say Lord I will just do what your word says and I am not bothered

about what any human being says and I believe God can do a miracle with his life if you will trust him honor the Holy Spirit in your life seek his power don't dishonor him by ignoring him in your life you can't make it without the power of the Holy Spirit no matter how much you know his word you cannot serve God without the power of the Holy Spirit you cannot overcome sin without the power of the Holy Spirit and I ask Jesus to show you how he became a man just like you to be an example for you I believe that God can change our lives one last thing don't be satisfied with just a good Christian life God wants you to build his church you may never be an elder you may be a small little part in that church but say Lord I want to do my part to build a local church where I am when Jesus said all

men will know you are my disciples when they see you love one another how can they see that if there is no local church in your place this invisible church that people speak about well how is the world going to see this invisible church it's got to be a local church of people who live together and love one another care for one another that's what the world is going to see and that's why the devil is always hitting at that bringing controversy and fights and quarrels in there may God help us our heavenly father we pray you take these feeble words and help somebody through them this afternoon for your glory we pray

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