

Why God Uses Women

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, gratitude, and serving God faithfully. It highlights the need to focus on glorifying God's name, being grateful for His forgiveness, and being willing to serve without seeking recognition. The speaker shares personal experiences and insights on dealing with sin, expecting gratitude, and the significance of humility in serving God effectively.

Scripture: Luke 17:10, Matthew 6:9, Luke 7:36, 1 Peter 3:7, James 4:6, Proverbs 22:4, Philippians 2:3, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Humility", "Gratitude in Service"

Description

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Transcript

Dear brothers, it is important for all of us to know how much God depends on the men in a church and it's tremendously disappointing to God when men do not take the responsibility of leading, sharing God's Word, teaching, etc. according to the ability God has given you. You can't be a teacher unless God gives you that gift.

I know that very clearly. But you don't have to be a teacher. The main ministry that every believer can have is the ministry of encouragement.

It says in Hebrews in chapter 3 and verse 13, encourage one another day after day, daily, as long as it is called today, because one of these days you will drop in the grave and there will be no more today for you. Don't forget that. So as long as you have life on earth, live it in a worthwhile way so that you don't have any regret when you come to the end of your life.

I have a lot of regrets about my unconverted days or my backsliding days. But from the time I began to take God seriously and from the time CFC started, I have hardly any regrets about the way I try to live. I've made mistakes, not deliberately, but God's been tremendously gracious.

I've tried to express my gratitude to God for saving a wretch like me by saying, Lord, I want to say thank you for what you've done for me. About 30 years ago, I was driving my two-wheeler. I used to travel in a

two-wheeler all the time in Bangalore.

And I was going past a railway crossing. And they're not operated electrically. There's a man there who lifts up one bar and then goes and lifts up the other one and then lowers this one and lowers that one.

It's a pretty slow process. And that day some new guy was operating it. I didn't know that.

I was right in front there on my two-wheeler moped, we called it a moped or scooter. And I went past that. He had lifted up, both were lifted up.

I went past. But before I could cross the other side, he lowered the other side. He was an inexperienced man.

And I'd hit me straight in the chest and I got knocked down on the railway track. And I, my skull cracked. I was unconscious.

I don't know for how long. I still don't remember one bit. You know, how these things happen.

You get a hit on your head and you don't remember it. I still, I mean, that's 30 years ago. I don't remember one bit.

All I remember is that I was coming near this level, what we call a level crossing. And the next thing I remember is my scooter is parked there by somebody and I'm standing up and I'm wondering what happened. And all the traffic is lined up here next to this waiting to cross the railway line.

And fortunately, no train came. But I seemed to be all right. So I rode the scooter and went home.

And anyway, God was merciful to me. And I said, Lord, I have not finished saying thank you to you for dying for me on the cross. CFC started in 1975.

And this was 1993. About 18 years later, we'd seen some churches planted here and there. But I said, that's not enough, Lord.

You've done so much for me. And I pictured myself writing T-H-A-N-K-Y-O-U-L-O-R-D. Thank you, Lord, for dying for me.

And Lord, I haven't finished. I'm halfway through one word. I don't think I've even finished T-H-A-N-K-Y-O-U-L-O-R-D.

I've got a lot more to write. So thank you for sparing my life. That was 30 years ago.

And the Lord's given me 30 years since then. And I'm still writing. I don't know when I'll finish.

Just writing. Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul, for being my savior. And I look at my whole life like that.

I'm just writing something. I'm not doing some great service for God. I'm just writing.

Thank you, Lord. Look at your life like that. Encourage other people to write that with their life, not just with words, but with a lifetime of service, sacrifice unto the Lord.

It says here in Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 13, Hebrews 3, 13. Encourage one another daily. As long as it is called today.

So that nobody gets hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. You don't have to preach a great message to save people from being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is a very deceitful thing.

And what it does is it hardens people's hearts. The deception of it. That people think, ah, this looks like an innocent thing.

Yeah, this movie, it's got a good rating. So, yeah, it's a very moving story and a lovely story. And it's basically most of the 90% a clean movie.

And you watch it. And somewhere in that typical Hollywood method, they'll have about 15 seconds, maybe, or 20 seconds of not nudity, but some type of sexually provocative picture. Otherwise you can't, Hollywood pictures don't work without that.

And the movie itself is maybe two hours or two and half hours. 20 years later, you would have forgotten the whole story. But that 15 seconds of a sexually provocative thing will remain in your mind.

That's what you remember. When you think of that movie, you have forgotten the story, but you remember those 15 seconds. That is the deception of sin.

Oh, it's a clean movie. Yeah, I know. Lovely story.

Very moving. What do you remember after 20 years? That 15 seconds of a sexually provocative answer to yourself. Is it not true of the movies you've seen, of the clean movies you've seen? And we may say, yeah, okay, I asked the Lord to cleanse it.

I know it's cleansed. Why do you remember it after 20 years? Not because God hasn't forgiven. He is forgiven.

It's blotted out by the blood of Jesus. You've repented of it. And it will not come up in the day of judgment.

I fully agree. But it has defiled you. It's weakened you just a wee bit.

You haven't lost your salvation. But it's made you just that wee bit ineffective for the Lord. I don't want that.

I want to learn from that. And it's a sad thing when parents show movies to their children without watching it through themselves and pollute those innocent minds with something which you can never remove. And once they've seen it, I say, hey, you say, children, hey, forget about that part.

How can they forget about it? You can't forget about it. They won't forget about it. That's the thing that will remain in their mind for the next 50 years.

So we must be very careful. Don't pollute your children. They have a whole life to live.

It's called the deceitfulness of sin. That's the expression here in verse 13, the deceitfulness of sin. Sin doesn't come saying, hey, I'm trying to corrupt you.

Are you listening to me? I'm trying to corrupt you. It doesn't come like that. Sin comes saying, this is a clean movie.

It's got a beautiful story. You'll never forget the story. I guarantee you'll forget it.

You won't forget that filthy part, that's all. And it's happened once. And you say, I'll never do it again.

But you do it again. Because another movie comes out with a wonderful theme and wonderful story. Maybe it's a historical one.

Maybe it's a Christian one. All I say is be careful, dear brothers and men are the ones whom God wants. We need to encourage one another, lest we be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

What does sin do to us? It just hardens. A wee bit of your heart gets hardened. I don't want it.

I've had enough of that in my unconverted backslidden days. And I say, Lord, I don't want to do that. I want to make up for my years of backsliding and sin.

And I want to take it seriously. I began to take it seriously only when I was 35. I was converted when I was 19.

Not that I was living in sin. But I hadn't taken the Christian life really seriously. And I never knew the fellowship of a church.

The fellowship of a church is what finally saved me. I'll tell you that. I have, I often use the five fingers to say, we need the blood of Christ.

That's where we begin. You can't do without that. Second, we need the word of God, the Bible.

Very important. Third, we need the Holy Spirit, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, because he's the one who makes us know God as our Father. The Holy Spirit cries out from within us, Father, Daddy, Abba.

It's Romans 8. And then the fourth, we need to know the way of the cross. Luke 9.23. If anyone will come after me, let him pick up his cross daily. Daily is the only thing Jesus said we must do daily.

You read the Bible daily? Excellent. More important than that is take up the cross daily. People never had a Bible for 1400 years after Christ.

The first printed Bible came out in the mid 1400s. How could they read the Bible for 1400 years? But they could take up the cross every day. And fifthly, very, very important, the body of Christ, the local church.

Every one of these I need, the blood of Christ, the word of God, the Holy Spirit, the way of the cross, and the local body of Christ. With that, I can get a firm grip. It's difficult for people to snatch this out of my hand with five fingers.

If I hold it with two fingers, just the blood of Christ and the word of God, yeah, that's enough. But people can pull it out of my hand easily. You want a firm grip on the Christian life, you need all five.

And I sort of understood three or four. The body of Christ, the local church, that's the thing that completed the grip I had on my Christian life. So, even if you're all alone, you know, our local, the first CFC church started in Bangalore, August 17, 1975, with two families, me and my wife, and another brother and his wife.

We were both thrown out of the Baptist church for preaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I said, okay. And we said, where to go now? We're not going to join any of these other churches around.

Okay, we'll meet in our home. And we started there, just two families. And little by little, different people came and went and came and went and came and went.

You know, it says about in Acts 18, I think, or 17, that the people in Athens always wanted to hear something new. There are some Christians like that. They always want to hear something new.

Let me read that verse to you. Acts 17. And the people in Athens, it says, they would always want to hear some, all stood on the, in Acts 17.21. The Athenians and all the strangers who visited there also got the infection.

Acts 17.21. They used to spend all their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new. We found that. We started a new church.

Aha, there were some people who wanted to come and see. They were not interested in following the Lord. Something new.

Let's go and hear it. And you'll find that when you try to start. Some people come along just because it's something new.

They're pretty fed up with what they have. You can't build a church like that. You've got to get people to believe in the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

You've got to repent and walk in the light. You've got to believe that the Bible is the word of God. There's no other word of God on earth.

And all 66 books are God's word. Take it seriously. And you've got to believe in the baptism and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

You can't live the Christian life without it. And you've got to believe that you cannot follow Jesus if you don't take up the cross every day. Then you can build the body.

So some people didn't want all that. And if you don't want all that, I'll tell you, you will not get to that fifth finger. You will not be able to build the body of Christ.

But the Lord had taught us all these other four. And then we paid a price for it as well by being thrown out by many churches. And then the Lord says, I want to build a body.

You know, we say Jesus came to save us from hell. There's no such verse in the Bible. No.

He came to save us from sin. That's very different. Are you more interested in being saved from sin or in being saved from hell? To be saved from hell is a very selfish desire.

To be saved from sin is to glorify God. We need to draw people not to be saved from hell, not to say, hey, you go to hell if you don't believe in Christ. That's not what I preach.

Sin will ruin your life before you go to hell. It'll ruin your family life. It'll ruin your children.

You need to be saved from sin right now. That's the first promise in the New Testament. Jesus will save you from sin.

How? The blood of Christ, the word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the way of the cross. He'll save you from sin. Then he can build you into the body of Christ.

And then we encourage one another to be saved from the deceitfulness of sin. God needs men for that. And we think of some wonderful women.

When Jesus was born, we read in Luke chapter 2, there's an Anna the prophetess. She lived as a married woman only for seven years, we read there in Luke chapter 2. And up to the age of 84, she was always telling people, there's a Messiah coming, there's a Messiah coming, there's a Messiah coming, till one day God gave her the privilege at the age of 84 or so to see the baby Jesus. And she told everybody about it.

Prophetesses have been very few. She's about the only one we read of in the New Testament. And after the day of Pentecost, we never read of any prophetess except false prophetess.

Revelation read about Jezebel, false prophetess. But in the Old Testament, there were some genuine prophetesses. In the time of Jeremiah, there was a prophetess called Huldah.

And the more famous one is in the book of Judges. I just want to turn you there for a moment. Why did God use a prophetess? It's good to see it in Judges chapter 4. The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord after their leader Ehud died.

And so as a punishment, the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, and who had an army whose commander was Sisera. And the sons of Israel cried to the Lord, because that man had 900 iron chariots, and he oppressed the sons of Israel for severely for 20 years. That was how God punished Israel when they went away from him, worshipping idols and going into adultery and all that.

He hand them over to enemies who would oppress them for 20 years, and they would pray, just like they prayed in Egypt, and God delivered them. This happened very frequently in the book of Judges. And then God would raise up very often a man.

But in this case, most of the judges, all the judges in the book of Judges were men, including Samson and others. But he was a woman. When they cried out to God, he raised up a woman.

Why a woman? The only woman judge in the book of Judges? There's four. Deborah, a prophetess, was judging. The question is, why did God raise up a woman? I'll tell you, because there were no men fit to be judges.

But she recognized that she needed a man to lead. She was a very humble sister. So she used to sit and judge, verse 5, and she knew that you need to get a man to lead this army.

So she sent and summoned Barak, the bravest man in Israel. She knew about him. Barak come here and said to him, the Lord, she's a prophetess, remember, tells Barak, the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded you go and march to Mount Tabor.

I want to deliver Israel from this enemy, just like God spoke to Moses. I want to deliver Israel from the Egyptians. This is sort of a repeat of that situation.

The Lord has commanded, go and march to Mount Tabor and take 10,000 men. And here's a promise, just like the Lord told Israel, I will defeat the Egyptians. I will draw out Sisera and all his chariots and troops and everything.

And I will give him into your hand. And the bravest man in Israel says, Sister Deborah, please come with me. I can't go without you.

I'm scared. I'm scared, sister. No wonder God could only choose a woman there.

The bravest man of Israel, even after he heard a word from God, was scared to go out. If you're like that, God will use a sister. Yeah, I believe that.

But it's a shame that Barak. And so he says, Sister, if you go with me, I'll go. But if you don't go with me, I won't go.

Can you imagine a man speaking like that? Okay, she says, I'll go with you. But you're not going to get the honor of killing Sisera, the enemy. Even that honor God will give to another woman.

And he couldn't kill Sisera. You read the story later on, Sisera went and slept in the tent, he got tired and went to some tent. And you read that in verse 17 of chapter 4. And she fled on foot to the tent of Jael.

And Jael went out to meet Sisera. Jael is the lady there, a woman, the wife of Heber. And said to him, turn aside my master.

Don't be afraid. Come right here. She was a wise woman.

And he said, please give me some water to drink. And she said, sure, I'll give you a bottle of milk and covered him up. He was exhausted.

And he said to her, stand in the doorway. And if anyone comes here, say, I'm not here. And Jael, instead of doing that, after he's fast asleep, look at this.

This is a woman. She took a tent peg, verse 21, and took a huge hammer and went secretly to him and drove the peg into his temple. You know how, what a strong blow you need to drive a tent peg into a man's temple with a huge hammer.

This is a woman. And it went right through his head into the ground. He couldn't get up.

And he was sound asleep. It means it wasn't slowly, slowly hitting. It was one shot.

And it went right into the ground. And he died. God used two women to deliver Israel in that time.

But there was a man. Can you imagine how disappointed God was? And then it's Deborah who sings the song in chapter five and sings about all the wonderful people who came and helped. And in that, if you go through it, she asked questions like, where were these people? Verse 16, why did you sit among the sheepfolds, among the divisions of Reuben? Verse 16, why did you sit there instead of coming out to fight? That's the question the Lord asked today in the fight against the devil.

Where are the men who are bold to build my church? God is not given the primary responsibility of building his church, of being the leaders to women. He never chose a woman among his 12 apostles. He liberated women tremendously in many ways.

He was born through a woman. Anna, the prophetess, prophesied about him when he was brought to the temple. And the first woman, the first person to see the risen Lord Jesus, you know who that was? I've often thought if I were, if God had asked me, he didn't, of course.

But if he had asked me who should be the first person to see the resurrected Lord Jesus, the beginning of a new creation. I mean, imagine if I could be there when God is making Adam and Eve, the first creation. Wow, to see that.

Well, impossible for us to be alive there. But this new creation, and Jesus risen from the dead, beginning a new order. What a privilege to be the first person to see the risen Lord.

And if God had asked me who should it be, I would have said Mary, his mother. She suffered so much shame, ridicule. She should be the one, or one of the apostles.

And God said, no, no, no, no. You list all the names. And he says, no, I'm going to choose that terrible prostitute called Mary Magdalene, who had seven demons in her, whom I cast out.

I really believe, Lord, your ways are not my ways. As the heavens are above the earth, so are different are your ways than mine. I would never choose Mary Magdalene to be the first person to see this new creation beginning.

Jesus risen from the dead, not the disciples, not the apostles, not even Mary. So that the world may know that he came to save sinners and not holy people. And he came to save the worst of them.

That's why he chose one of the worst to see. Not only for that, I want you to see that passage in John chapter 20. It's blessed me tremendously.

John chapter 20, we read. Picture this in your mind, verse 20, first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb while it was still dark, because she came with ointment to rub on the body. They couldn't get, you see, there were two sabbaths before that.

One was the sabbath of, you know, the Passover day was the day he was crucified, the 14th day of the first month. And then the next day was the first day of unleavened bread, which is a sabbath, which happened to be Friday. Jesus was, by the way, Jesus was crucified on a Thursday, not Friday, because otherwise you don't have three days and three nights.

So this Good Friday business is all nonsense. He was crucified on a Thursday. Then only you have three days and three nights before he's risen up on Sunday.

And then Friday was the unleavened bread, feast of unleavened bread sabbath. He couldn't do any work there. Saturday was a regular weekly sabbath.

So the only day they could go to the tomb was on a Sunday. And that's how, and Mary Magdalene was up before dark with some others and saw the stone rolled away from the tomb. Nobody inside.

And she ran and called Simon and Peter. How is it these other folks didn't want to go and see? Because Jesus had said to them, after three days, I'll rise from the dead. They'd heard it.

But they were fast asleep. That's what the men were doing. Fast asleep.

Just like in Deborah's time. And she went, found and came back. And they've taken away the Lord.

I don't know where they've laid him. And Peter and the other disciple went forth. That was John.

They ran. And I'm sure Mary couldn't run as fast as them. She was behind.

They ran and they came. And John was faster than Peter and came and looked in. And they found the linen wrappings.

Now this is the part I want you to see. They saw the wrappings and they did not go in. And Simon Peter also came following him and saw the linen wrappings lying there.

And the face cloth, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen, but rolled up. You know, this is a beautiful passage. There's a little thing I share with people that when Jesus got up and those wrappings were all taken off, he didn't just throw it away there, like some people do in their homes, throw things here and there.

He folded it and kept it. Why did he have to do that? This was his way of life. Even when he was a little boy at home, his mother told him to, when you get out of bed, fold your bed cloth and keep it aside.

Even after his resurrection, it wasn't just thrown there, rolled up and kept by itself neatly. Great example. And then the other disciple at first also entered and he saw and believed.

And what did they do next? Well, he was feeling sleepy. Whereas then they went back and got into their homes to continue their sleep. But not Mary Magdalene.

That is the other reason why she became the first person. But Mary standing aside, she couldn't go to sleep. These disciples could go to sleep, but not Mary.

She had been forgiven so much. Jesus once said, the one who's forgiven much loves much. The one who's forgiven little loves little.

Turn for a moment to Luke's Gospel, chapter 7. When Jesus was in the house of Simon, the Pharisee, Luke chapter 7, verse 36. One of the Pharisees requested him to dine with him. And you know, Jesus went to the house of Pharisees for dinner.

He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. See, they never sat like this at the table. The Jewish people had the habit of reclining their legs at the back.

They would sit like this and have their meals. Lie down rather, lie down on the ground and all around the table. And he reclined at the table.

And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner, which means she was a prostitute. And she learned that he was reclining at the table. Her feet were at the back, you see.

And she brought an alabaster vial of perfume. Where did she get that much money? She had worked as a prostitute for a number of years. They don't earn so much, but she earned quite a bit and she saved it.

And sometime she had heard Jesus and been saved. She saw that Jesus loved even prostitutes and saved their soul. And she was forgiven and she was so grateful.

She said, what can I do? I can't. She won't call me to be an apostle or a disciple to follow him with him. But I can do one thing.

I can spend this money, which I've got, which I've saved up for the rainy day, which I won't use it for myself. I'll buy the most expensive perfume available. And she stood behind him, verse 38, weeping,

weeping, wet his feet with her tears.

You know, you need a lot of tears to wet somebody's feet. The little things I meditate on, boy, she must have been really weeping hard and kept wiping them with the hair of her head and kissing his feet, anointing them with the perfume. Now, when the Pharisee who invited this said, if this man were a prophet, verse 39, he would have known what sort of person this is, you know, because in the Deuteronomy, there's a law in the Old Testament, which says a prostitute cannot bring her earnings into the house of God.

All the Israelites were supposed to bring their tithes except a prostitute. The prostitute was not permitted to bring her tithes or offerings to the house of God because it was earned in a sinful way. It's like if you cheated somebody and make money, God doesn't want it.

So, money earned by a prostitute could not be given to God. It's a law in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy, you can look for it. And that's what Pharisee is saying, this guy's a prophet, doesn't he know what Deuteronomy says? And she's bringing an offering and offering it, and Jesus was the prophet, the house of God, as it were, and he accepts it.

He doesn't rebuke her and say, go get away from here. No, he doesn't say that. And Jesus knew what this man is thinking.

And he says, Simon, I've got something to tell you. He said a moneylender had two debtors, verse 41. One owed him 500 denarii.

A denarii was usually a day's wages. So, 500 denarii is what, one and a half years salary. So, one man owed him one and a half years salary.

And the other man owed him only 50 days salary, one and a half months salary. And both were unable to repay him. He graciously forgave them both.

One owed a huge debt, the other owed a small debt. Who will love him more? Simon said, sure, the one who forgave more. He said, you judged correctly.

Now, look at this woman, compare her with you. She has been forgiven much, verse 47. Therefore, she loves much.

But you, who've been forgiven little, not forgiven little. Let me paraphrase it. You think you have been forgiven little.

So, you love little. There's nobody on earth who's forgiven little. Anybody here who thinks he's been forgiven little, even among the young people? No, I'm not in that number.

I've been forgiven much. And he said to her, your sins are forgiven. And then we read.

And then soon afterwards, with chapter 8, verse 1, Jesus went out. And verse 2, some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses, Mary called Magdalene, who had seven demons. And I say, hey, is that the Mary Magdalene who came to his feet? Doesn't say that.

Could possibly be. I think it was. She went out with him, following him.

She had been forgiven much. And she could never forget it. And she now see the empty tomb.

And she wonders. Let's turn back to John 20. And she saw these angels.

The other disciples had gone back to sleep. She saw these angels in verse 12, one at the head and one at the feet. And they said to her, woman, why are you weeping? And look at her answer.

I feel like weeping when I read this. The love she had for Jesus. They have taken away my Lord.

I don't know where they've laid him. I wish I could hear those words from her mouth, how she loved the Lord. The other disciples had gone to sleep.

I want to know where is the body of my Lord. He forgave me so much. I was the worst sinner on earth.

And he forgave me, changed my life. And then she suddenly heard a voice saying, woman, why are you weeping? He said, because they have taken away my Lord. I don't know.

Verse 13. And then that is verse 15, rather. And Jesus stands and says, woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? And she thought that was a gardener.

And she says, sir, she turns around and she can't recognize him. You know, Jesus had a way of hiding himself even to the disciples and emirs and everywhere. After resurrection, you can do some amazing things.

He could prevent people from recognizing him. And he thought it was a gardener. She thought it was a gardener.

And this is the thing, another thing that really strikes me. Sir, if you have carried him away, please tell me where you have laid him. I will take him away.

I'm a woman. I'm not very strong. But I will muster all the strength I have to carry this heavy body of a man.

I'll take him away. I don't want him lying around here. Can you see the love behind that? A weak woman saying she's going to carry the body of strong, muscular Jesus.

I believe he was muscular. He worked so hard so many years as a carpenter. That really touches me.

I'm not surprised. That almighty God chose her to be the first person to see the resurrected Christ. And when I read that, I say, Lord, make me love you like that.

That as a weak person, I'll have faith to do things impossible, like Mary lifting up the body of Jesus. I want to have faith for impossible things because my love for you will make me do it. It's amazing what I heard once, the true story of a little child was not run over by a car, but the front wheel of the car went over his leg or something.

And the mother saw it and came and lifted that car and released her child. And she was surprised how she got the strength to lift it. It's amazing how the body sort of gets energized when you are passionate about something you have to do.

My child is under that car. Something like that. This woman felt I can lift the body of Jesus.

I believe that. I want to say, brothers, spiritually, if you're grateful for what the Lord has done for you, it's amazing what God can do through you. It's gratitude.

I have been forgiven so much. I have not finished saying thank you, Lord, for dying for me. My whole life is going to be writing this sentence.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for me. And I'm slowly writing it. Everything I do is just adding one more, a little more, a little more.

I haven't finished that sentence. I hope you look at your entire life as not doing some great thing for the Lord. No, I haven't done any great things for the Lord.

I'm writing a sentence. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for me, for a wretched sinner like me. You keep that attitude all your life, my brother, sister.

The service of the Lord will never be a burden. You will never expect anybody to thank you. You will never expect anybody to give you money.

You'll never be disappointed with anyone. You'll never be offended with what people do to you or what you feel they should do for you, but they don't do. You will never be offended because everything you do is an act of thank you to the Lord.

As I've often said, we need to get light on areas in our life where we don't have light, on where unconscious sins in our life. I've often mentioned the story of how there was this young man who we helped a lot in our home in the early days of CFC and who went away. You've probably heard it.

I've said it before. He went away, got a good job, and never wrote a note to thank me, to thank us, me and my wife, for all that we did for him in the years he used to come to our house. As I began to think about his ingratitude, the Lord said to me, you're guilty.

I said, where, Lord? In expecting gratitude from a man. Haven't you heard those words of mine in Matthew 25, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brothers? What's the rest of that sentence? You did it unto me. Did you help that poor sick person? That was me.

Did you help that struggling person? It was me. To the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. And the Lord said to me that day, when you help a person, you were expecting thanks from that person.

That was a sin. That day I discovered that expecting somebody to come and thank me was a sin. Have you ever heard that before? Any preacher tell you that expecting thanks from somebody is a sin? I got light on that.

There's a lot of unconscious sin in us we have two types of sins, like the ice cube. We put a put a glass, put an ice cube in a glass of grape juice. 10% you see, that's the conscious part of your life sin.

90% there's unconscious sin in you and me, which we don't see. But if you cut off that top slice, a little bit of the ice comes up, you see the unconscious sin. If you deal with conscious sin in your life, you will see more of your unconscious sin.

Slice some more out, and you'll see more of that ice cube coming up. The more we deal with conscious sin in our life, the more we will discover the unconscious hidden part of sin in our life. And one of the things

I discovered was expecting people to say thank you to me, which I never in my life thought that was a sin.

I thought it was natural. You did something for someone and he says thank you. I'm not saying we shouldn't say that, but to expect it.

That's the thing. Well, I got light on that. Little by little, I find God gives me light as I slice off conscious sin in my life.

Now, if you don't deal with conscious sin in your life, you'll never discover that hidden part. If you don't slice off that top part of the ice cube, that 10%, you'll never see what's hidden. And the reason why some people never... What is growth, by the way? Growth is to discover more and more of unconscious sin in your life and become more and more Christ-like.

And that will never happen until you deal radically with conscious sin. You've got to get a really sharp knife to slice off that ice cube. It's not easy.

But if you deal with that in your life and say, Lord, everything that I know to be sin in my life, I'm going to deal with radically by the power of the Holy Spirit. And little by little, you'll discover. And then you'll discover that the fault is not so much with your wife as much as it is with you.

And you'll be merciful to people because you'll say... That's what I say. I see that so clearly as sin, but perhaps he doesn't yet see it. Maybe I'm in the fourth grade and I know a little bit about multiplication and division and a little bit of algebra as well, but he's in the kindergarten.

He's still studying that CAT is cat and BAT is bat and two plus two is four. So I don't expect him to know as much as me. Spiritually, it's the same thing.

There's some things I see as sin, which another person who has not grown as much as me has not seen it. How can I judge that poor child saying, hey, you don't know algebra. You don't know multiplication.

I'm the foolish one to expect the kindergarten student to know things that I know. Well, you are foolish if you expect your wife to see something as sin, which you have seen clearly, but she has not yet come to that place of maturity. But you expect her and you're disappointed when she does not see something as sin, which you see so clearly.

Be a man and acknowledge that there are weaker vessels in the body. The Bible says the woman is a weaker vessel. Live with her in an understanding way.

The more we come closer to the Lord, we are grateful for the light God gives us on that lower part of the ice cube, the unconscious sin. But we also become merciful to others and say, maybe they haven't got that light God has given me graciously. I can't be proud of it.

I want to be merciful to others. Amazing things happen when you're humble. So, Simon was obviously not humble.

But I'm trying to say that God uses women. Well, all these other disciples had gone to sleep. They came and saw, yeah, I'm sleepy.

I can't stay here. Mary was sleepy too. And she said, no, I can't go away till I see my Lord.

Where is he? When you begin to search for the Lord like that, and if he doesn't find a man, he'll use a woman. But he wants men first. He never chose a woman to be his disciple.

Dear brothers, in your locality where you live, don't disappoint God. Be the man God wants you to be there. He wants to build a church there.

And don't say like Barack, oh, no, no, no, I'm so weak. Say, Lord, if you want me to do something, I'm not anybody. I'm willing to work with others and let other people get the credit.

I don't want any name or fame or anything. I want your name to be glorified. I'm not trying to build my kingdom here.

No. The first prayer Jesus taught our Father, hallowed be your name. That's the first request.

In all my life, that must be my first request. Before, give me my daily bread and forgive me my sins. Yeah, yeah, that'll come.

But hallowed be your name. Let your name be honored in this town where I live. I have a burden for that.

That's what I had in the town where I lived, where the Lord, I want your name to be honored here, honored here. That's how the church started. And then when it is done, how does the prayer end? Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.

We don't touch it forever. How does it begin? Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. How does it end? Thine is the glory forever.

You live like that, my brother. God will do mighty things through you. And he won't have to look for women.

He'll use you. I know that because he used me. And I know that my limitations.

Let's pray. We have not understood humility fully. If we did, we would have received abundant grace from God, because God gives grace to the humble.

Pray to God, my dear brother, the things that God wanted to do through you that he's not been able to do because of your pride. Get down before God and say, Lord, teach me humility. Teach me to be like a little child.

You've got a purpose to fulfill in the place where I'm living. Don't let me miss out on that before you come. Help me to use the rest of my days for your glory.

Thank you, Father, in Jesus name. Amen.

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