

Without Christ We Can Do Nothing (Video)

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's ways and the need for believers to be humble and dependent on God. It highlights the significance of abiding in Christ, recognizing our helplessness without Him, and seeking to know God more deeply to fulfill His eternal plan for our lives.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:26, James 2:5, John 15:5, Acts 7:32, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Humility", "Abiding in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

The Bible says that as believers we have to bear with one another. And one of the things we discovered in our conference in Bangalore is it's very difficult to decide whether we should put on the fan or the AC or not. Because we have people from Tamil Nadu who shiver in the normal Bangalore temperature and then there are others who, sometimes we have foreigners who however cold it is they still feel it's hot.

So there's a lot of opportunity to bear with one another. And you know we are basically all human beings, we are all selfish. Everyone, we think only of ourselves and it's a great opportunity to say well Lord a little bit of inconvenience for me.

If somebody else can be a little healthier and happier it's okay. Those are all minor things compared to major things. You know I remember once when I was in Tamil Nadu and we were staying in a small little room in the conference time and the power went off and so nothing could run and it was so hot.

He opened the windows, the mosquitoes were there and I lay there in bed and I said Lord my condition is luxurious compared to the Apostle Paul. When he was traveling there was nobody to receive him anywhere and he shivered and sometimes he was in hot probably I don't know how many mosquitoes bit him and often without food. And I realized that you know as Christians we haven't really experienced much suffering.

And when we go through life with a fair amount of ease in traveling we have cars and comfortable homes with air conditioning and all that. We gradually develop a lifestyle of ease and comfort. There's nothing

wrong in that.

I'm not saying you shouldn't have these things. But what can happen is that we think that we deserve all that and we forget what the early Christians went through. Even persecution for example.

A little bit of opposition and we think it's very serious and we don't realize that so many Christians they are suffering for their faith. I mean just yesterday my wife got a letter from somebody in India. One poor sister who from a non-Christian background who just refused to marry a non-Christian husband.

And so the father just beat her and hammered her and took her to the police station and drove her out of the house. Any of you experienced that? That is suffering. They sent her out of the city and she had to run to another city where one of our CFC churches helped her to be in a hostel and took care of her.

I said thank God that there was some place she could go to. But those are the people who are suffering. The rest of us what we call suffering is a drop in the ocean.

So we need to learn to give thanks for the many, many good things God has given us. That's just in passing. And we get many letters like that.

Many, many very unhappy marriages. People who are in such a terrible state they want to commit suicide. So it's a tremendous privilege we have to be able to contact these people and write to them and help them.

And I want you to pray that you yourself, God will use you, every one of you. So you may not be able to preach and teach like others. But can't you pray, Lord, will you, if there's some needy soul somewhere whom I can help and encourage in some way, will you please bring me in touch with them in some way? I used to pray that for years.

I said, Lord, I don't know where they are, but if you will, I'm here to serve you. I'm willing to go through any inconvenience if I can help another soul know you a little better and to know Jesus a little better. If all of you will pray that prayer.

Say, Lord, I don't want to just attend meetings. That's good. But what's the purpose of attending meetings? To be strengthened so that we can serve the Lord.

Not in preaching only. Just in encouraging someone who is discouraged. Maybe saving some young person who is on the verge of suicide.

Can you think of what a tremendous thing it is if God can use you like that just to help somebody? And all you need is perhaps just to speak a word or phone up someone or write an email or something like that. But God has to lead you. And God has to see that you are willing to be inconvenienced.

Are you willing to be inconvenienced tremendously? Where your time is not your own. Where you are willing to sacrifice time and money in order to help someone to know Jesus better. If you offer yourself to the Lord like that, I can tell you one thing.

He can use any one of you. The weakest and the most helpless God will use. He's looking for people who are willing to say, Lord, I'm available to you.

I'm not able, but I'm available. That's what I've often said to the Lord. You may think I'm very capable.

I'm not. If I have any capability, it's because God fills me with the Holy Spirit and I seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day. That's the only ability I have.

And I say, Lord, I'm not able, but I'm available. Anytime, anywhere. You call me, I'll go.

I'll do it. But you've got to give me the ability. It's a great prayer for all of you to pray.

Don't be satisfied with a Christian life where you just drift along, come to meetings. You come to the end of your life and all you can say is, I attended so many meetings. Or, you know, Sharjah is a very generous church.

I tell you that. It's one of the most generous CFC churches. You give money.

Praise the Lord for that. But even that, it's not everything. Let's say, Lord, I want to be available to you to be a blessing to other people.

The blessing of Abraham, God told Abraham, I will bless you and you will be a blessing to others. Many of us pray, Lord bless me. It is one of the most common prayers that comes from earth to heaven.

Lord bless me, bless me, bless me. I don't know how many people also go on to pray, Lord, make me a blessing to somebody else as well. See, there's two sides to the blessing of Abraham.

Genesis 12 verse 2. The Lord said, I'll bless you, Abraham, and families will be blessed through you. So, you know, you don't get unless you ask. You sit back and say, well, what I've done is enough.

I don't want too much inconvenience in my life. I don't want to be inconvenienced. Think how much Jesus was inconvenienced to save us.

I often meditate on that. I find when I read the Gospels, he was perpetually willing to be inconvenienced. I think Nicodemus came to him probably at midnight.

Would you ever go to somebody's house at midnight whom you've never met before? Nicodemus had never met Jesus. When I read a simple thing like this, that Nicodemus went to Jesus at night. He went at night because he didn't want the other Pharisees to see that he was going, seeking Jesus.

He was a bit scared. But also, you know, you would be very hesitant to go to somebody's house at midnight. Unless you know, unless that person has given you the impression, hey, listen, I'm ready to be inconvenienced anytime, day or night.

If you're in need, just come and see me. Call me up. I get calls at 2 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock.

I say, I will never, never complain about anything. If you are willing to be inconvenienced to any extent, I'm telling you something, even you young children, God can use you to bless many, many people. So let's offer ourselves to the Lord like that.

What I want to share with you is something concerning God's ways to know God. If I were to ask you, what is the definition of eternal life? You know, we speak in the church, at least I do, in a very simple way that even children can understand. So even the children should learn this.

What is the definition of eternal life? Now most people would say eternal life is to live forever. But people who go to hell also live forever. They burn in hell forever.

Have they got eternal life? No. Eternal life, let's look at the definition which Jesus gave. Turn with me to John 17 and verse 3. John's Gospel chapter 17 and verse 3. This is eternal life.

This is the definition Jesus gave. That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. So eternal life is not referring to the length of your life.

Every human being who is born, once he is born, from that point onwards he is going to live forever. There's no animals, donkeys and dogs and all don't live forever. But human beings, once they are born, they live forever.

After. Maybe in heaven, maybe in hell. But they live forever.

But that's not eternal life. Because we know that people who go to hell don't have eternal life. God so loved the world that whoever believes in him, that he sent his son to die for us, that whoever believes in him should have eternal life.

Not everybody. So here the definition of eternal life is that we come to know God. So this is very important.

If I were to ask you, do you have eternal life? I think most of you would say yes. I received Jesus as my savior. So I have eternal life.

But do you mean by eternal life that you know God? And that's something we have to grow in. See what Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy. Sorry, 1 Timothy in chapter 6. Now, when Timothy got this letter, I think he was about 45 years old.

He joined Paul when he was 20 years old. And he was with Paul for 25 years. As a wholehearted, radical, faithful fellow worker with Paul.

Paul treated him like his son. He was the finest of Paul's co-workers. And at the age of 45, after he had walked with God for 25 years or more, he may have walked with God for even 30 years.

I think he must have been converted when he was 15 or so. Here's a 45-year-old man who has walked with God for 30 years. Co-worker of the apostle Paul.

You know what Paul tells him in 1 Timothy 6, verse 12. 1 Timothy 6, verse 12. Fight the good fight of faith and take hold of eternal life to which you were called.

Now, if somebody were to write to you and say, take hold of eternal life, how would you understand it? How would you understand an older brother who loves you very much telling you, brother, sister, take hold of eternal life? How do you do it? I'm sure all of you have read 1 Timothy sometime in your life. What did you do when you came to this verse? 1 Timothy 6, verse 12. If you have never read 1 Timothy, okay.

But if you have read 1 Timothy even once, and you came to this verse, what did you do with it? Did you stop and say, Lord, what does that mean, to take hold of eternal life? My question is, do you read the Bible seriously? Do you stop when you don't understand something? That's how I studied the Bible, and that's how I understood the Bible a little more. I come to a verse and I can't understand it. And it's like a stoplight, red.

I can't move. I can't move because I haven't understood this verse. Next morning I open my Bible and I'm still at the same verse.

There's a red light. I can't go from here. And I say, Lord, I'm not going to go until I've understood this verse.

And sometimes for a few days, then I got it. The light becomes green. Then I go.

You know, if you read the Bible like that, we may not go through the Bible 25 times in our life, but the Bible will go through us. That's been my prayer. I say, Lord, I don't want to go through the Bible 20 times or 50 times.

I want the Bible to go through me once. That means every verse in the Bible which is for me must go through my life once. So, in my younger days, I read a verse like this.

I didn't understand it. Most of the people in the church I attended also did not understand it. There was nobody I could go to.

But when you understand it, we read in John 17, eternal life is to know God. And to take hold of eternal life means to get to know God better and better and better. That's the secret of the Christian life.

It's to get to know God and Jesus Christ better and better and better. That means to know the way he thinks. For example, here's a young couple who love one another who just got married.

And even though they may love one another very much, the wife doesn't really know much about her husband. Because he just got married maybe last week. So, if somebody comes to their home and asks the wife, here's something, we need an important decision that your husband is not at home.

Can you tell me what he would do? The wife would say, I don't know. I don't know what he would do in this situation. Wait till he comes home.

But if you ask that same wife, ten years later, after she's got to live with her husband and know her husband, then she can say, hey, I know what my husband would do. I've lived with him ten years and I know how he thinks. I know his values.

And I think I can give you an answer as to what my husband would do. Not if they were fighting with each other. But if they really loved one another and got to understand one another and know one another.

A wife will know a lot about her husband. How he thinks and what he would do in a particular situation. That even if he's not at home, she'll be able to take the decision which her husband would take.

And when her husband comes back and she says, I did this, he'll say, bang on, that's exactly what I would do as well. That's the way we must know the Lord. That as we live with him more and more and more, we come to know the way God thinks.

You know that's one of the greatest privileges. To get to have his nature and to get to know him. And I want all of you to lay hold of eternal life.

Take hold of eternal life. It's the most wonderful thing you can have. It's greater than having a healing ministry or even a preaching ministry or anything.

To know God is eternal life. To know Jesus Christ is eternal life. To know him intimately like a friend.

Don't miss out on this. From the time we are born again, we must take hold of eternal life. Get to know him.

See in the Old Testament, I'll show you a verse in Psalm 103. Psalm 103 we read. Verse 7. Verse 7, yeah.

God made known his ways to Moses and his acts or actions to the sons of Israel. See Moses and the sons of Israel were on two different levels spiritually. The sons of Israel could only see God's actions.

He healed the sick. He split the Red Sea. When we were bitten by snakes, he raised up a bronze serpent and healed us.

When we were hungry, he dropped manna from heaven. When we were thirsty, he hit the rock and the water flowed out. These are the acts of God.

The things that God did. But they never understood God's ways. Why does God do things like this? And why does he not do this? But Moses, he didn't find it out on his own.

It says God made known his ways to Moses. Why did God treat Moses specially? In a way, he couldn't explain to the sons of Israel. I mean, it's just like you can explain certain things to a 20-year-old son that you cannot explain to a 2-year-old, right? Even if you explain it to the 2-year-old, he can't understand.

But a 20-year-old son or daughter, you can explain and the person is able to grasp what dad or mom are saying. It's like that. Moses was close to God, more mature.

God could say to him, like a grown-up son, he could say, this is the way I do things. But he could not reveal that to the sons of Israel. And I find among believers also, there are those like Moses and there are those like the sons of Israel who are only thinking of, I want God to answer this prayer.

I want God to do this for me, to do that for me. Only God's actions. I want God to do a miracle here.

I want God to give me this, give me that, the other thing. They are perpetually children. Whereas a grown-up person will not be thinking of what God can give him or answer him.

For example, you know, if a father is a businessman and he has gone on a long business trip and he has come back home. And the 5-year-old and the 8-year-old, what are they looking for? They say, dad, did you bring any toys for us? Did you bring any chocolates? That's all they are thinking of. What has dad got for me? But a 25-year-old son, he is not looking for chocolates and toys.

He is saying, dad, how did our business go? Is the business prospering? Did he get some orders? Can we expand our business? These are two different levels. And you find among believers also, there are those who only think of, Lord, what chocolates can you give me? What toys can you give me? Something for me. Some answer to this prayer, some answer to that prayer.

Something here, something there. Always some gift God has to give me. And then there are another level of believers who say, Lord, how is your work going on? I want to know more about the spread of God's word, God's work in the world or in India, for example.

How is the work going on? Is God's word spreading? That's a mature son. And God sees those who are only interested in toys and chocolates, spiritually speaking, and those who are interested in knowing more about his work and his ways. Now I am not trying to say this to condemn any of you, but all I am asking is,

how long will you take to grow up? That's the question.

How long are you going to sit occupied with what God can give you here or give you there or do this for you, and become a co-worker with him in his work? God is doing a work in the world through the Holy Spirit. That's why Jesus came. Do you remember when Jesus was 12 years old? And he was in the temple, and Joseph and Mary completely forgot.

Not forgot. They thought, well, he must be with one of the other families. He must be with the other children.

And, you know, let me test your Bible knowledge. When they went back to the temple, after how many days did they find Jesus? Three days. Boy, you guys really know the Bible.

At least some of you. Three days. Can you imagine your son being lost for three days, 12 years old? They meet him after three days, and they see him in the temple, and they said, son, why have you treated us like this? We've been anxiously looking for you.

Do you know what Jesus said? Didn't you know that I had to be about my father's business? That's how it is in one translation, the King James Version. I had to be about my father's affairs. How old was he? 12.

I didn't come here to the father's house to get chocolates, dad, Mary, mom. I had to be concerned about my father's business. It's amazing.

I've often thought about that. I say, Lord, can I have that mind of Jesus there, to be interested in the father's business, and not just what I can get from the father? If you're like that, God will show you his ways, and he'll show you, you'll get to know him more, and eternal life will grow in you. You may think that eternal life is not something that can grow.

I've got eternal life or I don't have it. It's not like that. Eternal life is not something you have or don't have.

It's something that you can lay hold of and possess more and more, or have very little of. A lot of the problems that many Christians have is because they don't lay hold of eternal life. Many, many problems you face, the solution to it is not to get God to answer some prayer, but to lay hold of eternal life.

Say, Lord, I want to get to know you more and more. I want to know your ways. And God is very eager to teach us his ways.

He was very eager to teach Moses, and if he couldn't teach the other children, it's because they were not interested. So it's one of the prayers that you need to pray. Lord, I want to understand more of your ways in my life.

I want to get to know you better. And many of our problems in our life will be solved if we make this our pursuit to get to know Jesus better, to get to know God better. See this verse in Romans 12.

It says in Romans 12, in verse 2, Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove or understand what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. What he's saying is, your mind is, from childhood, our mind has become conformed to this world because of the values our mind has got from all the worldly people we are surrounded by in school, as we grow up in college, in our place of work, our unconverted relatives. We have all absorbed certain values in our mind, and those are the values of this world.

And so we have a mind that is conformed to this world, which says, money is the most important thing in this world. It's in our mind. Pleasure, comfort, these are very, very important.

Pleasure and comfort and money and appreciation by others, very important. We've grown up like that and you must fight always to go on top of others. From school itself, try and come first in the class and try and come first in the athletics.

Do whatever you can to get on top. And people cheat and everything. These are the values we have acquired in the world from childhood, all of us.

From the time we've gone to school, we've gone to work, the values of this world have come into our mind. That is called being conformed to this world in your mind. And it says, don't be conformed to this world in your mind.

We are when we are converted. Our mind is full of the values of this world. And then when we are born again, the Holy Spirit comes in and one of his major jobs is to make us think differently.

To think the thoughts of God. Have you ever thought of that expression? To think the thoughts of God. Like I said, the grown-up son, the 25-year-old son is asking his dad, how's the business, dad? Is it going well? Mr. 5-year-old is not interested.

10-year-old, he's only interested in toys and maybe ice cream, things like that. But a grown-up son wants to know the mind of the father. So, don't be conformed to the world, but be transformed.

That means, it's not something that will happen like that suddenly. It's a process by which we begin to understand God's ways and my mind begins to think like God thinks. And there I find the answer to many, many of life's problems.

There I find that I become free from anxiety and fear and tension and quarreling and fighting that goes on in so many homes and between so many believers. When we understand God's ways, our life becomes one of rest and peace. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you can prove what is the perfect will of God for you.

See, God's got a plan for all of our lives. I don't know whether you know that. It's one of the things that I got gripped by about 56 years ago when I got baptized.

I was baptized 56 years ago in January 1961. And very soon after that, one of the first things that gripped my heart, I was only what, 22 years old or 21 years old, that God has got a plan for my life. I already had a plan for my life.

I was in the Navy and I wanted to go on and become big. But I realized that God's got a plan for my life too. I want to find out what that is.

See, if you turn to Psalm 139, Psalm 139, it's talking about the time when we were in our mother's womb. It says in verse 13, You formed my inward parts and you wove me in my mother's womb. It's talking about how God made us inside our mother's womb.

Every one of us. And he says, verse 16, Your eyes saw my unformed substance and in your book. Now God doesn't have a book like this.

When it says in your book, it means in God's mind. All the days that were ordained for me, verse 16, were written down when before there was even one of them. That means before I was born, God had planned out every day of my earthly life till the day I die.

Already planned out. I don't know whether you know that. You don't know the day when you're going to die or leave this world.

But God already knows that. When you and I die, if the Lord doesn't come before that. Our relatives may be surprised, but God is not surprised.

God knows when we are going to die. He's planned it. I'm not saying that all of us will live up to that life.

You can have bad habits so that you die before your time. You can live in sin and die before your time. You can have bad eating habits and die before your time.

There are so many reasons why you can miss out on God's plan. I think a lot of people miss out on God's plan. But God has planned something.

That's a tremendous encouragement for me to know and for you to know. That before you were born, God made a plan for your life. He planned exactly what you're supposed to do, whom you're supposed to marry, what sort of life you're supposed to live, what you're supposed to accomplish for him.

When you think of accomplishment, don't think of being preaching and going around doing miracles or planning churches. No, no, no. It could be just as a mother.

Like Timothy's mother. What do you know about Timothy's mother? I don't know whether she was a good cook or she was a clever lady or postgraduate or nothing. I know one thing, that she brought up one God-fearing son.

Such a wonderful son. If she did nothing else in life, that was a fantastic accomplishment that she brought up one God-fearing son who became such a blessing that Paul said, there's nobody like Timothy. So what was her task? She had one son and she brought him up in a very, very good way.

People who looked at her life would have said, what has this woman accomplished in life? She accomplished more than hundreds of preachers have accomplished by producing one son like that. So when you say God's plan for your life, it's not something that is big in the eyes of the Christian world. It's a question of fulfilling what God has planned for your life, brother or sister.

So if you can be gripped by that, Lord, before I was born, you made out a plan for my life and I want to fulfill that. That's all. I don't want to be great in the eyes of others.

I don't want other people to think I fulfilled the plan, but I want you to be happy with me at the end of my life that I fulfilled your plan. And to fulfill God's plan, I must learn to think like God thinks. Because that's what we read in Romans 12 too.

You can find out the perfect will of God if you allow God to change your mind to think like God thinks. So that's a good thing for all of you to try and focus on. Lord, I want to change my way of thinking so that I gradually begin to think like God thinks.

That's a wonderful thing. So that's what Moses understood. So eternal life is to know God better and better, to know his ways, why he does things like this, why he allows certain things in my life.

Okay, having said that, why did Jesus say in John 15, in John's Gospel chapter 15 and verse 5, Jesus said, I am the vine and you're the branches. Or, you know, in India you could say, I'm the mango tree and you're the branches. In Israel, there were no mango trees, so he had to use vine because that is the most common thing.

All over Israel, there were vines with grapes. But the principle is this. You are like a branch in a tree.

And Jesus said, I'm the tree and you're a branch. And just like a branch cannot produce a single fruit if it is not in the tree, you can produce nothing if you don't abide in me. It's a very simple illustration.

All of Jesus' examples and parables and illustrations are very simple with deep meaning. Think of this for example. We're trying to understand God's ways, okay? We are to be like a branch in a tree.

Absolutely helpless. You go to a branch and if you could talk to it and say, how do you produce such wonderful mangoes? Oh, he says, I don't do anything. I can't produce even one mango.

But I stay in the tree and the tree sends its juice. It's called sap into me. The branch says, some mangoes appear on the branch.

I don't know how. It's a miracle. And if you ask the branch, hey listen, why don't you just pull away from the tree and start off your own ministry of producing mangoes? Why do you want to be so dependent on the tree? Cut yourself off.

I can't do it. I won't produce anything. But you've got 25 years of experience producing mangoes.

They don't care if it's 50 years of experience. The moment I'm cut off, zero. Without me, verse 5, without me, you can do nothing.

Do you believe that? God's ways. Without Christ, you can do nothing. Nothing means anything.

You can accomplish a lot even without. Look at the number of people in the world who have done so many things without Christ. The meaning is, you will not produce anything of eternal value.

Whatever you produce will perish with this world only. If you want to produce something of eternal value, you've got to abide in Christ. Now, we can say that there are great scientists who have invented so many things.

People have invented the railway engine, the airplane, the computer, and so many wonderful inventions. But, once Jesus comes back, what is the use of all that? It's finished. There's no eternal result from all those works that you have done.

Maybe you've done some great things in your life, made a lot of money perhaps, built houses and all that, but what have you accomplished in terms of eternity? Probably nothing. That's what Jesus is saying. Without me, you will not produce anything of eternal value.

And I say, Lord, I don't want to spend all my life just producing something on this earth. Imagine if I've spent all, I'm 77 now, and however long I live, I say, if all I have produced is something that's just going to

disappear with this world, why did I live here at all? It's almost as good as my not having lived at all. Do you want to live such a life that it is said about you that it didn't even matter if that person lived.

It made no difference whether he lived or he didn't live at all. It must not be like that for a child of God. A lot of people in the world, it doesn't matter one bit whether they lived or didn't live at all on this earth.

But it must not be like that with you, my brothers and sisters. It must not be said about you at the end of your life, it didn't matter whether this person lived or not. No.

If this person didn't live, something would have been lost for all eternity. That's the way you must live. I wish all the young people here would be gripped by that, that God's got a plan for your life.

You don't have to be very capable. You don't have to be very smart. You just got to be helpless and recognize without Jesus Christ I can do zero.

That's the first lesson you need to learn in the Christian life. All the miracles that Jesus did was to teach his disciples one lesson. Without Christ you can do nothing.

When the first miracle was in the marriage of Cana, all the shops were closed. There was no way of getting wine. What's the message in that parable? Without Christ you can do nothing.

And every miracle was like that. The raising of Lazarus from the dead. Without Christ you can do nothing.

Or the feeding of the 5,000. Every miracle was to teach the disciples one thing. You can be very smart, you can be very clever, but you will not be able to do anything without him.

And that's one of the most important lessons we need to learn. And when we learn that, we will go to Christ constantly. See, for me, for example, God's called me to preach the Word of God or to encourage and help build churches and guide elders in churches.

Now you may think, Oh, Brother Zak's got so much experience. He's been serving the Lord full time for 50 years. Of course he can do all this.

It's not true. It's absolutely not true. Today, if I become proud and think that, Oh, I've served the Lord for so long, I can manage it on my own now.

From this day onwards I will accomplish nothing of eternal value for God. The same law applies to the branch that is only one month old in the tree and the branch that is 50 years old in the tree. Same rule.

Without being in the tree, you'll accomplish nothing. So that's one of the first lessons you need to learn in understanding the ways of God. Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ.

Learn this first of all, that without Christ, you will never accomplish anything of eternal value. And that's why Jesus told us to pray. See, what is prayer? Let me explain to you what prayer is.

Prayer is an expression of my helplessness without God. That's what prayer is. Lord, I can't do anything without you.

That's why I come to you. I mean, if I can do it without God, why should I pray? I don't need to pray if I can do that without God. I pray because I say, Lord, I can't do this without you.

If I do something, it'll be just a waste of time. I can get up and give a lecture for 45 minutes, but it'll accomplish nothing of eternal value in anybody's life if God doesn't back it up. There are lots of people giving religious sermons.

I mean, the Internet is full of them. You can spend hours listening to them and get absolutely nothing because they're not inspired by God. There are thousands and thousands of sermons that are accomplishing nothing.

And a little bit done with God's power accomplishes a lot more. Without Christ, we can do nothing. Ask God to teach you that lesson so deeply in your heart that you will say, Lord, I can't do it.

I mean, I can do a lot of things in the world, but to do something of eternal value, I must depend on you, and that's why I need to pray. You think you can bring up your children in godly ways because you read books on how to bring up children and attend a lot of messages on how to bring up children? No. You'll be an absolute failure.

Your children will grow up wayward, rebellious, and godless. And the fault will be with the parents who did not realize I can do nothing without God's help, who did not go to God and say, Lord, please help me. I don't know how to bring up my children.

My wife and I have prayed that for many years. We were not experts bringing up children. We were not experts when our children were born.

We're not experts today. We're like the branch that abides in the tree. It says, Lord, we cannot bring up our children properly unless the sap must flow from the tree to the branch.

Why does God do it like that? God does it like that so that no one can boast in God's presence and say, I did something for God. Do you know the number of people I have met, even in CFC churches, who very easily get puffed up when they've accomplished something? Maybe God has blessed their life or their ministry in some way, and they become puffed up, or God has blessed their business and they make some money or God's used them to, I mean, they got a good job or done well in life or they brought up their children properly, and they get puffed up. They think, I've done something.

Inwardly, for example, glory. Lord, I thank you. I'm not like that fellow.

Look at his children and look at mine. If ever that thought comes into your mind, I want to ask you, some of you, praise God, your children are grown up well, and you look at some other brother whose children are wayward, and you look down on him, I tell you, you don't know God. If you look down on somebody as a believer, I can tell you to your face, you don't know God.

You don't know Jesus. Do you know that Jesus never even looked down on a prostitute? He wouldn't look down on an adulterous woman and say, ah, I didn't commit adultery like you. No.

He was compassionate. He was compassionate to the thief on the cross. He was compassionate to Mary Magdalene who lived such an immoral life.

So, to look down on someone is to not to know God. Let me show you 1 Corinthians in Chapter 1. It's a very important verse here. 1 Corinthians in Chapter 1. You know, when God calls, he calls in a different way from which worldly people call.

For example, think of some big company. Say a big multinational company like Microsoft or some big company. They want to select top people for their company.

They will select the cleverest, the smartest, the most capable, the people who got the most qualifications. Isn't it? Now, which is a greater work? The work of some big worldly company or God's work? God's work is much more important than all these earthly companies. What type of person does God select? Listen to this.

1 Corinthians 1 verse 26. Consider your calling, brethren. There are not many wise people in your midst.

How is that? God doesn't choose many wise people. Not many mighty people. Not many noble people.

But, and God has chosen. Whom does God choose to do his work? The foolish things. God has chosen the weak things, verse 27.

God has chosen, verse 28, the base. Base means the low-level type of people who we would call scheduled castes or talids or those who are very low level in society. And God has chosen the things that are nothing for the greatest work in the world, which is more important than software companies and so many big, big things.

God doesn't look for people who are very capable. He looks for people who are nothing, nobody, unheard of, unseen, people who don't even have an address. These are the people God chooses.

Can you believe that? For the greatest work in the world? And he tells us the reason. The reason is so that, verse 29, nobody should be able to boast before God. No one will be able to say, hey, God chose me because I'm very smart or I'm very clever.

I used to get 100% in mathematics. That's why God chose me. Absolute rubbish.

That's why he picked out people like Simon Peter, James and John and all who were, I don't think they even finished school. None of them went to college. They haven't finished school and Jesus picked them up to be the greatest apostles in his church.

God's ways. We need to understand God's ways because it will humble us. Let me show you another passage which tells us in James 2. James 2 and verse 5. Listen, my beloved brethren.

Didn't God choose the poor people in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of his kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? Now, worldly people, when they want something impressive, they will select rich people. People with a lot of education and smart and capable. And here God goes around and chooses the poor.

People like Peter and James and John were extremely poor. We need to recapture those early values of what true godliness is. Because we live in a world where a lot of emphasis is based on cleverness and smartness and wealth and things like that.

And God doesn't care for any of these things. One of the smartest people in the Old Testament, one of the smartest people in the Old Testament, was Moses at the age of 40. From childhood he had grown up in Pharaoh's palace.

And by the way, Egypt was the world's superpower in those days. There was no other superpower, only Egypt. And their education level was so great that they used to build these pyramids, which even today people are wondering how they built it in those days.

That was the level of their education. And fantastically wealthy, superpower, military capabilities. In such a country grew up a man called Moses at the age of 40.

A mighty man who could speak well. And God says, you're not fit for my service. That's what we read.

He was not fit. See Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7. We are trying to understand God's ways. Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7, verse 32.

Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians. He had the finest education in Egypt because he was in Pharaoh's palace. Officially the grandson of Pharaoh.

And he was a man of power in speech and in action. That means he was a very eloquent speaker. And he was a mighty man.

You know, we read later on that he hit one fellow with one blow and killed him. He was a very strong man. And it says there how he killed one man and struck down the Egyptian, verse 24.

And he thought, listen to this, verse 25. He thought all those Israelites will realize God is going to deliver you through me. You see how smart I am? You see how well I can speak? You see how strong I am? They didn't understand.

God said to Moses, you're not ready. You're too strong. You're too clever.

You're too smart in your own eyes. I have to give you another education. And he takes this mighty prince of Egypt.

And takes him into the wilderness. And makes him look after sheep. For not one or two years, for 40 years.

Humbles him. And makes him so weak in his own eyes. And I don't have time to show you, you read in Exodus chapter 4. That when God calls him, he says, Lord, please don't call me.

I'm not capable of speaking. This is a different Moses. Not the Moses when he was 40 years old.

At 80 years old, he was a weak, helpless person. Like a branch that says, without the tree, I'll produce nothing. Without God, I can do nothing.

God says, now you're ready. Now I will do some of the greatest wonders the world has ever seen. Through you, Moses.

Because you have now understood the lesson of the branch and the tree. So, let me stop there. I want to ask all of you, my brothers and sisters.

Have you learned that lesson in your life? Have you learned that with all your ability and smartness. Now you look down on others and you think you're clever and smarter and richer and all that. It counts for nothing before God.

If you haven't learned. Helpless dependence upon God where you've got to pray about everything. And you lean upon God and you don't feel that you're better than anybody else.

You know what the Apostle Paul said about himself? He said, I'm less than the least of all the believers. I'm the least of all the believers. That's why God used him so mightily.

So, in God's eyes, it's not your smartness. But your humility that he sees. The greatest human being in this room.

I don't know who it is. But the greatest person in this room is the one whom God can see. Is the humblest in his heart.

God sees all of our hearts and he sees whoever is the humblest person in this room. Is the greatest person in God's eyes. Not the one who is most educated or knows the Bible or any such thing.

So, this is what eternal life means. To know God. To know his ways.

To lay hold of eternal life. Let's pray. Bow our heads before God.

And let's ask God to let these lessons sink into us. So that we never forget it. And those of you who are always feeling, oh, I'm good for nothing.

I'm so weak. I'm so helpless. Be encouraged.

You are the very type of person God wants. You are more useful to God than the other fellow who thinks he's so smart. And the one who thinks he's very smart, please recognize that all your smartness is useless to God.

He's looking for humility. God gives his grace to the humble. Heavenly Father, help us to understand your ways.

The world does not understand it. But you have revealed it to us in Scripture. Help us to be gripped by it so that we can live a useful life and fulfill the plan you have made for our life.

Before we were born. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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