

Work Out What God Works In

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of working out our salvation with fear and trembling, and having the same attitude in ourselves which is in Christ Jesus.

Duration: 57:31

Scripture: Romans 8:29

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of responding to God's call to have the same attitude as Christ Jesus, to be conformed to His likeness. It highlights the need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, to keep our conscience sensitive, and to earnestly seek the power of the Holy Spirit daily. The speaker urges believers to pray fervently, with loud crying and tears, to be saved from spiritual death and the defilement of sin, just as Jesus did.

Transcript

Let's turn to Philippians and chapter 2. Philippians 2 is the great chapter that tells us about the humility of Christ in coming down and becoming a man. And we are told in verse 5 to have the same attitude in ourselves which is in Christ Jesus. See that is the goal of the Christian.

The Bible says we are predestined by God if you are born again to be conformed to the likeness of Christ in every area. And if you are gripped by that, you will really long to get closer and closer to that every day. See predestination means your destination has been predetermined.

And in Romans 8.29 we are told that that destination is total likeness to Christ. See if you get into a train and have a ticket, the ticket shows Delhi as your destination. If you have got into the right train, you should be getting closer to Delhi every hour.

If you are not getting closer to Delhi every hour, what is it prove? You are on the wrong train. So if your ticket says your destination is to become like Jesus Christ and as each year goes by, you are not becoming more like him, more compassionate, more merciful towards others, more humble, more gracious, more pure in your thoughts, in your speech, in your attitudes, more free from the love of money and overcoming sin more and more, more good to other people, more generous with your money and your time to serve others and expecting less and less from other people, making no demands on other people. If you are not becoming like that, I just want to tell you, you are on the wrong train.

Believe it or not, you are on the wrong train. Maybe some of you did get on the right train the day you were converted. But it is a sad thing to say that I see many believers even in CFC who are going in the wrong direction.

And some of those who have come more recently to CFC are moving faster. Well that is the fulfillment of scripture, those who are first will be last and those who are last will be first. Many of you who have been here for many, many years are way behind some who have come much later.

Dear brothers and sisters, take it seriously. There is a destination God has put on the ticket for everyone who is converted and it is your responsibility to make sure you are moving in that direction. I seek to examine myself in that every day.

Every day. And if you do that, you know, we don't sort of check up our lives once a year like children who study for their examinations just on the day before the exam. No, the good students are those who study every day, who do their homework every day.

You know that. A good student is one who does his homework every day. So here it says a tremendous goal, I mean, have you taken it seriously? Verse 5, have this attitude in yourself which was in Christ Jesus.

The attitude Jesus had towards God, the total devotion to his Father, to obey the Father at any cost, to never please himself in anything, never to waste his time or his money or his life or anything like that, and also to love other people, to have mercy upon people who are, who don't have everything that, everything that he had and he, to have that same attitude in ourselves. And then it says, so then, beloved, you know, after describing this wonderful description of Christ from verse 5 to verse 11, how he emptied himself and was raised up to the right hand of the Father, etc., so then, so what are we supposed to do? Verse 12, so then, my beloved, just as you've always obeyed me, not only when I'm present but much more now in my absence, it means when it doesn't matter. You see, Paul was telling the Philippians, when I'm there in your midst, that's what he's saying in that verse, you guys are really keen to obey the Lord.

And now I'm not there. You should be more keen. See, if you are more zealous and spiritual in the presence of a servant of the Lord and you're not so zealous to be pure and holy when that servant of the Lord is not there, what does that indicate? It indicates that you don't really fear God at all.

You fear man. And the fear of man is the beginning of all foolishness, just like the fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom. You know, if you fear man, you'll just become more and more foolish every day.

I guarantee that. I mean, if you want to be more and more foolish every day, just live in the fear of man. Fear of man, fear of people who can hurt you, and fear of people whom you want to impress, whatever it is, two types of fear.

But if you want to progress in wisdom and become wiser every day, obey the word which says in Proverbs 23, live in the fear of the Lord the whole day through. So, he says, now that I'm not there with you, you should obey much more. So what does Paul want them to obey? And here's something I want you to notice.

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Do you know that the vast majority of believers don't have a clue what it means to work out their salvation? If anybody talks about it, they say, that's legalism. Was Paul a legalist? Was the Holy Spirit a legalist when he wrote that verse? Is that an Old Testament verse for people under the law? No.

He's connecting it to let this attitude be in yourself, which is in Christ Jesus. And so I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, like Paul says, my beloved, let me tell you that if you don't find yourself becoming more and more Christ-like in your speech, in your attitude to money, in your attitude to other people, more gracious, more overcoming sin, more pure in your thoughts, let me tell you in plain words, it is because you are not working out your salvation with fear and trembling. It's not just working out our salvation.

It's working out our salvation with fear and trembling. What am I to fear and tremble at? People in the world fear and tremble at the devil and witchcraft. I don't fear and tremble at the devil at all.

And neither should you if you're a child of God. But I do fear and tremble at God's Word. And at God Himself.

Because the Bible says that God looks with favor at those who tremble at His Word. If you're not familiar with that verse, let me show it to you. It's good to know what scripture says.

Isaiah 66 and verse 1 and 2. You know, this verse has come home to my heart especially. Because, I mean, I sort of spent the last 32 years trying to build the body of Christ, the house of God on earth, in different parts of the world. And this is the word that the Lord speaks to me.

And if you're a member of the body of Christ, you should also be doing your little part to help build God's house. God's house doesn't mean a building. But the people, to build up God's people in faith and love and goodness.

And so the Lord says, Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool. Where is this house that you're going to build for me? The Lord says, you puny little creature, you're trying to build my house. You're trying to build my church.

Who do you think you are? Well, He says, the whole earth is only the place where I put my foot. My hand has made all these things, verse 2. But, here's the person who can build my house. This one, the last part of verse 2, I will look, means I will look at with favor.

The one who is humble and contrite. Contrite means broken of spirit. And who trembles at my word.

That means one who reads something in God's word. Says, boy, I haven't taken that seriously till now. He trembles.

I mean, it's like if you have violated some law. And you find that the government or the police or the people have come to catch up with you. People tremble when a policeman stops them on the road or the income tax officer calls them up.

To question something or some court sends them a notice. Somebody has filed a case against you. They tremble.

Well, I mean, we may accidentally violate a lot of rules on this earth. But, okay, we pay the price for it. But it's not something to fear and tremble compared to fearing and trembling God.

Because we have violated His word. Do you know why many believers are absolutely useless to God in His work of building God's house? Absolutely useless. They come and sit in meetings, listen to the word.

But in terms of building God's house, zero. It's because they don't tremble at His word. God says, how can you build my house if you don't tremble at my word? You know, a lot of believers are like those who come and watch a house being constructed.

People are there, the laborers are there, struggling away, perspiring, carrying the bricks. The mason is sitting there day and night making sure the walls are straight, etc., etc., etc. And there are these observers who stand on the road and watch and maybe pass their comments.

Oh, that wall is not too straight or that thing doesn't look good. That's the condition of 90% of born again believers. Absolutely useless to God's kingdom.

Do you know the people who have tried to tell me how to build a church and how to build this church? Even some who have been here once and who have left us. The ones who have never built one church themselves. Not one.

They've tried to tell me how to do it. I would listen to them if they had at least built one church somewhere. But no.

It's the bachelors who know how to tell married people how to bring up their children, right? They can tell married people this is not the way to bring up your child, that's not the way to bring up your child. Bachelors know it all. That's how it is.

That is the arrogance and pride of many people. What about you? Have you found things to criticize in this church? You've done nothing for God yourself except sit in a meeting and listen to the word. And get all the benefit of people praying for you or helping you when you're in some financial need.

You've never done anything for God but you've been very critical, right? Of this thing and that thing and this brother and that brother and this thing done in the church and that thing done in the church. Shame on you. You will never grow in Christ-likeness in a hundred years.

I can prophesy that. If you don't repent. At least keep your mouth shut.

And say, I've nothing to criticize. I've done nothing for God myself. I've never built one church myself.

What can I speak against those whom the Lord has honored? Dear brother, sister. God looks at the humble. Those who are contrite in spirit.

And the more, the less we do for God, the more important we think we are. It's like the, you know, in a tree. The branches that have the maximum fruit bend down the most.

Because the weight of the fruit pulls it down. Who are the branches that stand upright? The ones that have got zero fruit. It's like that.

Parents who got nine or ten children. They are struggling. Oh God, give us wisdom.

We don't know how to bring up children. But those who got none. Oh, they know everything.

Old maids who never got married. Think that they can tell married people how to bring up their children. I mean, have you heard of more stupid people than that? Do you bachelors criticize others whose children are not growing up the way you think they should? Wait till you get married.

We have a tendency to be critical. And that is the clearest mark that you are a million miles from humility. And a million miles from receiving the grace of God.

That's why you have so many sicknesses. Which will never be healed. And that's why you have so many problems.

That's why you have financial difficulties. God's grace is not there. Why? Because He sees your arrogance.

Your lack of mercy. Think of that. God looks at those who tremble at His word.

Let this attitude be in you which is in Christ Jesus. It says, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. I need to tremble at every word of God that I have not obeyed.

And it says here. I didn't complete reading that sentence in Philippians 2.12. It's not a complete sentence in itself. And that's the part of it that gives us hope.

Philippians 2.12, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Because, thank God for that because. That because was not there in the Old Testament.

This is distinctively New Covenant. Work out your salvation because it is God who works in. You got to work out what God works in.

You understood that? God, who does it first? God. You work it out because God has worked something in you. And God works in you two things.

This is New Covenant. First of all, to will His good pleasure. That means you have a desire to do the perfect will of God in your life.

Just by the way, you didn't produce it. Don't be proud of that. Don't compare yourself with somebody else saying.

I have a desire to do God's will and other people don't. Well, it's God who worked that in you. The first thing He does is give us a desire.

And then, the second thing He does is He gives us the ability. He works in us first of all to will His good pleasure. And then to do His good pleasure.

That's exactly what we read also in the New Covenant in Hebrews 8. Where we are told, in Hebrews 8.10 it says, I will write my laws in their minds and in their hearts. To write or put God's law in my mind means He gives me the desire and the longing to do God's will. To write or put God's law in my heart means He gives me grace to strengthen my heart to do God's will.

This is the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant, God did not do that. He just gave them the laws and said, go ahead and keep it.

And never gave them the ability to do it. Why? To teach them, you can never do it on your own. One of the great lessons that God has to teach man is you can never do it on your own.

I'll give you a command but you first need to learn that you can't do it on your own. That's always God's way. He gives the law and for 1500 years He taught Israel one thing.

You can never make it. Have you learned it? You can't make it. But they know there are a lot of Christians today who still think they can make it.

Without being filled with the Holy Spirit. Without the power of the Holy Spirit. Without seeking God earnestly every day to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

They say, yeah, I can live the Christian life. Are you going to take 1500 years to learn it like the Israelites? The sooner you learn it, the better. You know, it's like the disciples who went out fishing.

They toiled all night and caught nothing. What is the Lord trying to teach them? You can't make it. You think you're an expert fisherman.

Go ahead and try. You know, it's on our strong points that God has to touch us. When Peter failed as an apostle because he denied the Lord.

He said, okay, I'm no good at being an apostle. But he said in John 21, I'm a pretty good fisherman. I'm going to go fishing.

And the Lord, as it were, said to him, okay, go ahead and try. And this expert fisherman, with all his other expert fishermen with him, caught nothing. God had to break Peter in his strong point, which was fishing.

I don't know what your strong point is. But that's the area where God will break you. Break your pride.

The area where you think you're so smart and capable is the area where he'll allow you to fail. And bungle up things. So that he shatters your pride and your ability in a certain area.

Have you experienced that? I've experienced that numerous times. I feel myself strong in certain areas and I bungle up right there. And I know that's God.

He's trying to break me so that I learn this wonderful truth that without him I can do nothing. So that he brings me to that life of perpetual dependence on him for every little thing. That's the way he wants me to live.

It's a very wonderful way to live. In the beginning we have to learn it. But over a period of time it becomes easy.

It's like a child first has to learn how to eat food. But you don't have a problem eating now. You can eat blindfolded.

But we learn it. Everything in life is like that. We learn something and afterwards it becomes such a habit that we can do it anytime.

So we've got to learn to live this life of dependence on God. But God works in us to will and to do. But it's not entirely his work.

That's the point. See there are these two sides in salvation. God works in and we've got to work it out.

Now if the attitude of Christ. Now remember all this has got to do with what we read in verse 5. The attitude of Christ in us. Now if that attitude of Christ does not come in us.

Where do you think the failure is? Is it that God has failed in not working it in your life? Or is it perhaps that you have failed in not working out what God worked in? Where do you think the failure is? I hope you realize it's in you. You know when Adam failed in the Garden of Eden. He put the blame on God.

Have you noticed that? Lord it's true I ate this but it's because of the wife you gave me. Don't forget that. See how very subtly he put the blame on God.

And you perhaps don't realize that very subtly you may put the blame on God. Is it possible that God may have wanted some of you here at least. To be teachers of his word.

And you are not. And you put the blame on God and say well he didn't give me a gift. He gave brother Zach a gift.

Why didn't he give you a gift? Perhaps because you were so lazy to study his word. I don't believe that I would ever have been teaching the word today. If I hadn't spent years studying the word.

By the sweat of your brow you will earn your bread. There's no other way. There's no other way to know the scriptures.

Except by the sweat of your brow. Now some farmer lies down lazily and says oh I'm going to get a crop. He's going to get nothing at harvest time.

And his neighbor gets a fantastic harvest and says God blessed him. God didn't bless him. God would have blessed you just as much.

If you had worked hard. Now I'm just trying to say how we can put the blame on God and miss out. I believe that many many Christians.

Many of you sitting here. I mean I'm sorry to have to say this to you. But I hope it will challenge you at least to do something with the rest of your life.

You can't do anything with the years gone by. But the rest of your life. Don't put the blame on God like Adam.

And saying you never gave me a gift. Consider the possibility. That you've been too lazy.

To seek God. In prayer. You've been too lazy.

To read the word of God. Maybe you've been too lazy to obey the little things God's been telling you. In Hebrews 5. And verse 11.

The Holy Spirit says. Concerning him we have much to say. Concerning Jesus.

Who became a man like us. That's the point. He's talking in verse 7. About Jesus in the days of his flesh.

Offered up. Prayers, supplications, etc. Concerning this Jesus.

We have so much to say to you. But it's very hard to explain. Do you believe that there are certain things about Jesus which are very hard to explain? That means you won't be able to understand it.

You won't be able to understand it. Not because you are not intelligent. Peter was less intelligent than I would say almost all of us here.

Paul may have been more intelligent but not Peter. Peter, James, John, Andrew. They were all fishermen.

They are not very educated. They probably never finished high school. So I would say that.

It's got nothing to do with intelligence. It's got to do with receptivity and obedience to God's word. Concerning him we have much to say.

But it's hard to explain. Because you have become dull of hearing. Dull of hearing in your conscience.

That's what he means. Not physical ears. Our physical ears may be very good.

How do we become dull of hearing in our conscience? That means when God tells you something in your conscience. You tell your conscience. Shut up.

I don't want to listen to you. I am going to do it in any case. And you violate your conscience.

And do what God was trying to tell you not to do. Or God told you in your conscience to go and apologize to somebody. And you say no, no, no.

And after sometime you don't hear that voice anymore. And you feel happy. It's not troubling me anymore.

It's not troubling you anymore because it's dead. You killed it. That's why it's not speaking anymore.

Don't think God is not speaking. You killed the voice of conscience. And he says you become dull of hearing.

And then he says, listen to this, verse 12. Hebrews 5.12 By this time you should have become teachers of the word. But you are not.

Why are you not teachers of the word by now? Because you are dull of hearing. God is trying to say something to you and you won't listen. Or you don't do it immediately.

You know I've noticed through the years. There are two types of obediences. There are some people who as soon as they hear something from God.

They do it at once. Jesus was like that. Paul was like that.

Soon as they are convicted. And I really sought to be like that. Lord, to do it immediately.

I wasn't like that in the beginning. But I really sought to be like that. Because I know that's the secret of the Christian life.

And there are others who obey. But they think about it and wait and wait and wait and wait. And finally they do it.

You know it was like that with me in the beginning. When I was considering water baptism. I belonged to a church that believed in sprinkling infants.

And I was sprinkled as an infant. So I didn't feel there was a need for another baptism. And I read the word, studied the word.

And I saw it was there. But still for one and a half years I didn't obey God. After I was born again.

And all those one and a half years. I felt as if I knelt down to pray. God would say, why should I listen to you when you are not listening to me? Why should I listen to you when you are not listening to me? Do you feel that God is possibly saying that to you? Water baptism is very easy.

You don't have to pay a price to be baptized. You can be very eager to be baptized. And don't think you are a great person because you got baptized.

It may be more difficult to obey something like go and ask forgiveness from your husband or wife. Or from your son or daughter whom you hurt. Or from your neighbor or from that other person whom you don't like.

Or go and set that matter right and give back that money you took wrongfully from your office or somewhere. That will be more difficult than water baptism. But that's where God tests you.

And if you don't obey. I'll tell you that. Your hearing level will drop a little bit.

You won't become completely deaf to God's voice. It will just drop a little bit. Wait for the next time when you still don't listen to something.

It will drop some more. Finally you just can hardly hear anything. The Bible says that the Apostle John.

When he was on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation chapter 1. You read there. He heard the Lord's voice in Revelation 1 like a trumpet. Can you imagine if somebody blew a trumpet here and you put your ear and say what was that? That person will be really dull of hearing right? Many of us say we can't hear God's voice.

How is it John heard it like a trumpet? And you say what is that Lord? It's the same thing. Dull of hearing. Most Christians that I know.

Believers are dull of hearing. They don't hear God's voice. They hear a message through a man.

I have heard many messages from men. That have challenged me. But as time has gone on.

I tell you honestly. Very few nowadays. Very few.

I remember in the olden days. I used to hear messages that challenged me. But nowadays.

Rarely do I hear a message. That I can say that was from God. That speaks to my heart.

Christendom is drifting. It's rare to hear a message nowadays. It's from God.

We are coming to the days of famine. Mentioned in Amos chapter 8 verse 11 and 12. Where men will wander here and there to hear a prophetic word from the Lord.

And they won't hear it. They will go from this conference to that conference. There are multitudes of conferences these days.

Revival conferences. And all types of conferences. But a word from the Lord.

That brings conviction of sin. And not only conviction of sin. See some people think that.

If somebody preaches a thundering fiery sermon. Convicting everybody of sin. That's a great thing.

No it is not. It must bring deliverance from sin. Then you have accomplished something.

I mean. If a surgeon tells a person. I'm using an illustration.

You got cancer in your stomach. And he takes this person to the operating theater. Cuts him open and says.

See here it is. Go out now. What sort of surgeon is that? He has exposed the sin completely.

And sends him home with his stomach cut open. With the cancer exposed. I wouldn't want to go to such a surgeon.

But a lot of preachers are like that. And they think they are following in the footsteps of John the Baptist. And the great revivalist.

Thundering away again. Sin. Sin.

Sin. Sin. This that and the other.

And there are particularly young people. Who are foolish enough. To think that these are prophets.

No. A good prophet. Not only exposes the sin.

But shows the solution. Not only points out sin very clearly. But gives the person hope.

That he can be delivered from it completely. That's a good surgeon. Removes the cancer.

Stitches up the stomach. Gives the person a sedative. Painkiller.

Speaks a kind word into the person's ear. Then sends him out. So he goes out of the operating theater.

Not depressed. Not depressed and gloomy. Feeling good for nothing.

But with hope. That's how we should go away when we hear God's word. You know that this verse teaches us that we could have been teachers.

But instead of being able to teach others. We need someone to teach you again. The elementary principles of the oracles of God.

I have a great longing. That I shall hear God more clearly when he speaks to me directly. Than when he speaks to me through another human being.

Did you hear that? I want to hear God more clearly. When he speaks to me directly to my heart. Than when he speaks to me through another human being.

I thank God for all the people through whom God has spoken to me. And now and then I really hear a word. That God speaks to me through a person.

And sometimes in personal conversation it has happened. It's not always from a pulpit. Sometimes it's some young brother testifying in some conference in Tamil Nadu.

I get a word from my heart. That person doesn't even know that God has used him to speak to me. And probably it's a good thing he doesn't know.

But God has spoken to me. But I am thankful for such occasions. For they are very rare.

But to hear God speaking to me every day. That's more important. Like the manna that fell from heaven every day.

My dear brothers and sisters. Long for that. It will change your life completely.

Man shall not live by bread alone. How often do you eat your food? Daily? Man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

Daily. The manna fell daily. Yeah.

That's how we are to receive it. And we need to have this goal. That I am able to hear God's voice more clearly.

When he speaks directly. Than through another. I am always excited when I hear God speaking to me through a dream.

Or in the middle of the night. Something. When I am asleep.

And I never talk about it. I mean a lot of people think. They get a dream from God.

They want to testify about it. I ask the Lord. Lord why do you speak to me in dreams? He said because I can't speak to you when you are awake.

You are too busy. Oh. So it's not such a great thing when God speaks to you in a dream.

I discovered that. It's sort of second best. That I am so busy doing other things during the day that he can't speak to me.

That he has to wait till I am fast asleep. And then he talks to me. I say Lord I don't want it to be like that.

I want you to be able to speak to me when I am awake. Don't think dreams and visions are the greatest thing. The greatest thing is when God speaks to you face to face.

That's heart to heart. Let me show you that verse too. I like to show you everything from scripture.

So that your faith doesn't rest on the wisdom of men. But on the word of God. Numbers chapter 11.

In case you don't know this verse. It's very important. Particularly in our day when a lot of people are talking about dreams and visions.

And thinking that is the greater way than when God speaks to the heart. It's not. Let me tell you this.

If somebody tells you that he had a dream and a vision. God spoke to him. And you say God spoke to your heart.

You are superior to that person. I want you to know that. So that you don't get fooled.

Numbers chapter 12. Numbers chapter 12. We read about Miriam and Aaron.

Criticizing Moses. And whenever a person criticizes someone else. It says here.

In the last part of verse 2. There are five words there. You see the last five words of verse 2. And the Lord heard it. Please remember that.

Whenever you speak about someone. Remember that. And the Lord heard it.

Moses didn't hear it. No. It was backbiting.

When you backbite somebody. Nobody hears it. But the Lord hears it.

And he takes it very seriously. Particularly if you speak about someone like Moses. Suddenly the Lord said.

Come here. I want to talk to you. And then he called.

Last part of verse 5. He called Aaron and Miriam. And when they both came forward. He said.

Now listen to me. Now read these words carefully. If there is a prophet among you.

And it's a great thing to be a prophet. I will make myself known to him in a vision. And in a dream.

Great. But Moses is more than a prophet. He is so faithful in my house.

That I don't waste my time speaking to him in dark sayings. And dreams and visions. I speak to him mouth to mouth.

Verse 8. Openly. Not in dark sayings. Not in the middle of the night in a dream or a vision.

But when he is awake. Heart to heart. So which is greater? You got God himself saying.

That when I speak to a person's heart directly. It's superior to his getting a dream or a vision. Listen to what God is trying to say to you.

So we come back to Philippians chapter 2. God is at work in you. And we got to work it out. And God works.

Whenever we read in the Bible. And you never read this in the Old Testament. God is at work in you.

It's always the Holy Spirit. When it speaks about God working things outside of us. That is our Father in heaven.

Working all things together for my good. If I love God and I am called according to his purpose. God makes everything work together for good.

Those are outward circumstances. But whenever it says God works in you. Like here.

That's the Holy Spirit. God has put his Holy Spirit in us. And I will tell you this.

If you don't seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Continuously. You will not know this working inside.

You will not know this hearing of God's voice inside. Conscience is a good guide. Conscience is what every man has.

Atheists have it. Ungodly sinners have it. Every child in the world is born with a conscience.

It's what distinguishes man from the animals. A conscience. Even the barbarians in the jungle have got a conscience.

Conscience is not a perfect guide towards God. Because a barbarian in a jungle can cut off somebody's head with a good conscience. Because his conscience has been educated by his surroundings.

And he has seen his father and uncle cut off people's heads. He will say that's okay. They can commit adultery with a good conscience.

So conscience is influenced a lot by our surroundings. How we were brought up. I mean if your parents told you that cheating in an examination was okay.

Then you probably could do that with a good conscience. But another child who is taught by his parents that cheating in an examination is not okay. His conscience disturbs him when he cheats.

So conscience is not a perfect guide. It has been influenced by what your parents taught you. By your surroundings.

By your circumstances. Perhaps by your friends. Some friends say there is nothing wrong in taking drugs.

Okay. You take it with a good conscience. But when a person is born again.

When Christ comes into his heart. When the Holy Spirit comes in. He repairs this conscience.

But conscience is like a weighing machine that is spoiled. You put one ton on it. The needle hardly moves.

Maybe just a flicker. If you put one ton on it. When you are born again.

God wants to repair that conscience. So that it is not sins weighing one ton. That disturb you.

But gradually it gets better and better and better. One day you see the needle flickering when you got ten kilos on it. Boy! It is better than one ton.

You are sensitive about something small that didn't disturb you. In your unconverted days. But don't be satisfied with that.

Because God wants to bring that weighing machine down to register grams and centigrams and milligrams. This weighing machine that would only register one ton has been so perfectly repaired. That now one milligram.

Boy! One thousandth of a gram. It flickers. The needle is showing.

That's great. That means God has been working. The Holy Spirit has been working in your conscience.

Now what can happen is. Some people when they are born again. They are whole hearted.

I think most of us are whole hearted the day we are born again. And we really take things seriously. And we listen.

Allow the Holy Spirit to make our conscience sensitive. And we listen to God. But then.

As we grow and we are believers for five ten years. We come into the midst of other believers. And we find some of those other believers don't have a conscience about some things.

And gradually your conscience also begins to get spoiled. The weighing machine was once again spoiled. That's happened.

I think some of you if you are honest. If you are absolutely honest. You may find that.

Your conscience was perhaps more sensitive when you were born again. Than it is today. There were certain things you wouldn't do then.

But you do now. Maybe your conscience was sensitive in the first year or so you were in CFC. And there were certain things you wouldn't do.

But then mingling with certain other worldly people in CFC. You can now watch certain movies. That you would never have watched many years ago.

You can sit comfortably through it. What has happened? Don't you feel you have lost something? And if you don't do something about it. I will tell you it will only go worse.

This is like a slippery slope. You can't stand still there. If you don't climb up you are going to go down.

God is working in you. But if you don't work it out. Gradually that thing will die.

I mean any doctor will tell you that some muscle that you don't use. Gradually withers up. You know a healthy man who can run around.

He is in bed for 6 months. Because he has broken some part of his body. When he gets up from bed after 6 months.

He can hardly walk. What happened? He is not paralyzed. He did not use his leg muscles for 6 months.

And he is unsteady on his feet. It is true. Any muscle in your body that you don't use.

Gradually withers up. And that is what happens to the conscience. You ignore it.

You neglect it. You don't bother about it. God is trying to work in you.

Work in you and you don't respond. It will gradually die. One day you won't hear God at all.

People like John even at the age of 95 hear him like a trumpet. Loud and clear. You have to say.

What was that? I can't hear God. And if you have lost the ability to hear God which you once had. Now if you never had it.

Okay you can develop it. But if you once had it. And you lost it.

I tell you. You lost the greatest thing of all. Because Jesus said.

Man shall live by every word of God. It doesn't matter if you don't have so much money. It doesn't matter if you don't have your own house.

And you have to rent one. Some people think the goal in life is one day to have my own house. Okay.

If you can afford it. Good. But that's not the greatest thing of all.

Jesus never owned a house. He had to rent one in Capernaum. So that's not the greatest thing.

The greatest thing is to be able to hear God's voice everyday. It's not to have a good job. It's not to have a great salary.

All that is okay. But if you don't hear God's voice. You are useless.

Man shall live. Jesus said. By every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And if I'm not hearing that. I'm not living the way Jesus wants me to live. And God when he speaks to me.

Is working in me. And I have to work it out. You see that's the difference between me.

And that initial earth. That you read in Genesis 1. Where everyday God spoke. Have you noticed the Bible begins with.

Telling us that everyday God said something. The first day God said something. The second day God said something.

The third day God said something. All the way up to the sixth day. God was always saying something.

In the very first page of the Bible. To teach us that. Our God is a God who wants to speak to us everyday.

And not only that. What you see in that first chapter in Genesis. Is that everyday when God said something.

Something miraculous happened. Everyday when God says something. His word never returns void.

It will always accomplish that for which it was sent forth. We read in Isaiah 55. And that's what happened in Genesis 1. God said let there be light.

And suddenly a miracle happened. Do you know that if you listen to God's word. We can experience miracles in our life.

Do you know how many miracles you have missed all your life. But by not listening to God everyday. Everyday you don't listen to God.

That's one day you lost a miracle. I don't mean a physical miracle. But some type of miracle that could have changed your life.

If God saw that he would respond to what he said. God said. Let the trees come forth from the earth.

Boy. It came forth. The big difference between the earth and us is.

The earth did not have a choice. God did not create the earth with a free will. When they listen to God.

Well do you think I should obey that or not? Should I allow the trees to come forth or not? The earth didn't have a choice. Whereas you and I. God gives us a choice. Because without choice we can never be holy.

You know the earth can never be sinful. And the earth can never be holy. Because there is no freedom of choice.

You and I can be sinful or holy. Because we got freedom of choice and a conscience. An animal cannot be sinful or holy.

Because it's got freedom of choice but no conscience. We've got freedom of choice and a conscience. And so we can be either holy or sinful.

So that's the difference. And God speaks. Just like in Genesis chapter 1. And now He waits for me to respond.

And if I don't respond. Or I wait. I mean if God said to the earth.

Let the trees come forth. And the earth sort of waits on that for two years. That's a picture of what happens with many believers.

God says something. And they think about it and think about it. Now there's some time they completely forget about it.

The voice of God will gradually become fainter and fainter and fainter. If we don't respond immediately. I want to tell you.

It's not an easy thing to live the Christian life. Let me tell you that. If it were an easy thing.

Listen. If it were an easy thing. To live the Christian life.

God would not have given us. A power greater than atomic power. Greater than nuclear power.

Greater than the power that created the universe. It's called the power of the Holy Spirit. Why would we need this fantastic power? I mean to run a little toy.

You need a 1.5 volt battery. You don't need 400 volts of alternating current to run a little toy. Some think they need thousands of volts of electricity to run something.

Why? Because nothing else will run it. Why does God give us the mighty power of the Holy Spirit? For what? Because it's not easy to live the Christian life. That's why.

To me the greatest proof. That it's not easy to live the Christian life. Is the fact that God has given me the greatest power in the universe.

At my disposal. If I want to live it. And if I neglect that power.

And say oh well I think I can do without it. Then I've got myself to blame for failure. And that's why we need to cry out to God for this power of the Holy Spirit everyday.

We need to cry out to God that He will keep us from defiling ourselves with sin. You know just as we are all eager to keep ourselves from sickness. You wouldn't go near a person who's got an infectious disease.

Which can be communicated just by his breathing at you. There are some diseases you can get just by getting a person's breath. Why if you know that you wouldn't go near that person till he's cured.

Because you don't want to get. Who among us wants to get an infectious disease? Are you as eager to be free from sin? You know how eager Jesus was? Let me show you this verse. Hebrews 5 and verse 7. In the days of his flesh.

Now remember. That verse we started at the beginning with. Have this attitude in yourself.

Which was in Christ Jesus. He does not ask us to run a race that he did not run himself. He does not ask us to walk a pathway that he did not walk himself.

What was the pathway he walked? In the days of his flesh. Meaning in the 33 and a half years that he was on earth. I would paraphrase it like that.

During the 33 and a half years when he was on earth. Hebrews 5 and 7. He offered up prayers. Does God have to pray? If Jesus was living here as God.

He wouldn't have to pray. But though he was God. He lived here as a man.

Not using his resources as God. That's why he had to pray. Supplication.

That's a word which expresses greater intensity in prayer. And specific requests. With loud crying.

Boy. And tears. When was the last time you prayed with loud crying and tears? Have you ever prayed with loud crying and tears? I don't mean for healing from some sickness.

Jesus was not praying for healing from sickness. Jesus was praying that he should not sin. He says he was praying to the one who was able to save him from spiritual death.

And he was heard. We know there is physical death and there is spiritual death. We know it's not physical death.

Because if he was praying for being saved from physical death, his prayer was not heard. He died. Which prayer was heard? To be saved from spiritual death.

And he was not praying for 33 and a half years to be saved from physical death. Oh Father, save me from spiritual death. All the time.

Spiritual death is what? The smell of sin. The touch of sin. You know, not just falling into the muck.

You don't have to fall into the muck to get the smell of it. You know, people have been in a room where a lot of people are smoking cigarettes. And even though they don't smoke cigarettes, the smell of cigarettes is on their clothes.

How did they get that? They didn't smoke a cigarette themselves. The smell of cigarettes is on their clothes because they are mingling with people who smoke cigarettes. It's like that, you know.

The defilement of sin is very easy to get. Sometimes we don't even realize it. I glory in the fact that I didn't smoke a cigarette.

Well, you hang around with such people and you get it on your clothes. Jesus prayed that he wouldn't have any smell of sin. That's why he was so earnest.

Because sin is terrible. It would cut him off from his father and he hated it. I want to encourage you to do that, brothers and sisters.

I have prayed to God with loud crying and tears. In fact, I did it even this week. Because I have a need.

And what I prayed for, I said, Lord, I see areas in my life. I'm not like Jesus. I lack that power and authority that Jesus had.

There's so little of the resurrection life of Jesus being manifested in me. That's why I cried out. That it would be seen more in my life.

Do you have a longing like that? Dear brothers and sisters. Let me encourage you to have the attitude which is in Christ Jesus. God, I really believe God loves us all.

And he's really trying to work something in you right now. As he's speaking to you. May I urge you in your own interest.

Work it out. Work it out. Say, Lord, I want to respond to you.

I tell you, your life will be different from today. Let's pray. While our hands are bowed in prayer.

God is a good God. Very merciful. He longs to bless us more than we want to be blessed.

This is the test. Of whether you have faith today or not. Here is my own definition of faith.

One of my definitions of faith. Faith is to believe. That God is more eager to bless you.

Than you are to be blessed yourself. Can you believe that? That's faith. If you think that you are more eager to be blessed.

Than God is to bless you. Then you don't have faith. I want to tell you in Jesus name.

God is more eager to bless you than you are to be blessed. But you need to respond to that. Heavenly Father.

I pray that you will apply the truth of God. Your truth. To our lives.

In a permanent way. We humbly ask. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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