

(Youth Conference 2006) How God Selects and Prepares Us

by Zac Poonen

To live a satisfying Christian life, one must get rid of wrong concepts and prejudices, lay aside every weight, look unto Jesus, take up the cross, despise the shame, and listen to God.

Duration: 56:33

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages young people to make the decision to be different from the world and follow the example of Jesus Christ. They emphasize the importance of looking to Jesus and running the race of faith, as mentioned in Hebrews 12:1-2. The speaker urges young people to lay aside any weights or encumbrances that hinder them from following God and to actively fight against sin. They also emphasize the need to be wholehearted in their commitment to Christ and not be influenced by cultural norms or the desire for popularity.

Transcript

The first thing I want you all to know is we have to get rid of a lot of wrong concepts that we have absorbed from our culture, which is basically Hindu in this country, and from the Christianity that we have seen around us. We may come from various denominations, and if you don't fight a battle to get rid of your cultural prejudices and the traditional prejudices you have from the Christendom particular branch of Christianity you grew up in, I'll tell you something, you will never become the type of man or woman of God that God wants you to be. I'm saying this from my own experience.

I decided when I became a Christian as a young man, I was 19 years old, that I would not be an Indian first, but a Christian first, and then an Indian. So if there's a conflict between Indian culture and what the Bible taught, I would choose the Bible. And if there was a conflict between what my particular church denomination taught and what the Bible taught, I would choose the Bible.

If you make that decision, you will discover different things, habits, maybe which your parents have followed, which your particular culture in your part of the country follows, which you have to decide you're not going to follow. You're going to be different because you've got one example, that is Jesus Christ. So the best advice I can give you young people is to look unto Jesus and run the race, like it says in Hebrews

12, verse 1 and 2. And when it says, turn to that verse for a moment, you've got a notebook and a pencil, please write so that you remember later on what you were told.

You can't rely on your memory. Hebrews 12, verse 1 and 2, it says here, let us lay aside every encumbrance or weight, everything that hinders us from following and sin. Now sin we can understand, something which our conscience tells us is wrong.

What are these weights or encumbrances? Sin is like a chain that ties our leg. You can't run the race if you've got a chain tied to your leg, tied to some tree or post. You've got to break those chains.

Weights are, you know if you come to a 100 meters race and your pockets are full of heavy stones, you're not going to run very fast. So you've got to get rid of weights. And weights refer to many things, but some of those things are these prejudices we have because of our culture or tradition or church background or whatever it is.

Anything which doesn't look evil, but which can hinder you from running the race, is not enough to just get rid of sin. I'll tell you this, if you take it seriously, you may be different from a lot of other young people because they don't take some of these things seriously, but you'll find in the long run that your life really counts for God because you're not going to be like the others. If gossiping is a part of your culture, get rid of it.

And seek to fellowship with those who are more interested in prayer meetings. I believe a lot of you young people should organize prayer meetings. And don't just call everybody.

In fact, one of the most useless prayer meetings is where you call everybody. You can only pray with those who have a burden. When Jesus went in to pray for Jairus' daughter who was dead, he even sent out nine of his disciples.

He said, we don't want you here. Imagine, nine of his disciples being turned out of the room. He said, I only want Peter, James and John.

A lot of people are offended with Jesus. A lot of people are offended with us when we select some people and don't select others, but that's fine. We're not here to please the world.

We're here to please God and accomplish something for God before we leave this earth. And I want to ask you, how many of you are serious about saying, I want to accomplish something for God before I leave this earth? I remember when I was a young Christian and I read the biographies of these missionaries who went out to difficult places. And it was very difficult for them over there.

Their lives challenged me as a young man. I said, boy, these fellows really accomplished something for God. What am I doing? I want to accomplish something for God before I leave this earth.

And I decided that when I was 21. And I decided that no human being on the earth, no preacher, no group, nobody is ever going to hinder me from accomplishing what God wants me to accomplish before I leave this earth. And because I made that decision, I look back on my life today with some satisfaction.

And I made a lot of enemies in Christendom. I couldn't care less. I know God is my friend.

I know the devil hates me like anything and that's a great compliment to me. And I want to say to you, your life can count for God if you decide now when you are young that you are going to be different from other

young people. Even other young people in your own church who are half-hearted, worldly, compromising and many other things that hinder them from being disciples of Jesus.

But if you're one of those people who want to be popular, I'd say forget about being a disciple of Jesus. Just forget it. You can sit through this camp, but you'll be wasting your time and you'll be wasting your life.

So, lay aside every weight. One of the things that you need to discover during these days, these two days. Lord, what are the sins that are hindering me from following you? I want to fight them, battle them.

Some of those sins are so deep-rooted in our flesh it may take you many years to get rid of them. Never mind. Say, Lord, if it takes me 10 years to get rid of this sin, I'm going to fight it for 10 years and get rid of it.

Don't give up. Don't ever, ever say, OK, I've struggled for 5 years, I couldn't get victory. No.

Determine that you're going to get victory over everything that your conscience tells you is wrong, even if it takes 10 years. If you're not filled with the Holy Spirit, pray what I prayed when I was a young man. I said, Lord, if it takes 10 years for me to be genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit, I'm going to cry out to you till I get it.

You know, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. If you don't seek Him wholeheartedly, I'll tell you right now, you won't find Him. If you're about to please this person and that person and do this thing and the other thing as a priority in your life, you might as well forget it about being a disciple of Christ.

But I hope that some of you at least, I don't expect, I'll tell you honestly, I don't expect all of you to respond to this word because there are a lot in a group like this, about 160 young people, there are always a number of people who are just not interested in listening to the Word of God. I know that. I know that from years of experience.

And I know that there'll be a number of people who go out from here and they'll be attracted by something in the world and they're friends and all that. I say, please go ahead and do that. Go your way.

But I'm speaking to the few here who are serious and say, I'm not going to let my friends influence me. I'm not going to let the world influence me. And I'm basically speaking these two days only to the rest of you, to those such people.

The rest of you, this is a picnic. Have your picnic and go home. But those of you who are serious about following the Lord in this crowd, I want to encourage you to take these days seriously.

And I'll tell you this, when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ and you look back over your life, you'll thank me for what I told you. If you take it seriously, you won't have any regret in that day. That's what I live for.

I say, Lord, I don't care what anybody in this world thinks about me. They're not going to sit on the judgment seat judging me in the final day. It's going to be you.

You're the only one. And when I stand before you in the final day, you're not going to ask somebody for his opinion about me. You're not going to ask somebody, what do you think of Zach? He's not going to ask anybody.

So why should I bother what other people think? I only want to know that Jesus, who knows every detail of my life, my private life, my thought life, my attitudes, everything. I want him to be happy. And I really want to speak only to those young brothers and sisters sitting here who are serious about that.

I'll tell you something. It doesn't matter if your parents think that you're the black sheep of the family. I've seen a lot of black sheep of the family who turn out to be the most wholehearted disciples of Jesus.

Like the apostle Paul, who was killing Christians. You're not as bad as that. Think what he became.

Or Peter, who denied Jesus three times saying, I don't even know Jesus. None of you have ever committed such a sin. But he became the greatest apostle.

So God's got great hope for those who have failed a lot. If they will acknowledge their failure and say, Lord, people in the church don't think much of me. And people in my home don't think much of me.

But that's okay. I want to live before you and please you. And you'll see that God will accomplish something through your life.

So, lay aside every weight and lay aside every sin. That's the thing that you need to think of during these days. How can I lay aside every sin? How can I lay aside every weight? And look unto Jesus.

It says in the next verse, fixing our eyes on Jesus. He is my example. I look at Him.

And how am I to look at Him? I'm to look at Him as the one who is the author of my faith, means the one who has produced a little faith in me. You fellows wouldn't be here. You folks wouldn't be here.

If Jesus had not produced some faith in you. The author means somebody who wrote some faith into your heart. Don't take the credit for yourself.

Jesus wrote that faith in your heart. And He who began that book will complete it. He'll finish the last page.

I believe that. He's the author of my faith and He's gonna be the finisher. Perfecter of my faith.

And then I have to look at Him as one... Listen, how am I to look at Him? There are two ways in which I must look at Him. First of all, I must look at Him as one who endured the cross. Now that's not something you hear much about in Christianity today.

Enduring the cross. People talk about enjoying. But the real joy which never disappears 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day, is this joy.

The joy which the world gives you, even the joy you get out of some answered prayer or some prosperity or some healing, I tell you that joy will not last 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. But if you take up the cross and die to yourself and decide to follow Jesus, you'll have a joy. I'll tell you from my experience that you have 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

That's how it was with Jesus. Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. His joy was of full joy.

Fullness of joy. And that came because He endured the cross. And He knew that if I go this way, I'll get joy all the time.

And He chose that way because that is the will of the Father. To take up the cross means basically that I don't do my own will, but the will of God. You know, a lot of people talk about taking up the cross and many people just say, what does it mean? Here it is.

Think of a cross like this. This is the picture of a cross. My hands crossed.

This is my will. This is God's will. Going in different directions.

And where my will crosses God's will and I die to my will and I choose God's will, that is the cross. In some situation where you're tempted and your conscience or the Holy Spirit says, this is the way Jesus would react in this situation. This is what Jesus would do in this temptation.

And you hear another voice, which is the voice of your flesh, saying, no, you'll get some enjoyment if you go this way. You need it, man. You need once in a while to enjoy yourself.

That's this, your will. And there's God's will. And at that moment, you're all alone.

You're going to make a choice. You're going to make a choice to either forget about the cross and do your will, or you're going to deny yourself and die. To die means to die to your choice and do the will of God.

And you keep doing that and you'll become a man of God. A woman of God. Otherwise, you can come to 10,000 camps like this, you'll never get anywhere.

You'll be just the same old person. Defeated, frustrated, like 90% of believers. Perhaps 95%.

There are very few believers who can say, I have a very satisfying Christian life. You go and ask people honestly, do you have a satisfying Christian life? I guarantee 95% will tell you no. Even people who have been believers for 30, 40 years.

You ask me, I say yes. I have a very satisfying Christian life. I'm not all that I should be.

I haven't become like Jesus, I've got a long way to go. But according to my present level, I'm very satisfied. Because I made a decision years ago that I'm going to choose God's will wherever I know it.

There may be many areas where I don't know it. That's okay. God doesn't hold me responsible for what I don't know.

Just like you will not get a 10th standard examination paper when you're in the 5th standard. Because you're not supposed to know certain things in 10th standard. So, I'm not bothered that I don't know certain things in a higher class, which I have not reached yet.

But, according to the present level of my understanding, I want to have a clear conscience. And that's all God is asking of you too. Please remember that.

That's what it means to endure the cross. And the other thing it says here, He despised the shame. There is a shame in being a wholehearted disciple of Jesus.

And you folks who are in college and in school know that. People will make fun of you. Because, I know, when I was working in the Navy, they used to call me a Holy Joe and all types of names.

They used to see me carrying my Bible in a little plastic bag. And they'd make fun of me. One person asked me, one of my juniors, he said, Sir, are you an insurance agent? Always going around with this every day out of the ship.

I said, yes, I'm an insurance agent. I insure people for eternity. So that they have eternal life.

Good opportunity. He asked for a testimony from me. I gave him.

I gave him the gospel. So, if you are different from the others, you'll find that you don't have to go and preach to others. They'll come and ask you something and then give them the gospel.

I'd stand around in those naval parties holding a glass of orange juice. And everybody else is drinking whiskey or rum or something like that. And they'd say, wait, what's this? You're drinking orange juice? Why? You asked for it, brother.

I'm going to give you now the answer. I'll give you the gospel. Alright, keep a Bible on my table.

Now, what's this? You're a Holy Joe. Okay, you asked for it. I'm going to give you the answer now.

So, you know there are many ways where you don't have to go and preach to others. They themselves open their mouth and ask you something if they see that you're different. And there's a shame attached to being a Christian.

Don't be afraid of that shame. Don't be ashamed to be known as a disciple of Jesus. Jesus said, if you are ashamed of me on this earth, that means in your office, in your college, you don't want other people to know that you're a disciple of Jesus.

You want to laugh at the dirty jokes that everybody else laughs at because you want them to think you're just like one of those disciples of the devil like all the others who laugh at those filthy jokes. I'm also a disciple of the devil like you fellas. I laugh at that.

And Jesus is standing there. He's not angry. He's sad.

Sad that you let him down. That's fine. Repent.

Lord, I never want to do that again. I want people to know that I belong to you. I don't have to go around with a big badge saying I belong to Jesus.

I think it's more by my life you know, if they see that I have a consideration and compassion for poor people and to those who are sick or discouraged that I can go to them and say, hey, would you like me to pray for you? There are many ways. Making it known that I'm a Christian. Whatever.

One of the goals I had was as soon as I got transferred to a new place or a new ship I wanted everybody to know as soon as possible that I was a Christian. I never wore a badge at any time. I was not permitted with my naval uniform.

You couldn't wear badges. I looked like anybody else but if they came to my room they'd see maybe a calendar or Christian calendar or something there that made it known that I was not this run-of-the-mill usual type of Christian. I was a disciple of Jesus Christ.

And you know, the result of that is some needy person would come to me and get converted because they knew that here was one person I could go to when I have problems. So that's the advantage of being known as a Christian and despise the shame. There is a shame but Jesus despised it.

Oh now watch that. That's nothing. Here is the world making fun of me and here is God and the angels delighted with me.

That's great. So, if you despise the shame and you take up the cross you can follow Jesus. That's why, in other words, look at the way Jesus lived his earthly life.

That's the first thing we have to look at Jesus in. The second thing is look at him seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12 We have to see him as one who's now got all authority in heaven and earth.

And if you really seek to please him, I'll tell you something. Do you know that when you listen to God, God will listen to you. Isn't that good? I remember in my younger days when I disobeyed God in something for one and a half years.

It was water baptism. And I knew I had to take it and I didn't take it. Every time I knelt down to pray I would feel God was saying to me, you're not listening to me.

Why should I listen to you? Do you know why many of your prayers are not answered? God's saying, you're not listening to me in that area. Why should I listen to you? It's a wonderful thing to listen to God. Because God will listen to you then.

That's the secret. If you honor him, he will honor you. If you dishonor him, he will dishonor you.

Those are laws. He gives grace to the humble, he resists the proud. It's up to you to decide whether you want grace or not.

You see, the promises of God for us are conditional. Conditional means there's a condition, even forgiveness of sins, even though it's free. Nobody has to pay anything for the forgiveness of sins yet 90% of the world is not converted.

Why? Because even for that there's a condition. Condition is you must repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. So right from the beginning of the Christian life, you can have everything from God but there are certain conditions.

I will never leave you nor forsake you. Looks like an unconditional promise in Hebrews 13. But it is conditional in the sense that it's not for all unbelievers.

It's only for believers. So you've got to become a believer for that promise to be fulfilled. Otherwise God will forsake you.

So every promise in a sense has got a condition. Please remember that. And those promises will not be fulfilled unless you fulfill the conditions.

If you honor him he'll honor you. You don't honor him, he's not going to honor you. So if you say, Lord I'm going to listen to you.

He's going to listen to you when you pray as well. Let me show you this verse. Hebrews 5 tells us why God heard the prayers of Jesus.

Hebrews 5. It says in verse 7 In the days of his flesh referring to Jesus Christ he offered up prayers and supplications with loud actually strong crying not loud. Strong crying and tears. That means in his heart there was a cry.

Sometimes there were tears. Can you imagine Jesus praying with tears in his eyes? And he wasn't praying with tears because somebody insulted him or called him the devil. We weep sometimes because somebody treated us badly or somebody insulted us or we didn't get what we wanted.

Jesus never wept once because he didn't get what he wanted. And I decided long ago in my life I will never weep because somebody treated me badly or I didn't get what I wanted or something went wrong in my life or anything that affects me like that all these earthly things. I'm never going to shed a single tear but I am going to weep if I sin in some area in my thoughts or in some area where other people didn't see it but Lord I slipped up there.

I am going to weep and cry at night on my pillow and ask God to help me. That's what it means to follow Jesus. I've heard you know every camp I go to for young people one question is why can't I get victory over sin? I'll tell you.

You pray like Jesus prayed you'll get victory over sin very quickly. When was the last time you wept on your pillow at night and said God I'm sinning please help me. You never done it? Do you want victory over sin? You won't get it in a hundred years you won't get it.

How can you get it when you're not earnest? God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He says you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. And so it says here he prayed with strong crying and tears to the one who was able to save him from death.

Not physical death. Jesus was not afraid of physical death. In fact it says he delivered people from the fear of death.

So how could he be afraid of physical death? Martyrs have gone to the flames and to lions to be eaten by them. Singing a song. There was no fear in them.

Jesus was not afraid of physical death. There was only one death that Jesus was afraid of. That is spiritual death.

That means the smell of spiritual death. You know how our nose can pick up a bad smell. Even though the bad smell may be coming from a hundred yards, two hundred yards away.

You say I pick it up something and I move away from that area. But Jesus was sensitive to sin like that. He didn't have to go and plonk himself into that muck before he realized the sin.

He picked it up from a long distance. Hey that's sinful. And he turned away.

That's how he hated sin. And so it says here that smell of death. He would avoid it.

Far away. That's why he never sinned. Because he'd pick up a smell there.

Hey hey that's not too good. You pick up that smell too. But if you keep indulging in it, you lose that sense of smell and then you begin to sin.

You tell lies. After sometime you lose the sense of sin in that area. If you lust and don't confess it.

Well you lose the sensitivity there. But Jesus was, he prayed Oh father, keep me from this, keep me from sin. Which ends in death.

And it says he was hurt. Because of his godly fear. How do we know he had a godly fear? Because he shrank away from sin.

As soon as there was a smell of it, he turned away from it. I don't want it. I don't care if everybody all my friends go that way.

I don't want it. Think if God can find in this crowd young men and women like that. I tell you it will delight the heart of God and India will have some man of God, some woman of God, 10-15 years from now.

It takes 10-15 years. You're not going to be a man of God tomorrow. But if you make that decision now 10-15 years from now India will have a man of God and a woman of God.

But I don't know. I've been so disappointed with so many young people I have seen. They all follow the crowd.

Or they follow Jesus for a while and then they find it's too difficult to go alone. This lonely way. I found my Christian life very lonely.

But I decided to stick it out. Because I looked at Jesus and I can imagine in Nazareth there was nobody else who was interested in living an absolutely pure life except Jesus. He's a young man.

18-19 years old 20 years old. Not a single person in Nazareth was interested in living a holy life. He was lonely.

And I used to look at his example as a lonely person. I used to remember when I was on the ship I was a lonely person. The only one in the whole ship was interested in living a holy life.

I said fine. I have one example at least in Jesus. Doesn't matter if I don't have other examples before me.

But I have Jesus as an example. I'm going to follow him. And I cried out.

I said Lord preserve me, preserve me, preserve me. You need to cry out. If Jesus need to cry out and to be protected.

Do you think you're going to get it any other way? I'll tell you the answer to many of your questions is you are half hearted. That's why you don't get what you're asking for. Why you're not filled with the Holy Spirit? You're half hearted.

How will I know when I'm filled with the Holy Spirit? You'll know automatically if you're whole hearted. How will I have victory over sin? You're half hearted. That's why you don't get it.

In fact so many questions that young people ask when answered. You're half hearted. You want to be half hearted and get all that God wants you to have? No.

It wasn't like that for Jesus. It's not going to be like that for you. You want to please your friends and get all that God wants you to have? Forget it.

Spend your life pleasing your friends. But you're not going to get anything from God except a few crumbs. A few drops.

If you're satisfied with that, fine. I'm not satisfied with drops. I want to live under the river falling from heaven.

I want all of God because I have only one earthly life. And you folks are so lucky that you can hear this when you're young. Imagine 16, 17, 18, 20, 25, even if you're 30, think that you can hear these things now and live the rest of your life for God.

You won't regret it. Don't be offended if you're corrected by older brothers. I tell you, I have been corrected so much.

I've been humiliated publicly. I just bowed my head. The Lord said, shut your mouth.

You're a young man. Shut your mouth. Humble yourself and accept it.

And I accepted it. For many years, not one or two times. It broke me and it made me the man I became.

I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, take it seriously. It's a matter of following the Lord. Let me show you another verse in the book of James.

You know it's the next book? James chapter 5. Very often people pray for healing and nothing happens. We all have that experience. It says here in James 5 verse 16 Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

I see from there that God's will for us is physical healing. I have believed that for many years now. I'm not saying that I'll never have a backache or never have a cold or a headache.

I'm not talking about that. I do not believe that God wants us to be physically incapacitated so that we cannot serve Him. I mean, Paul had a thorn in the flesh, some type of sickness.

But it didn't hinder him from serving the Lord. He lived with that sickness, but he served the Lord wholeheartedly. I'm not saying that we'll have perfect health till we get to heaven.

But, I don't believe it's God's will that I should have any sickness that hinders me from completing God's plan for my life. But it says here, I must confess my sins. If I have hurt you, I must confess to you.

If I have hurt God, I must confess to God. And then I must pray. And then it says in the next verse, actually the same verse, it's all one verse, the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

The effect, in the King James Version, it says, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. First of all, it's got to be fervent. Wholehearted.

You really mean business with God. And the other is, you must be a righteous man or woman. It doesn't say here that the prayer of every believer will accomplish much.

That's the reason why a lot of believers pray and nothing happens. But when a righteous man prays fervently, it says here, it accomplishes a great deal. Is there a difference between a righteous man praying and an ordinary believer praying? World of difference.

So then you say, oh, that's easy then. I'll just go to a righteous man and ask him to pray for me. Well, his prayers won't accomplish anything if you've got sin in your life.

You can get the most righteous person in the world to pray for you. It says that Jesus prayed for some people and they were not healed. Do you know that? It's the last verse of Matthew 13.

Jesus prayed for some people, they were not healed. He couldn't do much there because they were unbelievers. There was sin in their life.

So even though God may want something for you, you won't get it. Because you're not serious in your Christian life. And somebody else who is far more serious than you are, he gets a lot more or she gets a lot more than you get.

And I'll tell you something, there is no respect of persons with God. You know, I have seen something in our churches. In many, many of our churches, there's a lot of partiality.

There's a lot of partiality even among the elders. And so certain people get certain benefits because they are on good terms with the elders. And the elders like them.

And the elders don't like certain other people. Now, that's because those elders are not godly. We have a lot of elders in our churches who are elders but they are not godly.

But you say, how did they become elders? Well, that's because in a class of three-year-olds, a four-year-old is an elder. Even though he's not mature. So, elder is a relative thing.

If everybody is immature, then somebody who is not godly is fit to be an elder. But, because of that partiality, some of you who are in the good books of your elders, in your churches, may get certain benefits and certain advantages which other people may not get. And I've seen something.

Those who get those benefits are not usually spiritual. And then some of you may feel, well, I'm not on good terms with my elder. He always has a grudge against me.

Well, forget it. So what? Maybe he's carnal. Maybe your elder is carnal.

Can an elder brother be carnal? Sure. Can an elder brother be partial? I think a lot of our elder brothers are partial. I'll tell you that honestly because I've seen it.

And you don't happen to be in the good books of your particular elder. And so you get sort of pushed out in this way, that way. But does that mean God will push you out? No! He doesn't make a difference what your elders think of you, what your parents think of you.

Your parents may be partial to some of their children and, you know, treat you a little different. So what? Just make sure that God with whom there is no partiality accepts you. And I tell you, you will shine much better in God's purpose than all those people your elder brothers are partial to.

And you'll see that in the long run. Those brothers and sisters whom your elder brothers are partial to may get some benefits temporarily in the church. But you will be the man of God and the woman of God.

You may be not in the good books of your elder. It doesn't make a difference. I'll show you an example.

Let's turn to 1 Samuel and chapter 16. In 1 Samuel chapter 16 if you read the Old Testament history, you know that God had rejected King Saul from being king over Israel. And he wanted to select a new king.

Now that was not God's original plan. When Saul was anointed as king, David was not even born. Is that written somewhere in the Bible? Does any of you clever people know? How do we know that David was not born when King Saul was appointed king? I'll tell you.

If you read the Bible carefully, you read that Saul reigned for 40 years over Israel. And after Saul died, David became king. And it's written further down that David became king when he was 30 years old.

So, just do the math and tell me, was David alive when Saul became king? Hmm? Was that too tough for you? No! Saul was king for 40 years and David became king when he was 30. So David was not even born when Saul became king. So it was not that God already had David in mind.

No! He had Saul in mind. And 10 years later, when he saw that Saul is going the wrong way, he allowed David to be born. Do you know that God may have a plan for your life? And like I said, you may be the favorite of the elder brothers in your church.

And you get some privileges and all. God will set you aside like Saul. And he'll pick somebody else whom you don't value and whom maybe your elder brothers don't value also.

And that'll be the man of God in the future generation. That'll be the woman of God. And it's got nothing to do with the partiality of the elders.

Those blind elders will completely miss the bus. That's all. Every elder who's partial is blind.

We all have partiality. If you look in your heart, you young people, you have partiality in your heart towards certain people. And in that measure, you're spiritually blind.

I had partiality in my heart. I decided long ago, I will get rid of it totally. 100%.

Because I don't want to be blind. I refuse to be partial towards any human being. On the face of the earth, I work with a lot of elders and I'm not partial to any of them.

By God's grace. Because otherwise, I'll become blind. And I want to say to you young people, get rid of all partiality from your heart.

There are many people double your age, you haven't got rid of it. If you start getting rid of it now, perhaps in 10 years, you'll get rid of it completely. But you've got to fight it.

You've got to fight it. Every time you see it. Hey, that was partial.

I get rid of it. God's shown me different times. Hey, that was partial.

Get rid of it. Confess it. Forsake it.

That's how you get rid of it finally. Anyway, here was Samuel. See, Samuel was a man of God.

He had got rid of partiality in his heart. But it was a struggle for him because he appointed Saul. He was very disappointed that Saul was put out by God.

And God told Samuel in 1 Samuel 16 verse 1. How long are you going to grieve over Saul? I know Saul is your favorite. Samuel but forget it now. Get rid of grieving.

Oh, Saul has become like this. Saul has become like this. Forget it.

I have rejected him. Saul was Samuel's favorite. But God rejected him.

A prophet's favorite? An elder brother's favorite? Man of God has got no favorites. Jesus had no favorites. He turned around to Peter and say, Get behind me, Satan.

You're interested in the things of man, not things of God. He had no favorites. God has no favorites.

And I tell you that's a great comfort to some of you who feel that you're not one of the favorites of your parents or not one of the favorites of your elder brother. Doesn't make a difference. God has got no favorites.

Be like that. So Samuel, God told Samuel, Stop moping over Saul now. I've finished with him.

Now, I want you to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem because I've appointed one of his sons to be the next king. Okay? So Samuel did what God told him. We read in verse 4. And he arrived at Bethlehem and you know when a prophet came, people got a bit disturbed.

Hey, what's happening? Is something wrong? Why has the prophet come here? And they were trembling. People tremble in the presence of a true prophet. It says in verse 4, they came to meet him and said, Have you come in peace or have you come to rebuke us for something? And he said, I've come in peace.

Now, he went to the house of Jesse and he consecrated Jesse and his sons and he said, Please call all your sons. He told Jesse, I want you to call all your sons here. I want to meet all of them.

And so Jesse brought all his sons and the eldest was a man called Eliab, a young man. Verse 6. Samuel looked at Eliab and said, Boy, I'm sure this is the king. Look at the way he, he looks so smart, so tall, so clever.

And the Lord said to him, Samuel, you're influenced by his appearance, his height. I don't care for these things. I don't care what he looks like, how tall he is.

I've rejected him. Don't look at his. God judges persons differently from the way humans do.

God, man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. This is that famous verse 1 Samuel 16, 7. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. That's a great comfort when your heart is right and men have rejected you, when your parents have rejected you, when teachers in your college show partiality and put you down because you're a Christian.

Forget it. Don't worry. God looks at the heart.

It's enough if you're accepted by God, whether in your home or in your college or in the church. It doesn't make a difference whether you are rejected by man. Okay.

Then the next one came, Abinadab. The Lord said, the Lord told Samuel, that's not the one. Then Shammah.

The Lord said, that's not the one. And Jesse made all, verse 10, all his seven sons pass in front of Samuel. The Lord said to Samuel in his heart, none of these.

And Samuel was confused. Hey, the Lord told me to go and anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the next king and I've called Jesse and I've asked him to bring all his sons. All his seven sons are here.

And the Lord says, no, to each one of them. Have I made a mistake? Did I hear clearly? Let me just check up. Samuel said to Jesse, are these all your children, by the way? Do you have any other sons anywhere here? Oh, he said, there's one more.

I actually have eight sons, but that guy is a useless good-for-nothing fellow. He's the black sheep and we sent him to look after the sheep. He's not so clever or smart.

He can't be the king, definitely not. I didn't even bother to call him. He's always playing the guitar and singing songs and sitting out there.

I mean, he didn't know, the father didn't know that out there when looking after the sheep, David even killed a lion and a bear. Because he wouldn't tell his father all that. Imagine if you killed a lion and you came home and you never told anybody about it.

That'd be great, isn't it? That's the type of chap David was. I mean, Jesse asked, have you brought all the sheep home? Yes, dad, all the sheep. He didn't tell him one of the sheep was grabbed by a lion and he just killed the lion and pulled him out of his mouth.

He didn't tell that. He says it later to Saul. A young fellow who was quite happy to sing songs to God and praise Him.

Do you know that he wrote a lot of the psalms before he was 30 years old? All of those psalms were written by David before he was 30 years old. See, out there, he was all alone with God in the fields, looking after the sheep and praying to God and enjoying nature and he was so close to God. Rejected by his family.

Ah, you're the youngest, you don't know anything. You know how sometimes you have seven older brothers and they can just get on you as the youngest. And God picks him up.

And he says, yeah, there's one. And Samuel says, we're not going to sit down till you call him. So they sent for him.

You know, just think of this picture. Samuel says, call all your sons and he calls only seven of them. That is partiality.

I mean, I've never heard of anything like this. A father treating his son like this? One whom man rejected. The one whom the elders reject.

Maybe the one whom God chooses. Make sure God chooses you. Don't try to get in the good books of your elders, please.

Butter them and say nice things. Don't be a man, please. Live before God.

Honor your elders and honor your parents but don't be happy that they have accepted you and they think you're spiritual. You may go to hell with your elders thinking you're spiritual. So he he didn't, the elders here didn't think that this guy was spiritual.

The father always favored the seven older sons. And the other he treated like a little child. And when he came, the Lord immediately said this is the one.

Why? Because man looks in the outward appearance. God looks at the heart. He was only probably around 20 years old.

The older boy was probably around 30. But this young 20 year old superseded all his older brothers. The one whom the parents had rejected, the one whom the elders had rejected was the one whom God chose.

You could be one like that. What difference did it make that the father was partial, the elders were partial. So what? God doesn't choose the people whom parents and elders choose.

Maybe somebody else. You can be like that. And then as soon as Samuel took the horn of oil, verse 13 and poured it on this young 20 year old man.

Some of you are 20. Just think of you being 20 years old and the prophet of God pouring an oil on your head. The spirit of God came mightily upon David from that day.

And verse 14, the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. I mean it took him another 10 years to become king. But he was anointed that day.

And those 10 years were years of struggle. Saul tried to kill him. Do you know that you can be anointed by God when you're 20 years old and yet you may never come into the ministry you have till 10 years later.

But those 10 years you had to be faithful like David was. Rejected by Saul, persecuted. That was all part of his training.

To be rejected by older people. That's part of your training brother. I thank God that I went through that.

To be rejected by people whom you respect. To be treated as scum by your elders. To be rebuked in somebody else's favor.

Let your elders be blind and do that. You say, Lord, I want to live before you. Don't despise your elders.

Then you'll destroy yourself. If you read in the book of Samuel, you see how David respected Saul till the end of Saul's life. Even though Saul was a backslidden elder.

You must respect your elders even if he's a backslidden elder who doesn't have the anointing. God is my witness that every church I went to I respected the elders even though I didn't have confidence in them. To have respect for someone is different from having confidence in a person.

Your father may be a drunkard. You must respect him. You may not have confidence in him.

Your elder may be partial, carnal. Respect him because he's the elder in the church. You may not have confidence in him.

Confidence is a different thing from respect. You can respect a man and have no confidence in him. I respect the authorities.

I respect a policeman on the road because he's an authority. I may not have confidence in him as a godly man. Not at all.

You need to distinguish between the two. We can respect a lot of people whom we don't have confidence in. If you are in a particular church you must respect the authority in that church.

If you live in the state of Karnataka, you must respect the authorities in Karnataka. Or in Tamil Nadu, the authorities in Tamil Nadu. Secular authorities.

In India, secular authorities in India. But you may not have confidence in them as godly men. No.

So don't say, I don't have confidence in him so I don't respect him. That's wrong. You have to honor your father and mother even if they are drunkards and carnal and partial and everything else.

If they treat your brothers and sisters better than you, respect them. They are blind but respect them. Please remember this.

Very important to bear it in mind. And then the spirit of God came upon him and he became so different. Then as I said, for the next 10 years he went through so much of struggle.

I don't have time to show all that to you. But it is the same story with Joseph. You know when Joseph was chosen, he was only 17 years old.

I want to turn you to Genesis 37. Genesis 37 it says here in verse 2. These are the records of the generation of Jacob. Joseph was 17 years of age.

Young man. 17 years of age. God chose him.

And for 13 years, for the next 13 years, he struggled. He was in a far country, far away from his parents, in Egypt. A lot of that, maybe 10 of those years in jail.

Imagine being trained for God's work in a jail. David had to run around for 10 years in caves and hide. No proper food, no proper conveniences.

I'll tell you another thing about conveniences. I find a lot of young people today, they look for conveniences. Very important.

I must have my conveniences. But you're not going to be a wholehearted disciple. You know, if I went for a camp and the meeting started at 10 o'clock and I hadn't showered, I wouldn't shower till after the meeting.

But I find a lot of people who come for camps nowadays are not like that. I must have my shower. It doesn't matter if I'm late for the meeting.

Such people will never in a hundred years be disciples of Jesus Christ. Their priorities are wrong. Showering is more important than the meeting.

Or if I was late for breakfast and I'm late for the meeting, I say, forget breakfast. You be like that. Be a wholehearted person when I say, God is first.

Taking a shower, if I have time for it. Eating, if I have time for it. A lot of other things, if I have time for it.

But I don't find those type of young people today. They must have this convenience. They must have that convenience.

Where in the world will they be disciples of Jesus? Not in a hundred years. They'll come for camps, it'll be a picnic, they'll go home. Like I told you in the beginning, this message is not for everybody.

It's for those who are radical, wholehearted, who want to be disciples of Jesus Christ at any cost, for whom nothing is more important than God. Joseph was trained in hard circumstances. And if you find yourself trained in hard circumstances, away from parents, some of you may, at a young age, go off to college, away from your parents.

Well, Joseph went away at the age of 17. And he was in a jail for 10 years. And he came out to become a man of God at the age of 30.

Do you know that Joseph began fulfilling God's purpose for him when he was 30? David, when he was 30? Jesus, when he was 30. Where will you be when you're 30 years old? If God laid hold of you when you're 17, I'll tell you this, by the time you're 30, or 35, let's say, God would have a ministry for you. But if you're not wholehearted, then it's going to be difficult.

If you're not wholehearted, if you're not radical in letting God lay hold of you in those years, then it'll be difficult. So I want to encourage you, and if you've been, don't get discouraged even if you're near 30 or all that, say, Lord, I want to take it seriously from now on. Particularly if you're 17 or 18 or 19 or 20, boy or girl, in those days, in the Old Testament, it was only men.

Joseph, David. But in the New Testament, Acts 2.17 says, I'll pour out my spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Do you know, according to Acts 2.17 sisters, you're supposed to prophesy, to allow the Holy Spirit to come upon you.

That means to share God's word in a way that'll be effective. Not be a prophet or a preacher like me, but two minutes, three minutes, five minutes, in your home, or in the church. Share what God's laid on your heart in such a way that you really allow God to use you.

You'll find in the church after some time, everybody waiting to listen to you for three minutes. Because you've got something to say, even though you're a sister. You can be like that, but I don't know how many of you will be wholehearted like that.

If you allow the spirit of timidity, and the spirit of your culture, which says, no, women must be there in the background, then you're going to be a slave of your culture. But if you say, no, I'm a whole other Christian, I'll remain humble, I'll meek, and I'm going to be a witness for Christ. Things can be completely different.

I want to say to you that when God laid hold of Joseph and David, they didn't know that God had a great plan for them. I didn't know when God laid hold of me when I was nearly 20, God had a plan for my life, and you don't know it right now. But if you say, Lord, I want to be faithful, things will be very different in the days to come.

Let's bow before God. I pray, Heavenly Father, that everyone here who has heard will be challenged. And I pray at least a number of them will respond seriously in these days to seek you.

And not just temporarily, but permanently. Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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