

Faith Results in Thankfulness

by Zac Poonen

Faith in the New Covenant means throwing your lot in with the one whom God sent, and it is a total commitment to Christ.

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Scripture: Jonah 2:9-10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 4:20, Ephesians 5:20, Hebrews 8:10-12

Topics: "Faith And Gratitude", "Gods Promises"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in the New Covenant, highlighting the need to understand and believe in the promises of God. It contrasts the downward spiral of unthankfulness and lack of faith with the upward trajectory of giving thanks and praising God, leading to experiencing the glory of God. The message encourages a lifestyle of gratitude, faith, and praise, trusting in God's control over all things and His faithfulness to fulfill His promises.

Transcript

The New Testament which are almost never found in the Old Testament. And I encourage you to look up a concordance. Any of you who are serious about Bible study, I would encourage you to get a concordance.

It's not only just for Bible study. It can change your life if you understand what exactly the New Testament teaches. Because let me give you my observation after observing Christianity for 45 years, the fundamental problem with people who do not believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit and with those who believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit is that they have not understood the New Covenant.

Some have understood praise and worship. David praised and worshipped God better than any of us, better than any meeting I've ever seen in my life. But he was in the Old Covenant.

You can praise and worship and be in the Old Covenant. You can talk about healing and be in the Old Covenant. They had more healings in the Old Testament than more miracles in the Old Testament.

In the 40 years in the wilderness they saw more miracles than the apostles ever saw in their whole life. But the New Covenant, that was something which nobody in the Old Testament knew. Jesus said that the prophets and the apostles longed to see these things and they couldn't.

And he said to his disciples, your eyes are blessed because you see. Your ears are blessed because they hear. The Bible says in the Old Testament in Isaiah 64, eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the mind or the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him.

Now when you hear that verse, what is it that comes to your mind? Oh, must be heaven. Wonderful things God has prepared for those who love him. But do you know that verse is not talking about heaven? That verse in Isaiah 64 is quoted in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, exactly like that.

Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love him. But God has revealed them to us now by the Holy Spirit. It's not talking about heaven at all.

It's talking about the New Covenant. Do you know the wonderful things that Old Testament, the greatest Old Testament saints, eyes did not see, ears did not hear, they could not enter into their heart? It was the New Covenant. And I'll tell you something, if you have not understood the New Covenant, whatever else you may understand, you have missed the main thing.

It's like the engine of a car missing. You've got the body, you've got the seats, you've got petrol, you've got everything, the only thing missing is the engine. What's the use of that? And some people boast over other denominations saying, we've got better seats in our car than you have.

Good. But if both don't move, it doesn't make a difference what type of seats you have. The rusted car, brand new body, both are useless without an engine.

And the engine is the New Covenant. There's a lot of talk about faith today. That's where I really want to speak about faith and the result of faith this morning.

You know, faith is one of those words that's found much more. It's almost never found in the Old Testament. It's found in the New Testament in abundance.

Jesus always spoke about it. I was studying the other day and saw this one amazing thing. You know, as Christians, we can get disturbed by many things.

But Jesus was not even disturbed when his disciples were seeking who is going to be the greatest. I mean, it did concern him. But do you know when Jesus rebuked his disciples the strongest? You know, sometimes we say to our children, when are you going to learn? How many times I've told you? What are the things we rebuke our children for? Small things like spilling the milk or, you know, usually some earthly thing.

And you ask yourself, did Jesus ever say that to his disciples? When are you going to learn? He did. But only concerning one matter. You know, when they were competing as to who is going to be the greatest, he never said, when are you going to learn? That you shouldn't be competing for that.

He never said that. He said, well, he corrected them. Of course he corrected them.

But he never said it so strongly saying, when are you going to learn? But he did say it when it concerned unbelief. Only concerning unbelief. He said, how long shall I be with you? He once said.

Oh, you people of unbelief. And that teaches me something that if Jesus was so disturbed by unbelief, I need to be disturbed too. And you need to be disturbed as well.

But you know, many of us are very often not disturbed by unbelief. We're disturbed by many other things. We don't realize that the reason for many of the problems we have in life is our unbelief.

You see, like you go to a doctor with a symptom. Doctor, I've got fever. I've got sores.

I've got this. And the doctor won't deal with the symptoms. A bad doctor will deal with the symptoms.

The ones who come out of these capitation fee colleges. But a good doctor who is capable, he deals with the root of the disease and says, you know, this thing is due to this thing at the bottom. If I hit that, this will be solved automatically.

And I believe that many, many, many problems are due to unbelief. Even jealousy, which I spoke about the other day, comes out of unbelief. You know that? Jealousy is the root of many other problems.

But jealousy itself has a root in unbelief. Because when I'm jealous of somebody, I don't believe that God is in control of everything. That God decides what I should have and what another person should have.

If you're jealous of somebody else's wealth or position or good looks or spirituality or Bible knowledge, you're actually, it's an expression of your unbelief in God that you don't believe that God is the one who decides what you should have and what another person should have. And that leads to jealousy. That leads to competition.

When people are trying to show I'm better than you or my children are better than you, it's all due to unbelief. All problems that you have in your life, I can show you how it arises from unbelief. And if you deal with that problem, many, many of your other problems are solved.

You're serious. And that's why in the New Covenant, faith is such an important thing. And faith, you know, because words are, have got meanings, because we have heard it in the world, most Christians, most Christians, their understanding of faith does not come from the Bible.

It comes from the dictionary. We read about faith. I mean, people speak about faith in everyday language.

But what they mean by faith is not what the Bible means by faith. And it's so important to know what the Bible means by faith because our eternal destiny is dependent on it. So I want to show you a verse.

First of all, in John's Gospel, Chapter 6. John's Gospel, Chapter 6. We are familiar with this because we've heard it before. In verse 28, you know, verse 26, Jesus said, you fellows are seeking me because you ate the loaves and you were filled. They saw this fantastic miracle in the previous part of the chapter of 5,000 men and many women and children, maybe 10,000 people getting bread and fish from five loaves and two fish.

And they said, this is fantastic. What a mighty miracle. In fact, they said, this is the prophet of God.

We must crown him as king. And Jesus ran away because he didn't want to be a king. And then they came to him and said, in verse 28, what should we do that we can also do these works of God? I mean, teach us how to multiply the loaves.

Wouldn't you all like to know how to multiply the loaves and fish? They were just like us. Lord, can you teach us how to do these mighty works of God? And do you know what Jesus said? This is the work of God. Not multiplying loaves and fish that you believe.

What an answer. They want to do the works of God. And Jesus says, this is the work of God.

God wants to do a work in your heart. That's the work of God to make you believe in him whom he has sent, in Jesus. Now we say, I believe in Jesus.

Now I want to read how it is in a paraphrase called the Message Bible. This is the paraphrase of that verse. Throw your lot in with the one whom God has sent.

Do you understand that? Throw your lot in. Are you willing to throw your lot in? When a woman gets married, she's throwing her lot in with a man for life. She can't predict how it's going to be, but she throws her lot in.

You know, I think of these people who buy stocks, shares in new companies. About more than 20 years ago, 20-25 years ago, there was an unknown man in the United States called Bill Gates who decided to start a little company called Microsoft. Few people who loved him threw their lot in with him.

It wasn't a very famous company. It was a small, unknown, unheard of. Today, those people are billionaires.

Not millionaires, billionaires. Because they threw their lot in with that person at a time when nobody knew him, nobody trusted him. The same with some other companies like Yahoo and Reliance in India.

You know, when Jesus started a work, there were 11 people who threw their lot in with him. Lord, everything we have, we're going to invest in this. They became apostles, better than billionaires.

They did a work that's going to last for all eternity. That's the meaning of faith. Some people had faith in Bill Gates when nobody in India trusted him.

Some people had faith in the man who started Yahoo or Reliance. And these disciples had faith in Jesus. It wasn't, yes, we believe in you but we keep all our money to ourselves.

No. Those people who trusted these companies, they threw everything in and they got fantastic returns. That is what it means to have faith.

Throw your lot in. I want to ask you, have you given yourself to Jesus like that? I tell you, if you do that, your returns in eternity are going to be far greater than the people who threw their lot in with Microsoft when it started or any other company when it started. But the people were cautious.

You know, we don't know how this company will fare. I'll put 10% in so we get some profit. What did they get after many years? Okay, a little gain on that 10%.

What about the other people who put everything in? That's how it's going to be. All of us are not going to be the same in eternity because each of us are now deciding how much to invest in Jesus. Is this really a worthwhile undertaking? Most believers are very cautious just like people would be cautious with a new company.

Well, don't be surprised in eternity. When you're cautious, you're actually saying, yeah, I'm not so sure whether this company will take off. And that's the type, I mean, if a person says that, I mean, if somebody's starting a new company and comes to you and says, would you like to invest your life savings with my company? I'm just starting it.

Or let's take a bank. Many of you may not be familiar with shares. Let's take a bank that's just started.

And they say, I'm starting a new bank here. Would you guys trust me and put all your life savings in it? How many of you would put life savings in it? But just think if that bank took off like anything and gave you a 100% return on your investment every year for the next 25 years. Do you know what you'd be? And 25 years later when you see the bank taking off, you say, boy, I wish I had invested everything with that bank when it started.

But I was cautious. I didn't trust. Now with human beings, I fully agree.

You have to be cautious. You don't know whether a company will take off. You don't know whether a bank will take off.

But I want to ask you. Many of you say, we believe Jesus is Lord. We believe he is the son of God.

We believe he's the one who's got all authority in heaven and earth. We believe he's the one who's going to come and judge the earth. Then are we going to throw in your lot completely with this person? Or, yeah, I'd like to be a little cautious.

That's exactly what makes the difference between one believer and another believer. And that's the thing that will make the difference between each believer and another believer for all eternity. You understood what faith is? Faith is to throw your lot in.

I'm committed to this. Not 10%, 20%. Even I'd say 90% is not faith.

Faith is 100%. What would you think of a girl who gets married 90% to a man? 10% of the year she goes and spends, 36 days a year she goes and spends with somebody else. What type of commitment is that? What type of commitment is if she goes and spends one day in 365 with somebody else? Faith is a total commitment to Christ.

And Jesus is more trustworthy than Bill Gates or any company in the world. Do you really believe that? Do you really believe that the only thing worth living for is the kingdom of God and His righteousness? I mean, I've always looked at that like that. I do a business to pay the expenses.

That's all. But the thing we committed for is God's kingdom and His righteousness. Can you imagine how the Lord will reward such people? I remember reading of a dream that William Booth had.

We published it years ago in our monthly paper where he said, he was born again in his dream and he died. In his dream he died and he went to heaven. And the first thing he saw is forgiven, sins all forgiven.

He was so excited. My sins are all forgiven. And then he met Jesus and he got a review of his life on earth, how he was so cautious in committing himself.

He was careful. He's got other things to do on earth besides living for God. And then the Lord showed him all the martyrs.

There were their martyrs with people with such a tremendous glow in their faces in their lives. And the Lord gave them all such a loving look of recognition because they trusted Him with everything, even their life. And then Jesus said to William Booth in this dream, you will never feel one in spirit for all eternity with these people who gave everything.

You who were so cautious, so careful. And regret began to fill his heart and he said, oh is this, and he says, is the selfishness of my way of life going to haunt me for all eternity? Is this what is eternity going to be like even if I go to heaven? That the selfish way I lived on earth is going to haunt me and haunt me and haunt me. That I did not throw myself wholly in, throw my lot in wholly with the one who gave everything for me.

And he says, oh God, will you please, you know he, in his dream, how dreams are so real. You think they really happen. He really thought he died, finished.

Lord will you please give me another chance. No, no other chance, finished. And he woke up.

He said, thank God, it was only a dream. And his life was never the same. You have a dream like that, you'll never be the same.

I read a thing like that. It's somebody else dreamt and I won't be the same. Because I say, Lord, I've decided.

I know which company is going to get the maximum, give the maximum returns in eternity. I'll tell you that right now. Stockbrokers don't know that.

They don't believe you. But it's true. It's not only in eternity.

Jesus said, even here on earth. Not returns in terms of money. That's paper.

But something far more glorious than that. He'll give us all that we need. But faith means that, a commitment.

This is the work of God, that you throw your lot in with the one whom God sent. So Lord, I'm throwing my lot in fully with you. And because I believe what Jesus said, that he's got all authority in heaven and earth.

Let me turn to another verse in Psalm 106. Psalm 106, you've often heard me say that this is one of the clear marks of faith. One of the clearest marks of faith in our life is this.

Psalm 106 and verse 12. You must read the second part of this verse as resulting from the first part of the verse. Because the first part happened, therefore the second part.

Then, they believed his words and therefore, they sang his praise. So what is the result of faith? Praise. They broke out into songs of praise.

I mean, nobody had to tell them, come on, come on, let's praise the Lord now. Come on, come on, come on, open your mouth, praise the Lord. No.

They broke out into songs of praise. I mean, it's something like, you went to office one morning, and you saw a note signed by the chairman of your company saying, your salary has been trebled. Not doubled, trebled.

What do you do? I mean, if you're a normal human being, like me, you say, hey, great. That's great, man. I never believed that.

I was expecting 10% or something, and here I get 3 times. That's what I mean by breaking out into songs of praise. You'll be calling your wife, and hey, you know what happened? They believed his words.

They broke out into songs of praise. And I want you to see when it happened. Verse 8, verse 9. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up.

This is the time when they were crossing the Red Sea, and the enemy, the Pharaoh and his army were following them, and the Lord rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up, and they went through the deeps, and He saved them, verse 10, from the hand of one who hated them. For us, it's the devil. He saved me from the hand of one who hated me.

There are men who hate me too, and He saves me from their hand as well. It's not just from the devil. And He redeemed them.

He purchased them from the hand of the enemy, and the waters covered their enemies. Not one of them was left. Then, then, they believed His words.

They wouldn't believe it before. That's Old Covenant. You know how it is in the New Covenant? This is Old Covenant faith.

What's the difference between Old Covenant faith and New Covenant faith? Old Covenant faith is, Lord, when I see you destroy all my enemies in front of me, I'll sing your praise. I'll believe. New Covenant faith is, you set a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

They haven't been drowned. They're there. But, in the presence of my enemies, who are not defeated yet, you've set a table before me, and I'm not bothered about my enemies because you deal with them.

And in the presence of my enemies, you anoint my head with oil. This is Psalm 23. And my cup runs over.

And you say, hey, your cup's running over even though the enemies are alive. That's right. Because the Lord is my shepherd.

And I lack nothing. New Covenant faith is, we walk by faith and not by sight. We can praise the Lord before those enemies of yours are defeated.

The father of faith is not Moses, but Abraham. Abraham believed that he would have a son when he had no son. It was not after he got a son that he changed his name to father of a multitude.

No. He said it. He changed his name when he had no son through Sarah.

That's faith. That's New Covenant faith. That's why Abraham is called the father of faith and not Moses.

That is an old covenant faith which comes after you see God doing something. Well, everybody in the world can do that. Oh, praise God, he did it.

Great. Then they believed his words. That means what God had said long before, when they were still in Egypt, long before Pharaoh started chasing them, God had said, listen, I'll take you out of Egypt, man.

I'll take you into the land of Canaan. They wouldn't believe it. They didn't believe it when they saw Pharaoh chasing them.

It's exactly like us. You know, we, we hear these wonderful promises on Sunday morning and it challenges us and all that. And then Monday morning, some Pharaoh is chasing us somewhere or the other and we don't know what's going to happen and there's no solution in sight.

And then by Friday, the problem is solved. Then they believed his words. Praise the Lord.

We're ready for Sunday morning to praise the Lord again. That's Old Testament faith. Don't think that's, that's good.

I'm not saying it's bad. I'm just saying it's old covenant. It's better than no covenant.

It's better than those people who never give thanks to God at all, even after the enemy is drowned. That's, that's worse. Thank God you're at least give thanks after the enemy is drowned.

But I say new covenant faith is even better. That we don't believe anything that comes into our mind. That's a, that's a stupid type.

That's neither old covenant nor new covenant. That's some strange thing. That's sort of 20th century type of new thing that Satan has fooled people with.

God has said nothing but you still believe it. I'm going to get this new house and I'm going to get this new car. I'm not talking about that type of rubbish.

I'm talking about they believed his words, not believed whatever came into their mind. They believed his words. But the difference in the old covenant is they believed it after the thing happened.

In the new covenant we believe before it happens. I believe Jesus is going to come again. I haven't seen it.

I believe I'm going to be like him when he comes. I believe I've got all authority in heaven and earth. Belongs to Jesus Christ today.

Not going to belong to him before he left the earth. He said all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go into the world.

I would not dream of going into the world without believing that. They believed his words when? After he manifests his power or before? That determines whether you're an old covenant type of believer or a new covenant type of believer. You believe God will do it when he hasn't yet done it.

The presence of your enemies. He believes it'll happen. It'll happen.

I believe that it's going to be exactly like God has told me. I'll show you a verse which says exactly that in Acts chapter 27. Paul used that expression which he applies in this particular situation but Acts chapter 27 we read.

He says this is about a time when the ship was going to be shipwrecked and when it was shipwrecked an angel of God came and appeared to Paul and said listen. All of you are going to be saved. He says in verse 23 this very night an angel of the Lord came to whom I belong and whom I serve.

See this is the reason. To whom I belong and whom I serve. That's the type of man who can speak like this.

Can you say I belong only to God and I serve only him. The angel of God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me saying don't be afraid Paul. You must stand before Caesar and God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.

Paul believed those words even before they landed on the island when they were floating in the sea with the ship wrecked. Paul believed this and what does he say therefore verse 25 keep your courage I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. God will do exactly what he told me.

Had it already happened? No. They were still in the sea. They hadn't landed safely on the land.

Old Testament faith would be after they all come safely to the land. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah.

But New Testament faith is here before it all happens. I believe it will be exactly like God has told me. So that's why it's important to know what God has told us.

So let's turn to Matthew chapter 28 and see what Jesus says there about his own authority. In verse 18 these are almost the last words of Jesus before he left the earth after his resurrection. He said all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth therefore go into all the nations.

I want to look at that as something that I keep in mind when I go out to work every day. Or I ride my scooter and go out to town. Or you go to your office.

Isn't it wonderful to hear Jesus say all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Okay go to your office today. Boy you go to office in a completely different way.

That's what Jesus said. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go into all nations.

Make disciples. I mean your main job in life is to make disciples. I hope you know that.

You do an earthly job to earn your living. We all need to do that so that we don't become parasites on society. So that we don't become beggars.

That's why Paul made tents. And that's what we do. But that's not our main job.

Making tents. Paul didn't say I'm a tent maker. He said I'm an apostle.

I make tents to earn my living. You have a function in the body of Christ. And that function is your primary calling.

You may do some job to earn your living. That's secondary. But your function in the body of Christ is fundamental.

And you need to know that. And if you don't know it you must ask God to show you what it is. It may take time.

It took me about 16-17 years to discover what it was. But I pursued it. It may take you time but you should know it finally.

Lord this is what I'm supposed to do. And I'm going to do it. And I do a job to earn my living.

But all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. And I'm going to go on the basis of that authority everyday. When you're going into a difficult situation.

Which you don't know how it's going to turn out. When you're going to hospital. Or you're taking to court.

Or some awkward situation. Some difficult person you have to encounter. Your landlord who's threatening to throw you out of the house.

Or your boss who's threatening to sack you. You know the way to go and meet these people? On the basis of Matthew 28 verse 19. Provided your goal in life is not to make money.

Provided your goal in life is to make disciples. Remember this is not for every Tom, Dick and Harry. No.

There are lots of Tom's and Dick's and Harry's who claim things in the Bible that never work for them. This is for those who realize whatever job I may do. My main calling in life is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

You may have a job that earns you a hundred thousand rupees a month. So what? It's a means of earning a living. But your main job in life is to make disciples.

Or you may earn one thousand rupees a month. Doesn't make a difference. Your main job in life is to make disciples.

And if that is your main job, here are two wonderful promises. All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. Go.

Go to your office. Go and meet that boss. Go and meet that landlord.

Go into that hospital for treatment. Go to court or go to jail like Paul went to jail. He went to jail believing that all authority in heaven and earth was given to Jesus.

And there he sat in that dungeon. Those jails were terrible those days with rats and cockroaches and all types of things crawling around. And you know what he did there? He wrote Philippians.

With all these rats crawling over him. Rejoice in the Lord always he says. Again I say rejoice.

And there's a rat crawling over his leg there. Doesn't make a difference to him. Because all authority in heaven and earth was given to him.

What does it matter to Paul today in heaven that a few rats crawled over him when he was in that dungeon? Look what he accomplished on earth. Wherever he went, he lived a worthwhile life because he believed that all authority in heaven and earth was given to Jesus. He's going to spend his life making disciples and he would earn his own living by making tents.

And another thing the Lord said, when you make disciples and all my authority backs you, the last part of that verse, verse 20, I'm going to be with you always. I am with you always. Wherever you go, I'll be with you.

You go to a dungeon, I'll be with you there. You go to a hospital, I'll be with you there. You go and meet your landlord, I'll be with you there.

You go to meet your boss, I'll be with you. Isn't that wonderful? To have Jesus? You go and sit and write an examination. I'll be with you.

It's great. To go write an entrance test. He says, I'll be with you there.

All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. I tell you, it's the best way to live. Believe His words.

Lord, I believe. I believe. Even though it doesn't look as if everything is working out yet, I believe one thing.

That you are in control of everything. It says in 1 Timothy in chapter 6. 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 15. 1 Timothy 6.15 it says, the last part of that verse, referring to God.

He is the blessed and only sovereign. The undisputed ruler of this universe. Or like another paraphrase by J.B. Phillips says, the blessed controller of all things.

I love that title of God. There are many titles of God. He's our shepherd.

He's the light of the world, etc. But this is great. The blessed controller of all things.

To have faith is to believe that my heavenly father is the blessed controller of all things. Please remember that. All these people who tell you to have faith to get a better car or get a new house.

And then don't teach you to have faith to finish with grumbling and complaining. What's the use getting a new house and grumbling and complaining there? I'd rather live in a hut and never grumble and complain all my life. What's the use getting a new car and fighting with each other inside that car as you're driving down the road? I'd rather drive a scooter and not fight with my wife sitting at the back.

Isn't that sensible? What type of faith is this? Which gives you all these material things but doesn't give you faith that what God has promised, He will do. What has God promised? I will write my laws upon your heart and your mind. You know that's the new covenant in Hebrews 8, 10-12.

I will write my laws upon your heart and mind. If you don't have faith for that, my brother, sister, let me tell you plainly, you can get a palace. Your faith is Old Testament faith.

You can pray for a helicopter, not just a car. I mean I haven't heard anybody urging people to have faith for helicopters. It's usually a better car.

They haven't yet come to the level of helicopters. Why? Can't God give helicopters? If God can give you a green large car or a black large Mercedes Benz, can't He give you a helicopter? But why is it these guys who talk about cars? I tell you, in this traffic jam, a helicopter is much better. These big cars still get stuck in the traffic jam.

Sure. I mean if I was belonging to that crowd, I would never tell fellows to get a Mercedes Benz because a Mercedes Benz, even a scooter goes faster than a Mercedes Benz in this traffic jam. I'll tell you that.

You can weave in and out of the traffic with a scooter. You can't do that with a Mercedes Benz. You can't find a parking lot for a Mercedes Benz.

But you have a helicopter. Boy, it beats everything. And if I belong to that crowd, I would be encouraging people to have faith for helicopters.

But thank God I don't belong to that crowd. I belong to the crowd which teaches what God has said He will do. He will write His law upon my heart and mind.

His law is rejoice in the Lord always. It will be fulfilled in me. I believe that.

His law in Philippians 2.14 is do all things in your life without grumbling or complaining. He's going to do that in my life. I believe what God has said.

Just like Paul. For example, Paul could have said I believe that everyone on this ship will be saved and I believe that all these Roman soldiers will be killed and I will escape and I'll go back to Jerusalem and I will not be taken as a prisoner to Rome. Wouldn't that be faith? It would have been stupidity.

Why didn't he say that extra thing? He was in chains. He was a prisoner on that ship. Why didn't he have faith that the Roman soldiers would be destroyed and he would be saved and go back to Jerusalem to preach the gospel? Because God had not told him that.

Even though that would have been comfortable. He knew he was going into a Roman dungeon. But God only told him, Listen, I'm not going to save you from the Roman dungeon, Paul.

I'm going to save all of you in this ship from drowning. So he stops there. You know what faith is? Faith is to stop where God said something and you stop there.

You don't claim extra things that God has not provided. That is the way a lot of people are led into frustration. And the people who preach this are the ones who make the money out of everything.

I've heard numerous cases of people who preach prosperity gospel. The pastors drive the best cars and the other people in the church come on scooters because the pastor is getting all the tithes. He's not working like Paul and earning his own living.

No. He's making money from the tithes of people. Shall I give you a little maths homework? If ten people tithe, ten families tithe, how much will your salary be? Quick.

The average of those ten people. Right or wrong? If you've got twenty families in your church and they all tithe to you as the pastor, what's your salary going to be? Double. If you have thirty families in your church and all of them tithe, and if you have fifty families in your church and all of them tithe, what's your salary going to be? Now let me ask you a second question.

Who's going to have the best car in a church with fifty families? You got it? This is the trick. You know like these magicians who do tricks and somebody comes and says, Hey, I'll teach you how this is done. I'm telling you how this is done.

This so-called prosperity gospel. The guys who preach it, they're the ones who are making the money. And these simple people sit there and get fooled.

I want to encourage you. I want to deliver you from that type of deception. I want to encourage you to believe that what God has said, He will do.

He will do. If He said sin will not be master over you, God says, I will write that law in your heart and mind. I believed that years ago.

I still believe that not a single sin will rule over me. There are still areas where I don't have light. And I believe God will give me light.

Sure. It says they looked unto Him and their faces were lightened. And we look unto Him and God gives us light.

Psalm 36 verse 9. It says, In thy light we will see light. So as I get into God's light, I see more light upon myself. That's the mark of being in God's light.

If you're not getting light on yourself, I say you're not in God's light. If you're getting light only when some preacher says something in the meeting or somebody corrects you or something, you're not walking in God's light. No.

You know a good student is one who discovers his mistake himself. Without the sum being marked wrong in the examination. And then he discovers it.

It's good that you discover it yourself while you're working out those problems at home. And you discover, Hey, that was wrong. Great.

You're gonna be a good student. It's the same in God's church. So, here, this lack of faith that we don't trust God, that He's the blessed controller for every single thing that happens to me, that is what prevents us from being continuously joyful, continuously thanking God, continuously being grateful.

Let me show you Romans chapter 1. I want to show you two verses that are opposites of each other. One shows the way of spiritual progress and the other shows the way of backsliding. Romans chapter 1. It's a terrible decline here.

All the way from verse 18 to verse 31. It's like a slippery slope. Once you get out of God's grace, it's a slippery slope all the way to the bottom.

And it says here how it all started. How did this... What is the first step? Downward. Verse 21.

Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks. Do you know what is the first step downwards to backsliding? Never forget it all your life. The first step downwards to backsliding is not murder.

It's not lusting after women. It's not cheating. It's not stealing.

That's all comes... That's step number 10, 20, 30, 40, 100. What is the first step to backsliding? It's not something you do. It's something you don't do.

You know there are two types of sins. Sins that we do and sins that we don't do. Example.

If I slap somebody, that's a sin I did. If a fellow has fallen down and I don't give him a hand to lift him up, I just walk by like the Levite and the priest. That's a sin that I don't do.

These are called sins of commission and those are called sins of omission. So the first step downwards in backsliding is not a sin of commission. It's a sin of omission.

That means something I should have done which I didn't do. Now most of us, most Christians never think of sins of omission. They only think of oh I did this or I hurt that person.

I did that wrong. That's good. That's the kindergarten class and you've got to get past the kindergarten if you want to go any further.

What about the things we don't do? Do you ever get light on that? When you ask God to give you light, does he ever give you light on something you should have done which you did not do? Yeah. We need to get light on it. You know the other day I was speaking here about being considerate to visitors.

We didn't go and slap them. No. We're just inconsiderate.

I mean if somebody came to your house and you just didn't bother about him, you didn't slap him or anything. But it's a sin. And if you don't call it a sin, you'll never get light.

It's what we don't do. And here is a step downwards. They did not give thanks.

Have you ever thought of not giving thanks as a sin? I don't think most of us ever think of that. I believe a humble man has no problem being thankful. Do you know there is a close connection between pride and unthankfulness? I've used the illustration before.

Let me use it again. If the chief minister is walking down the street and he dropped his handkerchief and one of his security people picked it up and gave it to him, he probably wouldn't even say thank you. But if a beggar were walking down the street and he dropped his handkerchief and you picked it up and gave it to the beggar, he'd be amazed.

He'd say, I'm a beggar? This educated man is picking up my handkerchief and giving it to me? He'll have such a look of gratitude on his face. Why? Because he's got low thoughts about himself. The less you think about yourself, about who you are, the more grateful you are to other people who do small things for you.

Do you know that Jesus said, even if you give a glass of water to one of my followers, I'll reward you in the day of judgment. Jesus is thankful for a glass of water somebody gives. Look at us.

I really believe that many of us need to learn this lesson. Many of you have been in the church here many years. You've heard so many things that have changed your life, blessed you, protected you, protected your families.

I don't know how thankful you are for the church. Almost all people who fall away from the church I'll tell you one thing I've observed about almost all of them. I have never once in my life heard them publicly say, I'm really thankful for what I've received in this church or what my children have received.

I'm not surprised that they fell away. I'm not at all surprised. That's what it says here.

When people are not thankful, you know, if somebody invited you home for a meal and gave you a chicken biryani once, I'm sure all of you would not leave that house before saying, thank you so much for this lovely meal. Even the most uncultured person here will say it. Why is it we don't have the same appreciation for things that are million times more important than chicken biryani? Unless you believe.

Chicken biryani is the thing that I care for. The rest is all spiritual talk. That shows your condition.

If earthly things mean more to you than spiritual things, I'd say, brother, you're in a pathetically low state. You better wake up. Something's seriously wrong.

They were not thankful to God for all that he did for them. And when they were not thankful to God, see what happened. The only sin there was what they did not do.

They did not give thanks. But see the downward slope. When they didn't give thanks, they became, their foolish heart was darkened.

It's in the same verse. They got into all types of confusion. There was no sense of direction left in their lives.

They claimed to know it all. But they were foolish. And gradually, you go one downward step.

They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible to God in the form of currency notes, gold. See, whether you make gold into an idol or love gold in other forms, it's an idol. Therefore, God gave them up.

It says three times in this verse, in this section. Verse 24, God gave them up. Verse 26, God gave them up.

Verse 28, God gave them up. You know, it's a terrible thing when God gives us up. Each time God gives you up, you go a little lower.

A little lower. A little lower. Finally, they just ended.

Where did it all start? When they got something, they didn't give thanks. And that's why I say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, learn to be thankful. Learn to be thankful to God.

Don't take anything in life for granted. Be thankful for health. Be thankful for the fact you got a job.

Be thankful that you got intelligence to do a job. Be thankful for... Don't just pray when your children are sick. Thank God when they're not sick.

Lord, I thank you. My child's healthy. Thank you, Lord.

Don't pray for them just when they fail. Lord, thank you. They're doing okay.

Learn to be thankful. It's the sins of omission. Lord, I'm thankful.

Thank God for your wife. Thank God for your husband. Thank God for the church.

Thank God for the word of God which is a million times better, does more for you than chicken biryani. Don't take these things for granted. I believe many people take these things for granted.

And that's why it goes so slowly. I have made it a point in my life always to thank God and thank people for whatever they do. Somebody sends me an email with one sentence in it that blesses me.

One sentence. Not a whole message. One sentence.

I immediately respond. Say, brother, thank you so much for sending me that. That really blessed my heart.

I mean, it's just become a way of life with me. Because why should that person bother to send me that one word? Why should that person bother to give me a message that encourages me? If we can give thanks for a cup of cold water, you know, to tell you honestly, if you were to examine your heart, I believe that many of you would appreciate chicken biryani more than a message. Insert your heart before God.

It's true. Because you have more appreciation of that and not enough appreciation of something that's changing your life. I just want to, I can't change you, but I just want to tell you when we stop giving thanks, it's an indication that we are going downwards.

And we want to go on from there. It's not just giving thanks for things we receive. Giving thanks, we read further down in, you know, let me show you the verse in contrast to this.

This is how giving thanks, not giving thanks takes you all the way down. Here's the opposite of that verse. How giving thanks begins to take you all the way up.

Okay? That's in 2 Corinthians 4. These are two verses you must keep in mind always. Romans 1, when they stopped giving thanks, they went all the way down to the bottom. God gave them up, God gave them up, God gave them up.

Now you see the opposite in 2 Corinthians 4 when we read in verse 15 that, the last part of that verse, that when they started giving thanks many people, it led all the way to the glory of God. See, that's amazing. This is the opposite.

You start giving thanks and it leads to, abounds to the glory of God. That's the way I want to go. I want to go the way of 2 Corinthians 4.15 not the way of Romans 1.21. I never want to get into that Romans 1.21 direction.

I want to be always in this 2 Corinthians 4.15 where I give thanks and I give thanks and I give thanks. And that's the mark of faith. See what it says in Romans 4 about Abraham that when God told him he was going to have a son it says even though he was 100 years old and his wife was 90 years old and his wife's womb was dead for ever since he married her yet Romans 4 in verse 20 with respect to the promise of God he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith what is the result? giving glory to God.

See when we are strong in faith we give thanks Lord I don't see yet any child in Sarah's womb I just want to give thanks. You promise something you are going to do it. I want to encourage all of you to stop believing God for all these material things I tell you God will add all the things you needed for your life.

Matthew 6.33 has promised that you don't even have to seek for it. But I want to encourage you to seek for God's kingdom and His righteousness and that is to believe the new covenant promise where God says I will write my law upon your heart and mind. I will write it.

Will you claim that? Whenever you come across a promise in scripture say Lord I believe you are going to write that into my mind I believe that is your law. I remember years ago when I read Rejoice in the Lord always I said that is your law Lord I can't do it. Write it into my heart and he did it.

Take this other verse Here is the law of God Ephesians 5 Verse 20 It is an amazing law it is almost impossible not almost it is impossible to fulfill this without the power of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5.20 says Always giving thanks for all things in the name of Jesus Christ who has got all authority in heaven and earth to the Father Always giving thanks for all things whether it appears to work for your good or not it will work for your good if you love God that is faith Lord I don't see it yet working for my good but I believe it is going to work for my good.

That is giving thanks Lord will you write this law into my heart in my mind so that I am a person who will never out of my mouth will come any grumbling or complaining about anything about the way people treat me or do things to me Never I am going to give glory to God all the time give thanks faith they believe his words they sang his praise Dear brothers and sisters let's go this way I believe you Lord I am going to go the way of praise and thanksgiving in all situations I want to show you one last example In the book of Jonah who can get it quickly Jonah ok one of the so called minor prophets towards the end of the Old Testament Book of Jonah you know the story how he was thrown into the river into the sea and a big fish swallowed him up and he was in the fishes belly for three days

and three nights because God had given that job to that fish says the Lord had appointed a great fish Jonah 1.17 and in it says you must read verse 17 with chapter 2 verse 1 after three days and three nights then Jonah prayed what do you think he was doing for three days and three nights I think he was trying to crawl out of the well fishes belly on his own that's usually what we do when we are in some type of fishes belly trapped in some situation we try for three days and three nights to crawl out and when we don't succeed we say oh we better pray now well he prayed then after the three days and three nights then Jonah prayed and he prayed and prayed and prayed trouble deep trouble I prayed to God nothing really happened I was as far down as the body can go and then at the end he says

but verse 9 I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving praise the Lord never mind if I spent all my life in this fishes belly then verse 10 the Lord said this fellow can't stay inside there vomit him out you fish anybody who praises God like that should not be in any fishes belly he should not be in a hell he should not be anywhere he should not be trapped in any circumstances he is a bird he should be flying like the eagle he belongs to heaven not inside a fishes belly you know what the Lord is waiting for are some of you trapped inside some fishes belly today and you are praying say Lord I will praise you because you are the blessed controller of all things he can make any fish vomit you out just start praising him thank him make that a way of life with you and if its not

yet say Lord will you write that law in my heart and mind we just bow our heads for a moment and you say Lord I want to be this type of person not just once in a while I want to have a spirit of thankfulness and praise and joy all the time I want to give thanks for every circumstance that ever comes in my life because of one reason not because the circumstance itself is good but because Lord you are the blessed controller of all things you got all authority in heaven and earth and you are my father Lord Jesus you are my elder brother you will do more than any elder brother will do for me I trust you I believe you I praise you not that you'll do what I want but you'll do what is best for me even if I can't see it because I'm short sighted thank you Lord I believe you'll do the best for me

I want to thank you Lord and I want you to write this law in my heart and mind that I'll be a new covenant Christian thank you heavenly father you'll do it for us in Jesus name Amen Amen

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