

Knowing Jesus as Our Bridegroom by Sanjay Poonen & Zac Poonen

by Zac Poonen

Knowing Jesus is a personal relationship that requires intimacy, humility, and a willingness to be transformed by His character.

Duration: 1:11:01

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Personal Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of truly knowing Jesus, not just knowing about Him. It highlights the need to have a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus, to hate sin that crucified Him, and to pursue a deep love for Him above all else. The speaker encourages humility, a focus on inner transformation, and a genuine pursuit of knowing Jesus as the ultimate goal.

Transcript

Good morning to everyone at CFC. I'm tremendously blessed to be here and honored and just so delighted to be back. I was here in October for the conference and for my dad's 75th birthday and just a joy to be back.

I call this my home and I have tremendously warm memories of CFC. Obviously, this is such a privilege to be in a nice building, but first in my own home with five or ten, you know, families, maybe 20-25 people in 1975. And I was a little bit older than my young boys who are four years old at that time, a little over five, to then 40 Dacosta Square.

Now, the way and the work that the Lord is doing in CFC and the churches is a pillar and a testimony and a fire all across the world. Now, with the internet, many Saturday evenings, I'm able to log in and watch over Ustream this meeting and at least wave at you. Okay, but it's a tremendous joy and I know my brothers also send their greetings across the world.

Many watch Ustream now and are blessed by this. Many watch the messages on YouTube and you, all of you, brothers and sisters, are a blessing to many across the world. Who would have thought that those small seeds that were sown in 1975 through faithfulness of many of the brothers and sisters here is now blessing the world.

So, I'm just tremendously overjoyed and happy to be called as my home, to call this my home church and for the blessing that many of you have been. I also want to thank God for the elders, my dad, Brother Ian, Brother Newton, and now Brother Charles, for the leadership, much of the way in which you have run the church and many of the churches that have been planted are a blessing to me, a blessing to many others who ask questions about how is the right way to do God's work. I know my brothers as they have started churches in their homes and now have looked to the guidance of many of the elders here.

So, I praise God for that. I'm also delighted to be back here for the first time with my family in seven years. The last time I came, I only had a daughter and she was, I think, a little over one.

She doesn't remember much, but now is able to bring my two boys and my daughter is eight. And my two boys, one of them, Jason, thinks he's more Indian than Alex. So, your job, if you're children, is to convince both of them that they're both Indian.

Alex is the older, Jason is the younger by 15 minutes. They're both twins. And I praise God that they can come and really drink of the spirit.

God willing, we'd like to be here more often. It's a little harder to travel when our children are young, as you probably know. But we just praise God that we could all be here.

And it's my hope that my children can grow up knowing the same Jesus that I saw among the brothers and sisters here. That's my prayer for them. And, you know, as we grow up, we often, you know, the elders and the older brothers that I respected always told me, you know, you think it's easy to bring up children.

Wait till you have your own children. And I know how much I'm on my knees in prayer and humility. Because as we bring up our children in a world that's increasingly getting tougher and tougher with every generation, how much we need the fear of the Lord and how much we need that wisdom, which is the beginning of, as a result of fearing the Lord.

So today I just wanted to share, when Brother Ian asked me to share the opening message, I felt very humbled. I did not really feel, I felt I said I should speak after one of the elders speak here, but he insisted. So my calling in life, brothers, is to really be a witness in the workplace, as you know, and to be that Daniel or Joseph.

And I've talked about that before, so I pray that the words that I speak today will be a blessing, especially to the young people. And the title of what I'd like to talk about today is hopefully something that could be relevant and applicable to many of you young people, especially those in your teenage years, 20s or 30s. And this week, as you know, is the week where across the world, many people think about Jesus in the context of Christmas and things of that kind.

What I want to talk about today is, do you know about Jesus or do you know Jesus? Do you know about Jesus or do you know Jesus? There's a big difference, because today if you think about what's happening this week, out of the 7 billion people in the world, maybe a few billion actually will say they've heard something, and it's increasingly becoming more secular, even the remembering of the birth of Jesus. But then maybe there's a hundred million people who may know about Jesus because they've read the story of his birth or his death. But there's going to be very few who really know Jesus.

And if you look at what the scripture says, the eyes of the Lord roam to and fro across the world, looking for those who know him. And there's a good evidence of that in John chapter 6. If you turn to John chapter

6, you'll see what was in the time of Jesus. In John chapter 6, we've seen this passage many times before.

But at the beginning of this story, which is the feeding of the 5,000, you see that there were 5,000 men. Many of them came, you would claim that they knew about Jesus. Some of them may have been touched, healed by him.

A few of them may have had folks even raised from the dead. And maybe all together with women and children, maybe 8,000 people there. 5,000 men, maybe 8,000 people.

And then you see through the entire book at the very end of the chapter, in John chapter 6, it starts off with maybe about 8,000. And then as Jesus preaches more and more, of course they get the blessing, they get the food. And then you see in John chapter 6 verse 66, you see as a result of this, many of his disciples withdrew.

And were not walking with him anymore. These were so-called disciples who withdrew. And then he looked at his 12 and he says, You do not want to go with them also, do you? And Simon Peter says, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Verse 70, did I myself not choose you, the 12, and yet among you is a devil. So even among the 8,000, 11 only really wanted to know Jesus. And even at that time, their knowledge of Jesus was not complete.

But they only knew Jesus in the context of where they were. When I think about that, if you think about 8,000 people, out of that only 11 or 12. That's, you know, if you do the math, it's about 1.5%. And think if we had 1,000 people here, the eyes of the God, look, stone, throw, and found, only 2 people.

1.5 out of, we don't have 1,000 people here, maybe 500, 600. But if only one or two really know Jesus. That's statistically what we saw even in the time of Jesus.

So, there will be many who, you know, may be in heaven. And, you know, maybe the Samaritan woman, Nicodemus. There are many others who, the thief on the cross would be in paradise.

But if our only goal is to have our sins forgiven. We've heard through many, many years that partaking of divine nature is really what it could be for eternal life on this earth. And Jesus said in John 17, 3, this is eternal life that you would know Jesus.

And increasingly, my heart's desire is more and more. And all of you, especially those of you who are young, it should be to know Jesus. What does it mean that we can follow Him and our life becomes more and more like Him.

That we can look at others, like Paul said, follow me as I follow Jesus. And today we have so many who know about Jesus, who even know the scriptures. It's all head knowledge, but that intimacy of knowing Jesus.

And the intimacy is what describes, if you think about how in the Old Testament, God used the word know. Adam knew Eve. It was an intimacy.

It was a marital intimacy. And that's what the Lord wants to do in our hearts. So that we know Him.

And this promise is true for everybody. If you look at Hebrews 8, 11. It says that all shall know me.

All shall know me. It's no restriction. There's no reason why the 8,000 couldn't have, 5,000 plus, the women and children, couldn't have known Jesus.

Couldn't have followed Him. But it's a choice of their hearts. So much seeks to distract us from them.

And we know in Matthew 7, 21 and 23. If you look at that verse. Those verses in Matthew 7. We've heard this also a number of different times.

And this will be so sad when we get to heaven. And we see the words of Jesus saying, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of the Father, in heaven will enter.

Many who say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? In your name we cast out demons. In your name perform many miracles. And I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, those who practice lawlessness. And it would be so sad if all, we heard so much of what we heard at CFC. And many of the meetings.

Or maybe God's given us a place where we have a ministry. And we've prophesied in His name and even miracles. And so much of that will be cast away on the final day.

Because they didn't know. So I just thought a little bit about, very briefly. How can we know Jesus more? And I thought about two things that we can reflect on.

One is our thoughts and our motives. And the second is our actions and our reactions. And we've heard so much of this.

But it's good for us, especially those of you who are young and growing up. Because if you think about the life of Jesus. You hear so much about what happened in the last three and a half years.

Age 30 to 33 and a half. But those first 30 years was the cleaning of the inside of the cup. And as we get to know Jesus in the inside of our cup.

So that we can be transformed. So our thinking, our motives. Before we even are able to speak to react.

Or become more and more like you. That should be our prayer. We know this verse in Isaiah 55 verse 9. My thoughts are not your thoughts.

As the heaven is from the earth. So are my thoughts different from your thoughts. So when we think about everything that is not just.

The way in which the carnal person might think. But even the religious person might think. Just saying Lord conform me to your image.

Meaning that I'm not becoming just a religious person. But that my inner part, my inner being. Can become spiritually connected to you.

Humility. Humility. How the Lord reacted on this earth.

Not just the washing of the feet. But he was constantly looking to go down. And as I think about everything that we're surrounded by.

It's so easy for us to be puffed up. But to be in that spirit of humility. Where constantly every day.

As we think about the different things that come across our path. And for those of you who are working. You know how hard this is because.

In the workplace. And maybe in college or even in school. We're taught a different system.

It's all about being lifted up. Even in the church. Things that can be.

Given prominence are gifting. But you see how Jesus sought out the humble of the earth. The needy.

He did not have time for the rich and the famous. Holiness. I think about how when Jesus was able to speak at Matthew 7. About lust of the eyes.

And things of that kind. And then still be able to speak with purity. To the Samaritan woman.

In a public setting. Not a single form of lust. Or when he talks about having just an evil thought.

Being equivalent to murder. And then our attitude to money. When Jesus said that foxes have holes.

And birds have nests. But the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. All of these things.

That our motives. And our thoughts can be purified. So that we become increasingly.

More like Jesus. And knowing Jesus. And how would he react.

In a situation that we're faced with. And my prayer is that for every one of us. Brothers and sisters.

Who are young. That we would get transformed. So that inner cup of ours could be cleansed.

And we know what it is to be like Jesus. In an intimate fashion. And then when we think about.

Our actions and our reactions. When our thoughts and our motives are right. And we've been cleaning the inside of the cup.

For 30 years like Jesus did. When it gets time for us to actually speak. Or to actually have an action.

Then the fruits of the spirit can become apparent. And I see that in the life of Jesus. How we see about him being anointed at age 30.

And the Holy Spirit descended on him. And the fruits of the spirit. Later on we see in Galatians 5. The fruits of the spirit.

Are love, joy and peace. And the love. It's so easy for us to think about the love.

Being something that just shows the kindness. But I see the balance in Jesus. And the way in which he showed.

Both kindness and severity. And many of us will never really understand that. Until we have children.

And initially physical children. Or spiritual children. That the Lord may entrust us with.

To know that it's so easy for me. To rebuke or to discipline my child. Out of anger.

But it takes so much more. For me to be able to pray. That I would be in no spirit of anger.

When I discipline my sons or my daughter. And that I would show the life of Jesus. I show the character of Jesus.

And you see that how. Jesus in all of his actions. Show that kindness and severity.

Even with Peter. When he talked about that verse that we just read. In John chapter 6. It's the same Peter that he could then rebuke.

Saying get behind me Satan. And we see that also. In the way in which.

Jesus exhibited the other fruits of the spirit. I think about joy. And so much of what we go through in our life.

When we ask ourselves. How can we be anointed with that joy every single day. It's very very easy when we read Hebrews 1 verse 9. It's knowing Jesus.

In the way in which he hated iniquity. And loved righteousness. So that every single day.

His life had that oil of gladness. And when Paul says follow me. Like I followed Christ.

He can then say in Philippians 4. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice. And that can be our testimony brothers and sisters.

Where even though things may not be going our way. If we can have that inner joy. From loving righteousness and hating iniquity.

Then everything that comes our way. That could be sorrow even in the midst of things. We are rejoicing.

And I'm praising God. That the Lord is able to do a work in us. So that we are transformed increasingly.

To that heavenly nature of rejoicing always. And peace. You think about peace.

So much was going on as we know on the boat. When that big storm was going on. You see the life of Jesus being peaceful.

And asleep. And I think about the various different things that might happen. Especially those of us who are in the workplace.

You think about the stress that comes across your way. When perhaps the people who disagree with you. Or who might be politically conniving against you.

Or you might have a boss who's not necessarily very supportive of you. All of these are things that can get us stressed. And in today's generation there's so much more stress than ever before.

But if we can have that peace. Knowing that God's got complete control. And that's the peace that Jesus had with the Father.

So that nothing that could come His way really perturbed Him. And I pray that that would be the calling that we're all called to. That love, joy and peace could be something that we know more and more about in Jesus.

So when Paul said, like I talked about in 1 Corinthians 11.1. Follow me as I follow Christ. I see so many pillars of that now today in the churches as they've been raised up. It was so blessed for me when I came here in October.

To hear many of the testimonies from the various different churches. 50, 60 odd churches. And to know that many of them can say to the next generation.

Follow me as I follow Jesus. Just the same way that Paul did. And that's my prayer.

That for every one of you who are in your 20s, in your 30s, in your 40s. The older brothers are getting older as they get 60s and 70s. And the Lord carries as we enter 2015.

There's no guarantee that we'll see the end of 2015. And I ask myself, Lord if you've given me only one more year to live on this earth. How can I know more of you? Not just know about you.

But know how you would react in a particular situation. How can I become more and more conformed to your nature? So that I can also say to my children. Follow me as I follow Jesus.

So I know Jesus and they see that in me. And I can say the same to whoever the Lord's put in our midst to spiritually look after. And that is really what the Lord's calling every one of you.

And I'd ask you, especially those of you who are young. That the Lord would grip you with that word. So that you can be a witness in the workplace or in college.

So people can see in you that life of Jesus. And remember it's sort of like 90% to 10%. 90% of the time is going to be cleaning the inside of that cup.

That's the 30 years of Jesus. And then comes 10%. The three years, three and a half years where He was public.

So 90% of that is going to be the work the Lord does inside our hearts. To make us more and more like Him. And then when He gives us the opportunity to speak.

Or gives us the opportunity to in some way take an action. We are able to be bold. So I just want to encourage everyone here.

Brothers and sisters. You are a pillar. The CFC is a pillar.

I am so overjoyed every time I come here. To drink of the Spirit. I pray that that same thing could be something.

That my children can also breathe and drink off. Because it's blessed my heart. I can't tell you the number of different times.

Where when I think about how should I react in a different situation. Not just the first 18 years of my life here. But the many, many decades after that.

That I've been able to drink of the Spirit of CFC. Has blessed me tremendously. The Spirit of humility.

I learned from the brothers and sisters here. And that is really what I pray will be my North Pole so to speak. For the rest of the days of my life.

And also the North Pole for my children. Thank you very much for the blessing you are to many of us. Amen.

It's very easy to think that we know the Lord. Think of all those people. Jesus said in the last day.

He says many. Not one or two. Many means say 10,000 preachers.

Or maybe 100,000. Who preached for 2,000 years. Stand before the Lord and said.

Lord do you know what all we did for you? We traveled here. Preached, we did miracles. We laid hands on people.

Healed in the name of Jesus. And there were millions of people who admired these preachers. And said wow.

What great men of God. And what a shock all those millions of believers will get. In the final day.

When Jesus turns around and says to them. I never knew you. And the proof that I never knew you.

Was. There was sin in your life. Did you get that? Matthew 7. Many will say to me.

Verse 22. I prophesied in your name. I cast out demons.

I did many miracles. And they could also say. Lord do you know how many millions of people.

Admired us. As men of God. When they saw the miracles.

We were not like other preachers who didn't do miracles. We had television programs. That were broadcast around the world.

In many languages. And Lord do you know how many people. We reached with our miracles.

And what is the Lord's reply to them? Is he impressed? By all the money they spent on. Television programs. And going here.

Going there. No. Human beings are impressed with all that.

You see our mind has been so. Influenced by the movies. You don't realize how much Hollywood and Bollywood.

Have influenced your mind. To think of. You know.

Preachers who look like film stars. Great crowds. These are the things that impress us.

Jesus is not impressed by all that. If you want to think like Jesus. Read the scriptures.

The more. You think like Jesus. You can say you know him.

So today when I see people doing miracles. And all that. I say I am not impressed.

I say I want to know what is your attitude to sin. Matthew 7.22 they say. We did all this.

We did miracles. We cast out demons. I will say to them.

This is actually going to happen. You are actually going to see this. When Jesus comes.

This is what you are going to see. He will turn around to these hundred thousand preachers and say. I never knew you.

Because there was sin in your life. And the fact that you had sin in your life. Proves that.

I never knew you. Depart from me. It is not just for a few days.

Depart from me forever. You who practice sin. Lawlessness means disobedience to God.

God's word. You disobey that. That is lawlessness.

You are not talking about falling into sin. No. Almost every believer may trip and fall.

But there is a difference between falling and practicing. You who practice. That means.

You take pornography so lightly. It is not the occasional fall. You take it so lightly.

You take sin. Anger. You take bitterness and unforgiving sins so lightly.

You do it and you say. Oh it is okay. I can keep going that way.

You practice lawlessness. I am not saying this to anybody to condemn you. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

But beware of people who teach you. That once you accepted Christ. You are safe for all eternity.

That doctrine. Once saved always saved. You will discover has sent more people to hell.

Than almost any other doctrine. Do you know what the Bible says? I will read it to you from scripture. Turn with me to Hebrews.

And. Chapter 3. And verse 14. Hebrews 3.14. Even if you don't remember any other verse on this subject.

Remember this one. When people tell you. Once saved always saved.

Hebrews 3.14. We have become partakers of Christ. If. And write that in capital I capital F. If.

We hold fast. The beginning. It is not once saved always saved.

If we hold fast that once saved. Of our assurance firm. Until the end.

Or. We can say. If we do not hold fast.

The beginning of our assurance firm. Until the end. We are not made partakers of Christ.

I don't think. Language can be simpler. And plainer than that.

Who is the one who has come and said. No it doesn't really mean that. I know God has said.

Don't eat of this tree. But it doesn't really mean that. You can take a little bit of the tree.

It will be okay. Who said that? That is the first lie. That man heard.

And that liar. The devil. Has been continuing through all these years.

To tell people. Sin is not serious. It's not serious.

It's not serious. Don't worry. There are very very few churches in the world.

Today that teach that sin is serious. Why does the Lord say. I never knew you? Because you practice sin.

It's not because you don't know the Bible. There are many people in heaven. Who don't know the Bible.

Do you know that? You think the thief on the cross knows the Bible? If he had read the Bible. He wouldn't be murdering and killing people. He didn't read the Bible.

But he turned from sin. So let's try and understand. What does it mean to know the Lord? So that's the first thing you need to see.

I never knew you. Because there is sin in your life. And all the meetings you attended.

All the miracles you did. All the sermons you preached. Count for zero.

If you don't know him. Because that is serving you know. Serving.

Serving. Serving. What about some believer who knows the Lord.

But who cannot prophesy. Cannot do miracles. Cannot cast out demons.

Many of you are like that. You don't go around preaching. Or casting out demons.

Or healing the sick. What about you? There is no hope for you? Just because you can't do that? What is the relationship the Lord wants with us? Supposing you have a wife. Who cannot cook for nuts.

But what I mean by that is pretty useless cook. I am sure there are some wives like that. Even after many years of marriage.

They are pretty useless. But you got a servant woman at home. You are a rich person.

You can employ servants. Who cooks first class food? Who is the one you are devoted to? If you are a good husband. To the one who cooks your food? Or the one who cannot cook.

Maybe she cannot even keep the home tidy. But she loves you. Don't you want a wife like that? Or do you want a dobie? And a cook? What do you get married for? Who is the one who, which husband marries in order to get a cook? And a washer woman? You think Jesus is marrying someone because he wants a good cook who can preach well? Or who can do service for him? He's got millions of angels who will do anything for him.

They are like millions of servants. But he's got only one bride. That's the message of the Gospel.

In the Old Testament, there's a relationship between a man and a woman that is called knowing. Adam knew his wife. He did not know other women.

The relationship between a man and a wife is called knowing. A man knows his wife. He doesn't know his servant.

Knowing, that is another type of knowing just in the head. When Jesus speaks about knowing the Lord, it's that intimate relationship. In the Song of Solomon, you read about the bride.

I would encourage you sometime to read the Song of Solomon. And you read about two women there, two groups of women. One is the bride, and the other is called the daughters of Jerusalem.

They are not daughters of Babylon. No, no, no. They are daughters of Jerusalem.

Song of Solomon, Chapter 1. Right at the beginning it comes. Verse 5. I am black, the bride says, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem. But the king does not bring the daughters of Jerusalem into his banqueting hall.

In Chapter 2, Verse 5, it says, He has brought me, the bride says, into his banqueting hall, and his banner over me is love. And many times she speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem. O daughters of Jerusalem.

See this one. Song of Solomon, Chapter 5, Verse 10. My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, is the bride speaking about her bridegroom, outstanding among ten thousand.

And the last part of Verse 16. O daughters of Jerusalem, this is my beloved. This is my friend.

He is not your beloved. You serve him. Your daughters of Jerusalem may do so many things for him.

You may even be more good looking than him. Maybe you have a servant woman at home who is more good looking than your wife. So what? Are you going to fall in love with your servant woman because she is more attractive than your wife? You know what we read in the beginning? The bride says, I am black, but lovely in my king's eyes.

Do you know what the Lord is looking for? He is not looking for you to preach or cast out demons or to do miracles. He is looking for you to love him and to show that love by hating what he hated. Sin.

By hating what he hung on the cross for. What he died for. What he shed every drop of his blood for.

Not to make us prophesy. Christ did not die to make us prophesy. He died to save us from our sins.

He died to save you from those sins that you may still be practicing even if you break so lightly. Don't think you can make up for that by attending a lot of meetings or putting money in the offering box. No.

Jesus is not a beggar waiting for, will you put some money in my offering box? There are many churches that disgrace my savior by making him look like a beggar. Give some money. Give some money.

He's hard up. He's not hard up. All the silver and the gold in the world is his.

He doesn't want your money. He wants your love. He's not like these Indian marriages where people look, how much money does her father have? How much money does his father have? You think Jesus is looking like that? How much money does this child of mine, how much will he put into the offering box? It's a disgrace that so many churches proclaim a Jesus like that.

It's an insult. I feel hurt because he's my savior and he's my friend and they're insulting him. That's why we proclaim so strongly.

This is my beloved. This is my friend. He's altogether lovely.

You need to understand what the Lord expects from you, my dear brothers and sisters. You need to know him. Otherwise you know about him.

Yeah, he did all this. Today also I hear preachers saying he's doing this, doing that. I'm amazed that so many believers who watch these Christian TV preachers who present a show.

That TV program is a show. They spend many hours and they've got expert people who know television. They're not converted people, all these experts who produce the program.

They just know how to get people's attention. Have you noticed this? They show this preacher and they've got about 10, 20 cameras on all the audience or maybe 100 of them in big audiences and each one has a big group of people and this is all television gimmicks. Can you imagine Jesus getting TV people to focus on that guy there? He's crying and that one there is laughing.

Do you think such preachers know Jesus? And I'm surprised at the number of stupid believers who sit and admire this. Oh, great woman of God, great man of God. I have no time for them.

Because I watched all of them. I took one year. I got cable TV for one whole year.

I don't have it now. I don't watch TV. To watch these television preachers, to see what they are teaching my country, just a lot of rubbish.

It makes me angry. It makes me just as angry as Jesus was when he was born. I care for the 1,000 million people in my country.

I care for them that they should not have a wrong impression of Jesus and these people are giving a wrong impression of Jesus as a beggar asking for money, as a magician who is doing all types of tricks. I recently saw a Christian preacher, not on TV, but on the internet, and someone known to some of you here, who called a woman to come up. I'm praying for healing now.

And he said, I think both your hands are not the same length. I'm going to pray for you. Wow, they became the same length.

You wouldn't believe it. I actually saw it. I think I can even find it now on YouTube, that clip.

And there were comments there underneath by people ridiculing this. Is this healing in the name of Jesus? This is what's happening to tricksters. I'm not surprised that the Lord will say to all of them, depart from me.

I know people who were once in CFC who admire such preachers. Why? They don't know the Lord. They know about the bridegroom.

It says in Chapter 5, Son of Solomon, Chapter 5, the daughters of Jerusalem knew about the bridegroom. The bride knew him. And I pray that it's really the longing of my heart this morning as we enter a new year also in a few days, that all of you come to know him.

I know most of you are not daughters of Babylon because you've been in CFC long enough. But I want to be honest. I don't know whether you all belong to the bride.

I believe you're daughters of Jerusalem, all right. But are you the bride? Are you taken up with Jesus himself? Or with what he can do for you? If you're taken up with what Jesus can do for you, then Jesus is like the servant woman. If you're taken up with him himself, he's your bridegroom.

Remember, a servant woman can probably do more than a wife. Maybe she's a better cook. There are many servant women who can keep the house cleaner than your wife, cook better than your wife.

So what? Jesus is not looking for a good cook. He's not looking for someone who can preach well. That's a good cook.

He's looking for a lover. He came to earth looking for those who will love him. And I'll tell you something.

Even if you don't do anything else in your life, but love Jesus with all your heart, he will love you and you will know him. And he'll say, well done, good and faithful servant. He never preached a sermon, never cast out a demon, never healed the sick.

But you loved him and you really sought to please him in everything you did in your life. You always wanted to please your beloved. You wanted to be with him.

Song of Solomon, chapter 5, verse 2. I was asleep, but my heart was awake. See, this is, she's not yet become the wife. That's why she's not staying with her husband.

She's staying separately because she's not married yet. And my beloved was knocking at the door. Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one.

And what is a bride reply? Oh, I've taken off my dress. How can I put it on again? I washed my feet. How can I go out into the streets and be dirty again? You know how sometimes we respond like that.

The Lord says, drop what you're doing right now. Spend a few minutes talking to me. Do you hear that in your heart sometimes? You're busy doing something and the Lord says to you, can you drop that for a few minutes and talk to me? And you say, Lord, just hang on.

I've got something urgent. This is very urgent. Okay.

After a while, she says, I think I should get up. My beloved extended his hand through the opening. The door was shut.

He put in his hand through the window and then she suddenly realized, oh, I shouldn't make a complaint that my feet will get dirty or I've taken off my dress. I'm in my night clothes. How can I go out into the street? So then she decided after a while to get up and open the door to open my beloved and he was gone.

Verse 6, he was gone. He was not there. I tell you to my shame that has happened to me sometimes.

Sometimes I'm writing an article, Christian article and the Lord says, drop that and talk to me. And I say, Lord, just let me finish this. And by the time I finish the article and I want to talk to the Lord, he's not there.

There's a sense of a distance has come. He was so close. You know that verse which says, call upon the Lord when he is near.

Call upon the Lord when he is near. He had gone and my heart went out to him. I searched for him but I did not find him, verse 6. I called him, where are you? I came and called you and you were too busy.

Something else becomes a priority in your life. That's a proof that you don't know the Lord. You know, there are many earthly marriages like that, unfortunately.

Her husband and wife don't have time to talk to each other. They did talk a lot in the first year of marriage. Oh, but now we're married 10-15 years.

It's pretty boring to talk to my wife. My brother, let me warn you, your marriage is heading for the rocks. Your marriage is in danger if you don't have time to talk to your wife, if you don't enjoy being with your wife.

You're in danger, I'll tell you that. I know divorce is not common in India, but we're not talking about divorce. We're talking about a marriage where they're distant from each other.

Take time to talk to each other. Don't be so busy in your work that you have no time. Even if it's 15 minutes a day, quality time, just to assure each other that I love you.

You are my wife, my beloved. You're my husband, I love you. I want to encourage you, husbands and wives, don't think that's a Western thing or a Hollywood thing.

No. Hollywood has imitated it and copied it and corrupted it. But it's a divine thing to love one another.

Love came from God, not from the devil or from Hollywood. And if Hollywood has corrupted it, that doesn't mean I can't have the real thing. I'm not embarrassed to say that I love my wife.

Jesus is like that and I'm learning from Jesus. I see that in the song of Solomon. He says, Then I went, verse 7, to the watchmen.

Those are the elders of the city. And some of these watchmen were not very wise. You know, some watchmen can be very strict.

They struck me and wounded me. How does an elder brother strike you and wound you by being legalistic? You're like, you didn't do like this and you didn't do condemning people and sending them on a guilt trip. You didn't do this and you didn't do that and you should have done this.

That's not physically striking, but that is striking. Legalism and putting them on a guilt trip. Why aren't you going out and reaching the heathen or why didn't you help those poor people on the streets? You can say so many things to condemn people.

That's called guilt trip preaching. There's an article of mine on guilt trip preaching on the website. You can read it sometime.

The watchmen struck me and wounded me. They didn't help me to find Jesus. A legalistic preacher will never help you to find Jesus.

Don't waste your time listening to them. They'll stuff you with Bible knowledge. I grew up in a church like that when I was born again.

People who really studied the Bible. Oh, they filled my head with knowledge. And analyzing Greek words and Hebrew words and even with other groups that I was with, they were always saying one particular doctrine.

This is the doctrine. This is the doctrine. Oh, I got sick and tired of this doctrine.

I want Jesus. But I thanked God from one legalistic group to another legalistic group to another legalistic group. Finally, I broke free from all of them and I said, Lord Jesus, I want you.

That's all. I don't want doctrine. I don't want to be united with people on the basis of doctrine.

I want to be united with people on the basis that they love you and I love you. You know, that's the way I want to live till the end of my days. I want to be found at the end of my days.

End of my life on earth. Whether it's raptured or the Lord calls me home. As a passionate lover of Jesus Christ.

And a passionate lover of his body, the church, my fellow believers. If I succeed there, I'm happy. Even if I didn't do everything perfectly.

Even if I didn't do things to the satisfaction of others. Even if people get bored with my sermons, because I basically preach the same thing again and again. I'll be happy because I loved Jesus till the end.

And I loved my fellow believers until the end. The good ones and the bad ones. Those who troubled me, those who accused me, those who left me.

If I can love them until the end. I don't want to outlive people. I want to outlove them.

And if I can outlove people, it doesn't matter if I don't outlive if they live longer than me, that's okay. But I want to outlove them. So, she finally finds him and says, you know, the others come and say, the daughters of Jerusalem, you heard the elders and all beat her up, the bride.

Then, she tells the daughters of Jerusalem, verse 8, if you find my beloved, tell him I'm lovesick. It's good to be lovesick. It's one type of sickness you should never get rid of.

Be lovesick for your wife, for your husband, not just the newly married couples. The older ones, however old you are, lovesick. I've been married 46 years.

I want to be lovesick for my wife, just like I was before I married her, when I was engaged to her. And, I want to be lovesick for Jesus, above all. Lovesick.

Do you understand that? I believe in love marriages, especially to Jesus Christ. You know, the way some people are believers, I feel that this is an arranged marriage to Jesus Christ, not a love marriage. You know, there are love marriages and arranged marriages.

And, unfortunately, the love marriages, after 10 years, they both look the same. But, in the first few months, love marriages are really different from an arranged marriage. They are so passionately in love with each other, they don't care if the food is bad or overcooked and too much salt, anything.

Forget it. It doesn't matter because they are lovesick. Arranged marriages are very formal.

Hello, how are you? And, I feel the way some people are believers, it's an arranged marriage. I say, did you fall in love with Jesus? Somebody arranged your marriage and told you, come on, kneel down, ask Jesus to come into your heart, hold your hands, you're married. I say, I don't want that type of marriage.

Not with my wife and not with Jesus Christ. What type of marriage do you have? Do you have an arranged marriage with Jesus? Or do you have a love marriage with Jesus? I fell in love with Jesus 55 years ago. Before I fell in love with my wife.

And I love Him today more than, I believe, more than I did 55 years ago. He's the delight of my heart. Everything that the bride says in the Song of Solomon, I can say spiritually to my Savior and my Lord.

And, you know, to me, that is the greatest thing. Some of you may not be able to preach like me, so what? You may not have the opportunity to travel and preach in different places and maybe people don't admire you like they admire me. These things count for nothing.

I tell you honestly, I couldn't care less whether people admire me or call me the devil. It's exactly the same to me. I prayed that many times to the Lord.

Lord, whether people call me a prophet or a devil, must be the same to me. If one is a little more, then I'm not probably saved yet. But when they're exactly the same, prophet or devil, same thing.

Because their opinion doesn't matter. It's, Lord, what do you think about me? That's all that matters. Be like that.

Your life will be at rest. You won't be disturbed by the opinions of people. You won't be puffed up if people said good things about you.

You won't be depressed if people said bad things. It doesn't make a difference. Because you're beloved.

You're taken up with him. So, she tells the daughters of Jerusalem, will you please tell my beloved I'm lovesick, but where are they going to find him? They don't even know him. They say, in verse 9, they're asking the bride, what kind of beloved is your beloved? I don't know what you're talking about this.

Almost, you're very beautiful, but what kind of beloved is this? Then she says, my beloved is dazzling and ruddy, outstanding among 10,000, verse 10. That means, there's no one like him in the whole world. It's Jesus.

I'm delighted with him. You know, there's something here earlier on, which I wanted to just mention. When she arose to open the door, you remember, she didn't open the door for a long time, but when she did arise to open the door, verse 5, it says, my hands dripped with myrrh, Song of Solomon 5, verse 5, on the handles of the door that means there was a perfume there.

I mean, the bridegroom had just put his hand around on the door and that was enough for that perfume to be on that door and when the bride touched it, wow, that perfume came on her. And that is the mark of someone who has been with Jesus. Or even come, just, you know, she hadn't yet been with him, she just came a little near him, touched something and the first thing he touched, an aroma.

You know how these perfumes are, powerful. You know what the aroma of Christ is? Turn with me to 2 Corinthians, chapter 2, or the fragrance of Christ. There is only one way to get that fragrance, the myrrh and the aloes and the fragrance of frankincense and all that stuff into my heart.

Like this bride got it on her fingers when she touched the boat. Here it is, 2 Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 14. Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.

That means overcoming sin. That's why we keep on preaching that message. We preached it for 40 years.

Always leading us in triumph in Christ and manifest through us thereby this aroma. What is this aroma? The aroma of the knowledge of Him. Not the knowledge about Him but the aroma of knowing Jesus.

When people meet me, I don't want to get them to think, oh, he's a great Bible scholar who can show you this verse, that verse, the other verse. That's secondary. That's like wanting a wife who is a good cook.

Your wife may be a lovely wife and a good cook. That's another thing but that's secondary. The aroma that I know Jesus.

That's what people should smell or detect when they come in touch and think, here's a man who seems to know Jesus very personally. He's a very intimate friend of His. You know how sometimes worldly people try to impress you by saying, I know this MLA, I know this, the Chief Minister and I know that, I know the Governor, I know these people.

I hope when people come to talk to me, I don't know any MLA, I don't know any Chief Minister, I don't know any Governor but I know Jesus. That's all I want them to know when they come in touch with me. Pursue that, my brother, sister.

You don't have to have great gifts of the Spirit to do that. Knowing Him, not knowing about Him. That is what will produce the aroma.

It's called here the aroma of knowing Him. Knowing about Him, there's no aroma. It can be a stink.

Knowing about Jesus can be a stink. It can make you a legalist. It can make you put heavy burdens on people.

But when you know Jesus, there will be a twinkle in your eye, a song in your heart, a spring in your step because you are full of joy. In His presence there is fullness of joy. At His right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

There's an aroma that comes forth that people see like they saw in Jesus when there was a storm. And I tell you, fishermen are used to, fishermen like Peter are used to tremendous storms. And if a storm scares a fisherman like Peter, it must have been a really big storm.

And Jesus is not disturbed. I want to live like that because all of us, as long as we live in this world, there are going to be storms. There are going to be problems.

Sometimes massive thunderstorms. To be, Jesus is sleeping in the boat, to be at rest in Christ, okay. The storms may roar around me.

But I am at rest in Christ. It's a wonderful life. I tell you this.

I want to encourage you to pursue it. Pursue it till you enter it. You will no longer seek to impress people.

You know, all of us, when we are initially born again, we have what I call an inferiority complex. Everyone. That means I feel inferior to everybody else.

And whenever in the world, even non-Christians, when they feel inferior to others, they always try to show that they are superior. Any man who tries to show that he is superior to you has got an inferiority complex. Great men never, never try to show that they are great.

One of the greatest scientists of the last century was a man called Albert Einstein. He was a very simple man. He was the cleverest man in the world, but he never tried to impress people that he was the cleverest man.

I'm talking about a worldly person. About 300 years before Christ, there was a very wise philosopher in Greece called Socrates. Even today, they talk about him, the wisdom of Socrates.

He was known throughout Greece. Greece, by the way, was the superpower of those days and Alexander the Great stayed 300 years before Christ and Socrates was known as a great, wise man. Somebody came to him and asked him, Socrates, how is it you became so wise? He says, there's only one difference between me and all the other people in Greece.

All of us know nothing, but I know that I know nothing. That's the only difference. All the others think that they know something.

That's why I'm wise and the others are stupid. I thought of that. I said, the world is full of people who think they know so much or try to impress you that they know so much.

They know this person. They know that person. They know the Bible.

They know this. They know that. In the midst of that is a man like Socrates who says, I don't know anything.

Paul says, if anyone thinks he's a somebody when he's a nobody. I'll tell you, nobodies, people who know that they're nobodies get a lot more from God than others. Jesus spoke about a camel not being able to go through the eye of a needle.

But these small amoebas, they go through the eye of a needle easily because they're nobodies. Nobody cares for an amoeba. There may be one around here you can't even see it.

It's so small. Camels can be seen. They can't go through the eye of a needle.

To get to know God is like going through the eye of a needle. You have to be small. You have to be really small in your own eyes.

And when we have an inferiority complex and we are first converted, we want to impress people. I've seen in so many Christian churches I've attended how song leaders are always trying to impress people with their jokes and their humor and the way they wave their hands and the way they raise their eyebrows and all this type of stuff which they've learned from film stars and film actors. I see all that and I say, poor chap.

When will he get out of it? When will he get over this inferiority complex? He's supposed to be a normal human being. It's all because we feel inferior and we want to impress people. When you come to know Jesus, you don't want to impress anyone except Jesus himself.

I'm just trying to show you how you can be free from this slavery to men. When you try to impress people, there's a slavery there. Judge yourself.

Judge yourself in the light of what I just said. And see if it is enough for you that you know Jesus and you love him and that he loves you. That's how it was with the bride.

I don't want to be among the daughters of Jerusalem. And I certainly don't want to be among the watchmen who hurt others. I want to be part of the bride.

Towards the end of Song of Solomon, you read about love. In chapter 8, verse 7, Many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it. If a man were to give all the riches of his house, that means you put all your money in the offering box.

Compared to love, it's utterly despised. That's the way. And the last verse is like, Come Lord Jesus.

Song of Solomon 8, 14. Hurry my beloved. Come quickly.

I want to see you. I want to be with you. I want to get married to you.

This is what it means to know the Lord. I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, pursue it. This is the only Christian life worth having.

And you will know you're on the right track when you hate sin. When you hate sin, because that is what crucified your Savior. And you hate it.

Lord, this habit of mine. This is what you hung on the cross for. Particularly some sin you're constantly defeated by.

As we go to prayer now, will you just say this, Lord, it is this habitual sin of mine which nailed you to the cross. Please help me. Even if it takes years for me to get out of it.

I want to get out of it. Deliver me. I don't want to hurt you anymore.

I don't want to crucify you afresh. Let's bow in prayer. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes and think of maybe one particular sin that you fall into again and again.

Or maybe a sin that you thought you had victory over. But that you fell into recently again. Because of your high thoughts.

You know why you fell into that sin? Only because of pride. And that made the grace of God depart from you. And when grace departs, you cannot conquer sin.

Humble yourself once again. Come back to the cross. Not to the foot of the cross, but on the cross.

I never sing that at the cross, at the cross. I always sing on the cross, on the cross. That's where we are to be.

On the cross. I don't want to go to be at the cross. I want to be on the cross.

Say, Lord, I want to hang there with you. Dead to my sin. Dead to the world and its applause.

Dead to the opinions of men. Dead to my own struggles to impress people. Dead to feelings of inferiority or superiority.

I'm just precious in your eyes. That's enough for me. Lord, I want to hate this sin.

Maybe a thought. Maybe an attitude. Maybe a habit.

Ask God to help you Lord, I want to see it. This is the sin that nailed you to the cross. And you hung there between heaven and earth to free me from it.

Lord, I cry out to you. Free me from it. I want to know you.

I don't want to be a preacher, but I want to know you. I don't want to be a worker of iniquity, a worker of sin. I want to know you, Lord.

I want you to be my beloved. I want to love you. I want to be lovesick for you.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the Holy Spirit that draws us to Jesus our Savior and our Lord and our Bridegroom. Make it real, Lord, like it has become for me to everybody here. Time is short.

You're coming soon. There's no time to waste. Help us to be wise.

Teach us to number our days that we can one day present to you a heart of wisdom, a heart that loves Jesus more than anything else. Thank you for hearing us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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