

Living in an Upside Down World

by Zac Poonen

The world is upside down and Jesus came to set us right side up, but we must be careful to guard our hearts and minds from worldly values and seek to understand every word of God.

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Scripture: Matthew 8:5-8, Matthew 8:10, John 14:30, 1 John 2:15, 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Christian Living", "Faith Overcoming"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to live differently from the world, following Jesus' example and values. It highlights the importance of faith in overcoming the world's temptations and challenges, focusing on living with compassion for others and humility before God. The message encourages believers to have faith that Jesus can solve every problem and to live with heaven's values, surprising God with their faith and commitment to living according to His word.

Transcript

We have been thinking the last three Sundays of the fact that the world is upside down and Jesus came to set us right side up and we need to see what that means because a true Christian is one who seeks to follow Jesus in the way he lived and walked on this earth and then his way of life is going to be very different from the way of life of people in the world. Let me show you a verse in John's Gospel chapter 14 what Jesus said at the end of his life. John 14 we read here in verse 30 John 14 and verse 30 the ruler of the world is coming and he has nothing in me.

Now that means that Satan tried to in Jesus entire life to try and get a foothold in him through tempting him in various ways I mean three of those temptations are mentioned in Matthew 4 but he was tempted all through his life and the purpose of Satan in all temptation is to try and get one foot in the door because once he's got a foot in the door it's very difficult to shut it. He just walks right in. That's why you've got to be careful that he doesn't get a little foothold in our life and Jesus was extremely careful throughout his 33 years and it's interesting that Satan is called here the ruler of this world.

If Satan can't come in through obvious sin he will try to come in through putting some worldly value in us so that we become upside down just like the rest of the world and so we've got to be careful. Remember one thing that of all the created beings Satan is the cleverest. It mentions that in Ezekiel 28 and if any of you think that you're cleverer than Satan you are the first person he's going to deceive.

If you humble yourself and say Satan is cleverer than me and he will fool me however smart I may be in earthly things he will fool me by putting worldly values inside me and maybe getting me addicted not to sinful things but to legitimate things that make me waste my time so that I had no time for God. He succeeded and I find with believers the wholehearted believers the devil succeeds more by putting the world into their minds than by sin because he knows he can't put sin into their life. They're alert to sin but it's like you have two doors of sin in the world and you're alert to sin and you keep the other door open and he walks in.

He doesn't care which door he walks into your heart by. If one door is open he'll walk in. So you can be so carefully guarding the door of sin and he walks in through some worldly attitude or value and he's got in.

That's where Jesus was careful. He said the ruler of this world now there are two worlds one is the people of the world God so loved those people and we got to love them too. God so loved the world that he gave his son to die for them but there's another world which is the world system that the Bible speaks of.

You never read about it in the Old Testament. You know there are a lot of things you don't read about in the Old Testament for example how to overcome Satan. They never knew that because they didn't have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them.

It's no use telling people who are not baptized in the Holy Spirit about demons and the devil and all they don't understand it but in the New Testament after the day of Pentecost Jesus was the first person who was dealing with the devil directly and he recognized the devil is the ruler of this world. Everything in this world is controlled by Satan. I don't know how many of you recognize that the entire entertainment world is controlled by the devil whether it's Hollywood or Bollywood or even the music systems of the world.

The whole music industry is controlled by Satan and do you know how many so-called believers people sitting here young people sitting here don't have a clue about that. They think they are Christians. They are worldly under the authority of the ruler of the world the devil who's out to destroy their life who's already destroyed their life.

Many of you your children many of you good believers sitting here your children are being destroyed by worldly music. You think oh it's innocent. It's not innocent.

It's because you yourself are blind. Jesus was not blind. He knew if the devil doesn't come in through sin he'll try and come in through the world and we got to be careful that he doesn't come either way and when we recognize that the world is walking is upside down and Jesus told us to walk right side up then we need to recognize what there is in the world which the devil is using to draw us away from Christ.

See for example I find a lot of young people today who don't have time to read the scriptures and if you ask them why a lot of people even believers in our church they don't have time every day to read the scriptures. Is it because their life is full every day of a lot of essential activities? No. There are essential activities.

Now if you say that 24 hours of your day was filled with essential activities then that you couldn't read the Bible I can understand but if you look at your daily life you'll find there are a lot of activities which are not so essential which are just extras thrown in. Time is wasted that way and the end result is at the end of the day you don't have time to read God's Word. I'll tell you the reason for that.

The reason is and then let me shock you by saying most of you sitting here do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. You'd say that's not true. I say it is true and I'll prove it to you.

If you believe with all your heart that there was only one book in the entire world that God wrote that's the Bible and you also believe that the most important thing in your life is your relationship with God not your job not anything else. You would really seek to know God's Word the Bible. The fact that you don't earnestly seek to know that proves either that you don't believe that the most important thing in your life is your relationship with God or you don't believe that the Bible is God's Word.

See I proved it to you. Otherwise you'd spend time to study it. You'd spend time every day to know God and you would cut out certain non-essential activities to know God's Word and this is the reason why we are deceived by the Bible.

Remember the devil's tactics are all same old tactics though he's very clever he knows that the best way are the same old tactics that have succeeded with human beings for 6,000 years. How did he start with Eve in the Garden of Eden? With the Word of God. Eve does God's Word really say that? And Eve got into a discussion about whether God's Word said that and she fell.

It's always with God's Word. What was the first reply that Jesus gave to the devil in the temptation in the wilderness? Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Now if you believe that now take this seriously.

If you really believe that that you the only way you can really live live life with a capital L the way God wants you to live the only way you can live that is by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. If I believe that I would try to find out every single word that proceeds from God's mouth because that's the only way I can live. I mean if a doctor told you to take four tablets three times a day and you took only one tablet once a day it'd be pretty clear that you don't have much confidence in the doctor.

You don't believe what he says. You think you know better than the doctor and if it's a good doctor who gave you that prescription and you didn't follow it and you're sick you got yourself to blame. So when you have a heavenly doctor like Jesus saying the only way you can ever live on this earth the way God wants you to live is by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

If you believe that that heavenly doctor knew more about the way to live than you know you would seek to understand every word that proceeds from God's mouth. If you don't do that no wonder you're sick. No wonder you have bad moods.

You know you're never supposed to have a bad mood in the morning noon or night if you're a true disciple of Jesus. Why do you have them? Because you think you know better than the doctor. Why do you fight with your wife? You know you're never supposed to fight with your wife even one day in a year.

Why do you do it? Why do you complain so much against your husband or your wife or your neighbor or this and the other? The Bible says let's finish with all murmuring and all complaining. Why is it? I'll tell you why because you think you know better than your doctor. The heavenly doctor.

You have time to read so many things. What is essential for your work of course you know your study if you're a student you need to read. But so many other things you have time for and what gets neglected? God's word.

Because that is lost in your priority. And I'll tell you something anyone who puts God's word last in his priority is ultimately never going to read the Bible. And the ruler of the world will come in and occupy so many areas of his life and he will still have a very good testimony in the church because he doesn't commit obvious sins.

But his sense of discernment will not become sharp. He will be fooled by a lot of things. For example the entire Christian world has been fooled in the area of music.

They are not able to distinguish that music with Jesus Christ would approve of and music with Jesus Christ would not approve of. It's a very rare person in my life that I have met who can discern that. How do you define it? It's not by explaining beats and things like that.

It's a question of the Holy Spirit telling you that's not right. The vast majority of Christian young women don't have a clue about the type of dress they should wear which Jesus would approve of. The vast majority.

The vast majority of young people today do not know how to spend the money they earn because a lot of them are earning such a lot of money. And they don't know how to use their money in a way that Jesus would approve of. Why is that? Because they don't have time to study the scriptures.

And you think the devil hasn't got a foothold in their life? Of course he's got. They don't even know it. And they're satisfying themselves.

I'm not committing adultery. I'm not doing this. I'm not.

I'm not. I'm better than all those other churches. So what? It's like someone who got 20% in an examination saying I'm better than all those other people who got 10%.

Would you be happy if your child got 20% and came home and said, Dad, I got. I'm better than all those people who got 10%, 15%. That's exactly the way a lot of Christians are glorified.

And I think a lot of Christians in this church do. Because we're not allowing the Holy Spirit to show us through God's Word, make our spirits sensitive to what is of the world. And we could be walking upside down just like the rest of the world and say we are Christians.

A Christian is supposed to live upright. That means his value system is exactly the opposite of the value system of the world. See what Paul said in Galatians in chapter 6 about his own attitude of the world.

Galatians 6 and verse 14. May it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ to most Christians is a place where Christ died for their sins, which is good.

But here he speaks about another aspect of the cross that through the cross I, Paul, was crucified to the world and the world to me. And verse 16, those who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them. They are truly God's chosen people.

See what does that mean? It means that the world is not going to dictate to me what type of music I listen to, not going to dictate to me how I dress, it's not going to dictate to me how I spend my time. The world is not going to dictate to me anything because I recognize the world is under the control of the ruler of this world, which is the devil. There's a lot of things in education, a lot of things in advertisements, which are all

controlled by the devil.

And you've got to have discernment. What is of God and what is of the devil? You know, a lot of the medical world, for example, a lot of it is controlled by the devil. I mean, God ordained medicines and doctors to help poor people, to serve them.

People who don't have understanding of medicines and who don't have opportunity to, you know, get treatment and all that. But how many doctors in the world are doing that? Even Christian doctors, they're all after money. And a lot of people just are only interested in getting a reputation.

Medical world, which is supposed to be helping people, they're not helping people, they're just making money for themselves. It's the same with education. How is it that so many people in the world believe that man descended from a monkey? Whose idea was that? Using it as clever science? It's like that picture I saw of a big gorilla hanging up in a classroom and underneath is written, our father.

Our father. You want that? But that's what a lot of people believe, that that gorilla was their ancestor. I don't believe it.

I believe Adam was much more intelligent and much more good-looking and in every way a thousand times better than any one of us when he was created. He was perfect. God never makes anything perfect.

But see how the devil's taken over. The vast majority of people believe all this. Those are just a few areas.

But here he says, the world, I have been, I'm dead to this world. You know, it's, there was a godly man who put it like this. He said, true surrender is to be so identified with the death of Christ to this world that whatever did not appeal to him does not appeal to us.

Just think of that. True surrender is to be so identified with the death of Christ to this world that whatever did not appeal to him does not appeal to us. It doesn't mean we are not tempted.

Jesus was also tempted. Do you know that Jesus was tempted to the world at the age of 30? With all that maturity he had, the devil still felt, I can tempt him with the world. He showed him the glory of the world.

I mean, Jesus, God did, the devil didn't tempt Jesus with something which could not tempt him. He showed him the glory of the world and said, I'll give you this. Was it a temptation or was there no temptation there? It was a temptation.

Jesus shook it off. It didn't even, it's like water on the duck's back because he did, he had died to all that. He was not going to bow down.

But what did he say? I'll give you this if you bow down to me. Right from the beginning, Satan has always wanted worship. You know why he became the devil? He was a leader of the angels at one time, perfect, leading people in the worship of God.

He had everything, beauty, intelligence, authority, position. The only thing he didn't have was worship. God was being worshipped and he wanted the angels to worship him.

That's why he became the devil. Whenever you want people to admire you, worship you, remember whom you're following. You're not following Jesus Christ.

You're following the devil. You know, you can be a preacher. There are a lot of preachers in the world who just want people to admire them and adore them, respect them.

You know who they're following? The devil. There are music leaders who want people to admire them and respect them. They're following the devil.

But there may be music leaders in the Christian church. There are musicians who, when they play the music, they're not interested in glorifying God. They want people to admire the way they play the musical instruments.

They are following the devil. They're getting people to worship them. The world is full of people.

Look at all these film stars and the kings and queens and all that in the world and even Christian preachers and Christian musicians. They want people to admire them. It's the spirit of the devil.

He wanted Adam and Eve, when they were created, to worship him. And they did. When they, when he, they did what he told them to do, eat of that fruit, they worshiped him.

Yes, we don't worship God, we worship you. Do you know the number of born-again believers who are worshipping the devil? In some subtle area. You say, I don't believe it.

Yeah, that's because you don't read God's Word. The mind has not been sharpened to discern. It's like people who, who don't have good eyesight.

You say, can you read what's written on that, on that chart? They say, no, there's no letter there. There's a very clear, there's a letter there, but you can't read it. Because vision has become dim.

The vision of many Christians has become dim. They don't see worldliness, which another godly man can see clearly. And they think, ah, that's his prejudice.

It's when the eye doctor says, listen, there's a letter C there. No, no, no, no, it's not C. It's E. You're prejudiced, or you don't know the alphabet. That's not the reason, right? Your vision is not clear.

It's good to humble ourselves and recognize that in many areas, the world has got into our system, and it's taken away our vision. I believe that many who, when they were first converted, had a clear understanding of the world, have lost that. And that's how the bride of Christ gradually becomes a harlot.

There's a poem I read a long time ago where it says, once upon a time, the church and the world walked far apart. The world was one side, and the church was one side. The world was singing a giddy song, and the church was singing a hymn.

Gradually, the world said to the church, hey, listen, let's put some zip into your music. And initially, the church said no, but gradually, the church said, okay, a little bit, perhaps, a little bit. And gradually, the music of the church became exactly like the music of the world.

And then the world said, listen, your dress, it's all so simple. Look at mine. I'm going to make it like mine.

And gradually, initially, the church resisted it, but then gradually, the church said, okay, I suppose there's nothing wrong in it. There's nothing sinful. And after a while, little by little by little, the devil doesn't come wholesale with a whole lot of things.

The world comes little by little by little, and gradually, at the end of the hymn, the church and the world are walking hand in hand. But the church is still going to the meetings and singing the same old songs. And the people in one church are saying, we are better than all those others because our doctrines are better.

We speak in tongues. So what? If you're walking hand in hand with the devil and the world, what difference does it make whether you speak in tongues or heal the sick? The devil's won the victory. But do you recognize that? No.

Vision is dim. How did it become dim? You allow, nobody loses their vision all of a sudden. It's like cataract.

You know, people get old and they can't see the distance. A cataract doesn't come one day and suddenly become blind. No, it's gradual.

And if you allow the devil to put worldly values into your thinking, gradually, your vision becomes dim. You can't see it anymore. And then if you don't have the boldness to resist when other people in your good church are also going in that worldly way, and you say, they can do it, I can also do it.

The devil succeeded with one more person. You know, the devil can make one person worldly and make 10 other people follow that person. He's killed 11 birds with one stone.

He's a master at that. And particularly, if it's somebody whom you respect in the church, has also become worldly, they say, oh, he can do it, I can do it. If he can do it, I can do it.

If she can do it, I can do it. That is the surest way to go to hell. I'll tell you that.

That's the surest way to become worldly. Unless you say, Lord Jesus, you're my example. I'm not going to go the way a lot of other people.

I'm not here to judge anybody. It's not my business. God is the judge.

Let God judge, but I am not going to be like them. How many of you young girls have the boldness to say, I will not dress like other worldly girls, even if they sit in CFC? How many of you young people will have the boldness to say, I will not follow worldly systems in music, even if other young men in CFC follow that? Boy, you've got a great future ahead of you. But there are very few who have the guts and the boldness and the courage to stand like that and say, I'm going to be different.

I'm not going to judge them. No, don't spoil the wonderful attitude you have by going and judging other people. No, that's God's business.

You just say, I am and you don't even have to announce it. You just have to take a decision before God like Daniel. It says in Daniel, the great movement from Babylon to Jerusalem started with a young man called Daniel, who was 17 years old.

Babylon is a picture of worldly Christianity. You read that in Revelation 18. And there's an Old Testament picture of that when the children of Israel, God's people, went to Babylon.

And then he brought them back to Jerusalem after 70 years. And the whole movement from Babylon to Jerusalem started with one man, Daniel. And he was only about 17, 18 years old.

And you know, what was it that made him start that movement? Let me show you the Daniel chapter 1. In Daniel chapter 1, we read of a decision he made in his mind. Daniel chapter 1 and verse 8. Daniel determined, he made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or the wine which he drank. Now listen, he was not talking about adultery, murder, or pornography.

No. Those maybe many young people stood against. He was talking about the smaller commandments in God's law.

In the book of Leviticus chapter 11, it said there were certain types of food you are not supposed to eat. In Proverbs, it said you're not supposed to drink the wine when it fermented and stirs itself in the cup. Daniel knew those commandments.

So he said, I'm not going to drink that alcoholic wine. And I'm not going to eat of the type of food which God has forbidden us to eat. And I'm sure there are a lot of other young people around him who said, come on Daniel, don't be silly.

Those were laws that God gave to Moses when they were in the wilderness. We're living in much more hygienic conditions now and we can eat. It's okay.

But God had said no. So Daniel said, no, I don't care what you fellas say. I'm just not going to eat of that.

I'm going to be different. You think that was easy? It's not easy to be different. Even a child in school finds it difficult to be different from the others.

He determined in his mind, I am going to be different. Have you made that decision in your mind? That is the thing that will move you out of a Babylonian attitude of mind and bring you into Jerusalem, the true church of God. So that's how it was with Jesus as a young man.

His mind was set on the things of God, even as a child of 12. Is this the one you're following? Is this the one who you're following? Who at the age of 12 knew the scriptures, who even though he didn't have a printed Bible at home, knew the scriptures, learned it from childhood, listening carefully and therefore kept the world outside. In John 16, John chapter 16 and verse 33, because of this attitude of mind, Jesus could say at the age of 33, John 16, 33, when he finished his earthly course, he could say in the world, the last part of that verse, you'll have tribulation, but take courage.

I have overcome the world. Not only the ruler of the world, not only sin, I have overcome the world. Be encouraged.

You'll face a lot of tribulation in the world, trial, pressure, tribulation, not only in terms of persecution, but the world trying to get into your mind. I have overcome the world and I believe every true disciple of Jesus should be able to say, I've overcome the world. Think of that statement I mentioned earlier, where anything that did not appeal to him, does not appeal to me.

You know that whenever you get something of the world, which Christ does not approve of, if you have something in your life, maybe it's a way of music or a way of dressing or a way of thinking or anything you have in your life which Christ cannot approve of, I don't mean you're dressing very simply when you come to church. Is Christ with you only when you come to church? He's not with you the other six days of the week when you dress and go somewhere else? You want Jesus to be with you every day of the week or just when you come here? It's not the type of music you listen to or play on Sundays. Is Jesus not with you

seven days a week? A lot of Christians, they only want Christ on Sunday.

They don't want him to run their life the rest of the week. They're not Christians. They're Pharisees and they should call themselves by the right name.

We are Pharisees. We come on Sunday and say the right things, but we're not disciples of Jesus. Oh, forget it.

It's too much, too heavy a price. Let's be honest. Yeah, I have overcome the world.

That's anything that did not appeal to him does not appeal to me. Now, I'll tell you this honestly. It's a mountain peak.

I don't believe I have attained that top even after 50 years of being a believer. I keep checking. Anything that did not appeal to him does not appeal to me.

I say, Lord, I want that. I haven't got there yet, but I'm determined to climb this mountain that year by year, it'll be more and more true of my life. But whatever did not appeal to you does not appeal to me.

But I'm sorry to say that I've seen with many believers that they have gone down this mountain slope. They were a little higher up a few years ago. None of us have reached the peak.

We don't have to get discouraged if you haven't reached the peak. There are still a few things that appeal to us that didn't appeal to Christ. We got to press on to perfection, but you've got to take it seriously if you're sliding back.

What is a backslider? A backslider is one who once upon a time was climbing this mountain wholeheartedly, but gradually slackened off. Slackened off because he looked around at others. He didn't keep his vision on Jesus alone who never slackened off, who ran the race.

He turned away from looking unto Jesus and like Peter, he sank. I believe it's happened to many people. Some of you who came to this church 25 years ago or 30 years ago.

Ask yourself, are you more worldly today than you were then? I mean, I'm not going to tell you. You ask yourself. I asked myself that.

Lord, do I have values? Maybe there was a time when you slipped up. Okay, but did you repent and come back and say, Lord, I'm going to make up for lost time? Or have you succumbed to the pressure of people around you and particularly the type of you know, that one of the greatest pressures people can face in our churches is, oh brother, don't be legalistic. Okay, I'll be worldly like you.

That's a tremendous pressure. Don't be legalistic. I get scared.

I'm not scared of people telling me I'm legalistic. I'm not listening to them because many people who say don't be legalistic are trying to drag you down to their own worldly standards. That's all.

They want to justify their worldliness by saying, oh, that's all legalistic. Call it what you like. But sir, I'm not going to follow you.

Madam, I'm not going to follow you either. I'm going to follow Jesus. You couldn't scare Jesus by saying, oh, that's legalistic.

Oh, that's all legalistic. You have all these rules about music and dress and things like that. Okay, brother, that's fine for you.

But I'm not going to follow you. That's all. I have someone else I'm going to follow.

I have only one life to live in this world and I can't afford to miss the road by listening to all your arguments about legalism and worldliness. I'm not going to listen to it and wake up in eternity and find that I didn't follow Jesus, but I got scared of all these arguments that I'm legalistic and so I became worldly. Now, I really believe this.

I know there's legalism. I've seen people who are thoroughly legalistic and it's very difficult to fellowship with them. But one of the primary marks of legalism, let me tell you this, is judging other people.

It's one of the primary marks. You are not like me. Therefore, you're worldly.

I don't do that. So I can't be a legalist. But I have my own standards, which other people may call legalism.

That's fine. And I disapprove of the standards of a lot of other Christians around me, but I don't judge them. I disagree with them.

I disapprove of them. I go to many churches where I disagree with many things. I say, I'm not here to judge them.

Dear brothers and sisters, I'll tell you something. If you really want God's best, you have to break free from the opinions of men and particularly the opinions of fellow believers and particularly the opinions of people who you think are spiritual. They're not spiritual necessarily.

Follow your own standards as you see Jesus. Don't judge others, then you won't be a legalist. You have certain values yourself and you don't impose them on others.

You'll never be a legalist. Legalists are people who impose their standards on others. I have certain values and standards.

I never impose it on others. I don't even impose it on my sons or my daughters-in-law. I have them for myself.

I say, that's for me. I may not agree with some things that my sons do or my daughters-in-law do. I'm not here to judge them, but I'm not going to let my standard be affected by them.

No, or by some sisters or brothers in this church. I disagree with a lot of elders in our churches, many things. I don't judge them.

It's their business to go their way. I don't impose my views on them. I sometimes give a suggestion to different ones at elders meetings and all that, but I never go checking up.

Are you following it? Are you following it? No, it's not my business. I'm a watchman like Ezekiel. I just got to blow the trumpet and say, hey, there's some dangers here.

After that, nobody's blood is on my hands. Dear brothers and sisters, I believe that you can walk, you know, free from the pull of this world if you look at Jesus alone. That's the only solution.

And if you find someone who's really following Jesus, follow that example. I found a few in my life, and I'm challenged by them. Sometimes I read a sentence in a book, and it really grips me.

I said, there, there's a person who's seen something of Jesus, and it convicts me, and I follow that. Or I see something sometimes in a person. I see a meek and a quiet spirit in some young sister.

I say, boy, how precious that sister must be in God's eyes. The Bible says that. And then I see others who don't have that meek and quiet spirit, who are sort of bossy.

I don't judge them. That's between them and God. But I don't have much respect for them, because I say, that's not Christianity.

It's the spirit of the world that's come into such people to make them like that. Spirit of Christ is very different. He said, learn from me, for I'm humble and gentle.

One of the most disobeyed commands in Scripture, Matthew 11, 29. Learn from me, for I'm humble and gentle of heart. We're not naturally humble and gentle of heart.

We are proud and hard. But if we remain like that, it's sad. I believe that as we grow older, and as grow older doesn't mean you've got to become 60 or 70.

That means you were 20, and you've become 25 now. You've grown older. You should become humbler and gentler as time goes on.

That's how it should be. Particularly if you sit in a church like this, where you hear these truths regularly. So let's think of this as a mountain.

The way Christ lived, he overcame the world. The world had no power over him. He walked upright.

Now let me turn to 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5 and verse 4. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Now many people use logic here.

I'm born of God. That means I automatically overcome the world. No, no, no, no, no, no, don't read, read it like that.

I know 90% of born again Christians I've met have not overcome the world. They are defeated by the world. All around they don't even know it.

What does it mean? Let me read it like this. Whatever or whoever is born of God has the potential to overcome the world. That's how I understand it.

In you is the potential to overcome the world. You know, like a rocket. You see these rockets that have gone up into space.

They are built with the potential to overcome gravity, you know, up to a certain number of miles above the earth's surface. Gravity pulls everything down. But if you can go beyond that area around the earth where gravity pulls, if you go beyond that, gravity can't touch you.

That's why once these rockets have gone past that sphere of gravity, there's nothing to stop them. It's full speed. Their speed increases to some fantastic speeds, 40,000 kilometers an hour.

Magic. You can't do that when gravity is pulling you down. When gravity is pulling you, you're fighting gravity and your speed is pretty low.

But once you're broken free of gravity, there's nothing to stop you. The life of God, which is put into us through the Holy Spirit, is something like that. If you can break free by the grace of God from the pull of the world, if you got out of that realm, there'll be absolutely nothing to stop you from shooting into God's presence, from knowing God better, better, better, better, better every day.

And your life would be the most wonderful life that any human being can ever live. You may have pressures, sorrows, trials, and that everything else, sicknesses perhaps, but it will never take away your joy. It'll never take away your peace.

You will grow in grace. Your life will be like rivers of living water, blessing thousands of people. That's God's will for every one of us.

Why is it not so? We're allowing gravity to pull us down. It's like these rockets you hear of sometimes in the papers. They shot up and then they fell into the ocean somewhere.

Just couldn't break free from the pull of gravity. Gravity is a tremendous force. The world is like that, pulling everybody down.

We got to fight it to break free from it. Fight it continuously. After a while, it becomes easier.

You know, that rocket, as I said, once it goes past the sphere of gravity, it's easy going. Unless it decides after a while, because of the influence of other rockets that have not gone past the pull of gravity to come back. That happens to some believers.

They feel, hey, I'm hard. I don't laugh at the jokes other people laugh at. I don't spend my money like other people spend their money.

I don't spend my time like other people spend their time. Then they sink back into the lower levels of gravity. Then their life is back to the same old moods and discouragement and anger and strife and complaining and everything else.

But they still come on Sunday to praise the Lord. Are you happy to live such a mediocre life? Or do you want a life that Jesus called abundant life? It's offered to us. There's a victory.

1 John 5, 4, whatever is born of God has got the potential to overcome the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. How do we overcome the world? By faith.

Now today, the only faith that the Christian world generally hears about is faith for healing from sickness. Faith for getting money or a better job or a better house or a better car or more money or to become a millionaire and things like that. That's not the faith John was speaking about.

He was talking about a faith that overcomes the world. You go to a Christian bookshop today, and you see most of the books on faith are in relation to healing and material prosperity. Try and find a book on faith that tells you how to overcome the world.

I challenge you to go to any Christian bookshop and find a book based on the faith mentioned here. Faith to overcome the world. I'm almost certain you won't find it.

But you'll find plenty of books on all this false charismatic stuff. You know, I go to Brethren bookshops, and I find they're selling this charismatic stuff. Brethren don't even believe in all these charismatic gifts.

But those are the books people want. And money is money, whichever your doctrine may be. It's amazing the amount of compromise in Christendom today.

Money has taken over. It doesn't matter if the doctrine is wrong. If people want it, we'll sell those books.

We don't. The victory that overcomes the world, that's the type of faith we need. A faith in God's word, which tells me the direction this world is headed.

Turn over the page to 1 John chapter 2. I'm going to tell you two things here. When John speaks about the world, which is upside down. 1 John 2 15.

The love of the world, do not love the world and all the things in the world, which is like saying don't walk upside down, walk on your feet, walk upright. If anyone loves the world, if anyone walks upside down, then he's not really loving God. It's an amazing thing.

If anyone loves this world system, the love of the father is not in him. I'll tell you how. I'm not here to judge you.

I'm not here to tell you what you should do. I'm here to judge myself. And I say, if my way of thinking is influenced by the world's way of thinking, I cannot love the father.

If I allow my understanding of music to be determined by this world, I cannot love the father, even if what I'm playing is so-called Christian music. I refuse to do that. I say, no, I am not going to follow the world in its music or its styles of dress or no, I mean, I believe Jesus dressed like everybody else in his time, whatever the dress was.

And it's not, it's right for us to dress in whatever is the appropriate dress for the community or part of the world we're living in so that we don't look odd. We look just like the others so that we can witness to them. We don't distinguish ourselves by dressing in a special way like some pastors and priests dress to say, I'm different from you.

I'm not different. We're just the same. Jesus dressed like everybody else.

But Jesus was careful. They didn't follow the passions of the Pharisees. The special fashions to make them distinguish.

And he wouldn't do that. They didn't have film stars those days, they had Pharisees. They were the people whom they followed.

Today we have film stars and models and all that people want to follow. But Jesus said, no, I'm not going to follow any of those examples. I'm going to do what pleases my heavenly father.

And so we see here, if anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. And the other thing, everything that's in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life, or as the message Bible says, wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, and wanting to appear important. Wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important.

This is all of the world. That's got nothing to do with the father. How many Christians are seeking to be free from wanting their own way? Can you imagine how much peace will come into a home if a husband and wife seek to be free from wanting their own way? How many Christians are seeking to be free, totally free from wanting everything for oneself? And how many Christians are seeking to be free from wanting to appear important? That's the world.

Not talking about adultery. We're talking about a world system that's made everybody live upside down because they're seeking their own. They're wanting to appear important.

They're wanting their own way. They're wanting everything for themselves. There's nothing of the father in it.

There's nothing of Christ in all that. And if our salvation has not delivered us from all that, it's a pretty poor salvation. And then he goes on to say, it just isolates you from God.

Do you know that, brother, sister? That way of life will isolate you from Jesus Christ. And that's what scares me. It will isolate me.

I'm reading from the message Bible. If I want my own way, and if I want everything for myself, and if I want to appear important, it will isolate me from Christ. And I don't want to be isolated from Christ.

I'd rather be isolated from all those other things and be with Jesus. And then it goes on to say, the world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting. That's the meaning of lust.

The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on its way out. Wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important, it's all on its way out. It's slowly on its way out.

If it was on its way out in the first century, you can imagine it's pretty close to the edge of the cliff now. I don't want to be a part of that. I want to be different.

I want to overcome by faith, a faith that believes that the way Jesus lived is the only way a Christian should live. That's the faith that will overcome the world. Do you believe that the way, the attitude of mind that Jesus had towards the world is the only way any Christian should live in this world? I believe that with all my heart.

That the things that did not appeal to him should not appeal to me. And if I, as I said, I haven't attained it, but by the grace of God, I'm going to go higher and higher every day. Like we sing in that song, I'm pressing on the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day, still praying as I onward bound.

Lord, lead me on to higher ground. Well, it's a good song to sing, but is that your prayer every day? Lord, lead me on a higher ground where I'm more and more free from the world and more and more free from the opinions of my colleagues and friends and other Christians and everybody else. And where my vision is focused on you and everything.

I believe the way you live, that's faith. I believe the way you live is the way every Christian should live. I believe the standards you've laid down in God's word are the standards I've got to live by.

I believe every little commandment you gave is for me to obey. That's faith. I believe.

And I also believe that every one of God's commandments are for my good. I believe that. This doctor knows what he's prescribing.

I'm not going to think that I know better than this doctor. I accept his prescription. If he tells me to take something 10 times a day, I take it 10 times a day because I don't know better than him.

It's humility. Jesus hasn't changed. Let me turn you to Matthew chapter 8. It's an amazing verse where it says, Jesus marveled, marveled.

Can you do something that will make Jesus marvel? There are only two places in the gospels where it says Jesus marveled. He marveled when he saw faith. That's here in Matthew chapter 8 and verse 10, the middle.

When Jesus heard this, he marveled. He was surprised at a Roman military man. And he said, all you Jews and Pharisees who read the Bible, you don't have as much faith as this Roman military man.

You believe Jesus sometimes praises an unbeliever? Is this the Jesus you know, who looks at you as a believer and says, you fellas don't have as much faith as this non-Christian. They were Jews. They had the Bible.

This Roman military man, he'd never read the Bible. He probably didn't know who Moses and the prophets were, but he saw something in Jesus. And where do you see the manifestation of his faith? Lord, my servant is in my house, maybe 25 miles away, kilometers away.

Jesus said, I'll come to your house and heal him. He said, no, you don't have to come. You stand here and give a command.

And that sickness will go. Even though my servant is lying 25 kilometers away in the house, distance doesn't make a difference, Lord, to you. Whether that distance is 25 kilometers or 25 billions of kilometers from heaven to earth.

If he speaks a word, it's done. And the Lord said, this is amazing faith. You believe that I can do this, speak a word, and the problem will be solved? Yes, Lord.

As I've often said, the message I get from all the gospels is this. Jesus can solve every problem. There's no problem he cannot solve.

The only time he couldn't solve a problem was when people came to him with unbelief. When they said, Lord, we have this problem, but you know, it's a tough one. We're not sure whether you can handle it.

And Jesus said, that's right. I can't handle it. You're absolutely right.

I can't handle it. Not because I can't, but because you don't believe. And that's how we come to Jesus.

Oh, Lord, you're 25 billion kilometers away. If you speak the word there, you think something will happen here? The Roman centurion says, yes, it'll happen. And the Lord says, I'm amazed at that faith.

And some others say, but Lord, this is a tough one. This is not an easy one. It's a problem I'm bringing to you.

I don't think you can handle it. They said, that's right. It won't be solved in your life.

Whereas another guy who's got a problem 10 times worse than yours, he gets his problem solved. Why? Because he doesn't go to Jesus with that type of unbelief. Lord, I'm not sure whether you can handle this.

I think I got to go to some human beings to help me here. Well, the Lord says, go. But there was a reason why the centurion had faith.

You know, faith grows in a certain type of soil. I just want to tell you these two things before I close. Here was a man who walked all that distance to plead with Jesus, verse 5, for a servant, verse 6, who was lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.

Now, many of you may have servants in your home. If your servant is paralyzed or is in pain, what would you tell her? Don't come to work today. Go home and come back when you're better.

Not the Roman centurion. He had compassion for a servant and said, let me talk to Jesus about this. Do you have a compassion for people on a lower social scale than you? That's the type of ground on which faith grows.

When you have compassion for those who are lower than you in the social scale, those who are poor, those who are weak, the way you treat your servant at home is the way God will treat you. I've always believed that. I've had servants, helpers in my home, and I've been extremely careful how I treated them.

Go and ask any of them how I treat them. God's been good to me. I tell you that.

Be good to others. God will be good to your children. God's been extremely good to my children because I've been good to the very poor children of others who come and work in my home.

Are you? Are you like this Roman centurion who didn't have a Bible? Military man. People think military men are very hard, but look how gentle he was towards the servants. Some of these non-military people are harder.

Secondly, he said to Jesus, Lord, I'm not worthy, verse eight, that you should come to my house. I'm a wretch. Do you really believe it when you sing amazing grace? How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I can say before God, I sing it with greater meaning today than when I first got saved. Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me. I don't deserve that Christ should live in my heart, but he does.

Therefore, I don't think that I am a sort of a better wretch than some other worse wretches. Faith grows in the ground where I recognize I deserve nothing but hell. God's been good to me.

I don't consider myself superior or better than anybody. I tell you honestly, God is my witness. I picture myself sometimes, the day when Christ returns, I shut my eyes and imagine that Christ has returned and he's coming to give his rewards.

And I picture everyone in CFC being ahead of me in getting those rewards. Honestly, I really believe that because to whom more is given, more is required. God's given me much and he require a lot more from me than from you.

Dear brothers, let's walk in compassion towards others and not judging others. Let's walk in humility and faith will rise up in our heart to believe that Jesus can solve every problem. God bless you.

That's great. Heavenly Father, you've called us with an amazing call to live different from the rest of this world, to live with heaven's values, to live by faith. We want to do that.

We want to surprise you by our faith. Yes, Lord, like that Roman centurion, if he could do it, why can't we? I want to do it, Lord. I want to surprise you every day with my faith, that your word is true.

Lord, I don't want anything on this world to appeal to me that didn't appeal to you. That's the way I want to live. I pray there'll be at least a number here who want to live that way.

Help us in Jesus name. Amen.

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