

# (Manitoba 2001) Counting the Cost to Follow Christ

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of counting the cost of following Christ and making a genuine commitment to internal transformation.*

**Duration:** 1:03:01

**Scripture:** Proverbs 11:24, John 15:11

**Topics:** "Blessing Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a man who refused to wear a special robe offered to him at a wedding feast. The man believed his own clothes were good enough and didn't see the need for the robe. The preacher uses this story to illustrate the importance of making a decision to follow Jesus and not trying to please others. He emphasizes that once God brings someone to a moment of decision, they must choose to follow Jesus or please men. The preacher also highlights the need for Christians to live out the word of God in their lives, being a living example of Jesus Christ to others.

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## Transcript

I'd like to turn this morning to Philippians and chapter three. In the Gospels, God has given us, in great detail, the life of Jesus. In the Acts of the Apostles, God has given us, in great detail, many things about the life of the Apostle Paul, particularly his ministry.

We don't read much about his life, but his ministry. And then, most of the episodes were written by the Apostle Paul, and in a number of those episodes we get a picture of his inner life. It was from that inner life that his ministry came.

See, this is one big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Everything in the Old Testament was external, and everything in the New Testament is internal and then goes to the external. When Jesus said to the Pharisees, you clean the outside of the cup, but first clean the inside of the dish and the cup, and the outside will automatically be clean.

It's very important to see this distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Or to use another illustration, supposing we have a sickness that brought a lot of sores in our skin, and somebody gave us an ointment that you could rub on those sores and it would go away. That would be a great

blessing.

The law was like that. You could remove it on the outside, prevent it from coming out. You could prevent people from committing murder, prevent people from committing adultery.

The laws of the governments in the world are based on the Ten Commandments. That's why we have law and order in society, that stealing is controlled, theft and adultery and murder is under control. It's like the sores are not allowed to come out because of this ointment.

But then you get rid of it here, it'll come in your leg, and you rub the ointment there, it comes somewhere in your back, and you're always having to deal with it. But then one day somebody invents an antibiotic, and the antibiotic you don't rub on your sore, you take it inside, and that deals with the root of the problem, and then you don't get the sores anywhere. That's grace.

That's the New Covenant. The New Covenant always deals with the inside first, and when it deals with the inside, like Jesus said, the outside will automatically be clean, because you don't need the ointment anymore. And that's what it says, if you are led by the Spirit, you don't need the law.

You don't need the cube of ointment if you have taken the antibiotic. But the trouble with a lot of people today is that they haven't taken the antibiotic and they've thrown away the cube of ointment, and they are worse than people in the Old Testament. That's the tragedy.

How do you know whether God has done a work inside you or not? It will become manifest on the outside. But not only on the outside, it will be inside first. That's why Jesus said, the Old Testament said, don't commit adultery, I say don't do it inside.

The Old Testament said, don't commit murder, I say don't get angry inside. That's where murder starts. And the Old Testament, the law we could say was like a pair of scissors.

The bad fruit comes, you cut it off. Another bad fruit comes, you cut it off. You've got to go around with the scissors all the time.

But John the Baptist said, Jesus came with an axe, and He laid the axe to the root of the tree and pulled out the tree. Why do you need the scissors then? Why are you going around with scissors? Because you haven't laid the axe to the root of the tree. So you need to ask the Holy Spirit to lay the axe to the root of the tree inside, and when that is done, you can throw away the scissors.

But if you don't lay the axe to the root of the tree, you'll have to just go around with your scissors every day to make sure that you don't have a bad testimony before other people. And then some people do something more than that, they buy some good fruit from the market and hang it up on the branches to give the impression that I've got a very fruitful tree. That's Phariseeism.

You know, pretending that we are very fruitful when the tree is absolutely barren and rotten. And that's the thing that Jesus denounced. And those Pharisees were furious when Jesus came with His axe and they killed Him.

And they'll try to kill you if you go with that message today as well. It's the same. Man has never changed.

So everything in the Old Testament was external. The temple was external. Now the temple is internal.

The sacrifices were external. You'd see the lamb being killed, the ox being killed. Now it says your body's got to be a living sacrifice.

It's internal. Everything is inward. It's not external.

They had external festivals those days. Now we have it inside. And if it doesn't begin inside, I want to say you're still under the Old Covenant.

If you've got a righteousness, which is only on the outside, which is just what people can see when you stand before them, you're back under the law. The righteousness of God begins inside. The purpose why Jesus died was so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled, Romans 8, verse 4 says, inside us.

It's a very important word, Romans 8, verse 4, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled inside us first. It could not be fulfilled inside in the olden days, only on the outside. And Jesus spoke about when the Holy Spirit is poured out.

You see, when we see a lot of things being, in a lot of groups today, they speak about the Holy Spirit, and particularly in the charismatic movement, where a lot of external things happening, people falling down and laughing and so many things. I'm not impressed by all this, because I say, Jesus said, when the Spirit of God falls upon a person, when it fills a person, rivers from his innermost being, John 7, 38 and 39. From his inner... That's the most important part.

You leave out that part and you can be deceived. From his innermost being, rivers of living water will flow out. You see, that's New Covenant.

New Covenant deals with the innermost being. God changes you inside. It's not a superficial outside change, where you have a lot of external excitement and shaking and all that.

It's from the innermost being. And when the Holy Spirit fills a person, what is the primary mark? It's not noise. I've often told people, why do you think Almighty God called the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and not the noisy spirit or something like that? If the Holy Spirit fills you, what should be the first thing in your life? Holiness.

That's why He's called the Holy Spirit. And if He doesn't bring, at least if He doesn't start a spark of... It will grow naturally, but if He doesn't start a spark of holiness inside you, I say, you've got some other spirit, whatever it is. Now, the tragedy today, I have seen in many cases of people who were a little upright and good, and then they go and join some group, and they say they've had an experience of the Holy Spirit, and they end up being more unholy and worldly, and I say, what's wrong here? Something's wrong.

Some other spirits have taken over, and there are many spirits operating in the world today because they sought for something external first. Whereas the Holy Spirit comes to work within first, and from inside, the outside will become more manifest. It will become manifest on the outside.

So that's very important for us to see. And in the New Testament, for example, you see that contrast in Paul and a lot of the Old Testament great men of God. What do you know about the inner life of Moses? Nothing.

What do you know about the inner life of Abraham? Almost nothing. What do you know about the inner life of Elijah or Malachi or Isaiah? We know about their ministry. We know tremendous things they did in

ministry.

We know what Joshua pulled down the walls of Jericho. But what do you know about Joshua's inner life? Nothing. The Old Testament was all external.

But when you come to the New Testament, we read so much is written about the inner life of the Apostle Paul. It's from that inner life that his ministry came. And so, Paul could say, follow me as I follow Christ.

Jesus lived for 30 years without any external ministry. That was an inner life that he lived there before his father. A good life for 30 years.

And from that life came three and a half years of ministry. That is how it must be in our life also. You can't have an effective ministry by just something external.

It has to come out of your life. Somebody once asked me, Brother Zach, how long did you take to prepare that sermon? I said, 40 years. It has to come out of your life.

If it doesn't come out of your life, it's superficial. It's just head knowledge where you put facts together. If it doesn't come out of your life, it's not New Covenant.

In the Old Covenant, it is all external. And if your righteousness is only external, for example, you look nice on the outside, very holy and well behaved, and you're not, there's no change on the inside. There's something suspicious.

And a lot of people like that today. They look nice on the outside. They look very holy.

Go and see how they live at home. Go and see how they talk to one another when other believers are not watching them. Have a look inside their thought life, their attitudes to others.

And it's quite another story. There's no holiness there. So please remember this.

And Paul tells us a lot about his inner life in the Epistle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to help us to know. Because, you know, when we look at Jesus, people can say, well, he was the son of God. We could never be like him.

And that's why God has given us another example in the Bible, and that's Paul. Nobody can say, well, he was different from us. Actually, Jesus was also like us.

But some people don't believe that. So God's given us another example. Well, you can't say Paul wasn't like you.

How did he live an overcoming life? You know, once Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4, he says, I know nothing that convicts me. I know nothing in my life that's wrong. But that doesn't mean I'm completely holy, because God sees a lot of things in me which I don't see myself.

But in the areas where I can see, my conscience is clear. And so I find there are a number of things that we can learn from Paul's attitude, which the Holy Spirit has put down in Scripture for us to see, so that we can come into a glorious life, too, and follow Christ as he followed Christ, and come into that glory that he came into. And that's what we read here in Philippians chapter 3. See, many people would like to get what Paul got without paying the price.

He paid a price here, as you see, in verse 7. Now, first of all, he says he was a, you know, he had an external righteousness, verse 6, which is blameless, but he was still a persecutor of the church. His external life was so good, but he persecuted the church of God. And that's what confuses a lot of people today.

We say, oh, this person is such a good man. But then why does he fight against the work of God being done somewhere? You know, we can have meetings here, and some good people can oppose it, and you wonder why. Why is that good person? He's a good person.

And a person can be a good person, but he's persecuting because he does not know, he cannot understand the working of the Holy Spirit. And a lot of people like that. Externally good, here was Paul, great example.

Outwardly good, but persecuting the work of God. Till God opened his eyes, and he saw that he was fighting against God. But how did he come into this life? How did that change take place? When God, when Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, and he sat down for three days without meeting anybody, he didn't drink water, he didn't eat.

For three days he was fasting and praying, and those three days he evaluated what he was going to lose by following Jesus. You know, Jesus said to his, when he spoke about discipleship, he said, first sit down and count the cost. He never asked people to follow him without counting the cost.

And Paul spent three days counting the cost. Is it worth it? Is it worth it losing everything that I've had all my life? Everything that I've valued and treasured for 30 years of my life, whatever age he was, to get this. I think of an Old Testament example where God told Abraham once in Genesis 22, take your only son, Isaac, to Mount Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice for me.

And it says next morning Abraham got up and he also walked for three days. Just like Paul was fasting for three days. Mount Moriah was three days journey, the Bible says.

And as Abraham walked that long journey, why did God tell Abraham to offer him on Mount Moriah and not just around the corner, in the next block? Because he wanted him to count the cost and decide. He doesn't want you to decide in a hurry and afterwards regret it. Count the cost.

And as he walked, trudged that dirt road to Mount Moriah, he was thinking, my only son, the thing I value most in my life, everything I own, all my hopes and ambitions are centered in this son. And I have to kill him now. Is it worth it? Is it worth it? And by the end of three days he was clear.

It's worth it. God is worth everything. And he was willing to sacrifice his son.

And he called it worship. We read in Genesis 22. Paul at the end of three days said it's worth it.

Worth sacrificing everything, giving up everything in order to get Christ. Have you said the same thing? You know, a lot of people haven't counted the cost in the beginning. And later on, when they begin to face the consequences of following Jesus, they back off.

A lot of backsliding takes place among Christians because right at the beginning, they don't sit down and count the cost. They are half-hearted. But Paul sat down and he said, in verse 7, Whatever things were gained to me, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

He said, if I had stayed in the Jewish system, well, I could have been a member of the Sanhedrin. I could have been a big shot, one of the rulers. I could have had position, prestige, lived in a grand palace and enjoyed myself earned the respect of many, many people.

But I lost all that. When I followed Jesus, the world began to treat me like garbage. They beat me.

They hammered me. They locked me up in prison. They called me all types of names.

And he said, it was worth it all. Because I found something in Christ. And he says in verse 8, I count all things, everything to be lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ, my Lord.

There are so many things that Paul valued before he met Jesus Christ. And there are many things that you have valued in your life up until now. Things that are valuable.

For some people, it's money. For some people, it's a religious system, like Paul, which is very valuable, because they grew up in that from childhood. Their forefathers grew up in it.

Paul grew up in a certain religious system, which he dumped completely once he came to Christ. He threw the whole thing away. Now, a lot of people today... You know that parable which Jesus said when he compared the Old Covenant and the New Covenant? He said, you know, some people try to take a patch of a new cloth and attach it to an old garment.

And in India, because it's hot, a lot of us wear cotton clothes all the time. Cotton shirts, cotton shorts and pants and trousers. Cotton is something which if you buy in the market and you stitch your dress without first soaking that cloth in water, you'll find after the dress is stitched, it doesn't fit you.

Your clothes don't fit you, your shirt doesn't fit you, your trousers don't fit you, because the cloth shrinks when it's soaked in water. And that's why whenever we stitch clothes in India, cotton material, we first soak it in water, dry it and then give it to the tailor to stitch our clothes. That's what Jesus is speaking about.

Now, imagine a cloth that's already shrunk like that and trousers or dresses being made from that. And then there's a hole in it and you want to patch it up. And you take a new piece of same color and everything, another piece of cotton cloth, and without soaking it in water, without shrinking it, you attach it to this old garment and then you wash it.

Nothing happens till you wash it. The moment you wash it, the rest of the garment is already shrunk, but this new patch is now shrinking. And what happens when it shrinks? It tears the garment.

So that's what Jesus was saying, that you take a new patch because you hear something good in a meeting. You say, oh, that's a good thing we heard, that this new covenant stuff. And you try to take this patch and attach it to your old system to which you belong.

It's going to tear the whole thing. It does not work. Jesus spoke about new wine in new wineskins.

In those days, they didn't put wine in bottles. They never had glass in those days. They used to put it in animal skin, stitched so well that nothing would leak.

They'd pour the wine in. And animal skin also has the same property. It has got an ability to stretch.

And you know, when the wine ferments inside the animal skin, it stretches. And the animal skin can stretch. That's why they used animal skin.

They could put the wine inside. But after it has stretched to a certain extent, that's the limit. It cannot stretch indefinitely.

Okay, now you've got this stretched old wineskin. And now you get this new life that Jesus speaks about, this new covenant life, and somebody pours it into this old wineskin and ties it up. And what happens? Now the new wine begins to ferment and it begins to stretch.

And what's going to happen to this wineskin? It's going to burst. And all the wine is lost. So the Lord was saying, you can't take this new life and put it into the old system.

The whole thing will burst. You'll lose even what you've got now. So, you need to take this new wine and you've got to get a fresh animal skin.

You can't take a patch and put it in the old garment. You've got to throw away the whole old garment and make a new garment. Now, I think some of you are thinking, well, I've got something wonderful here, Jesus' life.

Now let me see how I can fit it into this old system. It never works. I'll tell you right now.

Don't waste your time. There are some people sitting here who have tried it for years and they've never got anywhere. I speak to them and I know that they haven't progressed at all spiritually.

And you won't progress in another 20 years if you try to put that new wine into old wineskins. If you try to put a patch into the old garment, I'll tell you that. I don't have to be a prophet.

I'll prophesy right now that old wineskin will burst. I can prophesy right now that garment will tear. Don't waste your time.

Don't think you're wiser than Jesus. Jesus said it. Listen to it.

Paul sat down and counted the cost. In three days he decided. Some of us haven't decided even after three years.

You know why Paul's life was so useful? Because he took only three days to decide. Abraham decided in three days by the time he went to Mount Moriah, it's worth it giving my son. God's worth everything.

There are certain things in the Christian life that are free. Forgiveness of sins. What do you have to pay for that? Nothing.

Eternal life, it's a gift. If I give you a gift and you pay me one cent for it, it's no longer a gift. A gift is absolutely free.

You don't have to fast. You don't have to pray. You don't have to type to get forgiveness of sins.

The gift of the Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit. You don't have to fast or pray or anything to get the Holy Spirit.

You have to receive. Ask. Prayer is asking.

You can receive if you have faith. If you have thirst, you receive. But there are certain other things in the Christian life, which the New Testament says, which are not free.

I told you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, they're all free. You don't have to pay anything for it. But the Bible speaks, Jesus said about, in Luke 14, about counting the cost.

Counting the cost of discipleship. Sit down, he said, and count the cost. How much is it going to cost, he said.

In Revelation 3, he told the church in Laodicea, verse 14 onwards, and the elder in Laodicea, I counsel you to buy from me gold tried in the fire. That's not free. I counsel you to buy from me eyesalve, to anoint your eyes so that you can see white raiment, that you can be clothed.

That is not justification. That is practical righteousness. There is a garment that Christ gives you free.

There's another one you've got to pay a price for. It's the New Testament. You read in Revelation 3, I counsel you to buy from me white garment that you may be clothed.

There are a lot of people who have accepted Christ and they say, I'm clothed to the righteousness of Christ. But nobody seems to be able to see it. Where is it? There are lots of people like that today roaming around the world saying, I'm justified, everything is covered by the righteousness of Christ.

And it's true. Have you heard the children's story of the king's invisible clothes? Well, I'll tell you if you haven't heard it. It's a very interesting story.

There was a king who was pretty conceited and there were two clever men who wanted to make a fool of him. And they pretended to be tailors and they said, well, king, your birthday is coming up and we'd like to make a special dress for your birthday. But there's something peculiar about this garment, this material that we've got for this dress.

This material can only be seen by those who are worthy of the office they hold. That means if you are good enough to hold your particular office of king or prime minister or anything, you'll see it. Otherwise, you won't be able to see it.

And these two men held up their hands like this with nothing in between. And they said, well, how do you like this garment? And the king could see nothing. The king thought, boy, does that mean that I'm not worthy to hold the office of being a king? And he was scared.

So he had to pretend. He said, yeah, that's a nice dress. That's a wonderful garment.

And they said, would you like us to make a dress for you with this? Yes, yes. He said, make a dress. And he called the prime minister.

And he told the prime minister, you know, this dress, this garment can only be seen by those who are fit to hold their office. And the prime minister looked at this, these two people holding up their hands. He could see nothing.

There was nothing there. And he thought, boy, does it mean I'm not fit to be the prime minister? The king seems to be able to see it. He couldn't see it either, actually.

And the prime minister said, yes, king, yes, your majesty, that's a wonderful garment. So the king was convinced the prime minister could see it, but it's only I who can't see it. They were all pretending that they could see this.

These clever fellows fooled the whole government of the king. And then they stitched this garment. They made a lot of actions as they were stitching, stitching, stitching, moving their hands up and down.

Finally, the dress was ready. And they told the king to take off his clothes, and they put this garment on him. And there he was standing absolutely naked.

And they said, boy, this is fantastic. And they called the prime minister and the ministers and the ministers. They looked and said, this is wonderful, beautiful.

And they couldn't see a thing. And then they said, well, we've got to go on a parade through the town with the king wearing this new dress. And they announced in the town, this dress can only be seen by those who are fit to hold their office.

These were two really smart fellows. They collected a large fee for making this dress. And as the king paraded through the town absolutely naked, everybody, nobody could see a thing.

And they all began to wonder, does it mean that I'm not fit to hold the office I'm holding? And they all said, boy, that's lovely clothes, lovely clothes the king is wearing. All pretending till a little child said, hey, the king is naked. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings comes forth the truth.

What is the application of it for us today? The lot of people going around saying, I'm clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And the little children in their home can see when they yell and scream at each other, my dad and mom are just naked. There's no righteousness, there's no nothing there.

What a lot of deception is going on today in this business of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It's true that in my sin and my shame, I come to Christ with nothing, and Jesus clothes me with His righteousness, and I stand before God. It is a reality.

But what I say is that the Holy Spirit then begins to work inside me to begin to produce that righteousness. That which is imputed, imputed means put to my account, becomes imparted over a period of time. And if it's never imparted, then I'd say it was never imputed.

Then you're fooling yourself. If the righteousness of Christ is put to your account and you're clothed with the righteousness of Christ over a period of time, I know it will take time, but over a period of time, something begins to grow inside you. Righteousness from within, a desire for purity.

And if that's not happened, you need to go and seek God again. There is a price to be paid for that. The Lord says, I counsel you to buy from me white garments.

Jesus also spoke about that. He said about a man who went around seeking expensive pearls. And finally he found a pearl of such fantastic value that he discovered he had to sell all the pearls he had accumulated in his life in order to get this pearl.

Now my question is this. That's a parable Jesus spoke. Was that pearl free? Or did he have to pay a price for it? He had to pay a price.

And he sold not half his collection of pearls, but all his collection of pearls to buy this one. He felt it was worth it. And Jesus repeated that parable.

That's the only parable that's repeated in another form in Matthew 13. He said a man went looking for treasure. And he found a treasure hidden in a field.

And he had to sell his entire life savings to buy that treasure, to buy that field. He had to buy it. It wasn't free.

What I'm trying to say is there are certain things in the Christian life that are absolutely free. But there are certain other things you have to pay a price for. And that's what Paul is speaking of here.

He says in verse 8, Philippians 3, 8. I have suffered the loss of all things, all my pearls that I accumulated in my life. My entire religious system, lock, stock and barrel. Every bit of it.

I took it and threw it away. And you ask Paul at the end of it, Well, wasn't that a terrific price you paid? He says no. When I compare that with what I got.

Jesus Christ. He says here this wonderful word in the last part. He says it's all rubbish.

Is it a price you have to pay to throw out your trash can from your kitchen? To put it all into a garbage bag and throw it out on the street? For somebody to take it away and take it to the garbage dump? Do you weep over it? When you throw away your trash and garbage? Rubbish is one of my favorite words. Garbage. Rubbish.

A lot of things Christians value are garbage. Rubbish compared to Christ. Compared to his anointing.

Compared to revelation on God's word. Once you begin to see that a lot of things this world values, Honor, acceptance, money, comfort, luxury, is garbage. You'll never think twice before saying, I don't want it, I want Christ.

Why is it that we find temptation so attractive? Because you've got a value on that. You place a value on it. Why is it when the devil tempted Jesus with all the glory of this world, Jesus could immediately say no? Because he saw all that glory of the world as garbage.

And if somebody comes and offers you garbage, how many of you are going to accept it? Thank you very much. No. Throw it away.

I don't want it. That's exactly what Jesus said. But how is it that some of us, when we are, many of us perhaps, when we are tempted with something, we find ourselves attracted.

Do you find yourself attracted to that trash can? Attracted to the garbage dump? It's because the devil has blinded our eyes. He's fooled us that there's something valuable in that garbage dump. Something valuable in that trash can.

Go searching inside. See if you can get something. Paul saw the whole thing was garbage.

What is the honor of men? You tell me. You just sit down for a moment and count the cost. And you'll see there's no cost at all, in a sense.

For example, all men appreciate you. You say, that's a great thing, I'm accepted. But God says, disapproved.

I don't approve. On the other hand, you have all men rejecting you. And God says, well done, good and faithful servant.

Which is better? Which do you want? Do you want God to say, well done? Or do you want all your friends and everybody else, whom you've grown up with, to say, well done? That's the question. And I've seen very clearly, if all six billion people in the world say, whatever their opinion, well done or not well done, I say, it's garbage, compared to God Almighty, my Creator, saying to me, well done, good and faithful servant. That's what Paul chose in those three days.

He said, I choose God's approval, not man's approval. I don't want to please any man in the world anymore from this day. I want to please my God.

He said in Galatians 1.10, if I seek to please one single human being, I can never be the servant of Christ. And the reason why many people today cannot be the servant of Christ is because they are seeking to please men. Do you know that you cannot please God if you seek to please men? You've got to make a choice.

And I believe some of you've got to make a choice before you get up from that seat this morning. Whom are you going to please? God or men? Like Elijah stood in the Mount Carmel and told the Israelites, if Baal is God's servant, if Jehovah is God's servant. And I say to you, if those people you've grown up with in your system are the ones you want to please, go right ahead and serve them.

Please them for the rest of your life. If Jesus Christ is Lord, follow Him and serve Him. Make your choice.

And don't be a wishy-washy compromiser, sitting this side, sitting that side, putting your foot in two boats, trying to go here and there. A man pleaser, a compromiser. God has no time for such people anymore.

He's doing a quick work and He's going to throw all these people into the river. Decide once and for all whether you want to follow Jesus or you want to please men. You cannot do both anymore.

God brings you to the moment of decision. He allows you many, many, many times, but once He brings you to the moment of decision, then you have to decide. And you decide forever which way you want to go.

And Paul had those three days and you've had three days here. And in these three days, God brought you to the place of decision. Just like He took Abraham through those three days, He took Paul through those three days.

You don't need more than three days. You don't need six months to make a decision. It's only the compromisers who need that.

You've got three days, God's given you enough time and you have to make a decision today whether you're going to follow Jesus or you're going to follow men. Whether you're going to please God or whether you're going to please men. Whether you're going to live for the things that are eternal or the empty things of this world.

You've got to make a decision right now. Paul made that decision. And he says, I counted all rubbish.

What did I give up? I gave up rubbish. What did I get? I got the wealth of heaven. I got Christ.

He says, it's all garbage. And now he says, verse 9, I want to be found for the rest of my life in Christ. Not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law.

That means, that means two things. Not having a righteousness of my own which is derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ. The righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

There is a righteousness of the law and there's a righteousness of God. And this righteousness of the law, Paul calls garbage. Rubbish.

I threw it away and I've got the righteousness of Christ. Now this has two applications. First of all, imputed righteousness and second, imparted righteousness.

Imputed means that which is put to my account. And I want to explain both of them. You know, even when our sins are forgiven, even if all your past sins are forgiven right now, do you know that there's still so much corruption in your body, so much sin in your flesh, that you still can't stand before God? Even though your sins are forgiven.

I'm not talking... What is being forgiven? The acts, the actions you did which are called sin. That's forgiven. But what about your flesh? That's corrupt.

Paul said, nothing good dwells in your flesh. And we carry around a flesh, even after we are born again, in which nothing good dwells. How in the world can such a man whose sins are all forgiven, ok, I stand before God now as though I had never sinned in the past.

Good. But, in spite of that, I got a flesh which is corrupt. Totally corrupt from head to foot.

Even though my past is cleansed in the blood of Christ. How can I still stand before God? I can't stand before God even though my past sins are forgiven. Some of us think, oh, my past sins are forgiven, I can stand before God.

In what? In your flesh. In which nothing good dwells, which is full of sin. You can't.

That's why we need the righteous to be put upon us. That's called justification. Declared righteous.

The righteousness of Christ imputed to us. We are clothed with the righteousness, that perfect righteousness of Christ. So then, when I stand before God, He sees me in Christ.

Accepted. That's the only way I can stand. Cleansed in the blood of Christ and clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

And there, instead of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, if I try to stand before God clothed with all the good things I did in my past life, Isaiah says, our good works are like filthy rags before Him. Our righteousness are like filthy rags. It's like standing in filthy rags before God.

You know that parable which Jesus said in Matthew chapter 22? In verse 10 or somewhere around there. Matthew 22. He speaks about a man who came.

There was a wedding feast. The king invited a lot of people for the wedding feast of his son. And those days, they had a practice that when they came to the door of the king's palace, in order to have everybody

looking alike, at the palace, every person was given a brand new dress that he could put on top of his clothes.

And come in clothed in this robe, a kingly robe. And he could sit in the feast and everybody wore the same robe. So there would be no distinction between the rich and the poor.

And there was one man who came along to that gate and he was offered this robe to put on, so that he come to the wedding feast and he said, no, I don't want that. My dress is pretty good. I'm okay as I am.

And so he didn't take it. It's not forced. You don't, if you don't want to take it, you don't take it.

And he walked in and sat in the wedding feast and you could spot him immediately. Because all the others were wearing the same king's robe except this one man who thought his dress was good enough. And the king came to the feast and he immediately spotted him.

He said, how did this fellow get in here? With his own dress. And it says, they bound him hand and foot and threw him out. What's the meaning of that parable? That if you try to get into God's kingdom with your own goodness and your own righteousness, you'll be thrown out one day.

You got to humble yourself and say, Lord, my goodness, my righteousness is not good enough. I am no better than the prostitute and the thief when it comes to coming into God's kingdom. I come on the same basis.

Absolutely no difference. And if I'm, and the, you see, the beggar who came to the gate of the king, he had no problem. He came in his ragged clothes and he was so delighted.

Oh, praise God. I thought I'd have to sit in these ragged clothes in the feast and it's all covered up now. I'm going to have this brand new dress.

Who was the one who had the problem? The man who had fancy clothes. It's the same in Jesus' time. Who was the one who had a problem accepting Christ? The prostitute who had no righteousness, the thief on the cross, they were just delighted.

But it was the self-righteous Pharisees who lived such a good life whose clothes they thought were pretty good. They were not willing to be covered with the righteousness of Christ. And that's the problem even today.

People who lived a good life, they have a problem saying, Lord, my good righteousness is not good enough for you. I don't want this righteousness of the law because it can never fit me for God's kingdom. I have to come like we sing in that song.

Nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling. I've got nothing, Lord. All my goodness is garbage.

It's filthy rags. I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ. That's the first part of it.

Imputed righteousness. You can never get into God's kingdom no matter how good you are. All heathen religions and false Christianity preaches that we get into God's kingdom by our good works.

You know, they get the idea that in the final day God's going to hold a balance, put all our good works on one side, all our bad works on one side and decide who's going to hell and who's going to heaven. That's

a lot of garbage. Nobody will ever get to heaven that way.

Because one bad work outweighs all good works. What's going to happen to this balance? That's why we need to come with nothing and say, Lord, I'm a sinner. I'm clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

And then, after that, now how are we going to have this imparted righteousness? I don't have to imitate Christ. Now, there's a lot of difference between trying to look at Jesus and imitate Him and partaking. Don't you think there's a difference between a pig trying to imitate a cat and the pig getting a cat's nature inside, then it won't have to imitate, it will automatically behave like a cat.

Otherwise, it will be acting. I'll tell you honestly, I don't believe in the imitation of Christ. God makes me partake of His nature.

And that's how I follow Him. Otherwise, I'll be trying to now, now that I've accepted Christ, OK, I'm clothed with the righteousness of Christ, now I'm going to try and imitate Christ. And I tell you, it's a strain.

You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that you get power inside and God's nature is communicated to you and you love righteousness and you hate sin. Pray that God will make you partake of His nature more and more. And life won't be such a strain and a struggle.

Why is it a constant strain and struggle for so many people to overcome temptation? Because they're not filled with the Holy Spirit. They're trying to do through the law what is supposed to be done in the Holy Spirit's power. And Paul says, I will, I throw away this righteousness based on the law.

I want that which comes from God on the basis of faith. That's where we begin. Then he goes on in Philippians 3 in verse 10 to say, from now on, I want to spend the rest of my life doing three things.

And it's good for us to know these three things. Verse 10. He says, now onwards, the most important thing in my life is I want to know Jesus better.

Secondly, I want to know the power of His resurrection. And third, I want the fellowship of His suffering being made conformed to His death. Let me just mention these three things briefly.

The most, some of the most important things in the Christian life. To know Him more than to know the Bible. You know, when Paul wrote Philippians, most of the New Testament was not even written.

And there were a lot of Christians in the first century who lived and died without ever reading the New Testament. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. And up till about five hundred years ago, printed Bibles were not available.

It's only five or six hundred years ago that the first printed Bible ever came out. How did Christians live for fourteen hundred years? How did God want man to live? There's a lot of difference between knowing the Bible and knowing Christ. Jesus said to the Pharisees, you search the Scriptures but you don't come to Me.

He said in John 5. I find that with a lot of scholars today. Believers who study the Bible and who don't know Jesus. Their lives are not changed.

They got such a lot of Bible knowledge. They search the Scriptures but they don't come to Christ. Strong people, not broken because they have never come to Christ.

They come to the Bible. And the Bible was only meant to be a way by which we came to Christ. It is a book in which the Holy Spirit wants to show us the glory of Jesus.

And if you only got a doctrine out of the Bible, you missed the main thing. We got to know Jesus. The Bible is meant to help us to know Jesus.

To know what He is like. To know more about His inner life. To know the things that He lived for.

Allow the Holy Spirit. This is where you got to begin once you are born again. This is what you got to begin.

To know Christ. To ask the Holy Spirit to show you the glory of Jesus. Jesus said that.

When the Holy Spirit has come, He is going to take of the things of mine and show them to you. And I will tell you the greatest thing in my life since I got filled with the Holy Spirit and start to live continually in the fullness of the Holy Spirit has been that the Holy Spirit has shown me more and more of the glory of Jesus. And worked in my life to make me more like that.

I was saying yesterday how Jesus went down and Lucifer sought to go up. Have you seen the glory of Jesus there? Have you seen the glory of going down in the eyes of others, humbling yourself instead of exalting yourself? Have you seen the glory of Jesus as He washed the disciples' feet? Have you seen the glory of Jesus when He put His arms around a leper whom nobody ever touched? Have you seen the glory of Jesus in standing beside a woman caught in adultery defending her against all the Pharisees who wanted to stone her to death? That's the glory of Jesus. Have you seen the glory of Jesus when people called Him the devil? He said, if you have spoken a word against the Son of Man, it's forgiven.

That's the glory of Jesus. When people spoke against Moses they got leprosy. Miriam got leprosy for speaking against Moses.

What did people get for speaking against Jesus? Did they get leprosy? No, they got forgiveness. Do you want to follow Moses or do you want to follow Jesus? When people speak against you, do you want them to get leprosy or you want them to get forgiveness? Tell me. Forgiveness.

What does it mean when the Bible says in Hebrews 12, the blood of Jesus speaks better things than the blood of Abel? What did the blood of Abel cry out when it fell to the ground when Cain smashed his head and the blood fell to the ground? Abel's blood. God said to Cain, the blood of your brother is crying out to me. Do you know that fallen blood has got a voice? Do you read that in Genesis 4? That blood of Abel which fell to the ground cried out to God.

Do you know what it cried for? Pay him back. Pay him back for what he did to me. And when Jesus hung on the cross, his blood fell to the ground from that cross.

It dripped and dripped and fell to the ground. And it cried out and cried out, forgive them. Forgive them.

Forgive them. That's what it says in Hebrews 12. The blood of Jesus speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

And when people shed your blood, what's it going to cry out? Forgive them. I hope it is that. Well, before your blood is shed, when they shed the blood of your soul without your physical blood, what are you crying out? Judge them or forgive them.

That's the difference between the new covenant and the old covenant. When you get to see the glory of Jesus, the Holy Spirit seeks to make you like that. You can do good to those who hate you.

You can bless those who curse you. You can love those who are your enemy. We love everyone.

Like the sun shines on everyone, the good and the righteous, the good and the evil, the righteous and the unrighteous. The rain falls on everyone. That is when we know Jesus.

But if you just study the Bible, you don't get that. You got to see the glory of Jesus. The Word was made flesh 2000 years ago.

And you know what preachers have done? They made the Word into words again. It's not words. It's meant to be flesh.

It's meant to be flesh in me. The Word of God has to be seen in my flesh today. People have to see a living example of Jesus Christ.

People who look at your life must have a little idea of what Jesus is like. They must see the glory of Jesus in your life. Let me tell you another thing.

Just before Jesus went to the cross, He was sharing His joy with all the people. He said, My joy I give unto you in John 15. That was just about 12 hours before He was going to be crucified.

He was sharing His joy with other people. In the entire Gospels, I can never see Jesus with a long, gloomy, depressed face. I never see that.

I see Him carrying the burdens of the world, sorrows and Gethsemane. His heart was weighed down, not for His sorrows, for mine. He had no tears for His own grief, like we sing in that song, but sweat drops of blood for mine.

He had no tears for His own grief, but sweat drops of blood for mine. And every time I sing that song, I say, Lord, that's how I want to be. No tears for my own grief, but tears for the grief of other people.

That's how Jesus was. And people are still shedding tears for their own grief. Oh, somebody treated me like this, and somebody treated me like that, and somebody did this to me, and somebody said this to me.

Brother, you got to follow Jesus. You got to see the glory of Jesus. Throw all that garbage into the garbage bin, and see the glory of Jesus, who had no tears for His own grief.

He cared only for the sorrows of others, and He lifted their burdens, and God took care of His. The Bible says in Proverbs 11, 24 and 25, If you water others, God will water you. Have you read that verse? If you water other people, God will water you.

And I tell you, if you spend your life seeking to bless others, lifting their burdens, God will take care of your burdens. Sure. This is the glory of Jesus.

If you ask the Holy Spirit to show you Jesus Christ, in little things, you know when Jesus said it is finished on the cross? That was characteristic of a whole life. It was a lifestyle. When He was ten years old, and His mother Mary told Him, Jesus, go and get some water from the well.

And little boy Jesus, ten years old, would drop whatever He was doing, and go and pick up that wooden bucket, and go down to the village well, and would draw the water. And now let me ask you a question. Would He bring a half bucket back or a full bucket? When all the other boys brought a half bucket, He would bring a full bucket.

Right. Because the principle was, it is finished. He always did a finished job.

Not a half finished job. Of anything He ever did in His life. When His mother asked Him for a bucket of water, even if every other boy brought a half bucket, He would bring a full bucket.

If He made a table in His carpenter shop, do you think He ever did a half finished job? No. It was a completely perfect table. And I can imagine that if it was some poor widow in Nazareth that asked Him to make that table, He would go and deliver that table in the widow's house, and the widow would ask, well, how much does it cost? He said, forget it.

I'd like to give that to you as a gift. How could He become the richest carpenter in Nazareth if He was going to do things like that? His ambition was not to be a rich carpenter. His ambition was to be a good one.

That's the glory of Jesus. And when you see that, that will penetrate into every area of your life. You'll begin to bring full buckets of water instead of half buckets of water.

You'll begin to do a complete job instead of a half job because nobody sees you doing it. It affects every area of your life when you begin to see the glory of Jesus. That's to know Him.

The other thing Paul said here was to know the power of His resurrection. The greatest power that was manifested in this universe was not the power when God created this universe. No.

The greatest manifestation of God's power in this universe was when God raised Jesus up from the dead. And the meaning of that is, after the devil... Listen carefully. After the devil has done the worst that he can do, God will remove the effects of that and bring a resurrection out of that death.

After the devil has done the worst that he can do to you, God will bring something wonderful out of it, something good out of it. He'll turn the tables on the devil. This power of resurrection... You know what resurrection is? Deep down from the grave, coming up.

That's the power of resurrection. The power that lifts you up. When the power of gravity pulled Peter down into the sea, he said, Lord save me and the Lord lifted him up.

This is the power of being lifted up. Lifted up from depression. Lifted up from discouragement.

Lifted up from gloom. Lifted up from temptation. It's a power of a life in Jesus.

Think of the law of gravity that operates on this book. This is a picture of the law of sin and death. Law of gravity.

It's always pulling it down. Whether it's India or Russia or Canada or anywhere, the law of gravity is the same. It just pulls down.

The law of sin and death is the same in our life. There's something that's pulling us down, pulling us down, pulling us down. And wherever we go, in any place, sitting in a meeting, you can be pulled down in your thoughts, in your attitudes, words.

Always being pulled down into sin. Now watch. How is it not falling? Why is it not falling now? Is it because in this area the law of gravity has stopped operating? It's operating very much.

But there is another power greater than the power of gravity. That's the power of life in my body that's holding that up. And as long as I hold it up, it won't fall.

I'll get tired after a while, but Jesus doesn't. That's the difference. It says He is able to keep us from falling.

I can't. This book can't. But He, He is able to keep me from falling.

That is the power of resurrection that lifts us up from this power of sin and death that's pulling us down. That's the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit is something that lifts me up, helps me to overcome sin, helps me to overcome this world, lifts me up.

You see that flame going up into the sky? Those who study science will tell you there is a law of gravity pulling that aeroplane down, but there is another law called the law of aerodynamics that lifts that plane up against the law of gravity. That massive, hundreds of tons of weight, it goes up into the air. It's a tremendous demonstration of the power of God.

And it can do that for you. The power of resurrection. Paul said, I want to know that more and more in my life.

I'm not satisfied with the little I know. I want to know more. I want to know more of God's power in my life.

Like electric power, to get more and more and more and more. So that I get brighter and brighter and brighter. You know like a 25 watt bulb and a 2000 watt bulb, do you think there is a difference between the two? Yes.

Both have got light, but what a difference. And Paul said, I want to increase in my brightness. I want the power of resurrection to operate in me.

I want to open myself up to the Holy Spirit and I'm willing to pay any price. And here is something that attracts me. And I say, here I can get the power of the Spirit if I throw that out.

I throw that garbage right out of my life. I want the power of Christ in my life. The approval of men, garbage.

I want the approval of God. The wealth of this world, garbage. I want the wealth of God.

And you'll never lose out. The power of resurrection that lifts us up from this world continually. And the third thing Paul spoke about was the fellowship of his suffering.

The Christian life is not an easy life. Abraham may have had an easy time. David may have had an easy time.

And many of those Old Testament people may have had an easier, easy time. Some of the prophets didn't. But some of those men seemed to have an easy time.

But the Christian life, when you look at Jesus' life, was one of suffering. He had no place to lay his head. He said, Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

Look at the life of the Apostle Paul, the most wholehearted disciple of Jesus that you read in the first century. What was his life like? Sometime when you get time, you read the second half of 2 Corinthians 11. He got 195 stripes on his back from the Jews.

He was stoned three times. He was shipwrecked five times. He was once floating around in the sea, swimming, surviving for 24 hours.

He was chased from town to town throughout his life. He didn't sort of ease up as he grew older. It became worse.

He was persecuted, falsely accused. They called him all types of names. They called Jesus all types of names.

The Christian life is a life of following Jesus in a pathway of suffering, being misunderstood, accused. Do you want to follow Jesus all the way? Two, three years ago, a religious cult group from the West took me to court in India for exposing some of their wrong doctrine, for defamation, various things like that. I'd never been to a court in 59 years of my life.

I didn't even know what the inside of it looked like. And as I walked in, there were tears of joy in my heart. Real joy.

And in my eyes, I said, Lord Jesus, many years ago, I said to him, I said, Lord, I'd ask you to please give me the privilege of walking in your footsteps as much as possible in my earthly life. And today, you have given me this tremendous honor to walk in your footsteps. For I saw his footsteps.

He was taken to court also by religious people. And he had given me this priceless honor of walking in his footsteps. I said, Lord, this is wonderful.

And if you will lead me a little further also and give me the honor of being a martyr and dying for you, like you died, that would complete my joy. I don't know whether he'd give me that honor. You know, suffering is one of the greatest honors that God can ever give you.

Are you rejected by your parents? Jesus was. His brothers just rejected him and said they didn't believe in him. But Jesus said, who are my brothers? These people around me are my brothers and sisters.

Yeah, my relatives have thrown me out. They've taken me to court. They are in that other group.

And, I've got other brothers and sisters. It's exactly the footsteps of Jesus. Do you want to go that way? I hope you do.

Let's pray. I believe it's a wonderful way of life the Lord has shown you this morning. Though it be a pathway of suffering, it's also a pathway of glory.

And I want to invite you to respond in your heart now to the call that God has given you in these three days. He's given you three days to think about it as well. Answer to God.

Is it worth it to forsake everything to follow Jesus? To be rejected by your parents and relatives and friends because you want to follow Jesus? You can say that to God in the silence of your heart. And say, Lord, it's worth it. I'm going to go all the way.

I'm not going to go trying to patch up the old system with new garments. I'm not going to try and put this new wine into the old wineskin. I want to follow you all the way whatever the price, whatever the cost.

One sentence from your heart and Jesus will hear it and accept it. Heavenly Father, I pray for many sincere young people especially here and older ones who need to hurry up and make a decision as well. I pray that they will really hear your voice saying, I heard you.

I accept you. In that cometh to me, I'll never cast out. Thank you, Lord.

You have accepted that weak little offering, those two mites that some people are bringing this morning to you. Thank you. In Jesus' name.

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