

Partaking of Jesus' Life Through Death to Our Self Life

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being aware of deception and living a life that is pleasing to God, as the Lord's coming will not be secret and will be marked by massive deception among Christians.

Duration: 1:13:25

Scripture: Hebrews 4:9

Topics: "Self Denial", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of judging oneself first before judging others, highlighting the need for believers to diligently seek God's life and power through the way of the cross. It discusses the significance of allowing the sword of self-denial to fall on one's self-life to enter into the rest and victory that God promises. The message stresses the need for believers to be thirsty for more of God's life, to fear missing out on God's rest, and to avoid sins like jealousy and being a busybody in others' matters.

Transcript

Let's turn to 2nd Corinthians in chapter 11. This passage has been on my mind of late. Paul was a true shepherd, a spiritual father, and he was concerned that the Corinthian church, which he had planted, were like his children, that they should not drift away from being a pure virgin for Christ.

So he says, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, 2nd Corinthians 11 verse 2, for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. See, just like every man would like to marry a pure virgin, it's the same with Jesus Christ. And Paul was the one who was representing Christ to these people as his servant.

And he felt a responsibility to make sure that in the day when Christ came back, he could present these people in the church in Corinth as a pure virgin to Christ. There are very, very few elders and shepherds and fathers who have that type of burden for the churches they plant. But Paul had it.

That's why he wrote so many letters to them and that's why he exhorted them and challenged them and rebuked them. And in Corinth, he even handed one person over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. I mean, he was pretty radical.

You can't do that unless you really love the Lord and love the church. But he loved the Lord and the church so much that he wasn't even willing to hand over someone to Satan because he wanted to present this church finally as a pure virgin to Christ. And he was not bothered what people thought about him or whether people thought he was too hard or any such thing.

Those things didn't bother him at all. He was a servant of the Lord and he didn't want to please any human being. So he says, my burden is that one day when Christ comes back, I'll present you as a pure virgin.

Now, it's not entirely up to Paul. It depends on the cooperation of the Corinthians as well. So, but he was going to do his part.

I picture this in my mind, I get the picture of Abraham's servant, you know, who had been sent by Abraham to Mesopotamia to get a bride for Isaac. It's a picture of the Holy Spirit and the servants of God going out and trying to bring a bride for Christ. And it was a long journey from Mesopotamia all the way to Canaan where Isaac was.

And when he was bringing Rebecca on that long journey over many, many weeks, I picture like this, if there were some other handsome guys along the way who tried to get friendly with Rebecca, Abraham's servant would just chase them off. He was determined to protect her and present her as a pure virgin to Isaac in that long journey. And this is really the task that God gives to his servants to preserve the church in this long journey between the time they're converted to the time they meet the Lord.

That is the responsibility we have for our children as parents, to be able to present them as pure virgins to Christ and for a church. And he says, but, verse 3, I'm afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from that simple, pure devotion to Christ. Your mind can be led astray from simple, pure devotion to Christ to something else, something else which doesn't look bad, but which takes you away from that simple, pure devotion to Christ.

And the craftiness of Satan is seen, he says in verse 4, in people who come and preach another Jesus whom we have not preached. And you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted. Another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel.

We see plenty of evidence of that today in the world. Today in Christendom, Christendom generally is preaching a Jesus whom you can follow without dying to yourself daily. Isn't that amazing? Jesus said, if anyone comes after me, let him deny himself, Luke 9, 23, take up his cross daily and follow me.

That's the real Jesus. But you hardly ever hear that preaching today. Today there is a Jesus you can follow without denying yourself, without dying to yourself, without taking up the cross.

Have any of you been led astray by that Jesus? Do you think you can follow Jesus even for one day, without denying yourself, without taking up your cross? Then it is another Jesus, not the real Jesus of Scripture. You can't be deceived if you read the words of Jesus clearly. But the serpent comes with this craftiness and offers another Jesus who will make you healthy and wealthy and externally happy, without your having to deny yourself, or a different spirit.

A spirit that, the real spirit is called the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to have a different spirit? Evil spirits make people evil. Unclean spirits make people unclean.

So what will the Holy Spirit make people? Holy. But that's not what is being preached in most churches today. They don't teach that the Holy Spirit will make you holy.

They teach that the Holy Spirit will make you make a lot of noise and clap and shout and jump and dance. I'm not against any of those things. But if you do all that, you don't become holy, that's not the Holy Spirit.

Or they say the Holy Spirit will make you speak in tongues, I'm not against that either. But if that's all the Spirit does and doesn't make you holy, that's not the Holy Spirit. That's what I mean by a different spirit.

And remember, this is connected with Paul saying that I'm afraid that the serpent with his craftiness will lead you astray so that at the end of it all you find that you're not really a virgin ready for Christ. You've been led astray by another Jesus and a different spirit. It claims to be the real Jesus and claims to be the Holy Spirit, but it is not.

And I've seen plenty of that. And a different gospel, a gospel which does not tell you how you can be saved from sin, but how you can be saved from poverty and saved from sickness. Now, it's good to be saved from poverty and sickness, I'm not against that.

Just like I'm not against speaking in tongues or jumping and dancing and praising the Lord. But if you miss the main thing, which is being saved from sin, and you just become healthy and wealthy, that's a different gospel. I've got nothing against someone saying, God bless me with good health.

I can say that I'm 76 years old, I've hardly ever been sick in my life. It's God's goodness preserving me, so I'm not against it. I'm thankful for it.

If we are healthy, we can serve the Lord much better. And God provides us enough for our needs and most of us more than our needs and that is the blessing of God too. But, if I have health and wealth and I'm not saved from sin, that is a different gospel.

To me, the central part of the gospel is not health and wealth. It's a by-product. You seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, these other things are added to you.

But when these added things become central, it's another gospel. So you see, there's a lot of that going on today. And it's the craftiness of the devil that so many people who go through Bible schools and who study the Bible so much, don't seem to see that this is another Jesus.

This is another spirit, it's another gospel. So that's why we have to be very careful in the days we live in. When the disciples asked Jesus about the last days, when many people speak about, we're in the last days.

The disciples asked Jesus, what will be the sign of your coming? They asked for one sign. Turn with me to Matthew 24 and verse 3. As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying, Tell us, when will all these things be? And what will be the one sign of your coming? And at the end of the age, they were not asking for many signs. They were asking, what is going to be the sign that your coming is near? And you know what He says? You know, we think of famines, earthquakes, wars.

Those are the things that come first to our mind when we hear about the coming of the Lord, because we have read that. And that is also true, famines, earthquakes, and wars. But that He mentions, you know, much later in verse 7. But the first thing He says is, See to it that no one deceives you.

So what is the one sign that Christ's coming is near? Massive deception. And it is not the non-Christians who are being deceived. I mean, they don't even know the Lord.

He is saying to His disciples, see that no one deceives you. You disciples, see that no one deceives you. That means there is going to be massive deception among Christians.

And that is going to be the sign of His coming. So, if we are in a time when we see wide scale deception being practiced, to me it is one of the signs that Christ's coming is near. And among all the signs that He mentioned, like wars, rumors of wars, all those things He mentions only once.

Only in verse 7. He doesn't say it again. But when it comes to deception, you see how many times He repeats it. Verse 11.

Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. And then He goes on to say again, in verse 23. If someone says to you, behold here is the Christ, don't believe him.

They are deceiving you. Again He repeats in verse 24. False Christ and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, deceive, if possible, even the elect.

So what is He speaking about again and again and again? Deception, deception, deception, deception. Much more than He spoke about wars and famines and earthquakes. And yet the vast majority of Christians, if you ask them what are the signs of the Lord's coming, they would talk about famines and earthquakes and wars, which He mentioned only once.

This is the craftiness of Satan. That he gets you occupied with the things that you can't do anything about. I mean you can't do anything about an earthquake.

What can you do about that? You can't do anything about a famine going on somewhere. You can't do anything about there's a war between nations. But you can do something about deception if that comes your way.

And that's the one thing Satan doesn't want you to think about. He wants you to think about all these other things that are signs of the Lord's coming and be occupied with that. And not be worried about the one thing Jesus said.

And then you remember what Jesus said at the end of it. Verse 25. Behold, I have told you in advance.

Again He speaks about deception. If they say to you He's in the wilderness or He's in the inner rooms, or like some people say, He's come secretly and taken away the church. Don't believe them.

He is not going to come secretly. Just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will my coming be. It couldn't be clearer than that.

And there's so much of deception concerning the rapture and the church being taken up as to when it will happen. You know that most Christians believe it's going to happen secretly. Suddenly, they don't believe that the coming of the Lord will be like the lightning that shines from the east to the west, even though Jesus said it so clearly.

Even if it's going to be secret, nobody's going to know about it. How in the world did the devil manage to put such a lie upon Christendom for so many centuries and among so many good people? It's because

they don't read the scriptures carefully. This is a doctrine that came up in the last 150 years.

It was never preached for 1,800 years that the church will be secretly raptured. There is going to be a rapture when Christ comes again. This is just one area of deception.

I just mention that so that we can be clear on it. In 1 Thessalonians, we read about the rapture. 1 Thessalonians in chapter 5, chapter 4, sorry.

1 Thessalonians 4, here is how the Lord will come. Verse 16, now notice the things mentioned here, which are the predominant things that are mentioned by the Holy Spirit about the second coming of Christ. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God, and then the dead in Christ and those that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

And is this going to happen like a thief in the night? That's another deception. A lot of Christians say, the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. We won't be ready for it.

Again, because they don't read scripture carefully. Let me read it to you. For you know full well, chapter 5, verse 2, it's all the same subject.

You know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. But, verse 4, you brothers are not in darkness that that day should overtake you like a thief. You see the point? He's going to come like a thief in the night for all unbelievers.

If you're an unbeliever, he's certainly going to come like a thief in the night. So if you say the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night for you, you're an unbeliever. For believers, he says, you brothers are not in darkness that he should come for you like a thief in the night.

You're going to be awake. You're sons of light. And sons of the day.

So these are some areas where we've been deceived. I mean, Christendom has been deceived. Let me give you another verse.

2 Thessalonians, in chapter 2. We request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, our rapture. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our being taken up to be with Him. Don't be shaken.

Don't be disturbed by some spirit or message saying that the Lord has come secretly. No, no, no, no, no. Don't be deceived by such teaching.

Let me say to you that they will not come until first there's going to be a great falling away among Christians and the man of sin, the Antichrist, is revealed. To me, it is so crystal clear that Christ will not come until the Antichrist is revealed. And I might as well tell you that 95% of believers don't believe that.

I didn't believe it for many years until I studied the Scripture carefully. Many people say, hey, listen, if you say that you're going to make people live carelessly. People are going to live very carefully if they don't know when the Lord's coming.

He may come tonight, so I better be ready. And I say, well, think of the illustration Paul uses of a bride waiting for her bridegroom. Think of a practical situation where a girl here has been engaged to some man who's had to go on business or in the army or something to a distant country for a long time.

Here's a virgin keeping herself ready for waiting for her bridegroom to come. Supposing she knows he's not going to come for three years. He's been posted there for three years.

He won't get any vacation. He won't be able to come for three years. And she says, ah, in that case I can fool around because he's not going to come for three years.

What type of bride is that? She's a harlot. Do you keep a bride pure by saying you better keep yourself pure because he may come any day? No. You test a bride by saying he's not going to come for five years.

Let's see whether you keep yourself pure. So this false teaching that the sudden coming of the Lord is going to make people holy is a deception. If a person is wanting to be holy because he's afraid he'll be caught by the Lord in sin, he's not a virgin at all.

He's not part of the bride. He's a harlot. He's just thinking of himself.

He doesn't want to be caught at the last moment when the Lord comes. I say to a true disciple of Jesus, supposing you know the Lord's not going to come for 15 years. How are you going to live the next 15 years? Carelessly? In sin? And just before, two days before He's coming you're going to set everything right? I'd say you're a harlot.

Without a doubt you're a harlot. A person who's the bride of Christ, it doesn't matter if he never sees the Lord coming in his lifetime. It doesn't matter to me if the Lord doesn't come for the next 50 years.

That's not going to make me any less holy tomorrow. Because my holiness has got nothing to do with the coming of the Lord. It's got to do with the fact that Jesus loved me and gave himself for me.

And that my sin crucified Christ. That's why I hate sin. Not because I'm afraid I might be caught with the Lord suddenly coming.

And I want to say that to all of you, any of you who take sin lightly. Any type of sin. You take your anger lightly or your dirty thoughts lightly.

I don't believe you have seen enough. That it was your sin that crucified Christ. And if you can take it lightly, Oh I can just confess it and get the blood of Jesus to cleanse me.

So this is where we can be deceived from that simple pure devotion to Jesus Christ. So turning back to 2 Corinthians in chapter 11. If you see there, you know that Paul's tremendous passion as a true father and shepherd.

To protect his flock from this type of deception. He says, I have a godly jealousy. There is a jealousy which is good.

A godly jealousy. I don't want you to fool around with other men. It's like a man telling his fiance to whom he's engaged.

I'm jealous for you. That you must not be interested in any other man but me. Is that wrong? No, that's the right type of jealousy.

Paul had it. That these people in Corinth should not be devoted to anyone other than Jesus Christ. They should not be led astray by false manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

They should not be led astray by another gospel. And anyone who doesn't have that type of passion. I don't believe such a person should ever preach.

He should go and do some other business. He's not fit to be a servant of God who does not have a passion to preserve God's people in purity. That's the passion Paul had.

What would you think of Abraham's servant bringing Rebekah from that long distance and he just allows her to fool around with other men on the journey to meet Isaac. He'd be an unfaithful servant. And I tell you there are thousands and thousands of unfaithful servants in Christendom today.

And the proof of it is they don't seek to preserve the church in purity. In purity from sin and worldliness. That's the tragedy.

So Paul was faithful there in seeking to preserve the church in purity. And he's battling not the devil's persecution. See the devil is pictured in the Bible as a lion.

In 1 Peter 5 it says a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. That's one picture of the devil. And the other picture of the devil is as a cunning serpent seeking whom he may deceive.

So in the garden of Eden when the devil wanted to tempt Eve to turn away from the tree of life and partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he did not come as a lion. He could have got into the lion and roared at Eve and frightened her and made her eat. He knew he wouldn't succeed.

He would run away. But he came as a cunning serpent and that's where he succeeded. So the lion speaks of persecution.

The devil has attacked the church with persecution through the years. But he's never succeeded in destroying the church with persecution. Persecution only has made the church purer.

In every country. Why do we have some of the finest Christians in the world today in China? And in the olden days in communist countries people who were imprisoned for the faith they were some of the finest Christians. Because when the devil came at them like a lion or in the first century all the apostles were killed and beheaded and what not.

He came at them like a lion. It didn't kill the church. It made the church purer.

But when he came as a serpent from the fourth century onwards he came as a serpent and began to deceive. And infiltrated the church and brought worldliness and corruption into the church. Then he succeeded in corrupting the church.

And through the years it's been through deception that he's defiled and corrupted Christendom more than through persecution. There was an old Christian who in the early days who said that the blood of the martyrs is actually the seed of the church. So that means when the martyrs shed their blood it was the seed that was going to produce new churches and new believers.

So here also Paul doesn't say I'm afraid 2nd Corinthians 11 3 lest as the devil like a lion will lead you astray. No, as a lion he cannot lead us astray. He says I'm afraid that he will come with his craftiness like a serpent and lead you astray.

He can lead a Christian astray by making him love money. It's one of the biggest things that leads Christians astray today. All little little sins that people don't take seriously.

And what are they going to be led astray from? 2nd Corinthians 11:3 from simple pure devotion to Jesus Christ. So when I compare that with the record in Genesis chapter 3 of how that's what is mentioned here like the serpent deceived Eve. So that reminds us of Genesis chapter 3. So what did the serpent take Eve away from? He took her away from the tree of life to the tree of knowledge of good and evil and told her that that's how you'll get life.

He told her that if you eat of that you will be like God. Those are the exact words you read in Genesis chapter 3. And he tempted her with the same sin that he himself was tempted by. You read in Isaiah 14 that he wanted to be like God.

That's how he became the devil. So he put that same desire into Eve's heart. You will be like God.

You will have life if you take part of this tree. But that was not the right tree. It was the tree of life that he led her astray from because that's what God wanted her to partake.

Isn't it very interesting that you read in Genesis chapter 3 that the devil's temptation was God knows that you'll be like him. That's why he doesn't want you to eat of it. Temptation was you'll be like God.

And you find Jesus coming and saying you can also be like God. Same message. How do you distinguish the two? Satan is saying you can be like God and Jesus is also saying the same thing.

The big difference is Satan says you can be like God with authority and power. And Jesus says you can be like God in character, in love and humility. And so a Christian who seeks authority and power is going to be led astray.

A Christian who seeks character and love and humility is going to be on the right path. So what I see there is being led astray from the tree of life is called here in 2 Corinthians 11:3 if I take this as the interpretation of Genesis chapter 3 the tree of life is 2 Corinthians 11:3 simple, pure devotion to Jesus Christ. So anything that leads me astray from simple, pure devotion to Christ is leading me astray from the tree of life.

And if you turn back to Genesis chapter 3 you read there that before sin came into the world Genesis chapter 2 it says the tree of life, or Genesis 2:9 was in the middle of the garden. There was one tree right in the middle of the garden and that was not the tree of knowledge, good and evil. That's somewhere on the side.

Right in the middle of the garden God put the tree of life. Genesis chapter 2:9 That's what He wanted Adam and Eve to go and take. But He left the choice to them.

He was not going to force them because He doesn't force anybody to accept His life or even to come to heaven. He wants man to choose for himself just like He gives us freedom today to choose for ourselves. Simple, pure devotion to Christ.

The life of God. You can choose that or you can choose knowledge. Knowledge of the Bible.

And you know the number of Christians who have chosen knowledge of the Bible. Knowledge of the Bible means knowledge of what is good and evil over devotion to Christ and being attached to Him. But anyway,

Adam and Eve could have gone to that tree of life easily, straight away.

But after Adam sinned you could not go to the tree of life easily. You could still go. But it says here in Genesis 3.24 the last part God stationed angels, cherubs with a flaming sword turning in every direction to guide the way to the tree of life.

That was not there before sin came. But the moment sin came there was this flaming sword that went around the tree of life. And all this is symbolic.

So today if you want to go to this tree of life you can't just go and take it. You can't just go and take the life of Jesus. The sword has to fall on your self-life.

If you don't let the sword fall on your self-life you cannot partake of the life of Jesus Christ. That's the message here, so plain. And that's where the devil leads us astray by saying, no I'll show you a route to the tree of life where you don't have to slay your self-life.

There is no sword, come I'll show you. And he leads you to some other tree and tells you that's the tree of life there's no sword in front of it. And you can follow Jesus without denying yourself you can follow Jesus without judging yourself you can follow Jesus without taking sin seriously you can follow Jesus without dying to yourself.

Great! And that's the Christianity that Satan has offered the world today and vast majority of Christians have swallowed it. But it's not the tree of life. How in the world could you get to this life without the sword falling on you? That is the craftiness of Satan.

There is a sword in front of the tree of life and this fits in with everything that is taught in scripture. See 2nd Timothy in chapter 2 So let's look at 1st Timothy first 1st Timothy chapter 1 then we go to 2nd Timothy chapter 2 In 1st Timothy chapter 1 Paul says verse 15 This is a faithful saying Very rarely Paul uses that expression This is a trustworthy statement This is a faithful saying What is it? Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners That's the first statement which is a faithful statement a trustworthy statement and that's where we must begin I'm a sinner Christ Jesus came to save wretched miserable sinners like me Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me That's the first step The second trustworthy statement is in 2nd Timothy In 2nd Timothy 2 where we go from one to the other 2nd Timothy 2 verse 11 This is a faithful saying Again, the same expression It is a trustworthy statement What is it now?

If we die with Him we will live with Him If you let the sword fall on you you'll get to the tree of life Many have accepted the first trustworthy statement in 1 Timothy 1 But they don't believe this is a trustworthy statement They don't believe this is a faithful saying as faithful as the other one What would you think if somebody came and said No, no, no, it's not only Jesus Christ who saves sinners There are other people who can save sinners There are other religious people who can save sinners You'd say that's impossible, there's only one There is only one way for a sinner to be saved 1 Timothy 1 verse 15 It is a faithful saying Only Christ Jesus can save sinners I think all of us would fight for that and not allow another teaching that somebody else can save sinners But when it comes to the 2nd statement I wonder whether all of you are equally firm in saying we cannot live with Him if we don't die with Him Do you believe that?

Do you believe it as strongly as you believe the first faithful saying? I don't think most Christians do They say we can live with Him without dying with Him What does it mean to die with Him? What does it mean to take up the cross every day? Is this the only way to get to the life of Jesus? Let's turn to 2nd Corinthians in

chapter 4 He, in 2nd Corinthians 4 He speaks first of all about the new birth That's the first thing Just like we saw the first trustworthy statement is Christ Jesus came to the world to save sinners The second trustworthy statement is If we die with Him, we will live with Him In the same way, here the first step is the new birth 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6 Just like God said Light shall shine out of darkness He's talking about Genesis 1 The first day God said, let there be light He says that's the first step in salvation Into the darkness of our heart God said, let there be light And the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, verse 6 Shone into our hearts And we got light And we were born again Christ Jesus came to save sinners The first statement Now we go to the second statement How do we get this life of Jesus now in us?

The tree of life Verse 10 There's only one way to get it Always carrying about in our body The dying of Jesus Because that's the only way the life of Jesus will be manifested in our body And that's why Every day and many times a day Verse 11 We are constantly delivered over to death That means we are brought into circumstances Every day Always Constantly means all the time We are delivered over to circumstances Where we have to die We are delivered over to death And the purpose is That the life of Jesus May be manifested in our mortal flesh I mean Words could not be clearer than that That there is only one way to the tree of life By the sword falling on yourself life It's everywhere in scripture if you want to see it But if you don't want to see it You don't see it And If I'm really serious You know The Bible says God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him He's not a rewarder of every Tom, Dick and Harry He's a rewarder Hebrews 11 6 Diligently seek him Earnestly, diligently In other words If a person is sick and tired of his Adamic life And his murmuring And his complaining And his grumbling And his anger And his bitterness And his dirty thoughts And his jealousy And every other evil that we have inherited from Adam And when a Christian begins to manifest all those things Just like the unconverted people Covetousness and love of money and deception And all those things And he's happy with it He says well As long as we're in the world We'll be like that We just confess And get forgiveness Confess and get forgiveness Confess and get forgiveness endlessly He's not passionate about getting the life of Jesus The life of Jesus These things I mentioned were not there They were just not there in the life of Jesus But most Christians Don't have a passionate desire Are not diligently seeking to have the life of Jesus I say that even in churches where I have preached this truth for years I mean I've preached this truth for 40 years in India But I still find a lot of people are not diligent To have the life of Jesus And I presume this is the same over here in this church There could be people here I don't know your lives But I presume there must be people here Who have sat here for years Who are not passionate to get the life of Jesus And sort of content with their defeated life You think you'll get the life of Jesus?

Not in a hundred years I might as well tell you that Not in a hundred years You can sit in this church for a hundred years And listen to message after message after message You will not come to the life of Jesus Because you're not God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him And you're not diligently seeking for the life of Jesus You're content with your defeated life God never showed me the truth Till I was sick and tired And fed up with my defeated life And I said Lord I cannot go on like this I'm just an outright hypocrite And that's when the Lord met with me I've discovered in my life He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him Like it says in Jeremiah 29 and verse 13 You will seek me and you will find me Only when you search for me with all your heart What about somebody who doesn't seek with all his heart He won't find him He'll find some third rate Christianity And be happy with it Because he doesn't want to pay the price For the real thing You have to pay a price for the real thing And that price is death to self And the wonderful thing here is You see verse 10 and 11 here speak of The life of Jesus coming in us As we choose the death to self But the dying of Jesus is not the dying He died on the cross of Calvary You need

to understand There were two dyings of Jesus One is the death he died on the cross For the sins of the world We have no part in that We have absolutely no part in that He died alone for the sins of the world But there's another dying of Jesus Which was there in his life every day Every day he died to his own will Have you ever thought of that?

How could he possibly tell us To take up the cross every day Listen carefully If any man will come after me Luke 9.23 What should he do?

Deny himself every day Take up his cross Die to himself every day And follow me But if I say Lord you never denied yourself every day You never took up your cross every day You took it only on the last day of your life Then he's not an example for me Then I can't follow him But he did deny himself Otherwise what does he mean when he says Follow me And the only way you can follow me Is by doing what I did Deny yourself every day Take up your cross every day Then you can follow me Because that's the path I went So that's called the dying of Jesus The dying that went through all through his 33 and a half years He chose that way of dying to self Every day In other words He said no to his own will And yes to the will of his father He said that in John 6.38 I came from heaven not to do my will

The will of him who sent me That's called the dying of Jesus And when I take that into me The life of Jesus It's a reward God gives If we die with him we will live with him That's a faithful trustworthy statement And not only that Here's the wonderful thing Verse 12 is a step further Just like Jesus died so that we might have life It says here in verse 12 That if I allow this death of dying of Jesus to work in me Others will get life through my ministry Isn't that amazing Now if I don't allow the life Or the dying of Jesus to work in me Others won't get life through me They'll get knowledge A lot of preachers are communicating knowledge to people They go away after listening to somebody And say boy we learned something today We learned the meaning of some verse in Romans or Ephesians or

Leviticus Or Habakkuk or something like that That's not life That's knowledge And you don't have to die to yourself To communicate knowledge to other people If you're a clever person You can study the scripture carefully Use the concordance and all types of things And get a lot of bright ideas And air it out on a Sunday and impress people You don't give them life But if you die to yourself It says death works in us Verse 12 but life in you So the first thing is life in me And then it goes on to life in you In other words the Holy Spirit comes in And rewards me if I choose the way of the dying of Jesus And brings life within me And then that life flows out of me As rivers of living water and blesses other people This is the way God wants every single child of His to walk It's not just for

a few preachers Or some special Christians who are at a higher level No Jesus made that very clear in John chapter 7 He said in John chapter 7 And verse 37 and 38 John 7, 37 and 38 If any man is thirsty let him come to me As I've often said Jesus did not invite everybody to come to Him There was a qualification If you're thirsty Now for example if there's a job offered in some Corporation here saying You've got to be a graduate A college graduate To get this job And you're not a college graduate And you go there They say hey if you're not a college graduate There's no point coming here This is only for those who are college graduates Sorry, go home You understand that there's a condition to come there To qualify for that job you've got to be a college graduate And you wouldn't even dream

of going there Thinking you'll get that job if you don't have the qualification But yet People think they can come to Jesus without being thirsty How's that?

There's a condition to come to Jesus Just like you've got to be a college graduate to get that job To come to Jesus you've got to be thirsty If any man is thirsty Come to me What about if you're not thirsty? Don't come Even if you come you'll be rejected It's like the non-college graduate coming for that job He's rejected You're not thirsty and you come to Jesus Because some preacher told you come to Jesus He'll accept you I never preached that That's why I never give an altar call I never give an altar call Because Jesus never gave an altar call I've never seen him doing it once in his life He didn't say stand and come forward He always said sit down where you are and count the cost So that's what I preach Sit down and count the cost of being a disciple Are you thirsty?

If you're thirsty go to Jesus If you're not thirsty You can come forward in hundreds of meetings Nothing will happen I've seen a lot of people who go forward to altar calls Nothing happens in their life Or they go through some emotional experience Find me a man who's thirsty Desperate Longing for the life of Jesus I don't care even if he sits in that chair Never comes forward He'll find the life of Jesus in him The condition is thirst If any man is thirsty And if you come to him It says he who believes in me Do you follow?

Do you come under the category of he who believes in Jesus Christ? I think all of us would say yes I do If you do Then it says rivers of living water will flow out from you Verse 38 You'll never be dry I believe that I remember the years after I was born again When I was dry as a desert My Christian life was dry as a desert My inner life I would go to a meeting and get excited In the singing and all that Emotionally stirred I was dry, frequently discouraged, gloomy I couldn't say rivers of living water were flowing out from me But I believed in him And I realized that I was not thirsty It's not enough to believe You've got to be thirsty And if you're sick and tired of being dry like a desert You'll find rivers of living water But if you're happy with that condition You'll remain like that forever There was another verse where Jesus told Certain type of people to come to him Matthew 11 I'm just trying to show you that Jesus did not invite everybody to come If you're thirsty come in another place It says in Matthew 11, 28 Come to me those who are weary and heavy laden Not everybody Again notice Come to me anybody?

No, no, no, no, no Those who are weary and sick and tired Of their getting angry often Sick and tired of their lustful thinking Sick and tired of their love of money Sick and tired of their worldliness Sick and tired of their murmuring, complaining Sick and tired of their jealousy Sick and tired of their worldliness Ah, Lord says come to me But what about the bunch of satisfied Christians Who sit in so many churches Who are not sick and tired of their defeated life Who are quite content Who fight and quarrel at home And they're quite content with it Because they say I'm a Christian I've accepted Jesus as my savior The Lord is not inviting such people to come Stay where you are But if you're sick and tired Of your defeated life Come to me and I will give you rest Rest means Freedom From those sins And I'll tell you why I say that You know we've got to compare scripture with scripture This rest Is what the Old Testament Sabbath Symbolized The Sabbath was such an important commandment In the Old Testament That if a man disobeyed it he was killed You read in Numbers chapter 15 or 16 Where a man went out to pick up sticks on the Sabbath day And he was killed He said you can't do any work on the Sabbath day It was symbolic of a life of rest That God wants to give us As his children So when Jesus said come to me I'll give you rest What does he mean?

Let's compare scripture with scripture Hebrews chapter 3 In Hebrews chapter 3 we read about Certain people in the wilderness Who disobeyed God and did not enter Canaan You know the story Two million Israelites Six hundred thousand Israelites Perished in the wilderness Men Six hundred thousand men And male Israelites Perished in the wilderness They did not enter Canaan And we are told here Hebrews 3.16 Who provoked him when they heard Not all those who came out of Egypt Joshua and Caleb did not

provoke him They went in But with whom was he angry for forty years God was angry with certain people for forty years Because those whose bodies fell in the wilderness They did not enter Canaan What is Canaan called here?

Look at the name given to Canaan here God said He swore that they would not enter his rest The land of Canaan is called God's rest And he swore you will not enter into this land of rest Because you didn't trust me You thought the giants were too strong It's a picture of believers Who have come out of Egypt By the blood of the Lamb Baptized in the Red Sea Baptized in water But they won't enter Into the land of victory Or the land of rest Because they say the giants are too strong This sin that defeats me is too strong for me I can't overcome it And this other sin that defeats me is too strong for me I can never overcome it This giant keeps on knocking me down Knocking me down And like the ten spies we say The land is a wonderful land I've heard some here and there A few believers testify about this wonderful life of Jesus They've come into It's really a wonderful life But we can't go in Because the giants are too strong for us Exactly like those ten spies And God was so angry He said you'll never enter in Because you think those giants are stronger than Almighty God And that's what a lot of believers think That this sinful habit that I acquired from Adam Is more powerful than the Holy Spirit That's an insult to God The Bible says Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world And when I say that the one in the world is greater than Jesus Christ I'm insulting God That's exactly what the ten spies said And God said you will never enter into my rest You will perish in the wilderness And that's what happened to them And why didn't they enter in?

Verse 19 Because they had unbelief They did not believe that God was stronger than those giants Why is this being written in the book of Hebrews? That Christians, you believe that God is stronger That your sins are stronger than God You also will not enter into this rest So when Jesus said Come to me those who are weary and heavy laden I'll give you rest He's saying I will lead you into this land of Canaan I will lead you into this rest This rest where the giants are defeated in your life Therefore Therefore what?

Verse 4 Let us fear Do Christians have to fear? Some people say no They've got one verse Fear not I don't have to be afraid of the devil That's for sure I don't have to be afraid of man That's for sure There the word is fear not I will not be afraid What can man do to me? But I must fear something else I must fear where God has made a promise of entering into his rest Sin will not rule over you We come short of it We don't enter in That we should fear Don't use the word fear not over here It says let us fear Very often Christians Take the wrong verse in the right and the wrong place So let me make it clear again I must never be afraid of the devil He is defeated No man can harm me You don't have to be afraid of people No weapon formed against you will prosper And every tongue that rises in judgment against you You'll condemn Isaiah 54 17 This is the heritage of the Lord's servants But we have to fear Unless God's promised a life of rest for me And I don't enter into it I want to ask you all my dear brothers and sisters Do you have that fear?

That God has promised me a life of victory And I don't seem to be experiencing it And I don't even seem to be bothered by it That's serious Let us fear Because we have had good news preached to us A life of victory Like the Israelites had But it did not profit them Because they did not have faith in it So Verse 9 There's a Sabbath rest for the people of God So you see the land of Canaan is also equated with a Sabbath Also called rest A life of rest And do you know that when God made Adam On the sixth day What was his first day?

God's seventh day Was Adam's first day It was a day of rest And it's very interesting When I saw that That as soon as God made Adam He said Adam the first thing you need to learn Is not going to work in the garden That can wait The first thing you need to learn Is to be in fellowship with me And be at rest Let's spend 24 hours together And learn to fellowship with me and be at rest Then you can go and work in the garden The law was not like that The law said six days you work Then you shall rest But that was not God's original plan for man God's original plan for man was One day you rest Then go and work That is true Christianity God has delivered us from the law And brought us to God's original purpose for man Which is I enter into rest And then serve God I'm not supposed to serve God

Till I come to this rest My service will be empty, dry It will be like Prickles of dirty water coming out of my heart Instead of rivers of fresh living water coming out So it's a wonderful thing To recognize this That I can come to this tree of life If I allow the sword to fall upon me This is a trustworthy statement If we die with him We will definitely live with him There will always be a resurrection I remember the first time God showed this to me When I was seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit As a young 23 year old I'd just been baptized two years earlier I was baptized when I was 21 And I studied the scriptures And I was in a brethren assembly Where they never spoke about baptism in the Holy Spirit But as I read the scriptures I saw that the thing that changed the apostles on the

day of Pentecost Was this baptism in the Holy Spirit That timid, fearful Peter Suddenly became bold And those people who were sitting behind locked doors Suddenly they threw the doors open And they were not afraid of anybody They were not afraid of being jailed or persecuted or anything There's only one thing that changed them It wasn't the pep talk that somebody gave them It wasn't some preacher who stirred them up It was the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire That's why Jesus told them Don't ever try to go out Till you are endued with power from on high I know you're all very zealous to serve me But hang on, you wait till you're endued with power from on high And then you'll be my witnesses So I saw that and I began to seek God about it And I'll tell you honestly the truth I went to

the Pentecostal church and I was disappointed I love the Pentecostals I love all of God's people But what I saw, I was disappointed I heard a lot of noise and excitement Emotional stirring But I didn't feel that They didn't preach victory over sin They didn't preach the life of Jesus And overcoming life So I came away disappointed And I never joined them in my life But I said, Lord, I want to seek you And I don't want a counterfeit I don't want emotional excitement I don't want a lot of noise I want the real thing That which gives me the power of God in my life That which gives me an anointing in my ministry And that which gives me the life of Jesus And if it takes me 10 years to get there, I'll get it I'll wait 10 years But I don't want any cheap counterfeit So I sought the Lord in my

room And as I was reading the Bible and I was seeking God The Lord pointed me to his own baptism The time when the Spirit of God came upon him The Spirit of God came upon Jesus When he was 30 years old When he accepted baptism And to me, more than the baptism The symbolic meaning of it was what came home to me There was no need for Jesus to get baptized John the Baptist said, you don't need to be baptized I need to be baptized by you Why did Jesus stand in that line of sinners Waiting to be baptized?

I mean, his reason could have told him If he had lived by reason You know, if you stand in line, the sinners People will think that you've also sinned in your life And maybe there's some secret sin in your life That's why you're getting baptized Because John the Baptist said his baptism Was a baptism of repentance And maybe there's some repentance you need in your life People will misunderstand you But Jesus refused to

listen to that voice of reason The Father told him, go and stand in that line And get baptized Never mind how many people misunderstand you How many people say what they want about you See, the true servant of God is like that He doesn't care whether people misunderstand him He's only concerned about what the Father says And he told John the Baptist Let us fulfill righteousness right now It is needed for me to be baptized For thus I can fulfill all righteousness And so he submitted to John the Baptist Pushing him under the water Which symbolized People in the world putting him to death You know, the daily dying In some way or the other Provoking him Putting his self-life to death And he did not resist it He yielded to that death That's the meaning of baptism I yield to people crucifying me And as John the Baptist lifted him up out of the water He was testifying, I know That my Father will raise me up That if I die, I will live It was a new way that Jesus was proclaiming there In that baptism that had never been heard of In all the 4,000 years of man's history up until then If I die and accept death at the hand of others God will raise me up And that was the meaning of baptism And as soon as he came up The Spirit of God came upon me And the Lord said to me That is the way to have the power of the Holy Spirit This is an answer to my question How can I have the power of the Holy Spirit?

He said, if you choose this way of death to self I will raise you up And my power will rest upon you As long as you choose this way And if ever a time comes in your life Where you feel this is not the way for you My power will depart from you That's the word I heard 53 years ago And I've never forgotten it There I understood the close connection Between the Holy Spirit's power and the way of the cross Between the life of Jesus and the way of the cross Between the sword and the tree of life They're very closely connected And anybody who shows me a tree Where I can get to without a sword That's not the tree of life That is another Jesus, another Spirit, another Gospel That's what Paul is trying to say Because the real tree of life has got a sword in front of it There's absolutely no way to get to it You can try all around it But it's going round and round it says All 360 degrees The sword is going round it Whichever way you come to it You have to die That's the only way to come to it And there are Christians throughout the world today Who are trying to come to the life of Jesus Without that sword falling on their self life And they never seem to attain to it And I just want to ask you my dear brothers and sisters Some of you have heard the message of victory over sin Here in this church for many many years Are you frustrated?

Are you satisfied with your substandard life? Feeling that there's really nothing better that I can have At least this is better than what I had before Well if you're satisfied with that You're not thirsty for more You won't get anymore He's a rewarder only of those who diligently seek him But if you come to scripture and say Lord there's a lot more in scripture than I have experienced right now And I want to have it And if you're thirsty And if you're weary and heavy laden He will bring you into a rest There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God Let us fear lest we don't enter into that rest Let's choose that way of death to self Let me conclude with 1 Peter chapter 4 In 1 Peter 4 He speaks about judging oneself As the mark of those who belong to the family of God Here he speaks about the household of God in 1 Peter 4 Verse 17 The household of God or the family of God Which is the true church of Jesus Christ He says the time has come 1 Peter 4 verse 17 For judgment to begin in the household of God He's not talking about that future judgment where all men will be judged He's talking about a present judgment Like he says in 1 Corinthians 11 If we judge ourselves rightly We will not be judged That's what he's talking about here This judgment must begin with the household of God And it must begin with us first In the world They put themselves first in everything Except judgment Judgment they put others first Isn't that right?

In everything I'm first I'm first, I'm first But when it comes to judgment They judge other people first Jesus comes and delivers us from that world and reverses it That we learn to put others first In everything But

when it comes to judgment We put ourselves first It's the reverse of the world So it says if we judge ourselves First To me that is the mark of being part of the family of God That's the mark of That I'm part of the family of God That I judge myself So I see from that That this should be the characteristic of everyone who's a part of God's family That there's one characteristic about you That you don't judge others You judge yourself first In any situation You don't think of what he should have done What my wife should have done What that brother should have done That doesn't

interest me I Did I die to myself I'm not here to get my husband or wife to die to themselves I Judgment begins with me I want to be a part of the household of God I was part of the household of Adam for years I've finished with that I'm now part of the household of God The household of Adam Adam didn't judge himself When God asked him Did you eat of that tree He blamed his wife He says Lord look at her She's the one who caused me to sin That's the household of Adam But in the household of God I judge myself first What did I do wrong Where did I slip up Lord let me judge myself first And he says for example It says here Let none of you suffer Verse 15 As a murderer Or as a busybody in other people's matters There are a number of things mentioned in verse 15 Let me just mention two of them

A murderer Do you know who's called a murderer in 1 John chapter 3 Cain Do you know why he murdered Because of jealousy The first murderer In history Murdered because of jealousy Jealousy That God had blessed another brother More than him They both came with an offering But the fire fell on Abel's offering And not on him and he became a murderer Do you think there's jealousy Among believers You bet there is Jealousy because someone else Has been blessed more than you Ask yourself Don't be too sure It's not there Some of your criticisms of others May arise From a jealousy That that person has been blessed more than you Maybe he's blessed spiritually Maybe he's more gifted than you More capable than you Maybe he's richer than you He's far better off Than you are In the world And that can

cause a lot of jealousy All such jealousy indicates That you don't have the life of God Let none of you suffer Because of this jealousy So here's the first area Where we can all judge ourselves And that can Be very easy In a church Where There are different standards of living You know in India the standards of living Are very very There's a wide range of standards of living in India Because there are rich people and poor people And They both get converted And the bible Doesn't teach communism Which is Everybody share equally Some people think Christianity is communism That means everybody put all your wealth Together and everybody shares equally It's something like You've got all these fingers and one is too long So let's cut them all and make them equal But that's not the way God made

it He's made some big and some small So I've learned to leave that As the way God's done it Well he's made some people rich okay And some people are poor But some poor Christians Won't accept that I've seen it in India I've seen it among believers They haven't learned to judge themselves First they're jealous That why has God given that person So much and not so much to me I'll tell you brother sister Judge yourself if you want to be a part of the household of God Don't waste your time judging other people Jealousy was the first sin That came in the Bible After the garden of Eden Once Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden The first sin manifested itself is jealousy That's why I talk about it And I've seen it in the church And it's destroyed people Just like it destroyed Cain He

became the Lord Cursed Cain saying you'll be a wanderer I've seen Christians who are jealous Who become wanderers They never Wanderer means one who cannot come into fellowship with others They're always lone people Always have a complaint Against somebody else They're wanderers They cannot come into fellowship They've gone the way of Cain Like it says in the book of Jude They've gone the way

of Cain The other sin here is Being a busybody Verse 15 In other people's matters Troublesome meddler That's another sin I found very much among Christians Instead of Being occupied with judging oneself They're always nosy About what's happening In other people's lives They want to know Who's pregnant And who's falling in love with somebody How does this interest you I don't understand this These are

called nosy parkers Troublesome meddlers Busybodies and other people I've seen in my life Those people who have that type of attitude They never grow in their Christian life I see them year and year after year I'm talking about India, I don't know you folks Who they remain in the same place And if you're like that I can tell you In 20 years you'll be in the same place You're in today Because you're a nosy parker Always being interested in things that have got nothing to do with you You're curious About matters that don't concern you The solution to all that is Judge yourself Let the sword fall on all these Adamic Characteristics That are found in your life Even though you claim to be a believer And you claim to be a part of a church That is preaching the new covenant In all this high

sounding language But you behave just like any other Christian In any other dead denomination Let's take it seriously And say Lord I want to judge myself I want to be a part of the household of God And I want to take seriously from this day onwards I don't want to believe That I have come to the tree of life If I have not allowed the sword To fall on these filthy habits That I have in my life I want to take it seriously I want to diligently seek you And I believe that you'll reward me Let's bow our heads in prayer I want to plead with you In Jesus name You probably heard Many challenging messages in the past But they did not produce results Because you allowed The birds of the air To take away the seed You allowed the devil to take away That which the Lord convicted you about Don't let it

happen this time Determine with all your heart That you're going to press through Into the life of Christ Lord I don't care What price I have to pay I want to count everything else as rubbish Like Paul said in order that I might gain Christ And have his life Help us Lord Each one here To enter into this life To gladly choose The way of the cross Because you went that way Help us to see your example And follow you we pray In Jesus name Amen

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