

Pressing on to Perfection

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of pressing on to perfection, knowing Christ, and gaining Christ, while warning against false teachings and the danger of standing still at the starting line of the Christian life.

Duration: 1:20:15

Scripture: Psalm 95:6, John 4:23-24, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:15, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 6:1

Topics: "Christian Maturity", "True Worship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the call to press on to perfection in our Christian walk, acknowledging that we are not perfect but striving towards maturity and being like Christ. It highlights the importance of continuous growth, setting higher standards, and being willing to follow the example of mature believers. The message encourages a focus on true worship, understanding the elements of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving in our worship to God.

Transcript

In proclaiming the whole purpose of God, we have thought about perfection. Let us press on to perfection. That's what we have in front of our pulpit.

People accuse us of saying, you imagine you're perfect. I see you haven't read what's written on that pulpit. Let us press on to perfection is the clear confession that we are not perfect.

We are pressing on. It's the people who do not preach that who imagine they are perfect. But if you say, let us press on to perfection, you're acknowledging thereby that you're not perfect.

And that's the verse from Hebrews and chapter six, verse one, leaving aside the fundamental elementary teaching of Christ. Let us press on to perfection or maturity. The King James version, it says perfection, and that's how it says in the margin here.

And perfection is to be like Christ. And we preach that. And it's not only written here.

A church that does not preach, let us press on to perfection, is not proclaiming the whole purpose of God. In the Old Testament, there's no verse like press on to perfection. It was impossible.

But the moment Jesus came, see what he said in Matthew chapter five, he was speaking in the sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 48. Do you believe what Jesus said? Read it in your Bible. Therefore, you must be

perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

Sometimes people say, Oh, brother Zach, CFC preaches such impossible standards. CFC. Look at Jesus.

Supposing we stood here and said, you must be perfect like God is perfect. You'd say to me, brother Zach, don't be unrealistic. Go and say that to Jesus.

Say to him, if you have the boldness, Lord, don't be unrealistic, making statements like you ought to be perfect as your father is perfect. I tell you, it is because we don't take the word of God seriously, that we live such pathetic lives far below what God wants us to be. We're not saying we're perfect.

Jesus did not say, you must be perfect in one day. That would be unrealistic. It's like telling a child, you must walk in one day.

You must be mature in one day. You must get a job in one year. That's all unrealistic.

You must be perfect. It's a goal that we have before us, but it's not a goal we just look at and admire. It's a goal we press on towards.

Like we saw in that video, you help one another to reach that goal. You don't just give up along the way. If we can't run, we walk.

And I'll tell you some cases of marathon races and triathlon races where they couldn't even walk. I've seen videos of that. They crawled on their knees to cross the line because they couldn't stand after such a massive exercise of running and swimming and biking, crawled.

It's a great challenge. If I can't run, walk. If I can't walk, I'll crawl, but I'm going to reach the finishing line.

I wish all of us Christians would have the same passion that these runners have, somehow get to the finish. That picture should always be in our mind and put us to shame if we give up any time. I never want to give up.

Jesus said, he who endures to the end will be saved. That is the whole purpose of God that we proclaim. People think it's a strange message because they never heard it in other churches.

Other churches say, my sins are all forgiven. I'm on my way to heaven. I sit back in my easy chair and live for myself and watch movies all the time and go to church on Sunday and go to heaven.

I doubt whether such people will ever get to heaven. I'll tell you honestly, they are being fooled by today's preachers. And you realize that is the judgment seat of Christ.

See what the apostle Paul says in Philippians chapter 3. Philippians 3, he says in, I want to know him, verse 10. I've counted everything as rubbish. Let's start at verse 7. Whatever was gained to me, I counted as loss.

There are so many things that have been gained to you in the world. You've accomplished something. You've learned so much.

You've got experience and you're proud of all these things. Throw it away as rubbish and say, I want Jesus. I don't want to glory in my experience.

I count everything as loss. To me, the greatest thing is to know Jesus Christ, to know him, not even to serve him. That is secondary.

My service for the Lord comes out of my knowledge of Jesus. I can honestly stand before Jesus today and say, Lord, my passion is not to serve you. It is to know you.

I can honestly say that because that is my goal. But those of you who know me, I'm always traveling, even though I'm 76 years old. It makes no difference.

I mean, my wife and I have traveled by bullock cart to places at one time. I mean, we've done that for 48 years and we'll never give up. But that's not our goal, just serving, preaching.

We're glad to serve others. But knowing Jesus, knowing him better, becoming like him is the passion of my life. And if there's ministry, it is the overflow of knowing him.

That's how it should be in your life. Then your life will never be boring. You'll never get tired.

You'll never get exhausted and say, oh, well, I've been serving. So Lord, now I want to take a holiday. I never feel like that.

I'll tell you honestly, I never feel like that. Sometimes I go tired and sleepy after a lot of travel to a meeting. And I say, Lord, you've got to really touch me now.

I don't want to be sleepy when I speak. By the time I finish my one hour of preaching, I'm so refreshed, I'm ready to go for another hour. It's amazing.

I tell you honestly, it's amazing what if you allow the Holy Spirit to work in you, it'll refresh you and strengthen you when you're thoroughly exhausted. But if you say, oh, I'm tired and I'm exhausted, you'll get more exhausted. I'm just giving you a little suggestion to know Jesus.

And he says, verse 8, I've suffered the loss of everything. You and I can't say that. What have you lost by coming to Christ? Some of you from non-Christian backgrounds can say you really lost something.

But how many of you can say that? How many of you lost all your property because you became a Christian? Very few people here. Yeah, there are some people who have lost that. Some people have lost their connection with all their family members because they stood for Christ and His truth.

My wife suffered like that because she stood for the truth in the church. She suffered the loss of relationship with her own family members. Some people suffer like that.

But it doesn't, I mean, she's not disturbed by that. She longs for fellowship. But what to do? We're not going to compromise our conviction and what we stand for to please human beings.

We, like Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 5, henceforth we don't know anybody after the flesh. Turn with me to that verse for a moment, 2nd Corinthians 5. It's very important in our Indian culture. We are very closely related to family members.

It's a good thing. We help one another. But that also becomes a hindrance in our following the Lord.

And for you, you need to know this verse, 2nd Corinthians 5:16. From now on, we don't recognize anybody according to the flesh. That means, oh, this is my blood brother, blood sister.

No, we know people in Christ now. Even Christ, we don't think of Him according to the flesh means we don't think of Him as a Jew. He's not a Jew.

When He was on earth, He was part of Israel, but He's not an Israelite today. No, He's a representative of the entire human race. He's the man, Christ Jesus.

We don't know Him as an earthly person who spoke a certain language. So, my family, for example, is the church. I'll tell you that.

This is my eternal family. And I can stand before God and say, this family means more to me than any blood relative. It's the truth.

I don't know whether you can say that. It depends on how much you know the Lord. If you don't know the Lord, of course, you don't know like that.

Your blood relatives mean more to you than people in the church. Well, what can I say? I can only say, may God have mercy on you and deliver you from the old covenant. That's part of the old covenant.

In the old covenant, the Israelites only wanted to know their fellow Israelites. These are family members, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That's all.

Family members. Others, yeah, we say hi and bye. And unfortunately, there are people sitting like that in CFC churches.

No wonder they don't grow. The church is not their number one family. It's the second family.

The first family is the race of Adam. How are you related to your blood relatives? Through Adam. How are you related to people in the church? Through Christ.

But the people you're related through Adam mean more to you than the people are related to you through Christ. What type of Christian are you? Are you really born again? Has the Holy Spirit come in you? Or you're living in an imaginary world? I said the words Lord Jesus come into my heart. But it hasn't changed your attitude.

Paul changed completely. He said, I don't know anybody after the flesh now. I don't think this person is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

No. My relationship with Adam was cut off. You know, so many Christians are living like that.

That's why you have this false teaching called generational curse. Generational curse. Because some famous charismatic Bible teachers taught it.

People say, oh, it must be the truth. I say, so what if the most famous charismatic Bible teacher taught it? Is it in the Bible? No. They say, no, it says under the law that God will curse people under the so-and-so generation.

I say, that's Old Testament. So what if this great charismatic leader lived in the Old Testament? So what if a great charismatic leader married a divorced person or encouraged accepting remarriage and all that? I'm not interested. My standard is not great Bible teachers.

My standard is the Bible. According to the word of God. If it's not according to the word of God, I don't care who teaches it.

They're like the Bereans. When the Apostle Paul came and preached in the synagogue, you read in Acts 17. They told Paul, if I were to interpret those words, you read that in Acts 17.

Well, praise the Lord, Paul, it was great to hear you. We don't believe you yet. We'll check up the scriptures.

Next week, we'll tell you whether we agree with you or not. Imagine going up to the Apostle Paul and saying, I won't believe you till I check the scriptures, whether you're saying is according to scriptures. Because those days, they didn't have a Bible.

They had to go to the synagogue and open the scroll. It took time for them to check whether what Paul said was in the scriptures or not. Today, you have the Bible in front of you.

You can check immediately, is it according to scripture? That's why I say, don't ever accept a man who preaches something and does not show you scripture. Don't ever accept it. You'll go astray.

I guarantee you'll go astray. I follow that rule. I don't care who preaches it.

Great famous preacher doesn't make a difference to me. Is it in the word of God or not? Say clever explanations. One of these great preachers only has written these books on generational curse.

That means you're suffering today, some problems because your great-grandfather worshipped idols and there's a curse that has come down. I don't care if my great-grandfather worshipped idols. I don't know and I don't care.

I'll tell you why I don't have a generation curse. For many years in my life, I was part of a tree called Adam. The root was Adam.

From that came a tree. I belong to that tree. But one day the Holy Spirit cut me off from that tree when I was born again and grafted me into another tree called Jesus Christ.

Now my relationship is through Christ. What generation curse is there in this tree? Tell me. In the other one, there may have been a lot generational curse.

I don't know. I'm not bothered. So when a person says he's got a generational curse and he says he's born again, he's only born again in his words.

He's still in Adam. He's never been cut out of Adam and put into Christ. But then he'll have generational curse all his life.

Otherwise it's absolute rubbish and nonsense. Like the teaching on typing and infant baptism and appointing people as one-man pastors and all. You'll never find these things in scripture.

But some great man preaches it or some great man is a pastor of a church. So that must be right. I couldn't care less if the greatest man is a pastor of a church.

Show it to me in the Bible where the apostles appointed one man to be a pastor of a church. No, nowhere. I see them always appointing elders.

He was here, so let him hear. But coming back to Philippians in chapter 3, Paul says there, I count everything as rubbish compared to Christ. I want to gain Christ.

He doesn't say I want to reach the world. That sounds, you know, some people say I want to reach India for Christ. I want to reach the world for Christ and you're impressed by that.

I am not impressed with all this fantastic language. All these people who call themselves worldwide evangelistic fellowship and all India evangelistic fellowship, fantastic names. I'm not impressed.

I'm not impressed by any of them. It's all a way of making money and fooling other people that we are reaching the world and we are reaching Asia and we are reaching India. I am not interested.

I want to know if you're passionate to know Jesus Christ and to gain Christ. Paul was like that. He was a far greater missionary and evangelist than all these people today.

But his passion was to gain Christ. He says this is everything else is rubbish. Paul, you mean to say evangelism also rubbish compared to gaining Christ? Oh yes, everything is rubbish.

If I do evangelism without gaining Christ, it's worthless. If I believe in building the body of Christ without gaining Christ, it's worthless. That will not be the church of Jesus Christ.

So he says I want to be found in him having his righteousness and not my own. And I want to know him. And you ask Paul, why do you want all this? Tell me what is the reason? That I may know him, verse 10, that I may know the power of his resurrection and that I may fellowship with his sufferings and be willing to die with him.

Now listen to this, because that is the only way, verse 11, that I will attain to the resurrection from the dead. Do you believe that? I don't think most of you believe it. Resurrection from the dead, that's going to happen to me automatically.

25 years ago I said Lord Jesus come into my heart. I'm okay now. I will be raised from the dead.

Paul didn't believe that. I'm sorry to tell you that, but that's the truth. Read it again, that I may know him, verse 10, that I may have the power of his resurrection, that I'm in the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.

Why? In order that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. He didn't believe it automatically. Where did you get this doctrine from? Once saved, always saved.

That doctrine has sent more people to hell than I think any other doctrine. Somebody says once saved, I'm okay now. What a shock they'll get at the judgment seat of Christ when the Lord says I don't care about what you said 25 years ago.

He who endures unto the end will be saved. It's those who press on to perfection will have no regret. Those who want to gain Christ and who count everything else as rubbish compared to Jesus Christ, who don't know people according to the flesh, but who know Jesus.

And I tell you, it doesn't mean you hate your family members, you love them much better. You love them with a purer love. You'll obey God first and then you will respect your parents, not respect your parents first and then decide whether to obey God or not.

And then he says, I'm not saying I've already obtained this perfection. I've not become perfect. Verse 12.

But I'm not just sitting back and saying I'm not perfect. I'm pressing on to perfection. This is what we preach in our church.

So it doesn't mean that by my pressing on, I get righteousness. No, no, no, no, no, no. Let's let's look at verse nine.

I don't want to be found in Christ with the righteousness of my own. We got to begin there. Some people say we are preaching salvation by works.

No, no, no, no, no, we preach salvation by faith. We believe all our righteousness are like filthy rags to be thrown away. We believe that we need the righteousness of Christ to clothe us before we can even stand before God.

But we believe God does that in a moment when we are born of God, when we are born of the Holy Spirit, born again, we come to Christ as sinners and say, Lord, we are wretches and we can never make it to your kingdom. All my righteousness is like filthy rags. And like we sing in that song, nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling.

I cannot bring anything. And I believe that Jesus died for all my sins. That's what we teach.

And if we repent, which is the one thing many people don't preach, we don't say believe in Jesus Christ, we say repent and believe. Paul said, wherever I go, he said in Acts 20, I preach repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's like the two electric wires.

When they touch at the switch, the light comes on. Do you know that all that a switch does is make two wires touch? You open up a switch and you'll see just two wires kept apart. The moment you put the switch on, they touch, the light comes on, the fans come on.

And when repentance and faith touch, the light of God comes. With faith alone, nothing happens. With the repentance alone, nothing happens.

It's repentance plus faith. Don't ever forget it. And that's what we preach.

Repentance, that means turn from sin, not give up all your sinful habits. No. Giving up all your sinful habits is the finishing line.

Turn around from all your sinful habits is the starting line. Don't confuse the start line of the race with the finishing line of the marathon race. The finishing line is perfection, exactly like Jesus Christ in thought, word, deed, attitude, motive.

None of us have reached there. Paul says, I haven't reached there. But the starting line is I turn around from my sin.

My attitude to sin has changed. I haven't overcome it all yet, but my attitude to my anger has changed. My attitude to jealousy has changed.

My attitude to sexual lust has changed. My attitude to pornography has changed. It's a change of attitude.

Overcoming takes time. I want to make it very clear so that there's no confusion. And we receive Christ, and we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

And the Lord says, I will not remember your sins anymore. So now when I was born again at 19 and a half and given my life completely to Christ, I had committed a lot of sins in 19 and a half years. I mean, even if you're four years old, you've committed sins.

But God looked at me that moment as if I had never committed a single sin in 19 and a half years. Because I was clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and the Lord had blotted out my past and said, I will not remember your sins anymore. Hebrews 8, 12.

That is how we began our Christian life. Not by works. 100% by repentance plus faith.

But having been clothed with Christ, the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, then we run this race. We don't believe that we should come to the start of the marathon race and stand there forever. I think a lot of Christians have come to the starting line, and they think that's it.

They confuse the start line with the finishing line. Supposing you get selected to represent India in the Olympics at the marathon race, and you come to the starting line and say, hey, I got here, man. Where did you get? You come to the starting line.

You should be running, and everybody else is running, and you're standing there, waving the Indian flag, I'm here. That's crazy. That's exactly what a lot of Christians are doing.

My sins are all forgiven. I'm on my way to heaven. Where are you in the starting line? Do you know this is a race? Great that you came to the starting line.

Great that you were born again. Now you got to run this race. Paul says, I'm running.

I've not reached the finishing line yet. I've not become perfect. Verse 12.

But I'm pressing on. I'm running. There's a marathon race.

I'm running, running, helping others along the way. And I want to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me. That means like this man saying, India sent me to this Olympics to represent it.

I've reached the finishing starting line. Now I want to do what my country sent me here for, to run and win. And he goes on to say, brethren, one thing I do, I'm pressing on to become like Jesus Christ.

That's why Christ laid hold of me. I press towards the goal. Verse 14, to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

And let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude. Now doesn't it look a confusion? I'm not perfect. Verse 12.

Then he says, let us who are perfect, are mature, have this attitude. I'll tell you what it means. Understand it like this.

If you get a hundred percent in kindergarten, because you can say BAT is bat, CAT is cat, two plus two is four. Okay. A hundred percent in kindergarten.

Does that mean you got your PhD or your graduate degree or postgraduate degree? No. But can you get more than a hundred percent? Can you get 101? No. So your marks, when you get a hundred percent, what is that called? Perfect marks.

But have you reached perfection in education for your PhD? No. So there's a perfection you can have in kindergarten, which you cannot exceed. You cannot get 101.

But you get promoted next year and you start with 50 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent, 90 percent. Finally, you get a hundred percent. You reach perfection in first standard, but you still haven't reached perfection because that's postgraduate PhD stuff.

It's a long way to go, but at your level, you're perfect. And the next year you go to second standard and then you learn some new things. Again, in the beginning, you get only 40 percent, 50 percent, but finally you press on and hard.

And in second standard, you get a hundred percent. You're perfect, but you haven't reached perfection. That's what he's saying.

At my level, I'm perfect. And we cannot compare ourselves with one another. The fourth standard student who got a hundred percent and the first standard student at a hundred percent are two different levels.

So you cannot say, you must be at my level. Sometimes a husband will look at his wife and say, why can't you see that as sin? I see it clearly. I'll tell you why.

She's in first standard and you're in fourth standard. If you look down on her, can you think of an older brother who's in 10th standard looking down at his younger first standard brother? Ah, you don't know geometry, is it? Whatever fellow you are, you don't know algebra. Tell me who's the stupid person there, the 10th standard boy or the first standard boy? Definitely the 10th standard boy.

And whenever you look down on another believer, just because you know something he doesn't know, you are the fool. Please remember that. A 10th standard student will never look down on a first standard student and say, why don't you know what I know? We are pressing on to perfection.

But at our level, we must still be perfect. I don't want you to get pass marks. I often ask this question.

In an examination, final examination, pass marks are 40%. One student gets 40% in mathematics. Another student got 99%.

Who is happier when they come home? Who? The one who got 40%. He says, mommy, I passed. I got 40%.

I'm getting promoted. And the 99%, oh, mommy, I'm so sad. One more mark and I could have got 100%.

You see the difference between the student who's pressing on to perfection and the one who says, my sins are all forgiven. I'm on my way to heaven. You haven't understood a single thing about the Christian life.

You're not passionate to follow Jesus. You got 99%. You won't be happy.

You're happy with 40%. There's something wrong with Christians like that. Let us who are perfect, have this attitude.

And if you have a different attitude, verse 15, God will show it to you. I hope he's showing it to you right now that you're happy with 40% when you should seek for 100%. When you send your children to school, how many of your children you send your children to school? I mean, a child feeling like that is okay.

It's worse if the parent feels like that and says, son, you got 40%. Great. I'm proud of you.

What sort of foolish parent are you? That you're just happy that your child got pass marks? I don't think there's a single parent sitting here. Even if you only got 40% when you were in school, you want your child to get 100%, right? Sure. That's how a real father is.

And if you're an elder, you should be ashamed of yourself. If you look down on people in your church, and you're not longing for 100% yourself. And you're not longing that your children in your church should get 100%.

You don't long for that. Some of you elders, let me ask you, when you send your children to school, what do you want them to get? You want them to get 40% or 100%? You want your children to get 100%? You want them to graduate? Do you look at the people in your church like your own children? Do you want them also to grow and become like you? Are you afraid? Some of them may become more spiritual than me. That is a sad thing.

Wherever I see, you know, one of the things we have taught in our church through the years is, we don't believe in single man leadership of a church like a pastor, or executive pastor, or one man leader. No, that's not found in the New Testament. That's Old Testament, one prophet, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, that's all old covenant.

And most churches are in that state. Forget about them. It's like infant baptism and robes and rituals and hanging crosses around your neck and all that type of stuff.

No, we believe in the New Testament, the New Covenant. So in the New Covenant, we seek that everyone must enter into this New Covenant life. That's what we must desire for everyone in our churches, that they must also press on to perfection.

And I see that sometimes I find this in some of our churches, because they realize, CFC churches, we want elders. One elder will select some fellow who is an obedient, yes, sir, yes, sir type of person. Okay, you're an elder, come, because CFC wants two elders.

You're my fellow elder. Okay, we're going to do this. He says, Yes, sir.

Tomorrow, we're going to do that. Yes, sir. Okay, folks, I've got two elders, put this man's name also as a fellow elder with me.

He's not a fellow elder. In Tamil, they say Aam Saami. Yes, yes, yes, sir.

Aam Saami, Aam Saami, Aam Saami. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Is that a fellow elder? No, he's a servant.

I'm sorry to say there are some elders like that. And that's because the senior elders suppress that person. Suppress him, suppress him.

He never grows up to develop. He can never correct the other person. He just sits there and says Aam Saami, Aam Saami.

And that's a shame. It's better to have one man then be honest and say, I don't believe in dual eldership. I believe in one man, like a Pentecostal pastor sit there.

That's not God's way. I praise God for churches where elders have led other people to become equal to them. And if you make them go beyond you, wow, you're really a first class elder.

I don't mean beyond you in gift. Gift is God given. You can't do that.

You know, God only can give a gift to a person. I can't do that. But that he can grow beyond you spiritually, in godliness, that you can learn from him something about Jesus Christ, even if you cannot learn doctrine from him.

If you're not like that, you're like King Saul, who did not want David to come up, who was jealous when people said David killed 10,000, Saul killed 1,000. He was very upset. And particularly because the sisters were saying it.

People are disturbed when the sisters appreciate someone else. That's what he says. The women were saying, David killed 10,000, Saul only 1,000.

And he tried to kill him. We don't use the dagger today. But various ways there are elders who suppress others.

And I want to ask such elders of CFC churches who are here, who are suppressing other people in your church. Because you want to be the one man show. But at the same time, you got some Aam Saami people to show others that you're following CFC pattern.

I want to ask you a question. Would you be disturbed if your children got higher degrees than you got in your life? Tell me. Supposing you're only a BA, bachelor's degree, or diploma holder, and your child became a postgraduate.

What would you do? Would you suppress him? No, no, no, no. You can't go ahead of me. I only got diploma.

You'd be satisfied with diploma. Is there a single father or mother sitting here like that? I don't think there's one, even among non-Christians. And among all you elders, none of you are like that.

Why are you like that in your church? Why is it nobody is going ahead of you in your church? Why do you suppress them? You're ungodly. I'll tell you, you're an ungodly elder. You're like King Saul sitting on your throne.

You don't want anything to rock your throne. You're not pressing out of perfection. You're not encouraging other people to run the race.

Think of that video we saw, that brother coming, holding him, holding him, and then pushing him so that that fellow goes ahead of him, and he gets the prize behind him. What an example. Do we see people like that in CFC? Do we save your one family? You do that for your children because you love them.

You know, are you jealous of somebody in your church who's more gifted? Supposing you see another brother, much younger than you, speak very powerfully in a conference, and you sit there. Wow. You've got to acknowledge that he's far better than you.

There's a more anointing. But along with it, there's a jealousy. Hey, I'm older.

I'm 10 years older, 20 years older. How is it he's more anointed than me? My dear brother, before you lose your salvation completely, repent of this King Saul attitude. I have to warn you, your blood will not be on my hands because I warned you.

If you're lost eternally, remember where that loss began, in jealousy. Do you know that the first human being who was cursed, you know who it was? Not Adam. Adam was never cursed.

God cursed the earth. You read in Genesis 3, Cain. In Genesis 4, God said, you are cursed.

You know why? Because he was jealous of his younger brother. If Abel had been his older brother, I think he could have accepted it. Okay, the fire fell on Abel's sacrifice, didn't fall on mine.

Okay, he's my older brother. But my younger brother, having a fire, which I don't have, I gotta push him down. Today, we don't kill him with, you know, Cain must have taken a rock and hit him on the head.

We don't do such things today. We are more decent. We kill them with our tongue.

Oh, somebody asks you, what do you think of that brother? Oh brother, he's not so wholehearted. Why do you say that? Because he's better than you. And you don't want him to come up.

You won't give him any opportunities in your church because people may see he's better than you. People may go to him for counsel and not to you. And you don't want that.

You've been sitting as a king for so many years in your church. And you'd like King Saul, you don't want to give up your throne. It's sad.

Can such things happen in CFC? They are happening. Because people are not judging themselves. We are far from perfect.

Paul had such a passion that Timothy should go ahead of him. He really longed that the church would be built. And he says, let us therefore, Philippians 3:15, who have this attitude, and if you have a different attitude, God will show it to you.

And I hope God is showing it to you now. But if you haven't come, let us at least live by the standard to which you have attained. That means, don't go below, don't go from fourth standard to third standard, please.

At least remain in fourth standard. And then press on. And brethren, again I say, follow my example.

What a wonderful thing it is to be able to say, follow my example. I want others to go ahead of me. Follow my example.

I can stand before God and say, that's been my attitude. And not only in Bangalore, but in all CFC churches, I say, Lord, I want to pull back. Very many times I have longed to pull back completely from conferences.

There are some conferences I don't go to, because I want to pull back so that other people will speak in those conferences. There are youth camps I used to go to regularly, which I don't go to. Let other people now speak to the youth camps.

There are many conferences now I don't go to, and it's gradually I'm going to pull back, pull back, pull back, because I want other people to come forward. How will they get an opportunity to come forward, unless you give them an opportunity? How will they grow, unless you give them an opportunity? They're not suddenly going to get maturity, and that's why we seek to push people forward all the time. Please do that in our churches, so that when you die, there won't be a vacuum.

There will be others whom you have trained, just like you train your own children. Think of people in your church just like your children, and observe those, verse 17, who are also walking in the same pattern, because I tell you, many people don't walk like that, and I tell you, weeping. They are enemies of the cross of Christ.

Those who don't allow others to go forward are the enemies of the cross of Christ. So, in Hebrews chapter 12, we read about this race. The Christian life is not a platform we sit on.

It's not that you're lifted up and put on a platform, and you sit there till Jesus comes. No, it's a race. Hebrews 12, 1, let us run this race, verse 1, looking unto Jesus.

Okay, what was Jesus' example as a leader? Jesus is our example. He has run in front of us. He's called forerunner.

Forerunner means one who run the same race in front of us, and he reached perfection. When I say he reached perfection, he was always perfect, but there were certain areas he was not tested. You know, when he was up in heaven, was he tested sexually? No.

As a son of God, how can he be tested sexually when he was in heaven? Was he tested with the love of money? No. Was he tested with people spitting on him? No. Nobody spat on him when he was in heaven.

So many areas Jesus was not tested when he was in heaven, and that's why he had to come to earth as a man to be tested in all these areas. As son of God, he didn't have to obey anybody. When he came to earth, he suddenly had to obey imperfect Joseph and imperfect Mary, not just for one or two days, for 30 years, and he passed the test.

He had to compete with other crooked, cheating carpenters in Nazareth and be absolutely honest himself. How many of you do business and you're being absolutely honest in your work and you're competing with other people who are crooked? Think of Jesus. He couldn't make money like other carpenters because he was absolutely honest in his work.

He wouldn't cheat. These are the areas where he was tested and in that way, he passed one exam, another exam, another exam and completed his education. It's an education he got on earth in sexual temptation, love of money, jealousy, competition, obedience to imperfect parents, all that he got and he became perfect means he graduated.

Every time he got 100% in class. Now he says, let us follow his example. Let us look at his footsteps.

There are two-year-old footsteps of Jesus, five-year-old footsteps of Jesus, 18-year-old footsteps, 20-year-old footsteps, 25-year-old, 30, 33-year-old footsteps. There are footsteps of Jesus for little children to see, for teenage adults with all their passions to see, for people who are working can see his footsteps as a carpenter, for those who are full-time workers like me, they can see his footsteps as a 30-year-old, his attitude to money as a full-time worker. Many examples.

For every human being, there's an example. You follow? He is our forerunner. So we fix our eyes on Jesus, verse 2. He's the author and finisher of our faith and it was not easy for him.

It was a marathon race in which he had to endure, just like this triathlon we saw. He had to endure the cross at every step. Every step was taking up the cross for 33 and a half years and he reached the right hand of the throne of God past the finishing line.

Let us run this race and let us lay aside, it says in verse 1, all the things that entangle us. Have you ever seen an Olympic race where a man comes with a suit and tie to the start line? No. They'll have a vest and shorts, minimum, because we don't want any weight.

You don't find them having stones in their pockets or even their wallet in their pocket. Nothing. They put aside all.

They want to be as light as possible to run this race. Minimum. There is a minimum.

They don't come naked there, but with a minimum and so we realize in this Christian lays also, there's a minimum and we recognize that minimum and anything that like we heard yesterday, yeah, that's lawful, but it's not profitable to run this race. That's perfectly lawful to wear a suit and a tie. I mean, if somebody came with a suit and a tie to the starting line of the Olympics, they will not disqualify him.

No, I'm not saying you can't take part in this dress. You come like that, you take part, fine, but he's not going to help you to run. So, there are things which are lawful, they're not profitable for the race.

So, if a then he can come in a suit and tie, put all these things. This is lawful. Who said it's wrong to wear a suit and a tie at the start of the race? And some people are like that.

What's wrong with this? What's wrong with that? They ask, what's wrong with this movie? Yeah, there are one or two five seconds of sex scenes in it, but it's only five seconds, brother. We can fast forward that and go on. Is that how you watch movies? It's like saying, it's like children ask, how, daddy, there's a cliff there.

How close can I go to the edge of that cliff without falling down? And what do you think a wise daddy would say? Try three inches, see if you can go three inches, see if you can fall down. I say, stay as far away from that as possible. Don't you say that? So, when these questions that people ask, can I do this, brother? How far can I do this? I say, stay as far away as possible.

That is how we run the race. Let us lay aside these weights. I believe many of you have not made progress in the Christian life because there are chains and weights in your life.

Things not set right. When I was converted and I took baptism in 1961, the Lord began to show me how I had cheated the government in certain customs, duties and all when I was in the Navy. Brought things in

without paying any duty.

And I said, okay, I've got to return it. And I calculated and it came to some huge amount, three, four months salary. I didn't have that much savings.

So, as I said, I'm going to save up, save up, save up. And the day came when I had that salary and I emptied it out, gave it to the government and I was free. If I had not done that, I'd have had a chain on my leg for all these 56 years.

Yeah, I would have run with a chain on my leg. The main reason why some people are not making progress, there's a chain on your leg which you should have thrown off years ago. You should have gone and asked forgiveness from somebody.

I even had to ask forgiveness for this giving money back was one thing. The other thing the Lord showed me was, when you were 12 years old, you collected stamps. You know, people have the habit of collecting foreign stamps.

And when you have duplicates, you exchange it with other people. And I one day went to exchange stamps with my cousin. And while he was not looking, I stole one of his stamps.

No, I was not a saint from the day I was born, just for your information. I was a sinner, a wretch. And the Lord said, now I'm 10 years later.

The Lord is telling me when I'm 21, write a letter of apology. He stopped collecting stamps. I stopped collecting stamps.

There's no value for these things. Write a letter of apology to him. And I tell you, it was easier to give my four-month salary back to the government than to write that simple letter of saying, I'm sorry for stealing one stamp from you.

Because this was hitting my pride. That was only hitting my bank account. And sometimes it's very difficult.

Why is it you husbands and wives, when you quarrel, you can't go and say sorry immediately? Why do you have to think about it for half an hour or one hour or sometimes one day? Isn't it pride? When a husband and wife have a disagreement and quarrel and both know there's a tension, who should take the first step in restoring the relationship? In India, the answer is clear. The husband is the king. The wife must, whoever the husband did 10 things wrong, the wife must seek the restoration of fellowship.

That is the heathen culture in which we have grown up. I don't know how it is in the Western culture. They always say ladies first, so they give honor to them.

I see that in weddings, you know. The Western wedding, Western wedding is like this. Everybody will sit down when the bridegroom walks in.

Who cares for him? But the bride is coming. Oh, let's stand up when the bride is coming. Because the bride is more important in Western countries.

And even Jesus has come. Service has started. Jesus is there, but the bride is coming last.

In India, the bridegroom will ride on the horse like a king and the bride will be walking down behind there. The bridegroom is great here. In a Christian wedding, and I conduct it, I say either we sit for bridegroom and bride or we stand for bridegroom and bride.

That's up to you. And after that, when Jesus has come, we start the service. Because he's the greatest, most honored person.

And he's the one we respect most. We don't say the bride has come or the bridegroom has come. Jesus has come.

So when a husband and wife have a quarrel, who should take the initiative? Whoever is more spiritual. Because when God and I had a quarrel, who took the initiative to restore that relationship? Not me. God.

When God and man had a dispute, God took the first step because he's more spiritual. So you got the answer now. If you have a quarrel with your partner, whoever is more spiritual should take the first step.

And since both of you think you are spiritual, you should be just running into each other's arms. As soon as you hurt one another. It's always the most spiritual person who will humble himself or herself and say, I'm sorry.

I want to restore this relationship. Like that. How quickly do you take a thorn out of your leg? Do you wait? Do you meditate on how long the thorn should be there before you take it out? No.

Why don't you confess sin like that? Why don't you say I'm sorry in the same way as pulling out a thorn? There is only one reason. Pride. Pride.

That wretched sin of Lucifer, which he infected Adam with. And you still have some of that poison of the devil in you. Every time you hesitate to say sorry, say to yourself, Oh God, I've got the poison of the devil in me still.

It's taken me five minutes to go and say sorry. When will I get rid of this poison of the devil of pride? The same thing when you hurt one another in the brotherhood. Be quick to acknowledge.

Quick to say that was my fault. I'm sorry. I did not learn this lesson in the beginning because I never had a spiritual father to drill these things into my head.

But slowly I learned it. I learned that Adam would not take the blame for his sin, blamed his wife. But I see that Jesus would take the blame for sins he never committed.

My sin. And I'm a follower of Jesus, not of Adam. Let people think I'm to blame.

Fine. Okay. Brother, you think I was to blame for that? I'm sorry.

Don't you think that is more like the spirit of Christ than arguing about going on for an argument for half an hour? But you said this and you said this. No, no, no. But you said this.

And 10 years ago, you remember, sister, you said this. Or brother, you said that. Let's finish with all that.

If God has said, I will not remember your past, I want all of you husbands and wives to say to each other, I will not remember your past. That's the way to happiness. Press on to perfection.

Okay, you made a lot of mistakes up to this conference. But when you go back to this conference, you're going to be a different person. You're going to press on to perfection.

You elders are going to try your best to promote other people. No more armed swamis. But you're going to promote people who will grow up to godliness.

I'm not saying you should promote them before they're ready. Don't send your children out into the world when they are 10 years old. They can't live there.

But enable your church like you enable your children to grow up and graduate and get a job and live on their own. A time comes, you know, when your son is ready to leave home and stand on his own and he's earning his own money. You know that.

But you work towards that for so many years. You can work towards that for different brothers and sisters that will grow up that one day they can be on their own. That is our goal in CFC.

Pressing on to perfection. Sometimes, you know, some of the things we preach can sometimes be misunderstood. We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

So we are always accepted before God. The only thing that will prevent you from coming before God is there's unconfessed sin in your life. That's all.

Not because you're not perfect. The sin that you know, if you confess it, you can have access to God. So we believe in forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ.

We believe we are accepted in Christ. Not after we become perfect. But clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

If you're converted today, right now, like a little child, you can go straight up to the father. It's not only the 25 year old son who can be accepted by the father, the father picks up the newborn baby. So a newborn child, you can go to the father directly.

That's what we preach. You don't need to be perfect to go there. But we press on to perfection and sometimes people don't understand the difference.

It's like foundation and superstructure of a building. Foundation is we are accepted in Christ. Superstructure is let's press on to perfection.

And because we are building the superstructure, people get confused. Hey, what about the foundation? Yeah, we've laid the foundation. We're not keeping on laying the foundation forever.

No. We lay the foundation and press on to perfection. That's why every newcomer who comes to our church, there are two books I say you must read.

One is the real truth and the other is a good foundation. Get established on that. Then we can move on.

So I, you know, somebody was telling me yesterday that someone read this article on dead works and they got so discouraged because they said, boy, everything I'm doing is a dead work. Because I wrote down here and this is, by the way, in New Wine and New Wineskins chapter 13. Dead works are works done without joy.

God loves a cheerful giver. So if you don't have joy, the Lord meets those who rejoice in doing righteousness, Isaiah 64.5. And second, dead works are works done without love. If you have left your first love, then the Lord doesn't accept your works.

And third, works are done without zeal. Be zealous, therefore, Revelation 3 and repent. Dead works are works done without faith.

Faith without works is dead. It must come out of faith. Number five, dead works are works done for personal honor and gain.

And number six, works done just to ease your conscience. Okay, I give some money to ease my conscience. It's a dead work.

Number seven, works done out of the fear of divine judgment. Oh, if I do this, God will punish me. That's a dead work.

You avoid something because you're afraid of punishment. Or you do something because you think if you don't do it, God will punish you. And number eight, works done with the hope of getting a reward.

If I'm faithful like this, I will get a reward when Jesus comes. Dead work. And number nine, works done without bearing the dying of Jesus, without taking up the cross.

We have to bear the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus comes up. Those who are Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and desires. Galatians 5 24.

And number 10, works that are done from our soul, from our human reason, without seeking the will of God. So someone who read this said, boy, I'm just so thoroughly discouraged. What am I doing? Everything is a dead work.

So my answer to that is, that is a description of the finishing line. Okay, don't get discouraged that you didn't get there. I'm just drawing the finishing line before you so that you can press on towards it.

But don't sit there and say, I'm like this. Press on, press on so that in all these areas, less and your dead works decrease and decrease and one day you reach the finishing line. Or like climbing Mount Everest.

Don't just sit at the bottom and say, well, nobody's perfect. Nobody's reached the top except Jesus. No, press on.

Jesus reached the top, Paul reached quite a I want to reach as far as high as possible before Jesus comes back. So sometimes what we preach in the church can discourage people because they don't understand it properly. They confuse the superstructure with the foundation.

We are preaching about the superstructure and they get discouraged. Oh, I don't even have a foundation in your life. You've got a foundation brother, but you've got to build on that.

Don't just live with the foundation, build a house on that. So that's what we preach in the church, pressing on to perfection, not to be confused with justified by faith. You see in Romans, it's very beautiful in Romans chapter one is the godless sinner, chapter two, the religious sinner and chapter 323, all have sinned.

And the definition of sin is in Romans 3:23, coming short of the glory of God. Anything that comes short of the glory of God seen in Jesus Christ is sin. Or in other words, anything un-Christlike in your life is sin.

But you discover that slowly over a period of time. That's how we press on to perfection. I know in my life, the things I never knew was sinful years ago.

I discover it now and the Lord is leading me on year by year to discover new things. I give you one example, which I've shared with the church here as well, which I never even knew was sin. And when you hear me say it, you may also not have discovered it is sin.

There was a brother in our church many, many years ago when we used to meet in our house. And very often used to stay in our house after the meeting. And we helped him in so many ways.

And then he grew up, he got a good job and he left and he went somewhere else. And we had no more touch with him for years. He never wrote a letter of thank you or anything.

I don't know which church he joined and he was, and I was surprised. I said to my wife, boy, we've done so much for that guy and he never even, he's not even thankful. And I sought the Lord about it.

The Lord said, the problem is with you. I said, Lord, with me? What did I do? We helped him in every way possible. We even gave him my shirt when he was wet and came drenched in the rain.

Everything possible. He would go to the kitchen and make coffee himself and make it and go to college. And we were happy.

We did everything possible. We treated him like a son. And I asked the Lord, what was wrong with me? And the Lord said, you're expecting thanks from him.

Did you know that expecting thanks from somebody is a sin? I discovered it after many years. I thought expecting thanks is normal. You know, you do something for somebody, you're surprised he doesn't thank you.

You're expecting thanks. And the Lord said to me, you know that verse which says, when Christ comes in judgment and the Lord says to people who helped others, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. That's in Matthew 25.

Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. And the Lord said, that young brother, you did it to him. You did not do it as unto me.

That was your sin. Thank you, Lord. One more giant of Canaan.

I've discovered that I can kill. This giant is going to die in my life. But never again will I expect thanks from anybody in the world.

This giant and all his children also the giant are going to be killed in my life. But I never discovered this giant. Maybe some of you are discovering it now.

And what the Lord said to me that day was, if you want to thanks, expect it from me, not from him. I said, thank you, Lord. In future, whenever I serve your people, if I preach to people and they are blessed tremendously, I will not expect thanks from them.

If I serve them in a hundred ways and they're not grateful, I will not expect thanks from them. I will not be offended. I will not even expect it.

I already don't expect any money. That's finished long ago. But now I'm not even going to expect thanks.

It's a promotion to a higher class. Some of you have already serving God without expecting any money. Praise the Lord.

You pass that class. Now go to the higher class where you don't even expect thanks. Isn't it wonderful to be like that? People should learn to get.

I want to be thankful. I want to be thankful even if somebody gives me a cup of cold water. I have sometimes written to people like this.

The brother, when I came to your place 25 years ago, I had to travel to meet someone. There's no taxi available. And you very kindly took me in your car to that place 25 years ago.

I just want to say I haven't forgotten it. Thank you for it. I want to be thankful for people who even give me a cup of cold water.

I will never forget it. But I don't expect other people to be thankful to me. I'm free from that.

Jesus didn't go around expecting people to thank him. When the 10 lepers, nine of them did not come to say thank you. Why did he say where are the nine? For their sake, not for his sake.

He wasn't sitting there like a king and waiting for people to thank him. No. How terrible it will be for these people who are unthankful.

He was concerned about them. So, you can get light on some area where, like I said earlier, you can look down on your wife when you should not look down on your wife. Maybe it's an area where she doesn't have light on.

It need not necessarily mean that you're in 10th standard and she's in 4th standard. No. It may mean that is a subject she has not studied.

You got 100% in chemistry and your wife did not get 100% chemistry. Maybe she didn't study chemistry. She studied biology perhaps.

And she's ahead of you there. So it doesn't mean she's in a different class. It's a different subject.

And she may be in a higher class than you, but she didn't study that subject. You always got to esteem other persons as more important. Don't think of yourself as more important.

When you press on to perfection, you always take the low place. You always are grateful for other people, but you never expect gratitude from others. This is how we are to grow in grace.

But you know, in order to do this, we have to learn to worship. Worship is one of the great subjects in the Bible. And I want to say the devil has done a master job by calling singing praise and worship.

You go to any English speaking church in the world, and their singing time is called praise and worship. I said, do you know what worship is? Okay. I've studied worship with a concordance.

If you take a concordance, you'll find there are 181 references to the word worship in the Bible. Some of them is not always worshipping God, it's worship of idols or worship this or worship that or worshiped or worshipping, et cetera. But it's 181 references and I've looked through all of them.

I've understood like the Bereans, not what preachers say about worship, not what singers say about worship, but the Bible says about worship. And let me tell you briefly, the first person about whom it is written, not the first reference, the first person in the Bible about whom is written, he worshiped God, was Job. Job lived, I believe, before Abraham.

And it says about Job in chapter one, Job chapter one, Job, verse 20, he fell to the ground and worshiped God. First reference of a man worshipping God in the Bible is Job who lived before Abraham. The first reference to worship is in Genesis 22, when Abraham uses that word, but it is Abraham using that word.

We are going up to worship, but here it is the Holy Spirit using the word. The first time the Holy Spirit says about a man that he worshiped God, first person, Job, he fell to the ground and worshiped. He wasn't singing songs.

He wasn't saying, bless the Lord, O my soul. No, he didn't even open his mouth. He fell to the ground and said, I came out from my mother's womb naked.

The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away. He wasn't singing. He wasn't singing at all.

He was probably weeping and thanking God, Lord, I don't know why you took away my children, but you gave them to me. I don't know why you ruined my property. That was worship where God was more to him than his property.

God was more to him than all his family. When you come to that place, you're a worshiper. Just singing some songs and shaking your hips and you have a guitar and strumming it.

That's not worship. Don't fool yourself. It is not worship.

I'm just trying to instruct you something which you have been brainwashed by other Christians for so many years. Be like the Bereans. I'm showing you scripture, not Zach Poonen's bright ideas.

The first time we read about somebody worshipping in the New Testament, I showed you Old Testament, New Testament, Matthew chapter 2, the wise men came to Bethlehem and they saw the child, Matthew 2, 11, that's Jesus. They saw the child, Ann Mary, and they were not Roman Catholics, so they worshipped only Jesus. Have you noticed that? Read it carefully.

They did not worship Jesus and Mary. They saw Jesus and Mary, but they fell down and worshipped only him. Wonderful.

They didn't say, Oh, you're the mother of Jesus. You know how in India we respect mothers. None of all that.

They fell down and worshipped him. They fell down. They were not singing songs.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. No, that's not. They fell down and they gave all their treasures to him.

Job gave up his treasures. These wise men gave up their treasures. When Abraham worshipped, he gave up his treasure.

Isaac, if you haven't given up your treasures, you're not a worshipper. You can call it praise and worship. Call it what you like.

Many of you sing just for your own honor, and it's worship of yourself. Yeah, I've seen sometimes in the early days someone playing instruments and especially drums. Wow, people who drum, they really get people to worship them when they're beating the drums in a church.

That's why we got rid of it in our church. I've gone up to people and say, Are you getting people to worship you or to worship Jesus Christ? It's very difficult to lead a time of singing, I'll tell you that, without getting the attention drawn to you. Very difficult.

It's more difficult than preaching. I'd say 10 times more difficult than preaching to play instruments and sing songs and lead in singing and draw attention to Jesus Christ. Anyone who does that, I really admire them.

Okay, the last time we read about worship in the Bible is Revelation 22 and verse 8. John saw what John was, what the angel was telling him, all these wonderful things he saw in the book of Revelation, and I fell down to worship the angel. Again, worship is always falling down, and the angel picked him up and said, Don't do that. Don't do that.

I'm only a servant. Verse 9, worship God. Fall down before him.

What I'm trying to say is, worshiping God is falling down before him, giving all your treasures to him and saying, Lord Jesus, I don't desire anything on earth but you. And when I get to heaven, I'm not interested in mansions or golden streets or anything. I want you.

If you have come to that place, you're a worshiper. And if you remain in that place, you'll be a worshiper all your life. This is perfection in worship.

Let us press on to perfection. Let's not be fooled by the language of Babylonian Christianity. Then you say, Brother Zechariah, what are we doing when we sing? That is prayer, praise, thanksgiving.

It's not praise and worship. It doesn't sound very nice to say it, but it is prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. If you read the words of many of our songs, one is a prayer, and the other is a thanksgiving.

Thank you, Lord, for this. Thank you for that. Thank you for that.

And the third is praise. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. That is not thanking or prayer.

That is praise. If you sing a song, thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. That's thanksgiving.

Or it can be a prayer. I want to press on the upward bay. Help me.

Pass me not, O gracious Savior. That's a prayer. So when we sing, if you look carefully at the words, it's always prayer or thanksgiving or praise.

Perfectly right. All three are right. But the fourth one, prayer, thanksgiving, praise, the fourth, the highest level, worship, you can't do that with words.

You have to fall before God and give him the most precious things in your life all the time. And say in the words of the psalmist in Psalm 73, verse 25, I don't desire anyone or anything on earth but you. I don't desire anything or anyone in heaven but you.

In other words, when I die, I don't want to go to heaven. I want to be with Jesus. There's a lot of difference.

Some people say, I want to go to heaven when I die. No, I want to be with Jesus. He's the one I live for on earth.

And what is the advantage of worshiping God like this? I'll conclude Matthew 4 in verse 10. You shall worship the Lord your God and then you can serve him. The reason why many of us our service for God is not perfect is because you're not a worshiper first.

You study the Bible and you want to serve God. That is the foolishness of Bible schools. That's why we don't tell people to go to Bible schools.

You want to serve God, be a worshiper first. The way I spoke just now, not singing songs, but worshiping, falling on your face, saying, Lord, you're the only one. Take all my treasures.

Take my children. Take my family. Take my property.

You are everything to me in earth and in heaven. And you'll always be that. You know, I cannot even count the number of times I've said that to the Lord.

I say it all the time. When I wake up in the morning, I say, Lord Jesus, you are my everything. I will not necessarily always in those words, but with that spirit the whole day.

And I say, Lord, I want to be a worshiper. And the Lord says to me, you'll be my servant because you're a worshiper. I will work through you.

That's the only service that's going to last. There's a very famous statement. I think it was originally made by C.T. Studd.

Only one life, it will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last. I think C.T. Studd said it according to the light he had.

When I say that a lot of people are doing things for Christ today in Babylonian Christianity, it's not going to last. So the way I say it is, only one life, it will soon be past. Only what Christ does through you will last.

Not what you do for Christ. A lot of things you do for Christ will not last. What Christ does through you will last.

Because Jesus said in Matthew 15, every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled out. You know that? You don't know that verse? Let me show that to you. Matthew 15 and verse 13.

Every plant, every plant, 100% of plants which my heavenly Father did not plant. Some bright idea came into your head and you did it. It'll be rooted out.

I tell you today itself, it'll be pulled out. You did it without waiting on the Lord. You did it without seeking God.

Brilliant idea to do the Lord's work. Okay. It'll be pulled out.

You know so much of missionary work that is done in India is going to be pulled out in the final day. It did not originate in God. It'll be pulled out.

You say it's a good plant. I don't care whether it's a good plant. Who planted it? A man's bright idea, it'll be pulled out.

That is why I say, I don't want to have any bright ideas to serve God. Even now, you know, I get hundreds of invitations from different places and I say, Lord, I don't want to go here, there. People say, reach people for Christ.

Come on, reach people. Don't, don't miss that opportunity. Don't miss that opportunity.

I don't get pushed by man. I say, Lord, I'm a worshiper first. You tell me to go, I'll go.

You tell me to stay, I'll stay. I don't have a lust to serve God. I've got a great desire to worship God and that he prompts me to do something.

Okay, you've got to accept that invitation. I go. 1983, January.

I had two invitations from Kerala. One was to a huge conference of some 10 or 15,000 people of some big Pentecostal denomination. They wanted me to go as the main speaker.

And I had an invitation from a small group meeting in a house. And the small group. So I wrote to that big conference.

I said, sorry, I can't come. Because it is there on the same time now. So I went to the small group, just for a few days.

And a church was born. That is the first church was born in Kerala in Kottayam, 1983. From there it is spread.

How thankful I am that I did not go by human reasoning. Isn't it better to speak to 12,000 people than to speak to 15 people? Human reasoning, yes. But what is the will of God? I go and speak to 15,000 people, the Heavenly Father did not plant that plant, it will be pulled out.

And that is how I have sought to serve the Lord all these 41 years. I have not done it always perfectly. But I say, Lord, you tell me to go somewhere, I'll go.

I have no lust to go to any part of the world. No lust to speak to 10,000 people. I'm glad to speak to one person.

I remember once I went to a place called Bahrain, many years ago, just to meet two brothers who were in CFC there. I said, let me go and see them because I'm going to Dubai or somewhere for the meeting. This is just another hop there.

And when I went to Bahrain, I had to go from there to Doha, but it was the holidays. So I was stuck, couldn't get a visa to go to Doha. Four days or five days, I was stuck in Bahrain and it was holidays.

I had no plan. I said, okay, we are stuck here for four days. What to do? Let's have some meetings.

I didn't go there for meetings. I went there for two people because the Lord prompted me to go and meet them. So we had meetings and a church was born.

Did I plant it? Did I plant it? Far from it. I didn't go there to plant a church. I went there to meet two brothers and those two brothers are not there today.

Some others came and they were gripped by the truth. This is how God does his work. That no man can glory.

That I planned and I schemed and I did this and that. No, God did it. We will all stand before God on the final day and say, Lord, you planted these things and you deserve all the glory.

Men who do not know the truth will say, Brother Zach did this and Brother Zach did that and Brother Zach went there and planted a church. They don't know it. Let them say what they like.

I know the truth. God knows the truth. Dear brothers and sisters, what am I saying? Be a worshiper.

Be a worshiper. Let that be a passion of your life. Amen.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to press on to perfection in every area of our life. Help us never to be discouraged because we haven't reached the finishing line.

None of us have reached there. Help us to press on and press on and encourage one another. Help one another to reach the finishing line.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/QirvFekV5sY.mp4>

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