

Some Things I Have Learnt in 50 Years Part 3

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of truth, God's values, and faith in living a victorious Christian life.

Duration: 46:17

Scripture: Luke 16:15, John 7:30, John 21:22, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Peter 3:13

Topics: "Gods Plan", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

This sermon shares personal testimonies and truths learned in 50 years of being a believer. It emphasizes the importance of knowing God's truth, living a life of freedom, and understanding God's perfect plan for each individual's life. The speaker highlights the need to trust God's protection, believe in His power to turn evil into good, and seek to know God intimately to find strength and fulfill His unique purpose.

Transcript

This weekend I thought I would share a testimony in these four sessions concerning the truths I've learned in 50 years of being a believer, and this is the third of these sessions. The Lord's been very good to me and I want to thank him for it, because this year has been significant for me for two reasons. One, I completed 70 years last week, and if I don't look at it, it's because I'm only 30 inside.

I'm trying to be like Jesus more, I want to finish by the time I'm 33. The other thing is, I was born again exactly 50 years ago, so I completed 50 years as a believer as well, and there are a lot of things the Lord's taught me in 50 years that have changed my life. Jesus said you shall know the truth, the truth shall set you free, and that's the test I've always applied to any truth that people try to teach or that I've studied in scripture.

To know whether I got it right, the test is, does it make me more free? Free from the world and free from people, free from sin, free from tradition, you know like the eagle whose chains are broken that we can rise up to God. So truth is very important, and we need to get it right. So I want to review first of all the eight points I already covered in the last two sessions.

The first one was God loves Jesus' disciples as much as He loves Jesus. The second, God delights in honest people who will take the blame for their sin. Third, God delights in cheerful givers, He never compels anyone ever to do anything, not even to give money.

Fourth, we must treat every human being with dignity because the Bible says every man is made in the image of God in James 3.9. And the fifth truth, which I took in the second session, was holiness comes by looking unto Jesus and that's the meaning of faith. Faith is to look unto Jesus first of all for forgiveness and then to be saved from the power of sin in daily life. And number six, the way of the cross, which is so misunderstood or so little understood by Christians.

What it means to take up the cross every day is the way of life. If we die with Him, we will live with Him. If we don't die with Him, we will not live with Him.

And number seven, the world's opinions about us are fit only for the trash can. And please remember that all your life. It doesn't matter one bit.

It's only what God thinks about you that's going to matter in the day you stand before Him. Whether the world's opinions are good or bad counts for nothing. And number eight, we must be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, not just once, but continually.

And we must be filled with the Holy Spirit because that's as important as electricity is for these bulbs or for this mic and speaker system. You won't be able to live the life God wants you to live. The life described in the New Testament is not difficult.

It is impossible to live by human strength. As long as you think it's difficult, you will not seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. When you realize it's impossible, you'll be cast upon God.

Those are the things I've learned. And I'm going to cover 16 points altogether, and I want to cover four more in this session. Number nine, this world's values are the opposite of God's.

I want to turn to a verse in Luke chapter 16 and verse 15. Many people ask me, how do you know the Bible is God's word? Now, there are various reasons people have used for it in my early days. When I was young, I used to say, well, you know, the usual reasons people give that somebody dug up something in Israel and found manuscripts, and that's not the reason I believe it today.

I believe it because this book has changed my life in 50 years. And there's not a single thing that I have found in this book that is not true. And there's no contradiction.

I've studied it very carefully for 50 years, very, very carefully. There are apparent contradictions to those who don't study it carefully. But when you study it carefully, there are no contradictions.

And every promise in this book is true. And many of them I've claimed, and the ones I haven't, I want to claim before I finish my course. And every commandment in this book, I want to keep and finish.

It's one of the things I prayed to the Lord was, I said, Lord, I want to keep all your commandments before I leave this earth. And I want to claim every promise in this book before I leave this earth. It's something like if your dad left you a big inheritance, you might as well enjoy all of it.

Why enjoy a wee tiny bit of it like a lot of Christians do? All of it. So study the scriptures, and you will discover that the world's values are the opposite of God's. Luke 16, 15 says, in the last part of it, that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable or an abomination in the sight of God.

That which men esteem very highly, what does God think of it? It's an abomination. It's detestable. It's something that God's, it's not just that it's slightly different from God's opinion.

It's the exact opposite. It's an abomination, that which men esteem very highly. For example, in the world, they appreciate those who have a lot of confidence in themselves.

Now, that's okay in the secular world, in the business world. But when it comes to the Christian life, the Bible says, we have no confidence in ourselves, but we have total confidence in Christ. To have faith in Christ means to be like the branch in a tree.

Jesus said, I am the vine, and you're the branches. Without me, you can do nothing, is to recognize that, that our total impotence and helplessness apart from Christ, and a total confidence in God, zero confidence in ourselves. I'll tell you why this is important.

In the Old Testament, there was a law that said for the Israelites that if anyone was not circumcised, he was to be cut off from God's people. Now, everything in the Old Testament was a picture. It was not because circumcision was a big thing for God, but just like the killing of the lamb and the sacrifices, everything was a symbol.

What did circumcision symbolize? Circumcision symbolized Philippians 3.3. We are the true circumcision, it says, who have no confidence in the flesh, no confidence in ourselves. This is the meaning of circumcision, and circumcision was a cutting off of the flesh and throwing it away. And the spiritual meaning was, I have no confidence in the flesh.

Now, apply that Old Testament law. If a person is not circumcised, he's cut off from God's people. If a person tries to be a Christian, and he doesn't cut off all confidence in his own ability, he will never be the man or woman of God that God wants him to be.

So the world's values are quite the opposite. Well, think of another area. All of our information that we have and the judgments we make are based on what we see and read, what we hear.

The Bible says in Isaiah 11 verse 3 that Jesus never judged by what he saw or what he heard. One of the things the Lord taught me was I had to change my way of thinking and change the way I come to decisions and opinions. All the children of Adam make every decision based on what they see, what they've read.

All the information that comes through our eyes and through our ears is 99% of our decisions are based on that. But the true disciple of Jesus does not judge by what his eyes see or ears hear because it could be wrong. I believe one reason that God's allowed the sun to appear to move in the sky is to tell us that your senses can deceive you.

Every day you see the sun rising and setting, and we know that it doesn't move at all, but it's giving you the impression that it moves. You can't trust your senses. The earth is rotating under your feet at a thousand miles an hour, but it doesn't feel like it.

You can't trust your senses. So when we realize this, this is much more important spiritually that I'm not going to live by the values of this world. What appears to be valuable is not valuable in God's eyes.

Jesus, for example, when he came on earth, why was he born in a cow shed? I don't know. I've never met anyone in my life who was born in a cow shed. He came lower than everyone to teach us one thing from birth onwards that the things that are valuable in man's eyes got no value before God.

And remember, the birth of Jesus, unlike yours and mine, was planned from all eternity. You think Almighty God couldn't have planned for a room in Bethlehem? He could have easily done it, but he deliberately didn't allow any room to be available so that his son could be born in a cow shed in the midst of the cows and the donkeys to teach this world that that which man considers so valuable has no value in God's eyes. We know that Christ had to die for our sins.

But why did he have to die such a shameful death, hanging in an underwear on a cross, ridiculed and mocked by everybody? I mean, death, okay, he had to die, but couldn't it have been in a little more decent way in some corner where nobody saw him? No, it had to be with public shame, again, to teach the world that that which man values so highly has no value before God. There are many people who want to, even after they die, they look forward to a great funeral, and they plan for it. And I say, what type of funeral did Jesus have? There was hardly anybody there.

The things that man values so highly, even Christians, God has no value for them. It's character that God values. It's humility, which the world has no room for.

It's freedom from the love of money, which the world doesn't think it's important. So unless we understand this clearly, that the world's values are the exact opposite of God's, we will never be the type of Christians we should be. And one reason God has given us his word is to show us that everything that this world values is the opposite of what heaven values.

The apostle Paul once said that we apostles are treated like the scum of this world. Imagine God's greatest servants. Once we read that they wanted to make Jesus a king after he had fed the 5,000 with five loaves, and he disappeared.

He didn't come to this earth to be a king. The Bible says he humbled himself in order to be a servant. He had been sent from heaven to be a servant, and he refused throughout his life to take any other position than the position of a humble servant of other men.

That's why you see him on the last day of his earthly life, washing the disciples' feet. How different from Christian leaders today? How different from the example that Christians have set before others? It's because we haven't understood that that which men value highly is not just something that's not good. It's something that God hates.

It's an abomination. So that's number nine. Then I want to go on to number 10.

Nobody can harm us except we ourselves. It's an amazing truth that really brought a lot of rest into my life. Nobody can harm me except I myself.

And the Bible is full of examples like that. Beginning with the story of Joseph, whose brothers tried to harm him, but they didn't succeed in harming him. They sold him off to Egypt.

Well, that's exactly where God wanted him to go in any case. And Potiphar's wife tried to harm him, put him in jail, but that's exactly where God wanted him to go. Because he had to be trained in the rigors of jail life to be fit to be the ruler of Egypt.

And it was in jail that he would meet Pharaoh's butler, who would give him an introduction to Pharaoh. But who helped Joseph to go to jail? Potiphar's wife. Nobody can harm you except you yourself.

If we understand this, it'll change our lives completely. Satan was defeated on the cross. It's not just that Christ died for our sins on the cross.

But he defeated man's greatest enemy, Satan. I don't have to be afraid of the devil. I don't have to be afraid of anything that the devil or any of his agents can ever try to do to me.

I don't have to be afraid of sickness, accident, or anything. Because the Bible says in Romans chapter 8 and verse 28. It's one of the most wonderful verses in scripture.

Romans 8 verse 28. God causes all things to work for good. The important word there is God.

Jesus said when you pray, say our Father who art in heaven. We have a Father who's in heaven, who's in control of everything that happens on this universe. And there's nothing difficult for him.

And no one can harm us. Think of another verse I want to show you. Romans 8 verse 28 is fairly well known.

That God makes everything work together for good to those who love him. If I love him, and he's the object of my heart's desire. God himself will ensure that all the circumstances that happen around me will work for my good.

Because Satan was defeated on the cross. It's not just that God protects me from evil. That would be itself a great thing.

But he makes the evil that people try to do to me to work for my good. That's amazing. I mean here's a proof of it.

It can bring tremendous rest into your heart as it brought to mind for many, many years. You know the reason I mention these things is I wish somebody had told me this 50 years ago. The truths that I have learned.

Because then I could have lived with them. I struggled through many years to learn these truths. And those of you who are new believers, it's wonderful if you can know these things right at the beginning.

Think of this. What was the greatest evil that ever took place on this earth? The greatest, the most evil thing that ever happened. It was not 9-11 by the way.

The most evil thing that ever took place on this earth was the crucifixion of the son of God. There was no greater evil. That was the greatest act of terrorism or evil that the world has ever seen.

The crucifixion of God's son on Calvary. Okay, next question. What's the best thing that ever happened on this earth? The crucifixion of the son of God, right? What is God trying to tell us through that? That the worst thing that man could do or the devil could do, God can turn to become the very best thing for us.

And whatever evil you may have faced or you may face in the future, I'm sure you'll agree is lesser than the crucifixion of the son of God, right? And if the greatest evil could have been turned by God to the greatest good, that teaches us that any lesser evil that you may be experiencing, God can turn to the greatest good provided you believe. You know, one of the things of scripture is there can be truths there, but you won't experience it unless you believe it. And you see that in the beginning of Israel's history.

God told the people of Israel, I'll take you out of Egypt and I'll bring you into Canaan. But when they came to the borders of Canaan, God's promise was not fulfilled. Is it possible that God's promise cannot be fulfilled? Yes.

If his people do not believe they came to the borders of that land and 600,000 grown men said, no, we can't get in. God said, all right, you won't get it. Even though I promised you to, you'll get in, you will not get it.

But your children will get it. They'll trust me. And you'll wander in the wilderness for 40 years when you need not have wandered.

I believe there are Christians today wandering in the wilderness who should have been in the promised land. We should have been living a life of victory, but we're defeated because they don't believe. No one can harm us.

You've got to believe that Satan cannot touch us. Let me show you this verse in 1 Peter chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 13 says this. Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? If your passion in life is to do good, to love your enemies, to bless those who curse you, to always determine that you're going to do what is right and upright and good, even if it means loss, even if it means financial loss, you're going to do what is right.

I want to tell you in Jesus' name, no one can harm you. The devil gets power over many of God's children because they don't trust him. They don't trust God to protect them.

Let me show you two verses in Jesus' life. It says in John's Gospel chapter 7 and verse 30. John 7 and verse 30, it says, They were seeking to seize Jesus.

Jesus was a helpless person, weak, no influence in society. And here were all these powerful Pharisees, chief priests with their Roman soldiers to help them trying to seize him. But no man laid his hand on him.

Why? Because his hour had not yet come. That's the reason. He had more protection than the President of the United States.

All the secret service people, Jesus had no secret service. But he had angels around him. Nobody could touch him.

Nobody could arrest him. It's repeated again in John 8 and verse 20. While he spoke in the treasury, taught in the temple, no one seized him because his hour had not yet come.

And as Jesus walked on this earth, so can we. No one can harm us. But we can harm ourselves.

The Bible says, What a man sows, he will reap. Sometimes we think that it's only the obvious evil that we do that will harm us. It's not true.

Supposing a farmer, secretly when nobody's looking, in the middle of the night, sows bad seed in his field. Ah, he says, nobody saw me. What sort of crop is he going to get? Does it make a difference whether he did it when people were watching him or not watching him? It makes no difference.

It's a law of God, we reap what we sow. And we must bear that in mind. It's not other people who can harm us.

We harm ourselves. If you're not diligent to be faithful to the things of, the principles of God's word in your private life, that's what I mean by sowing in secret, in your thoughts, in the areas of your life that nobody in the church and probably not even your husband or wife know about. Those are the areas where you can harm yourself by what you sow.

Because believe it or not, one day you're going to reap that. If you sow tomatoes, you're going to reap tomatoes. You're not going to reap potatoes, no.

If you want to reap potatoes, you've got to sow potatoes. The Bible says if you sow to the things of the flesh, you will reap corruption and destruction. So the decisions we make determine how you're going to be in the future.

So it's wonderful to know that, that no human being can ever harm me. No demon in hell can harm me, except I myself. People try to harm David.

They didn't succeed. People try to harm Jesus, the apostles. They didn't succeed.

There may be external suffering, but God makes it work for our good. And I've seen that in all these 50 years that I've been a believer. So many, especially as one who is serving the Lord and seeking to speak the truth uncompromisingly, you can believe that I'm the target of Satan in many ways.

Not only me, my family too. But I'll tell you something. It's my testimony.

In 50 years, so many, many people have tried to harm me, hurt me, write articles against me, all that. They've only succeeded in making me a better Christian. I'll tell you that.

Do you want to obey all of Scripture? You know, I told you that I wanted to obey all of Scripture. How can I love my enemies if I don't have any enemies? How can I bless those who curse me if nobody curses me? How can I do good to those who hate me if nobody hates me? So there have to be these people who do these things so that I can obey Scripture and become a better Christian. So thank God for them.

Thank God for those who help you to obey the Word of God. Okay, number 11. Here's another truth that I've learned.

There's a verse in Daniel 11, verse 32. It's referring to the last days. I don't have time to go to the context of that chapter.

But if you read it, the whole context is about the days of the Antichrist, the end times. And in those end times, it speaks about the Antichrist. By smooth words, he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly towards the covenant.

Daniel 11, verse 32. But the people who know their God will display strength. Knowing God intimately is the secret of being strong.

That's point number 11. Those who know their God will be strong and take action. And this is especially referring to the last days.

So I want to encourage you to seek, to pursue after the knowledge of God. Many Christians have not understood what eternal life is. Jesus said in John 17, verse 3. This is eternal life.

Not living forever, because even people who go to hell live forever. That's not eternal life. This is eternal life that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

That's why Paul at the end of his life said in Philippians 3.10. My passion is to know him better. The more we know God, the more our life will become free. See, for example, there's a lovely verse in Lamentations 3 which says, His mercies are new every morning.

That's one aspect of God that's really blessed me. To know God as a merciful God. What is the meaning of His mercies are new every morning? I've thought about that.

You know, we must meditate on Scripture. Don't rush through Scripture. Many people try to finish the Scriptures quickly.

I'm not interested in getting into the Guinness Book of Records for the number of times I read through Scripture. I'm more interested in the Bible going through me at least once in my life. More than my going through the Bible 50 times.

If the Bible can go through me once, that's it. So, read Scripture slowly. What does it mean when it says His mercies are new every morning in Lamentations 3? It means that, let's take today.

That God looks at me as if He's never been merciful to me until today because all my sins are forgiven. He says, I won't remember your sins anymore in Hebrews 8.12. So, my whole past life, it's as if I've never sinned. And if I sin today and I say, Lord, I'm sorry.

Oh, this is the first time I want to forgive you. His mercies are new every morning. Now, what is the result of this? Every truth has got a practical implication.

It means I look at other people like that. You look at your wife as one who's never sinned until today. Wouldn't that be wonderful? You look at your husband as one who's never made a mistake until today because you've forgiven it.

It's not that they never did it. But, their sins and iniquities, I will remember no more. Do you want to be like God? We all say we want to be like Him.

What about in this area of looking at people saying, your sins and iniquities, I will not remember anymore. Didn't Jesus teach us to pray? He said, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others. Exactly in the same way.

Did you really mean it? How did you forgive that other person who did some terrible evil to you? Maybe you did forgive, but maybe your attitude is, boy, I'll never forget what you did. You're telling God, forgive me, Lord, but don't ever forget what I did. Is that the way you want God to forgive you? Treat others the way God's treated you.

When you know God as a merciful God, you become like that. The secret of strength, spiritual strength, is to know God. God's given us His word so that we might know Him.

For example, to know God as one who can do everything. Jesus said, nothing is impossible with God. He also said, nothing is impossible for the man who believes in this God.

You know, just like this tremendous electric power in a socket. When you plug into that socket, you get that power too. For your gadget, whatever you plug in.

The power is in that socket, but if you plug into that socket, you get the benefit of it. This is what Jesus was saying. Nothing is impossible with God.

When you know God, you discover there's absolutely nothing impossible for Him. Let's just stop for a moment and think of that very difficult or impossible thing that you know could possibly be the will of God for you. I've experienced numerous situations like this, where I said, boy, that looks impossible.

But it's not impossible for God. I'm not going to worry and be anxious, oh God, how am I going to handle this? The secret of spiritual strength is to know God. You know, in India, we have, even in our houses, a lot of ants come in.

It's a very common thing in Indian homes to see ants. They come after food. And sometimes you see a stream of these wee tiny ants crawling on the floor.

And sometimes that ant may be dragging one grain of rice to its little hideout in the corner. And it's a pretty heavy weight, one grain of rice for an ant. And if that ant could speak and say to me, brother Zach, can you please help me? I want to carry this grain of rice to my hideout ten feet away.

I say, sure. Oh, it's heavy. You don't realize how heavy it is.

It's one grain of rice. It's about ten times my weight. And it's a long distance, ten feet.

I say, it's no problem for me. I can take a sack of rice for you if you like. Ten feet is nothing.

You know, that's how we treat God. Oh God, this problem, it's so heavy. Can you handle it? A God who runs the universe.

In this universe, if you've studied geography, you know that the earth is like a grain of sand. Planet Earth is a grain of sand. And on this grain of sand are even smaller specks called you and me.

And we have what we call a problem. And we go to this almighty God, who we say is our father. I say, Lord, can you handle it? It's laughable.

It's like that ant asking me, can you carry this grain of rice for me? It's heavy. You know, a lot of believers are actually unbelieving believers. They don't really believe.

They don't know God as God who is almighty. I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, if you have surrendered your life to Christ, you'll come into a special relationship with God. He's become your father.

You can trust him. He's almighty. God has given us his word so that we might know him.

And that's why Jesus said, let me read you a verse in Luke chapter 10, verse 42. This is the place where it says Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his word. And for 50 years, God has been speaking this word to my heart.

One thing is needful. Mary has chosen that good part. What did she do? She just sat at Jesus' feet and listened.

Her sister Martha was busy working in the kitchen. We think working for God is more important than listening to him. That is our stupidity.

When Martha came and said to Jesus, Lord, tell Mary to come and help me. Look at her lazily sitting here. Jesus said, Martha, the trouble is with you.

You think I'm interested in all that food you're cooking for me? You think I'm interested in all your work for me? I'm not. I'm more interested in your listening to me. One of the verses the Lord taught me many years ago, that brought great rest into my life, was 1 Corinthians 4, verse 2. In the NASB, it reads like this.

It's required of stewards that a man be found trustworthy. When I read that in the Living Bible, it paraphrased it like this. The most important thing about a servant is that he does just what his master tells him to.

It's not that he runs around doing this, that, and the other. He does what his master tells him to. So I discovered the important thing is to know God, to know what is his will for me.

You know, people say, do something for God. I don't want to do something for God. I want to do his will.

Think of how Jesus lived. His life was so restful. He spent 30 years never going outside his little village of Nazareth.

And the next three and a half years, 99% in a small little country called Israel. He never traveled to China. He never even paid a visit to Rome.

He never went anywhere. And he said at the end of his life, I finished my work. When you know God, you will not be restless.

Your life will be one of rest. You will never compare your ministry with somebody else's. You will be at rest.

The secret of spiritual strength is to know God. Those who know God in the last days will be strong, and they'll do exploits for him. They'll do wonderful things for him.

So I want to encourage you to allow the word of God to change your way of thinking. If you don't read God's word, you will never know God. We know God through his word.

And I'm thankful that I've come to know so much about God as I've studied this word. And I've seen the life that Jesus lived, the words Jesus spoke. The Bible says Jesus explained the father to know God as a father.

To know God as one who is kind and strict. Kind and strict. That's an example for earthly fathers.

Your children must know you as a friend and as one who is strict to prevent them from destroying themselves. Because God is like that. So I want to just say this final thing in that point that God's got a solution for every problem you're facing today.

Not one, but every single problem. I'm thankful for that. To me, that's the message I get from all the miracles that Jesus did.

That Jesus can solve every problem. There was never a person who came to Jesus with a problem where Jesus had to scratch his head and say, boy, that's a tough one. I don't know how to handle that.

Never. And he's the same. Yesterday, today, and forever.

His love never changes. Applause And then I want to go on to point number 12. Another truth I've learned.

Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 10. It says here that we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. God has got a perfect plan for each of our lives.

Now, there are some people who say, maybe just a few in Christendom, who say that this teaching, that God's got a perfect plan for your life, is what's leading a lot of Christianity astray. That's false. My life was changed when I discovered, when I was baptized at the age of 21, that God had a plan for my life.

I want to testify to that. Nearly 50 years ago, when I was a young man, I was an officer in the Indian Navy, and my ambitions was to go right up to the top, to be an admiral. That was my aim, and I was working towards it when Jesus came into my life.

And I was baptized, and suddenly my ambitions changed, because of one reason. I discovered that God, who loved me, had made a plan for my life. And that plan took every factor into account.

My abilities, my gifts, my personality, all the path that lay ahead of me, the dangers in the future, what I was supposed to do. And I began to think, is it possible that I can plan my life better than God? That I can make more out of the rest of... I didn't know then I was going to live another 50 years. But, is it... I mean, even if I did, would I be able to plan those 50 years better than Almighty God, who sees all the future? I mean, it's like this.

Supposing you have earned a lot of money, and you're not good at investment, you don't know how to make the most of it. Supposing you got a million dollars, and you don't know how to invest it. And if you try to invest it, you'll just make a mess of it and lose everything.

And supposing there's a person who's an expert at it, and whom we can trust, and that's the important part, whom we can trust. Wouldn't you give it to him and say, listen, you can do this better than me. Can you trust God to invest your life with him? Say, Lord, you can make a better deal with my life than I can.

Boy, I'm so thankful that I let him plan my life 50 years ago. Three years after I understood that, and I took my baptism, the Lord told me to quit my job. And I left the Navy in 1966, 43 years ago.

And I'm so thankful the way God planned my life, that he didn't show me the whole future, he didn't give me a map for all of my life, or a blueprint, he showed me the next step. And as I took that step, he showed me the next one. And it says here in Ephesians 2.10, we are created in Christ Jesus, for what? For good works that God prepared way back in eternity, that I should walk in them now.

God has got a perfect plan for my life. I want you to see something here, the contrast between verse 9 and 10. When we are saved, it says in verse 9 of Ephesians 2, it's not a result of works.

There are no works that can bring salvation into our life. We're saved by grace through faith, not of works. But once we're saved, not of works, there are plenty of works after that.

Verse 10, we are created to do good works which God planned for us before the worlds were created. That's like saying, the foundation of our salvation, there are no works, but in the superstructure, there are a lot of works. Or if you take the example of a building, we say we don't put any doors and windows in the foundation, right? But we have doors and windows in the superstructure.

There are no works in the foundation, but plenty of works in the superstructure. And that's how it should be. So God has got a plan for my life, a perfect plan.

And that's why it's important for us to find God's will. God's will is not the same for you as it would be for somebody else. If you look at somebody else's life and say, oh, well, he did this, so I'm going to do that, you'll go astray.

You've got to find God's will for your own life. The Bible says we are part members of the body of Christ and each member in this body that God's created has got a different function. The eye has got a different function from the ear.

So the eye need not feel jealous of the ear and it doesn't have to imitate the ear. It'll go completely astray if it imitates another part of the body. The same with every little organ in this body.

It's got a particular function. And I want you to know that you've got a particular function if you're giving your life to Christ. You're a very vital, important part of Christ's body.

And you've got a function that if you try to imitate somebody else, you'll miss completely. Let me give you an example from the Old Testament. I don't have time to show you the verses, but it's in Genesis and Exodus.

At the age of 30, Joseph became the ruler of Egypt. He died when he was 110. That's all in Genesis.

For 80 years, he lived as a man of God in the comfort of Pharaoh's palace. Go to Exodus. You read about Moses.

He was in Pharaoh's palace almost from the time of his birth. He became 40 years old and God told him, for you, the next 80 years is not in the palace, but in the wilderness. Now if Moses, when he was 40 years old, had looked at Joseph's life and said, well, Joseph was in Pharaoh's palace for 80 years.

So I suppose I can live in Pharaoh's palace for the next 80 years. He'd have completely missed God's will for his life. It's very easy when we look at someone else's life and say, boy, he did it like that.

So I can also do it like that. You'll go astray. You remember when the Lord told Peter in John 21, Peter, when you're young, you gird yourself and go where you like, but when you're old, somebody else will drag you to lead you where you don't like to go.

He was speaking about the way in which Peter would later on be crucified and killed as a martyr. And his immediate reaction was, he saw John. He said, what about John? Is he going to have a comfortable life or is he going to suffer like me too? Have you found that question coming to you? Why does that brother have an easy life and me have all the difficulties? Why does that sister find it so easy and I'm finding it difficult? You know what the Lord told him? Let me paraphrase it.

Mind your own business. I call you to follow me. Don't worry about John.

If I want John to live for 1900 years, what's that to you? That's exactly what he said. If I want him to live until I return. If I want him to live for 2000 years, what's that to you? You mind your own business.

You don't have to worry whether he's going to suffer. You were called to follow me. Just forget about everybody else and follow me.

God's got a plan for your life. And I'll tell you something. If you follow that step by step, it'll be the best possible life you can ever live on the face of this earth.

And I'll tell you one other thing. You'll never be able to fulfill that plan if you love money. You'll never be able to fulfill that plan if you seek for the honor of men.

These are some of the lessons God's taught me for 50 years. And I'm so thankful that I learned them. I wish I'd known them when I was 20.

I wish all of you would know it today. It can change your life. Let's pray.

If the Lord has spoken to your heart, maybe one area. Say, Lord, I heard you speaking to me today. I want to obey you.

And if you've never given your life to Christ, today's the day to begin. I began that journey 50 years ago and don't regret a single day of it until today. Surrender your life to Christ.

It's the best life you can ever live. And if you have given your life to Christ, ask yourself if you have surrendered totally, do you seek to know him? Begin today. Say, Lord, I want to know you better.

I want to live by the principles of your word. Help me. Thank you for hearing me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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