

The Call of God - Fellowship

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship in the church, the power of the New Covenant, and the victory over sin through the death of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:01:35

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, John 4:4, John 12:23, Romans 8:17, 1 Corinthians 15:36, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 4:4

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the initial close bond that often forms when people come together in a church or fellowship. He emphasizes the importance of believing in the sovereignty of God and humbling oneself before Him. The speaker highlights the power of God to control people's thoughts and actions, citing Proverbs 21:1 as evidence. He encourages listeners to meditate on God's vastness and authority over the universe, recognizing that even in the midst of personal problems, God is able to help and solve any issue. The sermon also emphasizes the significance of Jesus' death on the cross in delivering believers from the grip of Satan and freeing them from slavery.

Transcript

To share with you, to get to know many of you better, to be bound closer in the bonds of fellowship in Christ, I praise the Lord for that. Why is it that in many a church, or in many a fellowship, when people first come together, there's a very close bond, something new starts, revival, and we think we're going to go together till Jesus comes. And then pretty soon comes murmurings, divisions, complaints, splits, is it going to be like this forever? I don't think we can ever build a church where there will be no wolves, there will be no counterfeits.

But I believe that in every church God seeks to gather together a few who are willing to lay down their lives so that God's kingdom may be furthered and His purposes fulfilled on earth. And in every church that will be few, but the number should keep increasing. And that's the core that fights the battles and keeps the church pure.

Way back in the time of Gideon, it says he gathered 32,000 people to fight against many hundreds of thousands of Midianites, but God said these people were too many, and finally He whittled them down to 300. And with those 300, He defeated the Midianites, took the spoils of battle, and when they came back, all 32,000 could enjoy them. And I see that's how it is.

There are many who come to enjoy the blessings of God, but God wants a few who will fight the battles, overcome Satan, keep Satan out of the church, and bring back the spoils from His kingdom. And to be in that inner core, I believe that's the real church in the midst of the church. There's one very important condition.

It says in John's Gospel, chapter 12, Jesus said, just before He went to the cross, The hour has come, verse 23, that the Son of Man is to be glorified. To be glorified, that's our goal. The Bible says we're going to be glorified one day.

But how is He going to be glorified? He said, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Here He's speaking about two alternatives. You either are going to be alone, that means without fellowship, or you're going to have fruit, and that means fellowship.

Now, fellowship doesn't mean that we all come into one church building regularly, and we're not excommunicated, we're here and we attend all the meetings and we're in good standing. That's not the meaning of fellowship. People can be lonely right in the midst of a very crowded church.

A husband and wife can live in one home. It doesn't mean they have fellowship. They can be alone.

Fellowship is a very deep thing. They never had it in the Old Testament. There's no such thing as the word fellowship in the Old Testament.

They were a community of people and they did many things together, but they didn't have fellowship. There are many words used in the Old Testament to describe God's people, like they're called the family of God, we're also the family of God. They're even called the bride in Isaiah.

We're also called the bride. They were told in Exodus that it'd be a kingdom of priests, and we're a kingdom of priests. They were the house of God, we're the house of God, but there's one title that's never found in the Old Testament for Israel, and that is a body.

They could never be a body, and the perfect example of fellowship is not a family, it's not a building, it's not a kingdom, it's the body, and that's what the church is called in the New Testament, the body of Jesus Christ. And when believers enter into the new covenant, it's not only that they come into a personal life of holiness, like we considered yesterday, partakers of God's holiness, not just externally keeping the law, but God's laws are written now in our hearts and minds by Him. It says that God works in us to will and to do His good pleasure, Philippians 2. That means He works in us to give us the desire to do His will, as you hear His will described.

The first thing that the Holy Spirit works in us is to desire that will, I want that in my life. None of us should ever think that that is something of our own production. Repentance from sin is the work of the Holy Spirit, it says in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 11, God granted repentance to the Gentiles, it's a gift.

I would have no desire to repent if God didn't give that to me through the Holy Spirit. You know, I've had many young people and older people come to me and say, I wonder if I've committed the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which I can never be forgiven. And I say, I ask them one question, do you have a desire to give up sin in your life? They say, yeah, I want to turn.

I say, then it's impossible for you to have committed that sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, because that desire to give up sin is from God, it's from the Holy Spirit. I don't care what sin you committed, it's not the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, that's for sure, because He would have stopped working with you then. You would have absolutely no desire to repent or turn to God if you had committed that unforgivable sin.

So it's God who first works in us to desire His will. That means He writes His laws in my mind. To write God's laws in my mind is that I desire His will.

But desire alone is not enough. I can desire God's will and I don't have the ability to do it. And that's the second part of that promise.

He works in us to will and to do His good pleasure. The same God who worked in us to desire His will is the same God who is going to give us the ability to do His will. That's the new covenant.

And that's the meaning of what it says in Hebrews 8 which we read yesterday. He writes His law not only in our mind, giving us the desire, but also in our hearts, giving us the ability to do God's will. Both are from Him.

And so I don't have to depend on myself to produce that ability. That's why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's why we need to cry out for grace in the time of need.

When we are tempted to cry out for grace, Lord help me now. I'm sinking, I'm going down, help me. And He keeps us from falling.

Like Peter, you know, when he was sinking in the sea, he only said, Lord save me. And the Lord stretched out His hand and held him. And in the moment of temptation, you try this out.

The Bible says that we had to run to the throne of grace to find mercy. That's forgiveness of our past sins. Mercy is an Old Testament word.

Grace is a New Testament word. There was no grace in the Old Testament. The law came by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ.

Mercy was there in the Old Testament. His mercies endure forever. The many verses about mercy in the Psalms.

Mercy deals with our past. Grace deals with our future. Mercy deals with the guilt of my past life.

They had that in the Old Testament too when David said, Bless the Lord, O my soul who forgives all your iniquities. But he didn't have grace. He couldn't say, Bless the Lord, O my soul who helps me to overcome all my sins.

He couldn't say that. Because he didn't have grace. He had mercy.

That means he did a lot of wrong things. And he cried out, God forgive him. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

His mercies endure forever. But grace is something else. The most misunderstood word among Christians.

Many people have understood grace to mean that now it doesn't matter if you sin. Because you'll be forgiven. That's cheap grace.

It's false grace. The real meaning of grace is in Romans 6.14 where it says, Sin shall not be master over you anymore because you are not under law, but under grace. Because you are not under the Old Covenant, but under the New Covenant.

There's one mark that a man has entered into the New Covenant. That a man has come fully under grace. Sin no longer rules over him.

We read in the Old Testament that Joshua got the leaders of the Israelites one day. And told them to put their leg on the necks of those kings in Canaan. Those huge giants which they got scared of 38 years earlier.

He said, put your foot on their necks. That's what God's going to do to all your enemies. They mastered this land once, but they're not going to master it anymore.

This land belongs to Jehovah. The land of Canaan. And we're going to win it for him.

That's how Joshua went into the land of Canaan. And the equivalent of the land of Canaan today is our body. This body has been ruled by not 31 kings.

These many, many kings have ruled this body which should belong to Jesus Christ. And when the message of the Holy Spirit comes saying these kings will no longer rule this body. But present your body as a living sacrifice to God and let Jesus Christ be ruler of your body.

Let Jesus Christ control your eyes from now on. Let Jesus Christ control your tongue from now on. That means you never want to look at or read anything that Jesus would not want you to look at or read.

And you never want to speak anything anymore that Jesus would not want you to speak. That you couldn't speak if Jesus were sitting beside you. That you never want to hear any gossip or any story which Jesus would not want to hear.

That you never want your feet to take you to some place where Jesus wouldn't want you to go. That's what it means to give our body to Jesus. And then comes the devil reminding us all these giants that have ruled this body for so many years.

And says, you can't overcome these giants, they're too strong. Well, they are too strong under law. But grace, grace gives us the power to put all those giants under our feet.

Sin shall not rule over you. That's the promise of God. And I remember in the years when I was defeated, defeated, defeated, defeated.

Just like those disciples trying to catch fish and not getting anything. I kept on confessing one truth. That's fine, it's true I'm defeated.

But one of these days sin shall not be master over me. Anger will no longer master me. One of these days, that day will come when the giant will come under my feet.

Lust will not rule over me. Bitterness will not rule me. Nothing will rule over me.

Jesus Christ will rule over me. Grace will reign in my heart. I want you my brothers and sisters, no matter how defeated you are.

To believe that a day will come in your life when sin will never rule over you anymore. Sin will not rule in your home. Peace will reign in your home.

Peace, the peace of God. Because that is the will of God. Confess it with your mouth.

And say to the devil, you're not going to rule forever. Have you got a child who's under the grip of the devil? Tell the devil to his face, you're not going to hold him forever. He's going to be broken free from your grip.

He was defeated on the cross. Satan was defeated on the cross. He doesn't like to hear it.

I believe you must confess that to the devil. You must tell the devil that he was defeated on the cross. I remember when a demon possessed, I didn't know it was demon possessed.

A lady was brought to my house and I told her to pray. And then told her to say that, Satan you've been defeated on the cross. She said, I've not been defeated on the cross.

That was a demon inside her. And that's when I knew it was a demon. I said, you're a liar.

You were defeated on the cross, of course you were. Get out of her, in Jesus name. And she left.

And then I said, say to the devil now, you were defeated on the cross. He said it. She was free.

That's the day I discovered he does not like to hear that. Who likes to hear about their defeat? I want to encourage you every day. Wherever you remember it.

Tell the devil, you were defeated on Calvary's cross. You got no power over me. Absolutely not.

You ruled over me many years. But you're not going to rule over me. You're not going to bring that complication into my family.

My son is going to be delivered. My daughter is going to be delivered. Don't just hang your head there and say, oh Lord.

The devil is doing this and the devil is doing that. One would think that the verse of scripture says, greater is he that is in the world than he that is in you. Is that what it says? It does.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Let's tell the devil that. I'm not stronger than you, but Jesus is.

I didn't defeat you. I don't have to defeat you. You were defeated 2,000 years ago on Calvary.

And I stand with my savior and you cannot have power over me. You cannot have power over my children. You cannot have power over my finances, my business, my house.

Nothing. I belong to Jesus Christ. Grace is going to rule over my heart.

They could never say any of these things in the Old Testament. They couldn't say one word to the devil in the Old Testament. You know that? Do you remember that Daniel struggled, struggled, struggled,

struggled for three weeks before Michael the angel could come to help him.

And the angel said, well, for three weeks this prince of Persia was struggling against me. Well, that was Old Testament. That is before Jesus died on Calvary.

That's before the armor was taken away from Satan. Don't go back to those Old Testament examples. It's not like that.

We stand against Satan. We stand in the victory that Jesus won on the cross. Sin shall not rule over us is the word of God.

And the Bible says, let God be true and every man a liar. Sin shall not rule over you. Any place where the devil's got a grip on your life, he doesn't have to have that grip.

Jesus has purchased total freedom for us. Not in our home, not in our church. We can bind the activities of Satan.

But, how did Jesus overcome Satan? It was not when he cast out demons that he overcame Satan. It was not by preaching sermons. It was not even by prayer.

And you are not going to overcome the devil by prayer, by casting out demons, by preaching sermons. The Bible says in Hebrews 2, how Jesus overcame Satan. It says, since the children, Hebrews 2.14, share in flesh and blood, he took part of the same.

That through death, this is the part I want you to understand. Through death, he rendered powerless the one who had the power of death, that is the devil. How did Jesus render Satan powerless? It doesn't say he destroyed Satan.

If he destroyed Satan, there wouldn't be any demons or Satan in the world today. He didn't destroy him. The Bible is very accurate.

It says he rendered him powerless, the one who had the power of death, that is the devil. Why? So that he might deliver us from the grip that Satan had over us. From slavery.

We were subject to slavery all our lives, verse 15. It was through the cross, through death, that he defeated, rendered powerless, destroyed the power of Satan. The same thing is repeated in Colossians chapter 2, where it says that he, on the cross, he's talking about the cross where two things happened.

One, he cancelled the certificate of death, which is all that many people know, Colossians 2.14. He cancelled the certificate of death that was against us. And then he, the next thing he did on the cross, when he nailed that to the cross and after that on the cross, he disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display over them, having triumphed over them through him. So Satan was defeated not when Jesus cast out demons, not when he preached sermons, not when he did miracles.

He was defeated only when Jesus died. Through death on the cross. And just like there was a day in your life, when, I mean you were, all your life you had believed that Christ died for your sins.

I know, I believe it from childhood and I think all of us sitting here. From childhood you know Christ died for the sins of the world. But there was a day that came in your life, some years ago, when you saw on the cross that Jesus took your sins.

That's the day you were born again. Even though you knew that as a fact for so many years. One day you realized he died for you.

He took your sins. It was your sins that nailed him on the cross and you received him. And your sins were forgiven.

But there is one more thing that happened on the cross. The Bible says that we were crucified with him too. Our old man was crucified with him.

Now I don't need to explain that or understand it. I've struggled with it through years and I've discovered. I can't really understand that.

But you don't need to understand something before you get the benefit of it. How many of you understand how your digestive system works? Can you explain it to me? I can't. But it's worked in my system for 60 years.

Without a problem, even though I don't understand it. That's just a proof that things can work in your life even if you don't understand it. And you can't explain it.

When God's word says. I've never seen my stomach but I believe it's there. And it does a good job.

And I don't understand how I, living now, was crucified with Christ on the cross 2000 years ago. But I believe it. What God's word says is more true than what any anatomy book says about my having a stomach or a liver.

It's true. And when my eyes are open to this truth. Something else will happen in my life.

Just like many years ago when my eyes were open to the fact that my sins were put upon Jesus on the cross. Something happened. A real change took place.

When I see that God took this nature of mine. And condemned it with Jesus on the cross. That my old man was put to death there.

That I died with him. Something will happen when I see it. When I see it.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 6. That once I see that. I must then thereafter. Romans 6.6 says your old man was crucified with Christ.

And therefore since that took place and you believe it. Now verse 11. Consider yourself to be dead to sin.

But alive unto God. You have to reckon yourself. You have to consider yourself.

From now on I believe that. This old man was crucified with Christ. I accept that position of death with Christ.

It says the spirit led Jesus to Calvary. And if the Holy Spirit fills me. He will lead me to that same death of the cross.

Every day in my life. That's what Jesus was speaking about when he said. If this grain of wheat.

Does not fall into the ground and die. It will remain alone. Why is there no peace in a home? Why do husband and wife fight? It's because there is no death.

Think for example if you have a neighbor. Where every morning promptly at 6.30. The husband and wife start fighting. And you can hear it.

In India the homes are very close. Just 4 or 5 feet apart. You can hear everything that goes on.

In the next house. You know they are fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting. Every morning you hear it promptly at 6.30. They start.

Back and forth calling each other names. And then one day. It's peaceful.

6.30 in the morning. And you wonder what happened. And you go there to that house.

And you discover. That the wife died. That's why there was peace.

That's the secret. If one person is willing to die. There will be peace.

Who will the other person fight with? If both die. There will be fellowship. That's even better.

But if you can't have fellowship. You can die and at least there will be peace. You can't clap with one hand.

Try it. No noise to come. Otherwise there will be peace.

No matter how long. You will get tired after a while and just give up. It's like that.

So if we die. There will be peace. If both die.

There will be fellowship. Without that death. There is no fellowship.

This is one of the mysteries of the New Covenant. What is the first thing I said? In the New Covenant. Grace brings us into a life of victory over sin.

That's the New Covenant message. He will write his laws. Upon my heart and mind.

Which means he will give me the desire. And the ability to do God's will. He will give me his own nature.

The nature of Jesus. That wanted to do the Father's will. That did the Father's will.

And then. He will do something more. And that is bring us into fellowship.

Through a union with him in his death. That's why he said. If a man does not want to be united with me in my death.

It will be like the grain of wheat that refuses to die. You can take that grain of wheat and put it in a glass case. And put it in your sitting room.

After 20 years it will be one grain of wheat. That's how a lot of Christians are. There is no spiritual growth in their life.

There is no fruit. Of growth of character in their life. There is no fruit in their ministry.

Because they don't die. But if they fall into the ground and die. And are willing to be buried.

You know what happens to a grain of wheat? We see that all the time around us. The miracle of resurrection. Is in all our fields.

All the time. Every year we see it. We don't notice it.

But it's death and resurrection. That all around us. The farms and fields are preaching to us.

Death and resurrection. That seed goes into the ground. It's buried.

Unseen. Trampled upon by men. And then it comes forth.

Because it dies inside. And that's what Jesus said. We need to do.

We need to choose it. We need to choose that way of giving up our own life. The life we have inherited from Adam.

It's rights. Privileges. My dignity and my reputation.

The rights I think I have. I say Lord I am willing to fall in the ground and die. And if I do.

There will definitely be a resurrection. It's like baptism. See none of us.

Why is it we so readily. Submit. To someone.

Who is going to immerse us in water. You know you can kill a person by immersing them in water. That's what they did.

To the early Anabaptists. The people who hated them. They say you fellows want to be baptized.

We will baptize you. Put them right down and never got them to come up. That's how they killed them.

Why is it. When you got baptized. You submitted freely to somebody.

Who was going to put you in the water like that. Because you knew. He'd pull you up.

You wouldn't hand yourself over to an enemy like that. And that's what the Bible says. If I can believe.

That it's God. Who is putting me down into that death. He will certainly bring me up.

In a resurrection. But if I think. That's not God.

That's Judas Iscariot. That's what Peter saw. In the Gethsemane.

He saw Judas Iscariot coming to. Immerse Jesus into death and he took out his sword. And fought.

Tried to cut off somebody's head. Chopped his ear. And Jesus said no.

Put it back. The cup. Which my father.

Has given me. Shall I not drink it. He never saw Judas Iscariot.

That's our problem. We see men. We see that person did it.

But Judas Iscariot was only a male man. Who brought a cup from thee. Father.

And. If I get a letter from my beloved. It doesn't matter if the male man's face doesn't look nice.

Or. He gives it to me in a rough way. Doesn't make a difference.

The letter is from my beloved. That's how Jesus saw it. Peter saw the male man.

Jesus saw his beloved father. Sending him a cup. Drink it.

What does it matter who brought it. He could see the father. And that's why he accepted it.

The Bible says. In 2nd Corinthians. In chapter 4. That.

We who live. Verse 11. Are constantly being delivered.

Over to death. For Jesus sake. So that.

We can have the same resurrection life of Jesus. Manifested in us. That's the whole purpose.

It's a wonderful verse. That the reason why God. As it were dips us in the water.

Is so that he can pull us out. As new people. He delivers us over to death.

So that he can give us the resurrection life of Jesus. There's no other way to get it. I mean you understand that.

There's no way to get a resurrection without a death. That's not possible. There's no way for that grain of wheat.

To burst out into life except it dies first. And so God. Who loves us so much.

And wants us to get rid of this. Adamic life. And wants to give us the resurrection life of Jesus.

Says. Will you let me. Slay you.

Will you let me put you to death. Shall I deliver you over to death. So that I can give you this resurrection life.

And we resist it. We'll never experience the resurrection life of Jesus. See that's why many Christians are not growing.

They're trying to improve this Adamic life. And okay. They come to the meetings.

And they get. Like a pep talk. Like the.

Coaches of a. Basketball team or something. Call them together. And give them a pep talk.

And they. Play a little better for a little while. That's how many Christians go to church.

It's like a pep talk they're getting. Okay we're going to live a little better at home from now on. And.

Forgive a few people. Make a little restitution. That's not the answer.

You got to die. If you die. That life you've got will be replaced.

With another. The resurrection life of Jesus Christ. There's no other way.

And. When you meet another brother. Who's going that way.

Of death. There'll be fellowship. Where does the conflict come? There's no conflict in the resurrection life of Jesus.

If you've got the resurrection life of Jesus. And I've got the resurrection life of Jesus. How in the world can we have a conflict? If my wife's got the resurrection life of Jesus.

And I've got the resurrection life of Jesus. We will be perfectly one. It's because.

Of the life of Adam. That all conflict comes. And that's why God is constantly arranging.

Circumstances. Situations. To deliver us over to death.

To break us. Humble us. He arranges the circumstances.

He arranges the people around us. And various types of. Situations.

All designed to deliver me over to death. I can resist. I can be like Peter and fight back.

And say I'm not going to die. Okay. Who's going to be the loser? I. I'm going to be the loser.

And think of all the circumstances. And situations God arranged. In your life.

In past years. To bring you to that death. And think of all the times you complained.

And grumbled against people. Grumbled against those situations. And that's why you are.

That's why you are where you are today. You are today. You are as holy.

As you really want to be. You didn't want to be any more holy. Oh yeah.

You'd desire it if it could get it without death. You'd like that resurrection life. If I don't have to die.

But there is no other way. Except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies. It will remain alone.

There will be no fruit in it. There can be a little improvement of character. There is a. There is a movement in England.

Some years ago. Called. The moral rearmament.

And. They taught improvement of character. It's got nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

They taught restitution. Being considerate and kind. To people and things like that.

It was just improvement of Adam's life. It doesn't last. It's on the outside.

But. This is resurrection life. This is another life.

And I can have it if I submit. Because in the book of Peter. Peter's letter in 1 Peter chapter 5. It says there.

Humble yourself. Verse 6. Under the mighty hand of God. That he may exalt you at the proper time.

It's referring to baptism. It's like if somebody comes to me. To be baptized.

I say to him. Just humble yourself under my hand. And I will exalt you out of the water.

And you'll come up. And that's the meaning of this verse. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

And he won't keep you there forever. He will exalt you up. And bring you into a life of victory.

What is this mighty hand of God? We think of some supernatural experience. No. It's that person who's causing you problems.

It's that situation. That you find yourself under pressure. It's the mighty hand of God.

Trying to push you under the water. It's interesting. Okay.

God waits. He won't force you. I don't force people to be baptized.

If I take the fellow in the water. And say I've changed my mind. I say okay go.

I'm not going to force you to be baptized. And God won't force any of us either. When we come into a situation where.

He says now this is the situation I arranged. Just for you. Here's the time you're going to die.

And you're going to experience a resurrection life. And this person said this against me. And keep on like that.

And at the end of it there's no resurrection life. And circumstance after circumstance. After circumstance God arranges.

And we never go under. The water. Even in the Old Testament.

You know I think the reason is. Like Peter. We can't see God.

In that situation. We think it is man. But it's not man.

It's God. God had a plan. For that man Joseph.

That on his 30th birthday. He should be the second ruler of Egypt. Now when God makes a plan like that.

For a man. Can you tell me if there's anyone in the world. Who can mess that up.

Nobody can mess it up. No demon. No man.

No superpower like Egypt. Nobody can mess up if God's got a plan. For Joseph to be the second ruler of Egypt.

By the time he's 30 years old. He could mess it up. If he didn't respond.

To what God was doing. And here he was in Canaan. How in the world is he going to be.

The ruler in Egypt. 13 years from now. How in the world is he going to be trained.

To be tough. And compassionate. To be the ruler in Egypt.

God's got to give him an education for 13 years. And the first step in that education. Is when his brothers are jealous of him.

And hate him. And try to kill him. A man's enemies will be those of his own household.

And when your relatives hate you. And despise you. And try to kill you.

Just don't hate them. If you hate them. You don't submit under the mighty hand of God.

The Bible says love them. Don't wish any evil for them. They are doing you good.

If you can see the hand of God there. They can't kill Joseph. Because God's got a plan for him.

Remember Jesus when he was preaching in the synagogue. And they tried to throw him over the cliff. They couldn't throw him over the cliff.

Because God had a plan that he should die on the cross. And if God had a plan that Joseph was to be ruler in Egypt. How in the world could they put this man in a pit.

And kill him. Because at the moment they put him in the pit. Those Ishmaelites come.

And somebody gets this idea which God puts in his head. Why not sell him? And where do you think those Ishmaelites were going? To Egypt of course. That's the first step in God's plan.

But who fulfilled it? These people who tried to harm him. Now think of this. If his brothers had not been jealous.

Had not sold him off as a slave. How would he get to Egypt? See how those people who tried to do evil. Fulfilled God's plan.

And when he got there. There was this wicked woman accusing him. Telling a lie.

Saying he was trying to rape her. And he gets locked up in jail. Now if he didn't go to jail.

How in the world would he meet Pharaoh's butler? Where did he meet Pharaoh's butler? Where would he interpret Pharaoh's butler's dream? To him. So that one day Pharaoh's butler could tell Pharaoh. I know a chap who interprets dreams.

He would never have met Pharaoh's butler. If he was living in Potiphar's house. So who is going to send him to meet Pharaoh's butler? Potiphar's wife.

By telling a lie. What she is fighting against? Potiphar's wife. What she is trying to justify herself there? Let her say what she wants.

This is a cup which my father has given me. I will drink it. If he wants me to go to jail.

Sure. See. All these things are written for our instruction.

To show us that if you submit to God. You can never be the loser. There is a hymn of Frederick Faber's.

Which goes like this. Ill. Ill means evil.

Ill that he blesses. Is our good. And unblessed good.

Is ill. And all is right. That seems most wrong.

If it be his sweet will. If you understood that. All is right that seems most wrong.

If it be his will. Because he will make it work for my good. Then we will start giving thanks for our jealous brothers who sell us.

And for Potiphar's wife who accuses us. And I think what is more difficult. Than people doing evil to us.

Is when our good brothers forget to do something for us. They promise to do something and they don't do it. That's what happened with Pharaoh's butler.

He told. Joseph told Pharaoh. You please go and tell Pharaoh's butler.

Please tell Pharaoh. There is a man out here who was unjustly put in jail. But you know how old Joseph was at that time.

28. Was it time for God for him to be released? No. What will happen if Pharaoh's butler goes and tells Pharaoh about this man.

He will be released and he will go back to Canaan. So the same God. Who works in people's minds like out there to sell him to the Ishmaelites.

Now works in Pharaoh's butler's mind and makes him completely forget. This man who helped him out of jail. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord when people promise to do something for you and don't do it. If you can do that. Then you really understood the sovereignty of God.

You stop blaming. This brother he promised to do this for me. Have you said that? He promised to do it for me.

Or you think like a fellow promised. He said he'd keep his word and look what he's done. You don't believe in the sovereignty of God.

You don't know what it is to humble yourself in the mighty hand of God. You don't believe that God can control people's thoughts. The Bible says in Proverbs 21 verse 1. Even the king's heart.

The king means the greatest ruler in the land. His heart is in the hand of the Lord. And the Lord turns it wherever he wills like the rivers of water.

Now if you see a river of water. It's not like these irrigation ditches which man digs. A river of water.

When you look at it from an airplane. It's flowing east. Then all of a sudden it's turning and flowing west.

And goes along like that west and you think it's going to go west forever. And all of a sudden it turns and flows east. That's how these rivers are.

You look at it in a geography map. In a map. In an atlas.

You see it's like this. The king's heart is like the hand of the Lord. He can turn it in exactly the opposite direction.

From what is going right now. That person who's got some influence on your life. And he's trying to harm you.

God can turn his mind. God can make that butler or pharaoh forget completely. Because it's not yet time.

And then when he's. Two years later the bible says. When pharaoh had the dream.

He remembered. You see God's time table is absolutely perfect. Nothing happens late.

If you walk in God's will. Right on the dot. When Joseph was 30 years old.

He was released. If it was 31. It would have been late.

God's plan wasn't when he's 30. He should be on the throne. And that's exactly what happened.

It was the same with David. God had a plan for that young man. That when this young man is 30 years old.

He must sit on the throne of Israel. He didn't have to fight for it. Saul threw spears at him.

Got people ganged up. People to find out where he was. Who would sneak on him when he's in a cave.

And got people together to kill him. They just couldn't kill him. And David himself wouldn't grab the throne.

There was a time when Saul was at his mercy. And his friend said kill him. He said no I won't touch it.

If I get something it must be from God. Not by my grabbing it. And that's why he's called a man after God's own heart.

And all this is a picture for us. That God through various circumstances and various people. Is trying to bring you down into death.

So that he can give you the most glorious life. That you can ever have. The life of Jesus.

But he cannot give it to you unless he puts you down. You cannot have that resurrection before a death. That grain of wheat if it doesn't die it will remain alone.

That's why he brings us into death. Think of this example in David's life. In 2 Samuel chapter 16.

It says about the time when he was running away from Absalom. And there was this wicked man called Shimei. Who was a relative of Saul who was disturbed.

That he no longer had influence in Jerusalem. In the king's palace. Like the old days when his relative Saul was on the throne.

Now David had come to power and he was keeping quiet. And now he was so happy that David was being turned out. We face situations like that.

Where someone who is jealous of our ministry. Or jealous of the way God has blessed us. Or anointed us.

Or backed up our ministry. And then something happens. Maybe some problem comes in our home.

Or in our ministry or in the church. And these people are gloating. That's Shimei.

And it says in 2 Samuel 16. He threw stones at David. He cursed him.

And he said to this king. This anointed man. This worthless Shimei.

He said to anointed king David. Get out you worthless fellow. You man of bloodshed.

And he says the Lord has rewarded you now. For killing Saul. David didn't kill Saul.

He never touched him. But he blamed him. He said now you are suffering for that.

And one of David's friends said. Let me go and chop off this fellow's head. He was like Peter.

Let's fight back and defend ourselves. And David said no. Because I have nothing to do with you.

Fellows who want to fight for me. And listen to this verse then. If the Lord has told him.

To curse David. Read it. If the Lord has told Shimei.

Curse David. I mean in today's language we put it. If the Lord has allowed him.

To curse me. Who am I? To fight against God. And to say.

How dare you curse me. In other words if God has sent that chap. To say something evil about me.

Why should I. Complain against him. God has allowed it. Do you see his vision of the sovereignty of God.

Way back there in the Old Testament. Before there was any Calvary. Before there was any Bible.

Before there was any Holy Spirit. Look at his understanding of God's sovereignty. I believe this is very important for us.

For us to be willing to die. So often we are unwilling to die. Because we think it's Shimei.

It's not Shimei. It's God. We think it's Judas Iscariot.

It's not Judas Iscariot my brother. It's the father. It's your father.

He has arranged it. God has allowed that person. That butler.

Who promised to put in a word for you. To forget about you altogether. God.

Has allowed your brothers to be jealous of you. To sell you. To send you to the very place.

Where he's got a ministry for you. Now this is what it means. To humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

And if we do it. They'll come forth a resurrection life. And when there comes forth a resurrection life.
If two people are like that in one place. There's such a tremendous power. When two people get united.
Who have both decided to take up the cross. It's not just peace. But fellowship.
And in that fellowship. The church is built. This is the New Testament church.
That's why the Bible says. In Ephesians chapter 2. About this mystery. Which Paul says was hidden from
ages.
Ephesians 3.5. Which is not revealed in other days. To the sons of men. And the great mystery.
You read in chapter 2. And verse 14. He has made these two into one. The greatest problem.
God has to make two people one. This is what Jesus said. Greater works than I have done.
Shall you do. Two people will become one. And that can only be possible.
If both are willing to die on the cross. There's absolutely no other way. No amount of marriage counseling.
Or psychological techniques. Or calling up your wife ten times a day. And saying I love you.
Will ever make you one. It's impossible. You got to die.
When you die. There will come forth from you. Both a life.
Such as you have never experienced before. As husband and wife. But if you are unwilling to die.
That unity will not come. The same with two brothers. If I am willing to die.
Anything that you do to me. Anything that you don't do for me. Anything that you say to me.
Anything that you don't say. I will not get offended. Dead people don't get offended.
When people say. I was hurt. You are still living.
Do dead people get hurt? Oh no. They don't get hurt. But see most people when they hear a message.
They are acting dead. Like little children. Who play a game and they are acting dead.
If you kick them hard enough. They will get up. But when a person is really dead.
It doesn't make a difference how hard you kick them. Neither criticism. Nor praise.
Makes a difference. You turn to that dead body lying here. And say you are a good for nothing fellow.
His face doesn't change. You say you are a great man. Just the same.
Makes no difference. Because he is dead. And that's what Paul says.
He says there is only one thing I glory in. Galatians 6.14 I don't glory in the churches I raised up. And the
scriptures I have written.

The dead who have been raised from the dead through my ministry. My powerful ministry. My anointing.

Nothing. He says I will only glory all my life. In the cross of Jesus Christ.

Where I die. Where God condemned this old Paul to death. So that.

This world's opinion of me makes no difference. And I don't care for the world either. From that day onwards he had as little interest in this world as a dead man.

He was dead to this world. Dead to its applause. Dead to its opinions.

Dead to what they said about him. Dead to what they thought about him. Dead to what his fellow believers said and thought about him behind his back.

He was dead. See a dead man doesn't want to know what people said about him. He is not bothered.

He is living before God. Ok people said something. There is a Shimei there.

There is a Judas Iscariot there. There are my ten brothers who are jealous of me and want to sell me off. Ok let them do it.

But I see God behind it all immersing me. In the waters. Of baptism.

And he will certainly pull me up. That's faith. That is what it means to live by faith.

I believe. That if I die with him like scripture says. I shall definitely live with him.

You know in 1 Timothy. It says this is a faithful saying. What is that? 1 Timothy 1.15 Christ Jesus.

Came into the world. To save sinners. That's a faithful saying that we all know.

Do you know in 2 Timothy 2. There is another faithful saying. It begins like this. 1 Timothy 1.15 This is a faithful saying.

A trustworthy statement. Christ died. To save sinners.

Of whom I am chief. You go to 2 Timothy. He says there is another faithful saying.

A trustworthy statement. If I die with him. I will live with him.

It's that second faithful saying. Which most of us don't know or don't believe. Think if you didn't believe the first faithful statement.

Would you be saved today? What is that first faithful saying? Christ died for sinners. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Applied it to yourself.

And it became true. Now I want to invite you today. To believe the second faithful saying.

In 2 Timothy 2.11 If you die with him. You will definitely live with him. If he puts you under the water.

He will pull you out. But if you refuse to go under. You will never experience resurrection.

You will just have this. Moral improvement of your life. Your life becomes a little better.

And. You will be saved. That's not what God wants.

God wants resurrection life. And lot of nice people can't get along with each other. It's a sad thing.

Why is it. That we who preach the most wonderful gospel. In the world.

Good news in the world. And should be producing the sweetest. Saints.

On the face of the earth. So many churches. That are preaching baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And holiness. And all these things. Often you find in them.

People who are sour. Grumpy. Bitter.

Complaining. Hard to get along with. And most of the time long faced.

That's not God's will. That's not at all God's will. It's because we don't die.

We've got an improved human life. And it's something like the woman. Who puts a lot of make up.

And all that. And then after sometime. All that make up fades away.

And then they've got to put it on again. You see this is how it is. We want to put up a front of a good.

We're nice people. And then after sometime it wears out. And then we've got to paint up our face again.

And appear nice. You don't need that when you have freshness inside. When you have resurrection life.

We are delivered to death. We must see God there. In every situation we must see God.

And then Matthew 5 verse 8 which says. Blessed are the pure in heart. What's the rest of the verse? For they shall see God.

Now I've understood that verse. It's got more than one meaning. But I look at it like this.

How do I know my heart is pure? All of us can think our heart is pure. But that verse tells me how I know my heart is pure. When my heart is pure.

In every circumstance and situation in my life. What will I see? God. If you don't see God.

But see Shimei. Your heart is not pure. If you don't see God.

But you see Judas Iscariot. Your heart is not pure. Blessed are the pure in heart.

For they shall see God. And only God. I want to ask you practically.

In some situation you are facing right now. What do you see? Do you see God? Or do you see people? Do you see people trying to harm you? People who forgot to do the things they said they do for you. And you can't see God.

You can't see the sovereign God. Controlling everything. Or sometimes some problem faces you.

And you think oh boy what a terrible situation these fellows have got me into. As if God can't pull us out of it. Whenever I face a really complicated situation.

Sometimes that happens. Where I don't know how to get out of it. And it looks as if there is no way out.

Really complicated and you think you are really going to go under now. I close my eyes. And I say Lord I want to meditate on you now.

And I want to meditate on you. As one who rules this universe. Millions of stars and galaxies.

The solar system itself is just one small little thing spinning around in a huge galaxy called the Milky Way. And in that solar system is a small little speck called the earth. You see we are seeing things from God's viewpoint now.

And on that speck of dust called the earth. Is another still smaller speck of dust can hardly be seen called me. And this me has got some problems.

On this speck of dust. And can you imagine this almighty God who is supposed to be my father. Wondering how can I help him.

Oh he is in such a mess. How to solve that problem. And I see the ridiculousness of the whole thing.

And faith comes in my heart. I say God you are my father. There is no problem you can't solve.

You who run the universe. What is this petty little thing on this speck of dust called sand. This dust called earth.

Having a little problem here which you can't solve. You can easily solve it. And when faith rises in our heart.

We see God. We don't see the problem. We don't see the people.

We see God. It can be a sickness in your life. And you can be so taken up with your sickness.

Oh such a big thing. And then you go to the doctors and the report. It just makes it much worse.

And then you need to sit back and see. Does God know about this first of all. Does he know about it or he doesn't.

He does. Job 23.10 is paraphrased in the living bible as. He knows every detail of what is happening to me.

I like that. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. It's true.

He knows every single detail of what is happening to me right now. There is nothing that he doesn't know. He knows it.

And he looks at us from heaven and he knows it. And if he allows it to continue for a while. It is with a purpose.

Like he gave a thorn in the flesh to fall. To humble him. Because of his many revelations.

And the more we are blessed. The more God has to do something to humble us. To break us.

To bring us down. So that we don't get puffed up. Why? Because the bible says God has to resist the proud.

That's here in 1 Peter 5. God resists the proud. But he gives grace to the humble. And I picture it like this.

If I am proud. God will come in front of me and push me back. If I am humble.

God will get behind me and push me forward. Now it's a question of where I want him. I can either have in front of me.

I already got the devil pushing me back. I got my lust pushing me back. I got human beings pushing me back.

On top of that if God also pushes me back. I am finished. So I better have at least God on my side.

Pushing me forward. And then I don't care if all the demons in hell. Are trying to push me back.

And all the 6 billion people in the world. Are trying to push me back. Makes no difference.

If God is with me I will go forward. Nobody can stop me. My lust can't stop me.

People can't stop me. They can't push me forward. And here is the secret.

The secret is here. Let me paraphrase this. He pushes forward the humble.

And he pushes back the proud. That's exactly what God does. And you are the one who determines whether God is going to push you on in the Christian life.

Or push you back. It looks as if he is on the side of the devil. Pushing you back.

But that's a law of God that will never change. He is opposed to the proud. And it doesn't say only the proud unbeliever.

What about the proud believer? It doesn't make a difference. If a man is proud whether he calls himself believer or unbeliever. God fights against him.

And that's the reason my brothers and sisters. Why many many Christians don't seem to make much progress in their Christian life. Why they don't get revelation on the word.

Why their lives are so fruitless. It's only one reason. They don't humble themselves.

Under God's mighty hand. They don't say God I see you here. I will never again complain against people.

I will not see Shimei's and Judas Iscariot's and Mrs. Potiphar and my ten jealous brothers anymore. Or King Saul. I will not see any of them.

I will see God. And I believe that your time table is perfect. If at a particular age at a particular time I am supposed to have a particular ministry.

All the demons in hell cannot stop that. All the human beings on earth cannot stop it. I believe that.

I remember when I was a young person. And God had gifted me to preach the word when I was 21 years old. 23 years old.

And there were a lot of elders in my church. Double my age who were jealous. The people who listened to me.

More than to them. And they tried to push me down. And I sit at the back.

And the Lord said shut your mouth and submit to them. And God broke me and broke me in those years. For 8 or 9 years it was like that.

I said praise the Lord. I will not rebel. I will humble myself.

And God knows when to release me. God knows when to take me out of this situation. He didn't keep me there forever.

He didn't keep me under the water forever. At the proper time He will lift me up.

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