

The Law of Giving

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of living according to God's laws, particularly through the act of giving and sacrificial love.

Duration: 1:01:25

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:19

Topics: "Sacrificial Giving", "Christian Stewardship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living out the Christian faith beyond mere words or rituals. It highlights the need for genuine power from God to overcome struggles, live in victory, and manifest His grace through selfless giving, respect, and worship. The speaker urges believers to follow God's laws, including sacrificial giving, honoring elders, and seeking to be rich towards God in all aspects of life.

Transcript

One of the greatest dangers in the Christian life which we have referred to at other times is the danger of thinking that our life is at the same level as the words we speak or sing. Paul said these words, I want to point them out to you in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 19. I want to read from the Living Bible 1 Corinthians 4 verse 19 and 20.

But I will come, he is talking about his visiting Corinth soon if the Lord lets me. And then I will find out whether those proud men are just big talkers or whether they really have God's power. For the kingdom of God is not just talking or singing, it is living by God's power.

So those of you who take your Christian life seriously, I want to say don't ever evaluate your Christian life by how much you know of doctrine, how well you can witness about Christ to other people, how well you can sing, how zealous you are to go to meetings or anything to do with speech. It is a warning in scripture. But how much power, how much of the power of God is there in your life? Power to overcome your lusts, power to be free from the opinions of men, power to overcome the attractions of this world.

If that type of power is in your life, power to overcome your depression and discouragement and bad moods, power to overcome your anger. Paul says that is the test. The kingdom of God is not words.

I have travelled a lot in Christendom and I tell you Christendom is full of words. Words, words, words. Singing, words, words, words.

I feel like Paul myself. I won't look for big talkers or good singers. I want to see how much of the power of God is there in their life, in their family life, in their relationship with their wives and husbands, in how they have brought up their children, etc.

These are the areas where the power of God is manifested. When Paul preached or spoke about the gospel, you know, we use the word gospel many times. I want you to see in Romans chapter 1 how Paul describes the gospel.

If someone were to ask you, before you look at this verse, can you describe the gospel, what is it? I think most of us will say it's a message of God's love, of the forgiveness of our sins. But Paul says, he doesn't say it's a message. He says in Romans 1.16, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God.

It's not just a message. Paul describes the gospel as the power of God for salvation. And he says, that's why I'm not ashamed.

It's something that actually works. If it doesn't work, we shouldn't be sharing it with other people. We know that we don't charge for the gospel.

The gospel is free. Anything you charge for cannot be from God. Please remember that.

Anything you charge money for cannot be from God. That is from man. The gospel is free.

God gives oxygen. How much do you pay for it? You go to the hospital and ask them to give you some oxygen. Boy, you got to pay for every breath.

God gives water free. Does the Bangalore Water Supply Board give it free? Man is always selling. God is always giving free.

And the devil is always stealing. Please remember these three characteristics. If you steal, you're like the devil.

If you sell things in the church, like some people have done here in the past. I don't know whether they have still repented. You're like other human beings in the world.

If you're like God, you give freely. So, Paul, when he passed on the gospel, he passed it on as the power of God. It worked in his life.

If you've got a tape recorder in your home that doesn't work, would you give that as a gift to somebody? I hope not. If you have a gospel that has not worked in your home, you still yell and scream at each other. Do you give that gospel to other people? I hope not.

Don't give something that doesn't work in your home, whether a tape recorder or a gospel. It must work. If it doesn't work in your life, it doesn't work in your home, don't give it as a gift to somebody else.

Go and get it fixed. Make it work. Then give it as a gift.

The gospel always works, the true gospel. The false gospel doesn't work. The gospel is the power of God.

And I've thought much about why is it that so many Christians talk about this but don't seem to experience it. And I feel that it is because they have not followed the laws of God. God works according to laws.

He's created the whole universe according to laws. We see that in the perfect movement of the stars and the planets. We see that in gravity, which works exactly the same all over the world.

The laws of plant life and animal life, the laws of birth and everything, it's laws. That's why people who study these laws, whether people who study biology or the human body, they know that everywhere in the world, it works the same way. If you study biology in India and you go to Russia, it's the same.

You study human body in India and you go to South America, it's the same. There are laws. God has made them.

In the same way spiritually, there are laws that have been there for years. And Jesus, as a man, lived according to those laws and that's why his life was so perfect. And when he said, follow me, he was saying, you can live according to those laws too.

And if you live according to those laws, your life will be like mine. That's what Jesus is essentially saying. But if you don't live according to those laws, and you just sing songs in the meeting, I'll follow you, follow you anywhere, everywhere, it won't work.

No matter how much you sing. And many of us have experienced that in our life. That despite all our singing and our feeling emotional in the meeting, life doesn't seem to change much.

Because there are certain laws. We've thought about the law of faith, for example. According to your faith, be it unto you.

Faith is like a vessel we bring before God. You bring a cup, you get a cup. You bring a bucket, you get a bucket.

You bring a tub, you get a tub. According to the size of your vessel, you get. According to your faith, be it unto you, someone who's got more faith, gets more.

It's a law. You can't change it. God gives His grace to the humble.

That's another law. You can't change that. We've got some of these important laws written right here.

God gives His grace to the humble. It doesn't matter. You know, if you're humble, you don't even have to ask for grace.

It'll automatically come, whether you like it or not. Isn't that wonderful? If God gives me grace, I don't ask for it. Because it's a law.

Like water going down to the lowest place. Grace goes down to the man who is humblest. Who's gonna get maximum grace here? I don't know.

Whoever is the humblest person here, will get maximum grace from God in his life. And when he gets maximum grace from God in his life, he'll get maximum victory over sin in his life. Because sin cannot rule over the man who is under grace, Romans 6.14 says.

But who's the one who's gonna get the maximum grace? The one who's the humblest. Jesus was the humblest. So the grace of God rested upon Him, it says in Luke 2.40. That's why He never sinned.

So there are laws. And here is another law that Jesus taught. We wanna look a little bit at that today.

Luke chapter 6. Give and it'll be given to you. Now some people use that only in relation to money. Covetous preachers love to preach on that verse.

Particularly if they want your money. But it's not referring only to money. It does refer to money too.

But money is not the only thing in the world that we have to give. And I'll just show you that in a moment. In fact in the previous verses, He's not talking about money at all.

He's not referring to money. He's referring to loving your enemies, verse 35. Doing good to them and blessing them.

Being merciful, verse 36. As your father is merciful. That's another law you know.

That's why we got it right up here behind me. You gotta be merciful to people if you want God's mercy in your life. These are laws.

Be merciful just as your heavenly father is merciful. And don't judge. You won't be judged.

That's a law. In fact it says over there, if we judge ourselves, we won't be judged. That's it.

We just got laws all around this building just to remind us all the time. I don't know how many of you have taken it seriously. But if you have, these are the laws that can change your life.

If you fear God, you need never fear anything else. That's a law. If you don't just admire these verses but seek to live by them, I believe these laws could have changed your life.

And release and you will be released. Or like another translation says, go easy on people. And God will go easy on you.

Do you go easy on people? I don't know. Do you go easy on your wife? On your husband? Go easy on them. God will go easy on you.

And I tell you, your life will be tremendously blessed. It's a law. In Matthew chapter... And then it says, before I go to that, Luke 6.38 Give, and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they'll pour into your lap.

For by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you in return. That's something he said in Matthew 7.2 as well. By your standard of measure.

Or like another translation says, the rules you apply to other people. Listen to this. It's really good.

The rules you apply to other people will be the rules that God applies to you. Isn't that good? Isn't that fair? God is a fair God. The rules that you apply to your wife, God will apply to you.

The rules that you apply to the servant in your home, God will apply the same rules to you. That is fair. The way you treat that poor person, God will treat you like that.

The way you treat somebody who has wronged you, God will treat you like that because you have wronged God so much. These are laws. Jesus spoke about giving.

As I said, the world is full of people who want to sell. Although they are not selling for profit, they want to receive freely. The world is full of people who are either selling things to make profit for themselves, or who are stretching out their hands to get and get and get.

They seek to get from fellow human beings, material things. That's it. And when they come to God, they seek to get material things from Him.

And that's why their Christian life never comes, even after many many years, to what it should be. But a radical wholehearted Christian can in one or two years come to a glorious life, if he understands that now I have been converted from selling and getting to giving. And that is why if you have heard me speak so hard on people who try to sell in the church, I will do that till my dying day.

I will do that until the people who are selling repent. And many of them have not repented. The people who are seeking to get and come to the church, we got to expose them.

Expose them ruthlessly like Jesus exposed. Till we have a church of people who have learned to be converted from that wretched Adamic nature of wanting to make profit from other people, and get from other people, and learn to give. It's a law.

Jesus said in Acts chapter 20, Acts chapter 20 and verse 35, These are the words of Jesus. One of the few words of Jesus found in the Acts of the Apostles, which are not found in the Gospels. It's amazing that Paul heard that.

He had never met Jesus. But one of his closest co-workers was Luke. And Luke was a man, it says in Luke chapter 1, that he carefully made investigation about all that Jesus did and said.

And he interviewed a lot of people who had walked with Jesus. And one of the things he heard, was that Jesus said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. That's another law we got written up there.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. In other words, you'll be happier, if you give. You know why so many Christians are so miserable, and gloomy, and long faced? I mean, I'm not saying how loudly they clap their hands and smile during the time of the singing.

That's only short period. I'm talking about permanently happy. If you want to be permanently happy, and to be the sort of person, who is never in a bad mood, the sort of person who is never depressed and complaining and murmuring about his problems to other people, I'll tell you, learn to give.

Because you'll be a happier person. You'll be a more blessed person. Blessed by God.

Your children will be blessed, if you learn to give. There is a blessing in receiving. Sure, when we are in need, we receive and we're thankful.

I'm not saying that's wrong. Jesus didn't say there's no blessing in receiving. When you're in need, you receive.

You know that Jesus himself received money, when he was a full-time worker for three and a half years. It says certain, Luke chapter 8, verse 2 and 3 says, some rich women gave him money. And he was not so proud that he wouldn't accept it.

He humbled himself and accepted it. A laborer, he said, is worthy of his hire. And he accepted it.

But he wasn't only one who learned to receive. He had learned to give, especially to the poor. And there is more blessing, that's what he was saying in this verse, in giving than in receiving.

So, those of us sitting here, who've spent our life receiving, okay, you got blessed when you received something, but you missed the greater blessing. Because you never learned to give when you had the opportunity to give. There were many times we don't have the opportunity to give.

That's okay. I'm talking about times when we have the opportunity to give. Or we have the opportunity to sacrifice something so that we can give.

You remember the story of the widow who dropped two little coins. You read in Mark chapter 12. It's very interesting to see that.

Mark chapter 12. It's a contrast here. Between... I want you to notice this contrast.

Between the Pharisees who knew so much of the Bible, who preached so much. And this poor widow, who never stood in the pulpit in her whole life. Who never got any prominence in the synagogue.

And the Pharisees were always up there in front. And he says to his disciples. There are two things he said to his disciples.

One, Mark 12.38. He says, be careful of the scribes. Beware of them. Beware of the teachers of religion.

You know, they had the Bible. They didn't have the Gita or something like that. They had the Bible.

In those days. Genesis to Malachi. He says, beware of these people who carry a Bible and come to teach you.

Isn't that a good warning for today? Beware of people who come with a Bible in their hand and try to teach you. Just watch their life and see what they are actually lived by. Beware of the teachers of religion.

Because they like to walk around in the robes of the rich and the scholarly. Oh! And they like everyone to bow down and respect them as they walk through the marketplace. And they love to sit in the best seats in the synagogues, in the churches, and at the feasts.

Oh! They'll never miss a feast. They are there in the places of honor. And what do they do with widows? They shamelessly cheat widows out of their homes.

Take those poor widows to court and drive them out of their homes. But they are preaching with a Bible in their hand. Jesus said, beware of them.

And they pretend to be pious. Or like we'd say, religious. To cover up the kind of men they really are.

Now listen. They do all this type of thing. They are not interested in giving to widows and helping widows.

They are trying to get even from the widows. Can you imagine a religious person trying to get something out of a poor widow? It's possible. It happens today.

It happens today. There are poor widows in the United States of America who give their little sacrificial offerings sincerely to God. And that's taken by some Indian preacher.

And he lives in 5 star hotels with them. They are cheating widows even today. It's happening.

It's happening all around us in our country. Christian organizations who live it up in grand style. Everybody there.

Who is giving to these people? Poor widows. That's what Jesus is saying. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

He says, these people who take even from widows. And to make up, to cover up the kind of selfish, covetous men that they are. They pretend to be pious by praying long prayers in public.

We are not talking about a prayer meeting where we pray long. But other meetings where we are asked to be short. I've discovered one thing through the years.

The people who pray long, listen, are the ones who don't pray in private at all. The people who pray much in private pray very little in public. They know how to be short because they are not interested in the honor of men.

They pray from their heart. There is more in their hidden life than in their public life. These people pray long prayers.

And because of this, their punishment will be greater. And then, he looks at a widow. She is the one, the exploited type, you know.

The one who is exploited by these religious teachers. As he sat there, it says here, Jesus sat down next to the collection boxes. Do you think Jesus sits next to the collection boxes today? I think so.

He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Jesus sat next to the collection box to watch. He watched as people dropped their money into the box.

Do you notice that? Jesus sat next to the collection box and watched how people are giving. Some who are very rich, put in large amounts. And then a poor widow came and dropped in two pennies.

And he called his disciples immediately and said, this poor widow has put more than all those rich men put together because they gave a little of their extra fat. But she gave up her last penny. There are Christians who give a little of their extra fat to God.

And there are others who give their very life. I heard of some poor village in Africa or somewhere where they pass a plate around to collect money. And it came to this poor little girl who didn't have a cent.

You know what she did? She put the plate on the ground and stood on top of it. She said, I give myself to the Lord. That's all I have.

What a wonderful action. This widow was like that. And Jesus appreciated it.

He did not appreciate the large amounts. He appreciated the sacrifice. He appreciated the spirit more than the amount.

That's what we learn from here. And when Jesus looks at people giving today, He is not calculating the amount. He is saying, is there a sacrifice there? Is there a denial of themselves? I was down in Tamil Nadu for a missionary conference of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band.

Most of them are from the CSI Church. We feel that we know much better than them. But I was really challenged by some of the things I heard there.

Some young 14-year-old girl saying, I told my mummy at the beginning of the year not to employ a servant. But I would do all the work the servant did in the house to give me that money which you pay the servant. And she did all that work and received the salary the servant would have got.

And she said, I've collected all this money so far and I've come here now to give it for missionary work in North India. CSI. We know more than them, right? We think we do.

I praise the Lord for that. Another sister who says, when I was a young girl I desperately wanted to be a missionary in North India. But my parents would never let me.

They got me married to somebody. Now I'm married and I've got this little child. And I'm going to make him the missionary I could never be.

Where are these people going to be in eternity? And where are we going to be? God has no partiality. We say we know more. Okay.

If we know more then our life should be at a higher level than even them. It's a spirit in which we have given. Not words.

Christendom is full of words. And God sees those who have words and those who have sacrifices in secret. We saw that last Sunday.

The principle that God has established for the Christian on earth is the principle of sacrifice. Take up your cross every day and follow me. People who... There were many others like this at that missionary conference.

Young children who had denied themselves something the whole day. I mean I've heard of another young boy in the United States who his father had promised him a bike cycle or something when he was 12 years old and he said, I don't want that cycle dad. I'll walk.

Give me the money for that cycle. And he took that money and sent it to some mission organization. Imagine 12 year old boys who are doing that.

Who deny themselves something. You know such boys will grow up later on in life to really serve God. Whereas those who from childhood just indulge.

They want the latest shoes. They want the latest this and the latest that and the latest the other thing. They want to go out and have a great time and frequently eating out and things like that.

Okay, there's nothing wrong in that. There's nothing sinful. But look at the level of your life today.

Where is it? Is yours that triumphant, victorious, glorious life where you overcome depression and gloom and all that type of stuff and there's something glorious about your life? If not, you know the reason. You have not learned to give to God. You have not learned like those people whom I saw at that convention.

You have never thought of giving your life to the Lord to live for Him rather than to think of what you can gain to get the best in this world and in the next. You know it doesn't work like that. If we suffer with Him,

we will reign with Him.

If we die with Him, we will live with Him. These are laws that cannot be changed. And we try to do it in some other way and it doesn't work.

Jesus said, these are some laws. Give and it shall be given to you. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Jesus also said in Matthew chapter 10, Here is another thing that He said. Matthew chapter 10 and verse 8. There He told us the reason why you should give. In Luke 6.38, He said, If you give, you will get back from God.

You will get back more than you give. In Acts 20.35, Jesus said, The greater blessing that comes in giving than in receiving. And in Matthew chapter 10, He told us the reason why we should give.

And I think many of us have a problem here because we haven't understood the reason. The reason we have to give freely is because we have received freely. Freely you received, freely give.

Why should we be merciful to other people? Because God has been merciful to us. Why should we forgive others? Because Christ forgave us. Why should we be good to other people? Because God has been good to us.

He doesn't ask us to do anything He Himself has not done. Why should we give to other people? Because God has given so much to us. I am always conscious of that.

If God gave me intelligence to earn money. And I know I have used my intelligence to earn money honestly. I could have been born without that intelligence.

If God gave me health for so many years so that I could work and earn money. That is not my ability. I freely received from God.

What did I get? Health? Intelligence? Ability? How in the world can I think at the end of the month? This is what I earned. That would be like Nebuchadnezzar saying in Daniel chapter 4 Isn't this great Babylon that I have built by my power? Isn't this what I earned at the end of month? This five-figure salary? By my own ability? You can't be a Christian. Surely you can't be a Christian if you think like that.

No true Christian thinks like that. Think of the people who are struggling for jobs. God has given you a job.

Think of the people who are mentally retarded or challenged as they say. Not able to work. Think of the people who are sick or paralyzed who can't go to work.

Think of the people who are laid off from their jobs. We have received much freely. Because God gives freely.

And the Lord asks you How many years I heard you say God, I want to partake of your nature. I want to partake of the divine nature. I want to partake of the divine nature.

You really want to partake of my nature? Which gives freely? We can be misers to the core. Oh God, help me to partake of your nature. Words, words, words, words, words, words, words.

What is his nature? God so loved that he gave. Jesus spoke in Luke chapter 12 about a man whose farm began to produce fine crops. Verse 16 A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops.

His big mistake was his thinking that he got it by his own cleverness. Instead of recognizing God gave it all to him freely. The earth doesn't belong to him.

Nothing in it belongs to him. The Bible says the earth is the Lord's and everything in it is the Lord's. One Corinthians 10 Everything in the earth is the Lord's.

But this poor man was blind to that fact. And when his barns were full to overflowing he couldn't put everything in. So he thought about this problem and finally exclaimed, I know what I'll do.

I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough and I'll sit back and say to myself, Friend, you got enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy.

Wine, women and song for you. And God said to him, Fool, tonight you'll die. Then what's gonna happen? Yes, every man is a fool who gets rich on earth but not in heaven.

So is the man who lays up treasure for himself but is not rich towards God. My dear brothers and sisters, please, I humbly plead with you. Remember this expression all your life.

Be rich towards God. Be rich towards God. It's an attitude not only to money but to our time, our energy, our life.

Lord, I wanna use everything you've given me and be rich towards you. I can speak freely on this because I've never taken one rupee from this church in 28 years. So therefore I can speak freely on it because I'm not interested in your money.

I've supported myself through all these years. I can speak freely about it. I'm asking you to be rich towards God.

It says in Deuteronomy chapter 14, Deuteronomy 14, it says, In the Old Testament they taught them to tithe. Jesus never taught tithing. He taught something more difficult, giving.

In relation to money, the Old Testament word is tithe. 10%. In the New Testament, the word is give.

But in relation to the tithe, Deuteronomy 14, 22, you must tithe all of your crops every year. And I wanna tell you another thing. In the Old Testament they never tithed money.

Because they were not working in offices and factories like today. They were farmers. They tithed crops.

They tithed lambs and chicken. Like sometimes in our village churches. That's what they bring as offerings.

The time of conference. Rice and potatoes and chicken. It's like that.

In the Old Testament times it was like that. In the last part of verse 23, the Living Bible reads like this. The purpose of tithing, this is what many have not understood.

The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives. So that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. You know that means when the man's crops produce much more than he

expected, he's gotta say, God, this is your blessing.

What shall I do with this extra that I don't need? When you got that promotion and that increment that you did not expect, when you got that fantastic job with a fantastic salary which you did not expect, what did you think? What you thought at that time determines what type of Christian you are. Two people think two different things. One person says, Boy, isn't that great? I got such a great job, man.

I never expected to get such a huge salary. I must be smart, right? I myself never knew I was so smart. But these guys think so.

Okay. See what your life will be like five years from now. Another person falls on his knees and says, God, I don't deserve one bit of this.

This is all your goodness to me. My barns have overflowed. Lord, it's your goodness.

I am going to use it for you. I don't need all this. I want to use it for you.

Of course, I got to take care of my family, sure. But I want to put you first in my life. And Jesus said, when you give, Matthew chapter 6. These are the laws of giving that Jesus taught.

What we've been looking at these verses. He says, when you give, verse 3. Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. So that your arms may be in secret.

And your father who sees in secret will repay you. If you have earned money, you know what this means? Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. If you think of husband and wife as right hand and left hand.

See, even your wife doesn't need to know what you have given to the Lord. Or what you have given to bless somebody. No.

Live before God. Don't let anybody know. So that your arms can be in secret.

And your father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And you know when he has repaid you. He repays you with something that money cannot buy.

He repays you with joy 24x7. That means 24 hours a day. 7 days a week.

Joy. How much money do you need to buy joy 24x7? Only God can give that. The fruit of the spirit is joy.

He will repay you. And you will see that in your life. You who were gloomy, depressed, long faced, have suddenly changed.

Your father is repaying you. You who were slaves to those dirty lusts. You are free.

Your father is repaying you. Because in secret you gave. You denied yourself in secret.

You took up the cross in secret. You know when Abraham offered up the dearest thing he had in life. That was his son.

He loved his son more than Sarah. I am sorry to say that. You shouldn't love your son more than you love your wife.

But I think Abraham did. And God knew that. The trouble was he loved his son more than God.

God said, you better give up your son. Sacrifice him. But the thing I want you to notice is You know, you read that passage in Genesis 22.

He traveled with all those men up to the foot of the mountain. And then when he was going up to the top of the mountain, he told those men, stay here. Because he wanted this to be just between him and God.

Isn't that good? Those people didn't have a clue. He said, what are you doing Abraham? He said, well, Isaac and I are just going to worship God. We will be back.

Just hang on here. And he goes all alone. He didn't want this grand display before other people.

Hey fellas, you want to see how much I love God? Here it is. Here is my son. You see this? Get the video camera and all ready.

None of all that. He was all alone. He said, God, nobody is going to see this.

Nobody. Isaac won't even live to tell the tale. It's just you and me.

Here I prove to you that I love you more than anything else. God said, stop. I proved you.

Now Abraham, I'm going to bless you so much, there's not going to be a man on this earth who's being blessed like you because I've seen you. That you put me first in your life. God is the same today.

He tests us in the different circumstances of life to see whether we will give secretly to Him that which is most precious to us without anybody knowing. Secret self-denials, secret sacrifices, secret times of prayer. When nobody in your house knows about it.

You say, how can I do that? I'll tell you. When everybody is sleeping. Nobody will know about it.

Even if you're sleeping in the same room. They won't know that you're awake and you're praying to God. God who sees in secret will repay you.

There's no doubt about it. These are laws that Jesus taught. Those who follow the laws, the Father repays them 24x7.

He repays them. You can become a radiant Christian because of the blessing of God upon your life. Even your health will improve, I'll tell you that.

I'm not saying that all sickness, the solution to it is this. There are many sicknesses because we live in a sin-cursed earth and many other factors. But there are some sicknesses among believers which are definitely due to some spiritual causes.

And it's because people live by the rule of selfishness. A lot of problems. You know it's like you have a good scooter or car going and you decide to put some sand into the petrol tank.

You know, just for fun. Put some sand into the petrol tank and after sometime you hear some noises and you wonder why. It's not meant to receive sand.

It's meant to receive petrol. When you became a Christian, you were not meant to live as a miser. You were meant to live with generosity.

But you live by the old rule and put sand in. No wonder things grind to a halt. Backsliding.

Defeated life. Problems. Problems between husband and wife.

Problems in the home. No way to solve it. And people say, Oh, brother Zak, the devil's got here and the devil's come here and the devil's doing this to me and the devil's coming to my home and the devil's got my children.

And where's Jesus all the time? You don't know. He's nowhere around. But the devil's doing this and the devil's... You see, the devil's almighty.

And the devil is everywhere. Poor Jesus, he's nowhere around. That's the way some believers talk.

A lot of rubbish. I don't go around glorifying the devil. There's a place the devil's... God has appointed for the devil and according to Romans 16.20, it is under my feet.

I believe that. So if he's sitting on top of my head, I got myself to blame. He can't sit on my head.

He cannot. Not in a million years. He's not gonna sit in my home.

No. I'm gonna follow God's laws. I'm not gonna give... The Bible says, don't give any place to the devil.

Have you read that verse? Ephesians 4. Verse 27. Don't give... I think it's King James that said, don't give place to the devil. Don't give any place to Satan.

Revelation 12, it says, there was no place found for Satan in heaven. I say, Lord, I want my life to be like heaven. There's no place for him found in my life.

But if you live a selfish, miserly life of getting and receiving and grabbing and selling, taking advantage of people, then the devil's got plenty. He'll be sitting on your head all the time. Because that's not God's laws, like putting sand into the petrol tank.

It's not how we're supposed to live. See, Paul says in 2nd Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians in chapter 9, he talks in chapter 8 about this tremendous goodness that these Macedonian Christians, how they gave, 2nd Corinthians 8 verse 3, they gave beyond their ability. First of all, according to their ability and beyond their ability, begging us to please allow us to bless the other saints poorer than us in Jerusalem.

Other saints poorer than us in Jerusalem. I want to ask those who feel you are poor, sitting here, have you ever thought of people who are poorer than you? You may be poor compared to some others in Bangalore. But what about the others in many parts of India who are poorer than you? That's what the people in Macedonia thought.

Yeah, we're not that well off, but we think of some of those poor saints in Jerusalem. They are much poorer than us. And they begged saying, please take this and give it to them.

And then he says to the Corinthians, you fellows, you've got much more than the Macedonians. You should be ashamed the way you're living. No wonder you have so many problems, you Corinthian Christians.

Those Christians in Philippi don't have your problems, because they've learned something of God's laws. And he says, you want to follow Jesus? Okay, 2 Corinthians 8, 9. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus? Though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. You want to follow Him? This is what He did.

He wanted to make other people share in His wealth and bless them. Follow Him. You want to be like Him? Be like Him.

Don't just speak words. The kingdom of God is not in words. He told the Corinthians, I'm sick and tired of you fellows and your words.

I want to see some power in your life. And then He says, in chapter 9. I want to say this, He says in verse 6. If you sow sparingly, you'll reap sparingly. If you sow bountifully, you'll reap bountifully.

But He says, I'm not trying to compel you. God loves, verse 7, a cheerful giver. That's the law of the New Testament.

God doesn't want any compulsion. All people who try to force you to give are doing the devil's work. Do you know that the devil forces? God gives freedom.

Have you seen demon possessed people? I've seen demon possessed people. They are not under their own control. They are forced by that demon to do this and to do that.

Do stupid things like even take off their clothes or yell or scream or let their hair fly around. Demon possessed people. It's sad.

They look so funny. Their hair all flying around. I mean that's... And nowadays it's a style not to have your hair tied up.

That's another thing. But originally it was demons who let your hair fly around, don't comb it and all this. It's a new style nowadays you see.

You don't comb your hair and all this type of stuff. But originally it was only demon possessed people who didn't comb their hair and let their hair fly around everywhere. Demon possessed.

They have no control over themselves. The devil forced people. God, when the Holy Spirit fills you, He gives you complete freedom.

And then he goes on to say, there's no God loves a cheerful giver. There's no compulsion here. Don't give if you don't feel like.

And then he says, I'm not saying that other people should benefit from your... That's chapter 8. He says, I'm not saying, verse 13, that other people should be at ease and you should be afflicted. No. I'm talking about equality.

2nd Corinthians 8.14 At this present time, your abundance will supply their want. One day their abundance will supply your want. That may be equality.

You see this is the thing. When I have a need, somebody else blesses me. And when I have an abundance, I can bless somebody else.

Isn't that good? So that verse 15, he who gathers much didn't have too much. And he who gathered little had no lack. Referring to the manna in the Old Testament.

That is why you've heard me say this before. Brother, once upon a time when you were in need, if the church took an offering and gave you money to help you in your poverty or to help you with some sick child or sickness in your home, good. You had a need, then you received it.

If you got more at that time than you needed, you should have returned the rest. You didn't do it. Okay, that's another thing.

But now that you have enough, what do you do? Now do you think, Oh well, now I have plenty. Let me return that money which was given to me 5 years ago or 10 years ago because now I have an abundance. Now I can give it back to the poor so that maybe some other poor people somewhere else will be blessed.

Have you ever thought of that? Has that bright idea ever come to your head? Or is the devil always controlling your thing? He said, No, no, no, don't ever think like that. No wonder so many of our Christians are so gloomy, so depressed. The blessing of God is not upon their life.

The blessing of God is not upon their finances. They are so frequently in debt. Blessing of God is not upon their work.

If they had learned to give, God would have shoveled into their life much more. Learn to give, not just money. Let's learn to give God praise and worship.

You know, I have sought for so many years in CFC and everywhere to come to one meeting where we will sing only worship songs and no prayer and where everybody will only worship never not ask for anything but only worship and I have yet to see that. I have yet to see even half an hour of such a meeting. We are so selfish.

Even in our worship time, we are asking God to give me this and give me that and give me the other thing. If you don't believe me, just read a little more carefully the songs that you sing. I read very carefully the songs I sing.

Because I am saying something to Almighty God. I don't want to just say things which God is in heaven and you are on earth so be careful with your words. I know God is in heaven and I am on earth.

I want to be careful with my words. When I sing, I want to be careful with my words. When I say something and I have discovered that I say, Lord, this is the same old selfish thing.

The devil is always... I am not saying it is wrong to ask God. But I mean we are asking God all the time. We have asked Him a million times.

Can't we spend one time just to say, Lord, I don't want to ask You anything now. I want to worship You. That's the mark of a son.

You know, when dad comes from a long trip the three-year-old will open the suitcase Dad, any toys for me? Any sweets for me? But the 25-year-old son will say, Dad, how did business go? Did we get some orders? Is our business progressing? That's the difference between a son and a child. God, what have you got for me? What have you got for me? Let's get out of that mentality. Let's grow up, my brothers and sisters.

Your life will be tremendously blessed if you grow up. Learn to give God praise and thanks. Learn to give other people respect.

You know, we live in a world where young people just don't know how to give respect to older people like the olden days. Very few young people even in CFC have learned to respect older people. And that is why I am sorry to say many of our young people are in a pathetic state.

They should have set India on fire by now. But they are still gloomy, depressed and worried about this and that and the other. They can't trust God for almost anything.

Why is it? Because we've always thought of getting. I want the latest this and the latest that and the latest other thing. How about giving a little respect to people who are older than you? How about giving a little respect to those whom God has borne witness to? If you don't learn that, it's not much hope.

We have to learn, my brothers and sisters, to give in many, many, many areas. And I believe as we do that, many times Paul says, appreciate those who labor among you. Just one verse in that connection.

There are many, many, but I'll just show you one. It's in 1 Timothy 5. It says in 1 Timothy 5 in verse 17. Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

I want to ask you if you've ever obeyed that verse in your life. I hope you have some elders somewhere. I don't know who your elders are.

But whoever your elders are, who work hard at labor, at preaching and teaching, if you think that's easy, you try standing up here and you'll know it's not easy. I've been an elder for many years and I know it's not an easy task. And have you given double honor to those who have done that? Whose ministry has blessed you, challenged you, protected you, protected your family, and do so many things.

Have you honored those whom God has borne witness to? Older brothers, older sisters. If you don't do it, I just want to say, it's not the elder who's the loser, it's you. It's blessed to learn to give.

And as I said, it doesn't just relate to money. Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God.

We have to learn to give like we learn to brush our teeth. We have to begin someday and then practice it everyday. After some time, it will become a habit.

But how about making a beginning? Say, Lord, there are many areas I need to learn to give. I need to learn to give respect where respect is due. I need to learn to give honor where honor is due.

I need to learn to give my life where I should. To give forgiveness. To give praise and worship to God.

To express appreciation to those who deserve my appreciation. We say thank you to a worldly person for little things. And we never express appreciation to people who have blessed us.

We are glad to receive. Consider, my dear brothers and sisters, whether this may be the reason why your life is still so shallow and not all that it should be. It can be a mighty power for God if you learn these simple laws of God.

Heavenly Father, help us learn your laws. Never to think that we are so big that we can live beyond those laws till the end of our life. Let us humbly submit to your laws, Lord.

And we know it is your will that it should go well with every one of us. Help us in Jesus' name. Amen.

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