

# Two Great Secrets Revealed - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen reveals the great secrets of godliness and the call to live as Christ lived through humility and revelation from Scripture.*

**Duration:** 43:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Matthew 13:11, John 4:23-24, John 8:1-11, Hebrews 4:15, 1 John 2:6

**Topics:** "Following Jesus", "Christian Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of Jesus Christ being our hero and role model. He compares young people's admiration for sports stars to the way we should strive to be like Christ. The speaker highlights the difference between the Old Testament, which is focused on commandments, and the New Testament, which calls us to follow Jesus. He shares his personal testimony of feeling defeated and hypocritical in his Christian life until he surrendered to God and asked for true transformation.

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## Transcript

I want to share in these two sessions this morning, two messages titled, Two Great Secrets Revealed. There are secrets in God's Word. And the Bible says in Psalm 25, that the secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him.

There are some things that God has revealed very openly. And there are some things in Scripture that God reveals only to those who want to know more. If you have read through the New Testament, you would have found the word mystery coming a number of times.

Actually, it comes more than 20 times in the New Testament, mystery. And all it means is a secret that only God can reveal to you. And I want to show you one instance of that in Matthew chapter 13 and verse 10, where Jesus said, verse 11, sorry, Matthew 13 and verse 11, Jesus said to His disciples, to you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

But to them, it has not been granted. Now, isn't that interesting that Jesus said that? And who were the them? The them were the Pharisees in the synagogues, who were hearing the message every week, reading the Bible regularly, the Old Testament. But there was something they couldn't understand.

But Jesus said to His disciples, you can understand. One of the clearest proofs of that is that the Pharisees who studied the Scriptures every week, and all of the Scriptures, Genesis to Malachi, all pointed

to Jesus. When Jesus came in their midst, they thought He was the devil.

They called Him Beelzebul. That's how blind you can get even when you read the Scriptures, and even when you are fundamental in doctrine. And Peter, who hadn't studied the Scriptures as much as the Pharisees, when Jesus asked him, who do you say I am? And he said, you're the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

And Jesus said, blessed are you, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you. That means, you didn't get this understanding of who I am through your own intelligence or through any human ability, or through someone explaining it to you. But my Father in Heaven has revealed it.

The great word in the New Testament is revelation, not understanding. Understanding is an intellectual thing. Depends on how clever you are.

You know, you can understand a chemistry book if you're clever. You can understand a mathematics book if you're clever. You can understand the Bible if you're clever in the mind.

But you may not have revelation. Revelation depends on how humble you are. Jesus said, I thank you, Father, Matthew 11, 25, that you have not revealed this to the clever and the intelligent, but to babes.

And when he said babes, he meant those who are humble. So, in the New Testament, there are a number of mysteries. But there are only two mysteries which are called great mysteries.

They are great secrets. Does God want us to know them? Sure. But like the valuable things on earth are not found on the surface, there are many good things on the surface.

You can get fruit, trees on the surface, and a lot of them are very good. But if you want gold and diamonds, you got to dig deep. It's like that with scripture.

There are certain things you can get on the surface. But there are certain other things which you got to dig deep. So, I want to show you, first of all, in this session, one of those great secrets.

1 Timothy chapter 3. In 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16, it says, By common confession, great is the mystery or the secret of godliness. He was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed in the world, received up into glory. I want to read that in the Living Bible.

The way to live a godly life is not an easy matter. But the answer lies in Christ who came to earth as a man and was proved spotless and pure in His spirit. Now, we all agree in the first part of it, the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter.

I don't think there's any argument about that part. But is there an answer? The question is this. Is it possible for a Christian to walk on earth or live on earth as Jesus lived? Does God require it? That's the first thing.

The answer to that is what is called a great secret, a mystery. I've discovered that most Christians don't even believe it's possible. So we got to go to Scripture.

I want to show you a verse in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 6. I want to refer to a number of Scriptures and the reason being exactly what Paul said. So that your faith does not rest on the wisdom of men but on the

power of God in His Word. I fear that many Christians today their understanding of Scripture has come more from Christian books and Christian television than from the Word of God.

And that's a very sad thing. Now I'm not against these things but I say faith does not come by any of these other things. Faith comes by hearing what God has said in His Word.

And if we don't go into God's Word we're not gonna have the faith that the Bible speaks of. We're gonna have a faith that psychology teaches. And there's a lot of psychology mixed with Bible teaching today which is the reason for the shallow Christianity we find among so many who call themselves believers.

And this is the reason why so many Christian homes are in such a mess. So much, so many Christian homes are broken. It's because God's Word is not the foundation of their lives.

They have more faith than psychologists than in the Holy Spirit. That's the tragedy. So 1 John chapter 2 verse 6 says, The one who says he abides in Christ ought to walk in the same manner as Jesus walked.

Or as the living Bible says, the one who says he's a Christian must live as Christ lived. Now when you read a verse like that, the one who says he's a Christian must live as Christ lived. Imagine if in your home, instead of you living in your skin, Jesus lived in your skin one day.

Would there be some difference in your home? In your office? If it was Jesus who came to work that morning in your skin with your face, would there be a difference? That's what this verse means. That's how we're supposed to live. Now when we look at a verse like that, we can look at it in two ways.

We can look at that as a burden. Boy, you mean God expects me to live like Jesus lived? What a standard. Or we can look at it like John Wesley, that great man of God who lived in England 300 years ago.

He looked at it and looked at it as a tremendous possibility that God was holding out to him. As a promise. And he read that verse and said, you mean to say that I can live on earth like Jesus lived? Boy, that excites me.

It's a secret. Great is the secret of godliness that Christ came to earth like us and lived. It's very important for us to see that Jesus came to earth like us.

He was made like us, the Bible says. Now, very often, when we hear the challenge that our calling in life is to live as Christ lived, immediately the devil comes to us and says, no, you can't. Because he was God.

And you're just a man. Now, it's true, he was God. And even when he was on earth, he was God.

God can never cease to be God. That's why he could receive worship. He could tell people their sins are forgiven.

You and I can't do that. But there were many aspects of his life where he lived on earth just as a man. That's the thing I want to point out to you.

It says in the book of Hebrews in chapter 2. Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 17. Therefore, Jesus had to be made. Listen to that expression.

Had to be made like his brothers in all things. See, it says here in verse 16, he was not made like the angels. When he came to earth, he was made like us.

We are his brothers. The Bible says that. Jesus looked around once and said, who are my brothers? These who hear the word of God and do it.

So we are his brothers. And it says he had to be made like his brothers in how many things? In all things. Because that's the only way he could become our high priest.

I'm sure the devil doesn't want us to know that. Because then, we might begin to walk as he walked. And the devil doesn't want that for sure.

Things would become peaceful in your home. And the devil doesn't want that. Your life would become pure.

And the devil doesn't want that. You would have spiritual authority over Satan and all the confusion he brings into your life. And the devil doesn't want that.

So he wants to hide from you this secret, this truth that Jesus was made like you in all things. And he can get you into theological arguments about how can this be and how can the other thing be. Well, if you want to get into that, the Pharisees were always involved in theological arguments with Jesus and went to hell.

You know, if we come to... But if we come to Scripture and say, Lord, you know, Jesus said, I thank you, Father, that you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent. God's Word was not written for theologians. It's written for those who want to live a holy life.

The Bible says, all Scripture, 2 Timothy 3.16, was given by God so that the man of God may be instructed in righteousness and that he may become perfect. And that's the reason why Scripture was given. So when we come to Scripture with that reason, Lord, I'm not trying to get into a theological understanding.

Theology is important, but it's primary purpose, it's all the theology in the world is not going to make us holy. It says here, He was made like us in all things. I just believe that.

It says in Hebrews 4.15, He was tempted like us in all things. And yet, He did not sin. That's a tremendous challenge.

I want to give you my personal testimony. I was born again when I was 19 and a half years old. And for 16 years after that, I was sure of my salvation.

I was baptized. I was sure if I die, I go to heaven. But I was defeated, defeated, defeated all those 16 years.

And I was ashamed to acknowledge it. Defeated my personal life. Defeated my home life.

Defeated in relation to money. Defeated in relation to everything. I got so fed up.

I was in full time Christian work. I got so fed up that 31 years ago, I said to the Lord, Lord, I can't continue preaching because I'm just a hypocrite. I'm preaching things which are true according to your word, which are not true in my life.

And if I continue like this, I'll just destroy myself. So I'm going to quit the ministry unless you do one thing for me. Make what I speak to be true in my inner life.

That there should be no difference between my inner life and the impression I give to others. That's the only thing I asked of God. And I would pray and fast and seek God and pray and seek God.

And God met with me. And I want to say He answered my prayer. I praise the Lord for that.

That's what gives me the boldness to assure the worst person sitting here that God can do that for you. He can. If you will hunger and thirst after righteousness, you will be satisfied or the word of God is not true.

Jesus said, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. Or as the NASB says, they will be satisfied. Why are people not satisfied with a holy life? Why don't they come into that holy life? Because they don't hunger and thirst for righteousness.

They don't believe. They are not challenged by the verse that we just read that he who says he abides in Him must walk as he walked. They are not concerned that God's name is dishonored in the world because Christians don't live as Christians should.

We had a president of India about 50 years ago or 45 years ago. He was a renowned Hindu scholar but who had read through the Bible and had a great respect for Jesus Christ though he was not a Christian. And he was a very shrewd observer of human nature and looked around in India and looked at the Christians and this is what he said to the Christians in India.

You Christians make extraordinary claims but you live very ordinary lives. And I have never forgotten that. This is the impression of a Hindu who respected Jesus Christ but could not respect many Christians he saw.

And that's made me hang my head in shame. I said, Lord, your name is dishonored in India not because of the way the heathen live but the way we Christians live. And I'm concerned about that.

I can't change everybody but I can change myself. I want to ask you. People who know you well who if they could see the way you live at home the way you handle your finances would they say you are a disciple of Jesus Christ? If they knew everything about your inner life your attitudes, your motives, your thoughts would they say you are a Christian a disciple of Jesus Christ? That's something that I keep asking myself all the time and that you should.

Because that's what brings dishonor to the name of Jesus all over the world the way a lot of Christians are living in their private lives. So, our calling is as we see here to walk as Jesus walked. The Bible says that when the Holy Spirit has come Jesus said that He will take of the things of mine and show it to you.

Now, you know, young people have heroes. Most of their heroes are sports stars and you go into their rooms you'll see big posters of some basketball player and they'll watch videos of how that man plays and they long to play like him and many of them strive and strive and strive to be like that man. And that's how they improve their game.

I want to ask you honestly honestly Is Jesus Christ your hero? Do you have a big picture of Him in your heart? Do you long, like that young man longs to play basketball like his hero? Do you long to be like Christ? To speak like Him? To live like Him? To have the same attitude to people that He had? To have

the same attitude to money that He had? To have the same attitude to serving His Father like He had? To have the same passions and motives and desires that He had? It all depends on whether He's your hero. I'm very thankful that when I got converted I turned around completely. I feel that a lot of people the fundamental problem in their life is that right at the beginning they didn't have a radical, thorough repentance from sin.

Repentance means a 180 degree turn And some people have turned 45 degrees 90 degrees It's a turn, but it's not a 180 degrees It's not a complete radical turn from sin in the world. And that's, you know the Bible speaks about being born again It's exactly like physical birth. And if you pull a baby out of the womb when it's been there only 6 months That's the type of conversion some Christians have.

You got to keep them in incubators for a long time You don't know whether they'll survive or not. And imagine if you have a church full of people who are in incubators A lot of pastors are living with that type of problem. And imagine if you pull out that child when it's only been 4 months in the womb You don't even know whether it'll survive.

But this is what's happening with a lot of evangelism today. Evangelists are so crazy for statistics that they want to pull babies out when they're 3 months in the womb because they have more conversions that way. But what type of conversions? I see this in India with evangelists reporting from here and there and here and there So many people converted, so many people converted It's almost as if the whole of India is converted now.

If you went by statistics I live there and I know the number of people who call themselves Christians were not converted. They haven't turned radically from sin and from the world. The Bible says He came to save us from our sin.

He didn't come just to comfort us. He came to save us from our sin. We have many other needs in life.

We have physical needs. And we have every right to pray for them. Like Give us this day our daily bread.

Jesus taught us to pray for our physical needs. The Bible teaches us to pray for healing. Teaches us to pray for our material needs.

But if we don't deal with the root problem of sin these other problems are going to keep on coming up. And that's why the Bible says you've got to deal with the root problem of sin first. And that's why the Bible challenges us to walk as Jesus walked.

And when we look at the life of Jesus See, we see the glory of God in creation. The world can see that. But when the Bible says that we saw the glory when John writes that in John 1 when it says we saw in Jesus the glory of God it was not in mighty manifestations of power but primarily in His humility.

If you were to meet Jesus when He was a carpenter 25 years old in Nazareth you didn't know who He was you just heard there was a good carpenter there and you walked up and spent a half an hour with Him what is the impression that you would get of Him? I don't think He would impress you with His holiness and make you feel small. No. I think if you spent a half an hour with Jesus when He was 25 years old as a carpenter in Nazareth you would come away with the thought boy, what a humble man.

That was His glory. You know, Jesus was the only one the only person ever born on earth who could choose where He was going to be born. You and I never had that choice.

We were just born. But Jesus from heaven for thousands of years could plan where He was going to be born and He chose to be born in a stable. He had come to earth to die for our sins and He could plan from heaven for thousands of years how He was going to die.

It didn't have to be crucifixion. It could be quietly in some corner where He was not humiliated like that but He chose to die on a cross publicly humiliated. All through His life from the stable to the cross He chose the way of humility the way of lowliness.

He came underneath everybody so that He could lift everybody up. This is the glory of Jesus Christ. This is the one we are called to follow.

He never made people feel small. That's the thing that challenges me. He valued every person He met.

He who says he is a Christian must walk as Jesus walked. Let me show you one example that always challenges me in John's Gospel chapter 4. Here we read of this Samaritan woman who it says here came to the well at lunch time. Now, in our villages in India where there is no running water in any house the situation is exactly the same.

Everybody has to go to the village well to draw water. And nobody goes at lunch time. Everybody goes early morning because they need water the whole day.

There was a reason why this woman went at lunch time. Because when she went in the morning earlier on all the women there would look down on her because she was sinful. And they would make fun of her and gossip about her and so she decided to go to the well when nobody would be there.

That's why she went at lunch time. Nobody cared for her. And Jesus was prompted by the Holy Spirit to go there at that particular time and to let His disciples go for lunch and He would stay there.

And here comes along this woman. And He talks to her. And He tells her, go and call your husband.

And the woman says, I don't have a husband. John 4 and verse 17. And Jesus says, that's right.

You've had five husbands and the one whom you now have is not your husband. You've said truly. Now, you know, she's embarrassed that this man knows all about my life and all about the five divorces I've had.

How would you talk to a woman who's been divorced five times and who's now living with somebody who's not even her husband? I hope at least from today you will talk to such a woman as Jesus talked to this woman. He didn't make her feel small. He didn't make her feel filthy and rotten like all the other women in Samaria did.

He didn't condone her sin. Oh, no. But He had compassion.

He who says he abides in Christ must walk as Jesus walked. If we want to, we can. The question is whether we're willing to humble ourselves and recognize that in God's eyes we're no better than that person.

All our righteousness are like filthy rags. Jesus needs to save that person and needs to save us. And she was embarrassed when she knew that Jesus knew all about her past life.

And so she changes the subject. You know how we change the subject when we're embarrassed about something personal. So she suddenly says, You know, Lord, I wanted to know about worship.

This matter of worship. I mean, can you tell me something about worship? Now, what would you do if you're a counselor and somebody tries to change the subject like that? Would you say, Oh, no, no, no, no. Let's come back to this.

Let's settle this matter of your divorce situation first. Jesus was not like us. He never brought that subject up again.

He just left it. You see, His sensitivity. He said, Okay, I'll explain worship to you.

And He gives us, He gave her the most profound statement of worship found in the whole Bible. Those who worship the Father, verse 23, verse 24, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Verse 23 and 24, they're the most profound statements of worshipping God found in the entire Bible.

And Jesus spoke it to a five times divorced woman who was now living with a man who was not even her husband. Jesus was so different from us. I believe we need to get a different understanding of Christ.

I see that in the picture of the Pharisees versus the woman caught in adultery. How the Pharisees wanted to stone her to death. And Jesus takes her side.

And says, Anyone who's not committed any sin, throw that first stone. And then He turns to the woman and says two things, not just one thing. He didn't just say, I don't condemn you.

He said, I don't condemn you. And go and sin no more. That's the full gospel.

I don't condemn you. Now some people stop there. That doesn't save that person.

If you just say, I don't condemn you, the person just goes and commits adultery again. But the full gospel is, I don't condemn you. But go and sin no more.

And I believe that woman never sinned again. She became a disciple of Jesus. This is the Christ whom we are to follow.

And when we look at this verse that we saw, that He was tempted like us in all things. We see the challenge in His life to a life of humility, a life of compassion for people who are lost and fallen deep into sin. But it all came out of a life that was pure before His Father.

Why was He tempted like us? God sent Jesus to earth, not only to die for our sins, but also to demonstrate through a period of 33 years, how God wanted man to live. And if we can see, that's why I said, is Jesus your hero? Do you see Him as not only your Savior who died for your sins on the cross, but as an example of how you are supposed to live, how I'm supposed to live. When I look at His life, I see that's the way God wants me to live.

And for that He had to be tempted exactly like me, in every point. What that means is, even though He was God, He did not use His resources as God to overcome sin. Because if He had done that, He couldn't be an example for me.

This is the great secret. Did Jesus use His resources as God to overcome temptation? Or did He overcome temptation only with the resources that He offers us today? It's a very important question. If you say that He used His resources as God, then I say, forget about trying to live like Him.

It's impossible. But once you understand this wonderful truth that He became like you, I know, the thing that opened my eyes nearly 30 years ago was this truth, that Jesus had become like me, was tempted like me. That what brought me into a life of victory.

That verse in Romans 6.14 which says, Sin shall not be master over you. Which the vast majority of Christians have not experienced. I began to experience it.

When I saw that Jesus was tempted like me. See, when I realized, that's when I realized the truth of this verse in Philippians 2 where it says, He emptied Himself. Philippians 2. He emptied Himself.

Verse 7, the NASB. He did not consider equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself. What did He empty Himself of? This is the great question theologians dispute.

Did He empty Himself of His deity? That's impossible. God can never cease to be God. That's why He could accept worship.

But He did empty Himself of something else. And that was His resources as God. So that He could be an example for us.

It's something like this. You know, if some millionaire or billionaire from the United States comes down to some poor village in India and wants to teach people there how to live on what they earn, \$25 a month. And he... Now if he comes there and says, I'm gonna teach you fellas how to live on \$25 a month here in this village and never to get into debt.

How to cut down your income, how to live clean. And if he every now and then goes to the ATM and uses his credit card, he's cheating. And if they know about it, they'll say, you're using your credit card.

Don't try and tell us, we don't have any credit card. We've got no savings. If he wants to teach them how he's got to live, even though he's a billionaire and he's got billions in his account back in the United States.

When he comes there, he must never use his credit card. And work like them, earn \$25 a month and teach them how to live. And they'll say, now we believe.

Now the question is, when Jesus came to earth, did he keep using his heavenly credit card, which we don't have? Or did he live only with the resources we have? The Bible says, great is the mystery of Godliness. He came in our flesh. He was tempted like us.

He emptied himself of those resources. Though he was God, though he was a billionaire, he never used the credit card. Is it possible then to live as he lived? If this man lives there for 33 years in that village and shows them how to live with the income they earn, that produces more faith than any amount of teaching.

And that's why there's a difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, they only had commandments. In the New Testament, we have an example in Jesus.

Now, which is the easier way to learn swimming? If I explain all the theory of swimming on a blackboard here and say, go jump in the river. Or if I take you to the river and say, follow me. That's the difference

between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament was just commandments. This is what you're supposed to do. But Jesus said, I finished with the law.

Follow me. And when you follow him, you live a life which is much higher than the standard of the Ten Commandments. But I'll tell you what happened to me when I saw this.

I had ambitions too. We all have ambitions. And it's good to have ambitions.

My ambition when I... I was in the military, in the Indian Navy. My ambition was to go right up to the top of the Indian Navy, to end up as the Admiral of the Navy. I was an officer at the age of 19.

And I studied about how the admirals fought in the world wars and how we were supposed to conduct naval warfare and all that. And one day, Jesus came into my life. And I turned around 180 degrees.

It's not that I didn't have any more ambitions. I did have ambitions, but they were 180 degrees different. Now, I was not interested in being the Admiral of the Navy.

No. I wanted to be like Jesus. I wanted... And I'm so glad that 45 years ago, I was gripped by the desire to be like Jesus.

And when God gave me the gift to preach, I studied the scriptures to see how Jesus preached. I said, Lord, there was never a preacher on earth who preached like You did. I want to preach like You.

I've heard many other preachers, but I didn't want to pattern myself after any of them. I said, Lord, I want to see how Jesus preached. I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, whatever your calling in life is, your primary calling is to be like Jesus.

And He was tempted, whatever temptation you face, He was tempted like you. And when I face temptation, last 30 years, this is what I've said. I've said, Lord, somewhere in Nazareth, during your earthly life, you were tempted exactly like I'm being tempted now.

And you didn't sin. I want to follow You. This is the reason why He gives us the power of the Holy Spirit.

How did Jesus overcome? He was filled with the Holy Spirit. It wasn't a theory. It wasn't a technique.

It wasn't a pep talk. There was a supernatural power that He had, which those people didn't have in the Old Testament, that every believer can have after the day of Pentecost. You know you can have that? That's the answer.

When we hunger and thirst for righteousness, how does He satisfy us? He fills us with the supernatural power, which is another law, called the law of the Holy Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, that lifts us up from the law of sin and death. Here's the law of gravity. Let me close with this.

The law of gravity is like the law of sin in your life and my life. It operates everywhere in the world, in the United States or India or anywhere, exactly the same. It's always pulling us down.

Always down. But why isn't it falling down now? Because another law, the law of life in me, keeps it from falling down. The Bible says, He is able to keep you from falling, if you believe it.

We have to believe it. We have to believe it. And say, Lord, I want this life at any cost.

And even if there are things you couldn't understand in what I said, I tried my best. Ask the Holy Spirit to explain to you. Can we just bow for a moment of prayer? While our heads are bowed in prayer, I want to invite you to respond to what God has spoken to you this morning.

Will you say, Lord, I want this life. I want Jesus to be my hero. I want to walk in His footsteps, to live that life following the example of the most wonderful life that anyone ever lived on earth.

Lord, I believe it is possible. You can keep me from falling into the sins that I keep falling into again and again and again. I believe You can keep me.

Thank You, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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