

Wisdom for Our Days on Earth

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon highlights the immense worth of every individual to God, emphasizing the importance of humility and acceptance within the church community.

Duration: 1:02:21

Scripture: Psalm 90:12

Topics: "Faith And Rest", "Humility And Service"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding rest and value in God, highlighting the need to trust in His care and guidance. It discusses the significance of understanding our worth to God, the value of living a life of rest and faith, and the impact of serving one another with humility and love.

Transcript

There are two things in my heart. One is, I feel that as there's a lot of prosperity in India now, which we never experienced 20 years ago. A lot of people are making a lot of money.

There's a lot of corruption. But there are many of us and many in our country who still are left out and go through a lot of struggles trying to make ends meet. And we come to the church and even in the church maybe you're not very well known, you don't have any prominence.

So one of the things we want to, want every one of us to know, is that if you have given your life to Christ, you're tremendously valuable to God. A sense of our worth to God, even if people don't appreciate us or value us, is very, very important as a foundation for our Christian life. In the world people have worth and value before others because either they are very big people or they come from big families or rich families or have a lot of money or their photos are in papers regularly, film stars, politicians and all types of people.

But most of us are not in that category. 99% of us were not even famous in Christian circles. And it's very easy to lose that sense of worth to think, well, what am I worth? And I want to tell you, you're worth a tremendous lot to God.

How do we evaluate the worth of anything? It's not by its size or anything like that. You know, a small diamond that you can hardly see, it just fits in the palm of your hand, is worth much more sometimes than a building because it's the price you pay for something that determines its value, not what it looks like. You know, I've heard of some paintings that are sold for \$12 million.

I look at it and say, I wouldn't give five rupees for that. It's such a useless painting. I mean, some children can draw something better than that.

Why in the world they pay \$12 million for that? I don't understand. I still, I've never been able to understand why they pay so much money, but it's valuable and they have to keep it under lock and key with security guards and all that, that useless looking painting because they paid \$12 million for it. Now there's a parable there.

Why does that man take so much care for something? Because he feels he's got a lot of value. And ultimately I want to say, brothers and sisters, it's not what people think of you. I may think that painting is worth only five or 10 rupees, but that guy's got a sense of worth and he's paid so many millions of dollars for it.

It's the same way when people look at us, it's not what they think we are worth. What was the price paid for you? That's the thing that we must always remember, never forget. So let's read this verse in case you're not familiar with it.

You know, unfortunately we have people watching so much television nowadays that they don't read the Bible. They are more familiar with film stars than the teaching of scripture, even Christians. And if you don't read the scriptures, then of course you will always have feelings of low worth and discouragement, et cetera.

It says in 1 Peter chapter 1 that we were purchased. The word redeemed is a religious word, but all it means is purchased. Jesus purchased us.

We sing in songs about being redeemed. Christ is our redeemer, redemption. It just means we were purchased.

And in the olden days, a couple of hundred years ago in different places, they used to have slave markets where they sold slaves, just like you sell furniture and they were auctioned. What are you going to pay for this slave? And different people would quote a price. We were purchased.

And it says in 1 Peter 1 in verse 18, we were redeemed or purchased not with silver and gold, which can perish, but with the precious blood of Christ. If you believe that the precious blood of Christ which he shed on the cross, the blood of one who lived all his life without sinning and who was pleasing to God, that that was worth more than all the silver and the gold in the world, then you know what your worth is. I know I was purchased with that blood.

I may not look very attractive in man's eyes. It doesn't matter. I mean, today, a lot of people in Christendom know me, but 40 years ago or 35 years ago, I was pretty despised and it didn't matter to me.

I was just as worth then as I am now. My value hasn't increased just because a lot of people know me. Not at all, because that doesn't add to my value to the question what I was purchased with.

I was purchased with the blood of Christ. And if you believe that you were purchased from the slave market of sin by the blood of Christ, that's your worth. And I want to urge you, my brothers and sisters, never to forget it.

Don't worry how you look or what people think about you or how clever you are or what rank you get in your class. You're precious. One of the things I look forward to when I come back to see CFC is our flowers.

And I don't mean these empty things here. I mean, these children, these are our flowers. See how quietly they sit.

I've never seen it in any other church where people sit quietly, children sit quietly listening for two hours. Those are the flowers that we value, not the things of earth that perish. So that's how Christ values us, purchased with his blood.

And that's why we are precious to him. And that's why it's so important to make sure that you're not just a Christian because you were born in a Christian family, but that you've given your life consciously to Jesus Christ, that you came to him as a sinner. I remember some years ago, I met a person in another country and he was not sure whether he was saved.

And I said, the trouble with you is you are coming to Jesus Christ as a Christian. And I want to tell you the bad news that Christ did not die for Christians. He was shocked.

I said, he died for sinners. The whole Bible says Jesus Christ died for sinners, not for Christians. So you come to Christ as a Christian.

I'm sorry, he won't accept you. You come to Christ as a sinner. He said, come welcome.

He came to save sinners. So I say, if you come to him as a sinner, he'll save you. But if you think, well, I'm better than the Muslims and I'm better than the Hindus and I'm better than the atheists.

I'm a Christian. I go to church. You'll never be accepted.

And that's the reason so many people have an uncertainty about their relationship with God. But come to him as a sinner. Who were the people whom Christ rejected on earth? Religious people who knew the Bible, who went to the synagogues, preached and prayed and studied and fasted and gave money to God.

And he rejected them because they felt they'd be accepted because of their religious knowledge and activity. And who are the ones he accepted? A poor, sinful woman who was caught in adultery. Jesus said, I don't condemn you because he was honest about her sin.

That's it. He didn't say, oh, well, adultery is not serious. He never said that.

He said, I don't want you to ever sin again. What a strong word that is. That's the balance in the gospel.

I don't condemn you for what you've done in the past, but don't do it again. That's the word of the Lord to all of us. And whom did he accept? A murderer who probably never did anything right in his life, hanging on the cross in the last minute.

Everybody thought he was going to hell, but Jesus had hope for him. So what we learn is that the way God looks at us is so different from the way man looks at us. In the Old Testament, God is called the God of the fatherless and the widows and the strangers and the aliens.

That means those who are on the fringes of society. You know, widows are not in the center of society. Hardly anybody cares for a widow.

Orphans, fatherless, they're on the fringes of society. The strangers in a country who are not citizens, who are immigrants, they're on the fringes of society. Those are the ones God says he's the God of those people.

The God of those who are despised by others, those who are not valued by others, to give them a sense of worth. And it's very, very important that in this church we give such people a sense of worth, that we don't hang around with the well-known and the famous and the rich, but everybody's equal. Because the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, in that early church, the first century church that Paul had established in Corinth, Paul says to them in 1 Corinthians 1:26, you know your calling brothers, that according to a human evaluation, according to the flesh means according to human evaluation, not many of you are mighty, not many of you are from noble families.

You know, that's another thing a lot of people boast about. What family have you come from? The part of the country I come from, a lot of people boast about that. The family I come from.

Somebody once was mentioning that to me and asked me which family I was from. I said I was from the family that got kicked out of Eden by God many thousands of years ago. Adam.

Adam's family. And that's why Jesus saved me. I don't have anything else to boast about.

Come to God like that, he'll accept you. Not many noble. God has chosen the foolish things of the world.

He has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things that are strong. He has chosen the base things of the world and those whom despised God has chosen so that and the things that are considered nothing on the earth so that he might bring to nothing people who think they are so big so that and the whole purpose is that no one can boast before God. On earth there's a lot of things we can boast about.

Like I said, our family, our position, our wealth, our accomplishments, and the name we have attained, etc, etc. Even in Christian circles, a lot of preachers who boast because they're famous and accepted. But the picture God has given me in my mind is, you know, human beings are like trees to use a picture.

Some are huge big trees, some are small little plants and big ones and different different sizes according to their fame and their wealth and their position and accomplishments, etc. But when a person comes to Christ, the Lord takes an axe and cuts it all down to ground level. And once all those trees are cut down to ground level, which is the big one, nobody, only Christ stands there in the midst as the only one who's worthy.

And that's why when we get up to heaven, we won't be looking around for Paul and Peter, but we'll sing that song which they sing, thou alone art worthy, Lord Jesus, thou alone art worthy. I often use my imagination to picture that day when I shall stand in heaven with my Savior. There'll be millions and millions of people around me and nobody will care or know who Zach Bunin is in that day, or Peter or Paul.

Everybody's attention will be focused on Jesus and say, Lord, thou alone art worthy. If it were not for you, we wouldn't be here. It was your blood that purchased us.

And so it's very important that we value everyone in the church, irrespective of what their weaknesses or limitations may be. Many years ago, we had a picnic. I think it was in Banner Ghata somewhere.

We went as a church. We were much smaller then. Many, many years ago, this was, and maybe 20, 30 years ago.

And I remember different families were asked if they would like to do an item, some sort of skit or song to just have a little good fun together there. So we did a skit, my wife and I and our four children. And the skit was this.

I asked one of my children to act as a retarded child who couldn't speak properly. And then we were sitting, the skit was, we were sitting and discussing what shall we do for this church picnic? And then somebody suggested we'll sing a song, all of us as a family. I said, okay, let's practice.

Count your blessings, name them one by one. And so all of us would sing count your blessing correctly according to the tune. But this little retarded boy would mix up the whole thing and say all types of syllables and confuse the whole thing.

And then the other boys would say, dad, we got to tell him to shut up. Otherwise he'll spoil the whole skit. You know, we're singing so well and he's saying something or the other and messing up the whole thing.

So I said, okay, if we don't know how to include a weak child in our family, along with us, then we are the ones who are retarded, not him. If we are intelligent, we know how to include him also and make him feel valuable in the family. I mean, he was born like that.

What to do? It's not his fault. So I said, now we're going to sing and we're going to make sure we include him. So I told him, okay, now we are going to sing at the end of each sentence.

Okay. You're going to sing all by yourself because you're very valuable. The rest of us will all sing together, but at the end of each sentence, you're going to sing.

And all you have to say is la la la la la. That's how you can do that. Right.

La la la la. Okay. But by the way, you know, some of these folks are retarded.

They've got good musical sense, even though they can't speak words and all properly. I've noticed that. So we sang count your blessings, name them one by one.

La la la la count your blessings. See what God has done. La la la la.

I said, doesn't that sound much more wonderful than when we were singing alone without him. And then I said, the whole purpose of this kid is to say that in our church, nobody is considered retarded except the one who thinks too much of himself and who cannot accept others and who makes other people feel small. That guy is really retarded.

We don't despise him. We just feel sorry for him. And that's how it must be because Jesus Christ values everyone who is, he died for the whole world.

He once said, what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul. And from that, I learned that the whole world in God's eyes is not worth as much as one soul. That's so important to

understand this dear friends, dear brothers and sisters.

This is the value of one soul to Jesus Christ, our Lord. And that's the Christ we proclaim in this church. I've often said this, India has not rejected Jesus Christ.

India has rejected the Christ that they've seen in many Christians. And that Christ I've also rejected because those Christians are not behaving like Christ. They're not living like Christ.

Their whole attitude to people and to things and everything else is not the attitude Jesus had. And that's the Christ that many Hindus and non-Christians have seen, and they rejected. You know, when I witnessed to non-Christians, whether it's in a bus or a train or anywhere, I tell them, the first thing I want to say to you, my dear friend, is that 95% of Christians you have met in your life are not Christians.

That's my introduction to the gospel. It's unfortunate that we have to say that, but I believe it. I was like that myself for 19 years.

I was born in a good Christian family, but I was not a Christian. I was a name. My name was Christian.

I went to church and read the Bible and prayed, but inwardly Christ did not come in. It was a name. And I want to ask all of you here, I don't want to take it for granted that just because you come to CFC, of course you must be born again.

Are you really born again? Have you had a birth in your life just like you were physically born? And you know the difference when a child is born, stillborn means dead. Soon as it's born, it's dead. And then we, what a joy there is in a living child that's born.

I want to ask you whether you've had that type of experience in your life where Christ came into your life and you came into a new life. You know, just like a little baby comes out of its mother's womb in that dark surroundings. It's lived for nine months wondering if there's anything better than this.

All water around me, dark, dark. Then suddenly it comes out into a world and says, wow, what a world this is compared to the one I was living in for nine months. Did you have an experience like that? That is new birth where we lived in darkness and discouragement and failure and Christ came in and things became different.

I said, wow, I'm a citizen of heaven now. And I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, I love you all. I believe I have a responsibility for you as one of your elders to ensure that if you come to this church, at least, you know, I can't force you to give your life to Christ, but at least you know that you are not a Christian because you were born in a Christian family.

No, I often tell people you go into a hospital and look at all those newborn babies, you know, any hospital here, so many newborn babies. Can you look at that baby, those babies that are all born yesterday and tell me which is a Hindu, which is a Muslim, which is a Christian, which is an atheist? Can you tell me? No, none of them are any of those things, but they grow up in homes and one of those child grows up to be a Christian, another grows up to be a Muslim, another grows up to be a Hindu, another grows up to be an atheist. It's training from their parents.

That's it. What are they when they're born into the world? Just little children. And then, but they have a nature in them.

You don't have to teach a child to tell a lie. Every child in the world tells lies, whether they're Christian parents or Muslim parents or Hindu parents or anything. They fight, they quarrel, they're selfish, they grab.

You don't see any difference. You go to the kindergarten in a school and can you look at all the children playing there and tell me who's a Christian? It's very difficult to say. It's all the same.

They're all fighting and quarreling and yelling and everything else. It's not birth that makes any of us any religion. A time must come in our life when we make a choice.

I made that choice when I was nearly 20 years old, 19 and a half. I said, Lord Jesus, I give my life to you. I want you to come into my life.

That was not to become a preacher. It was to become a Christian. That's what changed the direction of my life.

And I want all of you to be absolutely sure that that's happened in your life. And as I said, don't come to Christ as a Christian, come as a sinner. Say, Lord, there's nothing good in me.

I'm a sinner, but you died for all my sins on the cross. It's like a man who's got a debt of say 1 billion, 1,000 million rupees, a hundred crore rupees. He wonders how in the world can I pay this debt? He's scared to meet that creditor whom he owes his money.

If he sees him, he goes the other way till one day some wealthy man who loves him, pays that 1 billion rupees debt and gets the receipt from him and gives it to him and says, you don't have to be scared of him anymore. Your debt is paid. That's what Jesus did on the cross.

But if I act as though, no, I don't have any debt. I'm all right. Then he won't be forgiven.

But if I can come to him and say, Lord, I had a tremendous debt from the time I was a child. All I've done is displeased you and done wrong to you. But I thank you that Jesus died for me, for a sinner like me and paid my debt completely on the cross.

It says in Colossians 2 verse 14, he tore up that certificate of debt of mine and set me free. That's why we say, praise the Lord. That's why we're happy.

That's why we sing from our heart and Christ has come in and God has declared us righteous. There's a word in the Bible, it's called justified. That means he's declared me righteous.

And now I know this is all elementary stuff, but we have children growing up here who have not heard that elementary stuff. And sometimes we are preaching to all the grownups who have been here many years. And these children have never heard the simple gospel that you come to Jesus as a sinner.

Christ died for you. And there are new people who come to this church who hear about holiness and they never attained to it because they've not come to the starting line. You know, you cannot join a marathon race if you don't come to the starting line.

You cannot join the hundred meters race if you don't come to the starting line. That's true in the Olympics. It's true in a school athletics program.

So the question is, you can't join the race in the middle. The question is, have you come to the starting line? Have all of you come to the starting line? That's so important. We want everybody here.

I've often said this, everybody who comes to this church, I must see you in heaven one day. All the children that are here, we don't want one of them to be lost. I don't want, my children are all born again, they're going to heaven, but I don't want just my children.

I want many children. Somebody asked me once, Brother Zak, you've got four sons in America now, when are you going to migrate yourself? I said, I've got 4,000 children in India. What do you mean migrate there? Are all of them saved? Are all of you really going to meet me in heaven? Sure.

The question is not, have you overcome sin? There may be habits in our life that we take a long time to overcome. My question is, do you hate it? That's the question. Or do you enjoy it? A pig can fall into the muck and a cat can fall into the muck.

The difference is one enjoys it and stays around there and paddles around in the muck, the cat jumps out immediately. We can never say that a cat will never fall into dirty water, but I can tell you one thing, if it falls, it jumps out immediately and it licks itself clean immediately. Not because it was trained.

You don't have to train a cat. It was born that way. No mother cat trains its kitten saying, you can't be like pigs, you must be clean.

And when you're born again, one mark is you automatically, just like that cat has a desire to be clean, that little kitten has got in his brain a desire to be clean. It's a nature. Just like the little pig has got no desire to be clean.

It's the same way when you're really born again, you begin to have a desire to be free from sin. It may take you a while to learn that, to be free from it. My question is, are you battling it? Are you battling it? Are you battling sin every day in your life? And once we have got established on that, the next thing we need to consider, as I said, there are two things.

One is our foundation. The other is the superstructure. A building has got two parts, foundation, superstructure.

A tree has got two parts, roots and the upper part of the tree. So what I was talking so far is the foundation, the roots. It's very, very important that our foundation is solid.

Then we come to the upper part of our life as to how we're going to live the rest of our life now that we have been forgiven. Am I going to spend the rest of my life saying, ah, I've got a wonderful friend who keeps on paying my debt. He paid my debt of 1,000 million rupees the other day.

So I can keep on getting into debt. Let me keep on borrowing and borrowing. This good friend of mine will always come and clear my debt.

Would you do that to someone who spent a lot of his own money to pay your debt? I don't think we do that to a human friend who cleared our debt and say, well, I'm just going to take advantage of him, make him keep on paying my debt. But that's, is that your attitude to Jesus Christ? Now I'm talking about the superstructure. You say, well, oh, forgiveness of sin is so easy.

It doesn't matter if I sin. Now, once in a while, you may feel like that, but if that is your constant attitude, it doesn't really matter if I sin. Then my brother, sister, I have to say to you, I seriously doubt whether you'll really become a child of God, whether you're born again.

I don't think so. The change of nature has not come in. I mean, if a cat says, oh, well, it doesn't matter if I get dirty.

I say, then you're a pig acting like a cat. No, you're not really changed. As I said, the test is not whether you've overcome your anger and your sexual lust and things like that.

The thing is, do you hate it? Do you confess it to God as soon as you have fallen? Do you get out of that dirty water like the cat and lick yourself clean immediately? How long does it take for a cat to get out of the dirty water it's fallen into? It doesn't take five minutes. It doesn't even take one minute. It's immediate.

As soon as you're aware that you have sinned, do you immediately come back to God and say, Lord, forgive me, cleanse me. I'm sorry I took advantage of your goodness to me, but I got into debt again. Please forgive me.

He'll forgive you. He'll clear your debt, but don't take advantage of his goodness. That's all I say.

And so we need to know how we are to live the rest of our life, which God has given us. See, Jesus did not purchase us just to go to heaven when we die. A lot of Christians think like that.

Now, if the only purpose with which Christ died was to populate heaven, then the best thing he could have done to us was to kill us as soon as we are born again, right? As soon as we're born again, kill this fellow, he'll go to heaven straight away. But why doesn't, why he doesn't do that? He allows us to, he's allowed me to live for 51 years, 53 years since he first saved me. What for? So that I could talk to others and tell others about his goodness and show forth in my life the values of heaven.

That's why he's kept you alive, brother, sister, so that your life can glorify Christ on earth, the way you live, the way you speak, the way you deal with human beings. If you can show in a world where people value things and use people, if we can show we value people and only use things, it's the reverse. You know, human beings, as they are away from God, they value material things and make use of people for their own ends.

But when Christ comes into our life, we use material things, but we value people. Has that happened in your life? It's one of the things that, it's one of the things that happened to me when Christ took possession of my inner life. And so there's a prayer I want you to, it's a prayer you know from Psalm 90.

Psalm 90, by the way, is the only Psalm that Moses wrote. Most of the Psalms are written by David, but Psalm 90 is a Psalm that Moses wrote and he, there's a little prayer here, it's a beautiful prayer. He says, Lord, teach me to number my days.

That means, let me not think I'm going to live on earth forever. I'm going to live on earth only for a limited period of time. Psalm 90 in verse 12, teach us to number our days so that we can apply our hearts towards wisdom.

That means so that I can live on earth in a wise way and a wise, the way to wisdom is to acknowledge that we don't have it, that we, only God can give us wisdom. What is the best way to live on this earth?

Sometimes even some non-Christians have got a little understanding of that. You know, 300 years before Christ came to earth, there was a man in ancient Greece called Socrates.

He was known for his wisdom. He had tremendous wisdom and he, in giving answers to problems and things like that. He was a very simple man, a man who obeyed all the laws of his country and known for his wisdom.

And somebody once came to him and asked him, how did you become so wise? Oh, he said, that's very simple. He said, all of us in the world know nothing, but I'm one of those who know that I know nothing. All the others think that they know something.

That's the big difference. So when the day comes in your life, when you acknowledge, Lord, when it comes to divine wisdom, I know nothing. I know a lot of things about science and mathematics in the world and making money and getting out in the world and all that type of stuff.

But when it comes to things of God, I'm just zero. Then you'll get wisdom. You come to him and say, Lord, that's how we must approach the Bible.

So teach us, Lord, to live on earth in such a way to recognize that we're not going to live here forever. You know, there was a man who came once to John Wesley, who John Wesley was one of the greatest servants of God who lived in the 18th century, 300 years ago or 250 years ago. And somebody told him, after he'd been a wholehearted Christian for many years, told John Wesley, supposing you knew that you're going to die tomorrow, how would you live the rest of today? Isn't that a good question? Supposing you knew you're going to die tomorrow, how would you live the rest of today? He said, I'm going to live exactly the same way I plan to live.

I don't have to change a single thing. Here was a man who was always ready to meet God. He didn't have to say, oh boy, I've got to go and confess to that chap something I hurt him and I've got to return that money I stole from someone or he didn't have to do anything.

His conscience was always clear. What a way to live. I mean, there may be earthly things that we have to settle if we knew that we're going to die tomorrow.

That's something secondary. We are talking about our spiritual relationship with God. Jesus once said concerning his second coming, it's in the Gospel of Luke, he said, when I come, you should not have to go down to the house if you're on the rooftop.

And if you're out in the fields or today, those days they worked in the fields today, he would say, if you're in the office, you shouldn't have to come back home. What is the meaning of that? That when Christ comes suddenly, nobody should have to say, we shouldn't have to say, oh Lord, hang on. I didn't apologize to my wife before I went to the office this morning.

Let me go back and settle that or let me go down from the rooftop downstairs to settle some matter. I must always be ready. Whether I'm on the rooftop of the house, whether I'm in office, my conscience is always clear.

I have nothing, nobody. And when the Lord comes to take me home, that shouldn't be somebody on earth to say, Lord, you can't take him. This guy owes me some money.

How can you take him to heaven? Tell him to pay back his debt and then you can take him. I don't want anybody to be able to say that. I want to be always ready to go.

And if I've hurt somebody, I've apologized to that person. If I've cheated somebody, I have returned that money and I've tried my best to live with a good conscience, not a perfect life, but with a good conscience. That means as soon as I do something wrong, I've settled it.

Teach me to apply my heart to wisdom. Supposing you knew that you had only one more year to live, how would you live the rest of this one year? Okay, you would settle all your earthly matters. That's good.

But how would you spend the rest of your time? What would your conversation be at home? What would you be talking about? Would you still be talking about the most useless things that you talk about now, if you had only one more month to live? Teach us to number our days. Lord, our days are so few. We don't realize it.

We are more careful with our money than with our time. Even rich people don't waste their money. Poor people don't waste their money, but wastage of time.

Wow. The number of things we spend our days in, useless wastage of time, because we don't realize that time is as valuable as money. I'm thankful that I've come to realize it a little bit.

And you know, in the Old Testament, the days when Moses was teaching people, he could only give them instructions. This man who wrote this, Lord, teach me to number my days, Moses says, so that I can have wisdom. But what could Moses teach people? He could only give instructions.

But today we have somebody better than Moses as our leader, Jesus Christ. He didn't come here to give us instructions. He lived a life and showed us how to spend our time.

Some time ago, I read a little article. You probably heard it too. Referring to the life of Jesus Christ.

The effect of one single life on this earth. One solitary life. Let me read it to you.

He's referring to Christ. Compare that with yourself. He was born in a small unknown village in a very small country.

He was born the son of a very poor village woman. He grew up in another small village where he worked only as a carpenter until he was 30 years old. And then for the next three years, he was a traveling preacher.

You know, the world doesn't value carpenters or traveling preachers. He never wrote a book. He never held any public office.

He never had a family. He never owned a house. He didn't go to college.

He never visited any big city in the world. He never traveled more than 300 kilometers from his hometown at any time in his life. He never did any of the things that people usually associate with great people.

The great things. He had no degrees after his name. He was only 33 when people turned against him.

All his friends ran away and left him all alone. He was handed over to his enemies and they put him through the mockery of a trial. He was executed by crucifixion by the government of his day as a criminal.

And while he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothes, which were the only property he had on this earth. And when he was dead, because of the pity of a friend, they loaned him a grave to be buried in. But since that time, 2000 years have come and gone, but nobody in history has influenced history as that one single man.

He's the central figure of the human race, Jesus Christ, the leader of all the progress that mankind has seen in any field. All the armies that ever marched on this earth and all the navies that ever sailed the seas and all the governments and parliaments that ever sat anywhere in the world have all put together, have not influenced the life of man on this earth as that one single life. And he says to us, follow me.

You don't have to be famous, brothers, sisters. You don't have to write a book. You don't have to own a house.

You don't have to have a family. If you have these things, thank God for it. I'm not saying anything wrong with these things.

I've written books. I've got a house. I've got a family.

But what I say is, if I think these things mean anything, it's a question of how you live your life before God. One life can influence millions if you live before God. That's so important.

So when you look at the values with which Jesus lived his life, we learn something. What is the secret of his life? There we can learn how I can build a superstructure of my own life. Almost from the beginning of my own Christian life, more than 50 years ago, I'm very thankful that the Holy Spirit directed me to make the life of Jesus on earth my study.

In the Old Testament, they just studied the Bible. Today, I don't just study the Bible. I use the Bible to study the life of Jesus.

It doesn't matter if I can't remember all the verses in the Bible. If I've studied the life of Jesus and understood how he lived and patterned my own life after that by the power of his Holy Spirit, then I've lived a wonderful life, even if I don't know the Bible. Because remember, that for 1400 years, nobody had a Bible like this after Christ rose again.

Printed Bibles were available only in the 1500s. How did people live for 1400 years without a Bible at home? And even the early Christians, there was no New Testament in those days. The New Testament was completed towards the end of the first century.

But they had something. They heard about the life of Jesus and the Holy Spirit showed them the principles by which Jesus lived. And that's how true Christians lived when they didn't have a Bible.

Today, we have so much Bible knowledge. We study the Bible. It's good.

But it's a question of what do you go to the Bible for? Just to get a sermon sometimes. Make the life of Jesus your study. That's endless.

And I'm still learning how to live as I study the life of Jesus. The principles by which he lived his life. Let me give you one example.

If you read the Old Testament, one of the things that God emphasized greatly to the Israelites was keeping the Sabbath. It's mentioned right at the beginning of the Bible that God remade the earth in six days. And on the seventh day, he rested, thereby showing a pattern, not because God needed six days to remake the earth, he could remake it in a second.

But the reason why God limited himself to do it in six days was to set a pattern for man, saying, when you work for six days, you need one day of rest. And all over the world, what's written in the first two chapters of the Bible are followed by every nation on the face of the earth by every religion, that one day in seven must be a holiday. But more than that, what God was teaching Adam when he created was not just to have a holiday.

Adam was created on the sixth day, so the seventh day was his first day. And as soon as he was created at the end of the sixth day, his first day was a day of rest. So he didn't work for six days and then rest.

He had fellowship with God that first day and then went to work. So that's the meaning of the Sabbath. It must be a day of fellowship with God.

Those Old Testament people didn't understand it. They thought he just don't do any work and sit back and do nothing. No, it's a day of fellowship with God.

And the wonderful thing about the New Testament is that God says you can now live like that every day of the week, not just one day. I don't fellowship with God one day of the week. See, going to church, maybe one day of the week, that's okay.

But fellowship with God is a perpetual Sabbath. Every single day of mine is a Sabbath now. That means a day of fellowship with God and not only fellowship with God, a day of resting from... Sabbath is called the day of rest.

Rest from what? Rest from anxiety, tension, bitterness against others, and all the things that bring agitation into our hearts. What somebody said about me, what they did to me, all that agitation, that's unrest. Jesus' life was one of perfect rest.

It is from that point of life of rest that he served his father. And I say, that's how I must serve also. I cannot serve God if I'm agitated in my heart, if I'm anxious and worried and tense and wondering what's going to happen there.

No. Let me show you this passage in Matthew chapter 11, which we are all familiar with. Jesus said, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11 28. We all know that well-known verse. Come to me, all you who are worn out.

Here in this paraphrase, it says, are you burnt out on religion? Come with me, and I'll show you how to come to rest in your life. People are fed up with false Christianity, fed up with trying, trying, trying to please God. Jesus says, come to me, walk with me, work with me, learn from me how to do it.

Learn from me, for I'm gentle and humble in heart. The trouble is you are pursuing the wrong things. Learn from me.

And that's why I say, make the study of Jesus, the passion of your life, learn from him. And twice he says there, I'll give you rest and you will find rest. Verse 29.

So that is the rest he's speaking of that inner life that we can, a life of rest with Jesus. That was a secret of his life. He wasn't in a panic anytime.

There could be a storm in the lake and he'd be fast asleep in the boat. You know why? Because he was at rest. He knew that nothing could take away his life from earth till his father had determined it.

Isn't that a wonderful place of rest to be in? So I want to ask you to start with the basic thing, the fear of death. All human beings fear death. I wish they would fear spiritual death as much as they feared physical death.

And the test of that is, here's a simple test to find out whether you fear physical death more or spiritual death more. Are you more disturbed by sickness or by sin? That's all. One question.

If the doctor says you got cancer, does that disturb you? Or your conscience says you hurt somebody, go and apologize to them. Which is it that disturbs you more? I think I can say before God that today sin would disturb me more than sickness. What can sickness do to me? Maximum, maximum hasten my trip to heaven to be with my father.

What else can sickness do? But sin can separate me from my father forever. Have you seen the seriousness of it? Most Christians haven't. The devil doesn't want them to see it because he wants them to be with him forever.

And that's why in this church we preach against sin. Because I believe that it'll do more damage to you than any sickness can ever do. I have met people who got AIDS when they were unconverted and who got converted and never got healed of their AIDS because God doesn't promise that he'll heal everybody.

He promises he'll forgive all our sins. And they die of AIDS, but they go to heaven. But I know other people who took sin lightly, who were very healthy, who died healthy and went to hell.

Yeah, it's serious. We're not afraid of death because there's a wonderful word in Revelation 1 and verse 18. Revelation 1 18 where Jesus says, I have the keys of death.

If you got the key of a door, you're the only one who's got the key. You know that nobody can go through that door till you open it. And for one who has given his life to Christ, the Lord says, I have the key of death.

And we must live on earth like that without being afraid of death because we know that Jesus has got the key and others must see it in our life. I remember a few years ago, I was traveling from Bangalore to Delhi in an airplane, a local flight. And there was an old colleague of mine from the Navy who was a Commodore, now retired.

And he recognized me and we sat together on the plane. And somewhere halfway between here and Delhi, I don't know what the plane went through. It was dropping like anything and the whole plane was shaking.

It was one of the worst experiences I've ever had. And this guy, he knew from 40 years earlier that I was a Christian in the Navy. He held my hand and said, Zach, I know that as long as you're in this plane, nothing will happen.

So we're okay. I said, wow. He remembers that.

Oh, well, we had a safe journey. I'm not saying that we won't have plane crashes. What I'm saying is Jesus has got the key of death as far as I'm concerned.

I cannot go through that door with cancer or road accident or airplane accident till he decides to open it. When he opens it, I don't want to stay this side of the door anymore. I don't want to have some artificial machine plugged up to my body and say, hey, the Lord's opened the door to death, but I want to hang on here for some more time.

I don't want it. I said, take out all those plugs. Let me go.

I don't want to stay here one day after the Lord's opened the door. The Lord says, come, I want to go. Dear brothers and sisters, it will bring rest into your life.

Rest, freedom from anxiety. Come to me, the Lord says. I'll give you rest concerning so many things in the future.

You know, Jesus said, you have a father in heaven. You're not like the birds. Your father cares for the birds.

He cares for the flowers. Why are you worried? We have heard that story so many times, what Jesus said, he cares for the birds. Why are you worried? Do you believe it? Let me repeat a story I've often said here.

Those of you who have heard me before know it. One bird talking to another bird and saying, why are these human beings always so anxious and worried with their brow furrowed, wondering what's going to happen? And the other bird says, I don't know, maybe they don't have a father like you and I have. Maybe that's why they're so worried.

When the birds look at your life, do they say that? Maybe this guy doesn't have a father like I have. That's what Jesus taught people, that you've got a father in heaven who cares. We must be at rest, brothers and sisters, if we want to live the Christian life.

A rest that comes by faith, that I've got a father in heaven who cares for me, who knows all the future, who has planned, who sees the pitfalls that are ahead of me and steers me around it by circumstances, by people. Sometimes I want to go in some direction and I can't go and I'm disappointed. Something I wanted to get and I couldn't get and I have to go another way and afterwards the Lord shows me.

You see that pit there which you avoided? Sometimes we don't see it on earth. When we get to heaven, the Lord shows us the pathway he took us through and how we were disappointed in some place because I didn't get that admission, I didn't get that job, you didn't marry the person you were supposed to marry and you called it a disappointment and the Lord will show you that day it was not a disappointment, it was his appointment for you. Your life would have been a mess if you had married that person and if you have got into that job and into that college, this is what your future would have been and the Lord says, see how I steered you away from that so that you could live a useful life.

That day you will fall down and say, oh Lord, thank you so much. The man of faith says it now. He doesn't have to wait to go to heaven.

He says it now, thank you Lord, you're making everything work for my good. I could tell you numerous stories, numerous stories of the harm that other people have tried to do to me, particularly since I'm a

servant of God. I know I'm a target of Satan.

I'm not afraid of that. I believe Satan's afraid of me but people have tried, he has tried to use people to harm me but every single one of those things have worked for my good. Just like the harm that Joseph's brothers tried to do to him only sent him off to Egypt where he could become the ruler.

The Bible is written with stories like that. We must be at rest. That's the only way to live this Christian life and I want to emphasize that to you.

Strive, the Bible says in Hebrews 4 to enter into this rest, that your whole life is one of rest. For me it has become a rule in my life. Colossians chapter 3, great verse.

Colossians chapter 3, this is the way to build a super structure. Verse 15, Colossians 3 verse 15. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts and the word rule there means be a referee.

Read it like that. Let the peace of Christ be the referee in your heart. You know in a football game when a referee blows the whistle, what happens? Everything stops.

Now somebody who doesn't know the rules can say, hey nobody's challenging me. Let me go and kick the ball into the goal and he thinks he's scored a goal and the referee calls him back and says that's not a goal. Just come back here.

We've got to set a foul right. When the referee blows the whistle, everything stops. The foul is set right.

Then the game continues and you hear it says the peace of Christ is the referee and when the peace of Christ has blown a whistle in your heart, whistle in your heart means some agitation, some disturbance. I can't sleep at night because something is bothering my mind. The referee is blowing a whistle and saying hey there's something wrong in your life.

Don't toss and turn, turn, toss and turn the whole night. Just set that foul right. Don't just keep on kicking goals because it won't be counted.

Set that foul right. If you've got to apologize to somebody, go and apologize. Maybe you say Lord first thing tomorrow I'm going to set it right and peace comes into your heart.

Continue with the game. So many Christians are living with this perpetual referee blowing the whistle and they're still running around doing so many things. They're not realizing that nothing is going to be counted.

Only one life and it will soon be passed and only what's done for Jesus Christ will last and finally let me say let's learn to serve one another like that from a position of rest. Listen do we have that song called will you let me be your servant? It's a very beautiful song. It's our attitude towards one another.

Will you let me be your servant? Let me be as Christ to you. Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too. We are pilgrims on a journey.

We are travelers on the road. We are here to help each other. Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ like for you in the night time of your fear. I will hold my hand out to you. Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping. When you laugh I laugh with you. I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony. Born of all we have known together of Christ's love and agony. Will you let me be your servant? Let me be as Christ to you.

Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant too. In this church beginning with the elders we seek to be servants to each other because we are a family. You know in a family the biggest servants are the father and mother.

They serve the children day and night. That's how the elders of this church are. And all of us can learn to be servants to one another.

Not make demands. Servant has no demands. He only serves.

And I believe if we live like that we shall not only build a superstructure ourselves in our lives but be a family as a church that glorifies God. Praise the Lord. Let's bow our heads before God in prayer.

And if God has spoken to you this morning my dear brother sister please respond in the particular area where God spoke to you in a simple prayer. Say God I want to know you as my father every area of my life. I want to glorify you in the one earthly life I have.

I don't know how long I have to live but I want to number my days and be wise. I know you'll help me father in Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you.

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