

Are You A Member of God's Family

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a personal relationship with God as our Father, highlighting the need to stay close to Him to avoid the dangers of sin and to experience true repentance. It challenges individuals to assess if they are truly part of God's family by prioritizing God as their Father above all else, rather than external factors like church membership or community. The speaker encourages a deep, foundational connection with God that leads to a life of rest, joy in repentance, and a genuine hatred for sin.

Scripture: John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Luke 15:7, 1 Peter 2:2, Ephesians 2:19, Revelation 2:4, Matthew 7:21, James 4:8

Topics: "Personal Relationship with God", "True Repentance"

Description

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Transcript

You know, I used to always think that God sent a flood as soon as Noah finished building the ark. So, I think I have a different opinion now. I think Noah had built the ark, and then, but he was still waiting for the snail.

The ark was ready, all the animals were in, but God said, nope, got to wait for the snail to come back in. When the snail got in the ark, then God said, okay, we got all the animals in. Obviously, I'm not sure about that, but I'd like to think it that way.

Then God waited even for the snail, even though the ark was all ready, boat was fully sealed so that the water couldn't come in, but God said, no, there's a couple of snail, male and a female, we need for that snail to come back in. I also want to inspire the children, as you are studying these men and women of God, to ask God if he's the God of those people or of you too. Is he the same God who called Amy Carmichael to go thousands of miles away? Or like Eric Little, we heard about him, who went halfway across the world almost to minister to the Chinese.

We have Chinese people in our church here. Was it the influence of Eric Little? Maybe. And ask the Lord what God wants to do through your life.

Both of those people are very special to me. Amy Carmichael, I just want to read a few words that have been stuck with me for a long time. She wrote these words, give me the love that leads the way, the faith that nothing can dismay, the hope that no disappointments can tire.

Here's the words that stuck to me, though. Listen to this. The passion that will burn like fire.

Let me not sink to be a clod. That means just an ordinary, useless thing. Let me not sink to be a clod.

Make me thy fuel, O flame of God. I've forgotten those lines. I've said this to the Lord on multiple occasions.

Lord, make me thy fuel, O flame of God. You be the flame, let me be the fuel. People will see the flame, but I'd be the fuel.

Doesn't need to get any of the glory. Let me not reduce my life to become a clod. Dear brothers and sisters, dear young children, your life is in front of you.

Don't let your life reduce to be a clod. Don't go after Olympic gold medals as if that is some big achievement. Learn from Eric Little, who is willing to give the highest of all human accolades to get the crown, an imperishable crown that I have no doubt he's wearing to this day.

I want to share a message by asking a question, and I wanted to talk about being a member of NCCF. I wanted to ask if we are members of NCCF, who's going to answer that question if I were to ask you, are you a member of NCCF? If we are building a human institution, we can give you human measurements. We as elders may be able to tell you you're a member.

You can say you come up here and you speak and you share or you're baptized and you can say, well, I fulfill all the requirements. I'm a member, but I want us to recognize that what NCCF is, is a spiritual entity, not a physical entity. You see people here.

We meet at a particular time. We have Bible studies, but I hope that the Lord will open our eyes that there is a spiritual thing called NCCF, which is the local family of God. And I want to ask you, are you a member of that family of God, which is a spiritual thing and no human can give you entrance into that? Because I fear that we can, we can become members of NCCF and think we are set and God looks at this spiritual thing called NCCF, which is the spiritual family of God that gather here.

And he may not say, I don't think every one of you, even though you stood up and spoke and all of those things, I don't think you're a member of the church. I don't even think you're a member of my family. Maybe you used to be, but you no longer are a member of NCCF, the spiritual church.

In fact, you're no longer a member of my family altogether. Many churches don't preach that, but we do. And so I want to ask ourselves, especially those of us, most of whom are members of this church, the physical church, and we as elders have the best discernment that we could possibly, would not possibly have, but the best discernment that we have, that's what we have, but that's not God.

And the person who should answer whether we are a member of NCCF is God, not any elder. I can give you all kinds of assurances. The elders can give you all kinds of assurances.

The people can give you all kinds of assurance. Am I a member of the spiritual church of NCCF because I'm an elder here? That's the question the Lord asked me. So if you're an elder of this church, does this mean you're a member of NCCF, the spiritual being? And the answer is no, that doesn't mean that just because you're an elder.

I don't have any special automatic rights into the spiritual entity called NCCF, which is the family of God, just because I'm an elder. I have to ask God and fulfill the same requirements and hear the same word from God as everyone here. We as elders don't have any special rights that give us automatic entry.

So this is not a message to you. It's a message to us. And so I must also ask myself, what is the true difference between this spiritual church and a very good community of people who are kind, who help one another, who care for one another, who greet one another, who care for other people's children, who have control of their tongue, who care for people when you have babies, who grieve with you when you have when you have loss.

These are all wonderful characteristics, but does this make us the church of God? Do we think that there are no groups of other religions that also behave this way and better? There are. We're just scratching the surface in terms of human kindness towards one another. At least that's what I feel.

There's so much more I have to go on being loving and caring and considerate to other people. That's my own assessment about myself. We can do so much better.

But when we do that, does that now make us a wonderful family of God? No, it doesn't. I have to ask God, God, am I part of your family? I was part of your family. Am I still part of your family? I wrote down something.

First thing, God must be my father. If God is not my father, I am not a child of God. God doesn't have any children of his who are orphans.

Zero. So if I say I am a child of God, then God is my father. There's no one who can enter the kingdom of God.

There's no one who's born again who doesn't also receive the right to be called children of God. That's John chapter 3 and John chapter 1. But that means I live with God who is my father. And I want to ask all of us who are members, some of us know all the doctrines.

I want to ask you, have you grown in your relationship with God as your father? I'm not asking for an intellectual agreement with it. Has forgiveness become more of your nature? Has anxiety gone further away from you than it has ever been? Has murmuring and complaining decreased because you have gotten to know that God is your father? If it isn't, I want you to ask yourself, is God really my father? And I'm not trying to tell you you're not to condemn you. I'm trying to show you the incredible birthright we have when we come in to God's kingdom.

And I don't want to assume that just because you have a birth certificate hanging around your neck that you are alive. You were born again. I'm not trying to debate.

I'm not trying to question this. I'm not going to try to debate your birth certificate. What I'm trying to ask is, are you alive in this born again life? And if I'm born again, the immediate, immediate privilege I get is that I have a father.

When I'm born again, whoever births me, born of the will of God, puts me on God's lap. That's the first thing that happens. You know when the baby's born, the nurse goes and puts the baby on the mother's chest.

If the baby's healthy and that's how children are born in God's kingdom, healthy every one of them. And then God puts us, the first thing that happens when we are born again is we are put on the lap of God. Has that happened? Are you still there on the lap of a person who's my father? And there's no intellectual question I can possibly ask.

It is not a doctrinal agreement. I fear that NCCF can have a lot of people who agree to all the doctrinal statements of NCCF become very kind, have great Bible studies, become more loving towards one another, but in their private life do not know God as their father. I want all of us to be able to go to God and say, God am I acting to you, with you, as if you are my actual father? If my father was the king of the most powerful country in the world, how much worry will I live with for any earthly matter? If my father was the king of the most powerful country in the whole world, how much worry would I live with for any earthly matter? I think it's close to zero, if not zero.

So if God Almighty, the creator of the universe, is my father, I have to ask myself, how much worry should I allow to persist in my life? How much complaining and murmuring can persist in my life? And when I see children, members of NCCF or whatever it is, that don't have that basic security, because God is our father, I worry. I worry if there's a birth certificate, but that life is going away. That one day there will not be life, the spiritual life anymore.

Because there's no personal relationship with God as a father. Dear brothers and sisters, I wrote this down. My deepest, my most basic relationship on this earth must be with God as my father.

Are we married? Do we have children? What is your most basic relationship that you have? Oh, my life will just collapse if that is taken away. And I'm not asking, is God going to be taken away? I'm talking about God as a father being taken away. What if God was no longer a father, but still a loving God like in the Old Testament? Will your whole life crumble and cease to have meaning? This is a deep searching question that I ask myself often, to make sure that I am not subscribing to a religion, but that I have a relationship.

Let me say that again. If God was to no longer be my father, but still be the loving God and all of his attributes, will my whole life crumble? Still have my wife, still have my children, you still have your husband, still have your children, still have your father and your mother, still have your grandchildren, whatever it is. But just take away one thing.

God is no longer your father. That is what I mean by it has to be the most basic thing. Dear family of God, this is the secret to why I have been able to come to a life of rest.

I don't always live in that life of rest, but I know the secret. I know the answer because God has clearly shown me that the most basic foundational material of my spiritual life has to be that God is my father. You can take away everything else, just don't take away that.

This is how Jesus lived on this earth. He said you can take away everything else. You can even take away my physical well-being.

Beat me up, take me to the cross, no problem. Just don't take away this foundation that God is my father. This is where I learned it from and this is where I've learned how he lived such a happy life, such a restful

life and he says come to me.

Humble yourself and learn this life of rest. God showed me a little picture of this as a father. I want to inspire you to what a beautiful life it is to have God as a father.

This is not, again please, this is not to make anybody feel insecure. It is the most blessed life. It's the life that Jesus had.

I was, you know, one of the things that I don't, I'm not given too much fear. I'm not given it's maybe my personality and I'm not given too much anxiety. One of the things that really sometimes just scares me is the thought, because I tend to be very absent-minded, that's why it comes very close to me, is the thought of me having four children in my home.

My wife is not with me. My children went under my responsibility and we're walking on the road and I'm not paying attention and my children just wander across the street and the cars come and hit them. It's one of those things that's like, now you got to pay more attention.

Whenever I think that I'm like, I need to pay more attention with my kids, especially on the street. It's one of those things that I pay attention to and I have four, so it's you got two or three, but you got to pay attention to all four at all times. Not being able to daydream about what happened or this thing that came in.

No, you got to watch because all of a sudden that car comes and hits you and it makes my heart jump just a little bit whenever I think about that. Picturing me out there in the road, four children and one of my kids just running around without looking and he's seeing a car coming at it. And you know what it made me think of? It made me think about how God feels when I am one of his children and I wander along the streets of life where sin is coming at me like cars and I make the mistake of not reaching out for him.

I'm not staying close to my father. My children are fine if they stay close to me and they stay this side of the traffic. But if I had a dream where I'm walking down the road and all my children are this side towards the pavement, it's a very pleasant dream.

But you just put the children on this side on the other side where all the traffic is going and now it's a not a very pleasant dream for me. And I looked at I saw my life and I said I felt like the Lord was telling me this is the kind of father I am. I'm walking with you but my heart jumps in trepidation because you just wander alone and sin comes at you like speeding cars.

And you keep doing this and I keep having to take you to the hospital and resuscitate you because you're just beaten up by sin again and again. When are you going to learn to stay close to me and hold my hand? And the same thing that was one of those tormenting thoughts for me imagining my children just darting out onto the street. I'm like wait.

I saw that as a picture of God suddenly saying wait don't do that. Don't you see all these cars coming at you? The horror that God lives with. The horror that God leaves us when we do our own will.

He feels the pain. He says you don't see these these cars coming at you. I will tell you this.

This is the the fact that I don't live with God as a father is I will tell you there's no doubt about it. I live with a daily holy fear of it. I live with a deep deep holy fear of it.

It is my the thing I am most afraid of. That's my honest testimony before God. For many years now maybe often or close to a decade 2nd Corinthians 11 3 has almost become like my life verse.

I'm afraid that as the serpent deceived you lose the simple relationship with God as a father. I live with a daily deep deep fear that I will not relate with God anymore as my personal father and it won't be because I fall into sin that this will happen. It'll not be because God kicks me out.

He never does but it will be because I move on to more advanced topics like victory over sin, sanctification, what is the meaning of worship, what do I think about the tribulation and all these fancy things. But I've lost my first simple relationship that I had with God when I was born again and God placed me on his lap. That I am a precious child of God is a truth that I jealously guard and I keep asking myself.

It is the one question if you made me narrow down the question and say something give me one question on whether you really are right with God this would be it. Are you in are you interacting with God as a father? The devil knows how deep this is that he even had the audacity he even had the courage to test Jesus with this. That when he went to Jesus and he said move aside step aside all of my other generals and captains of his army of angels he says no no no Jesus is there I tempt him directly.

You lower guys not good enough for you I'm going to tempt Jesus directly. The devil himself came down and tempted Jesus and for the first two temptations he said if you are the son of God. I'm not so sure I'm debating that myself is what the devil was saying.

Jesus would not be moved if he will tempt Jesus he will surely tempt us with this. That'll be the playbook are you a child of God and I'm so I'm not saying this to question it I'm asking you to get your assurance of this from God. He must affirm that you're a child of his and if you are a child of his please do a bible study in the new testament of what is connected with being a child of God.

You will desire his word that's 1 Peter 2 verse 1 as newborn babes like milk is how I drink God's word. I'm supposed to read God's word as a baby drinks milk that's supposed to be my relationship if I'm a newborn babe of God. If I don't have that let me ask myself if I'm really a child of God but make my election sure make the heritage and the birthright sure.

There's another point which I want to talk I don't have time which is we don't want to sin but I'll talk that some other time but I want to leave with this. If you don't have this relationship it's the one virtue that every member of this church must have is you must learn how to repent that's what we need to learn how to do. When we are faced with this question these deep searching questions a muscle that we have to have really strong is to learn how to properly repent not repent as the dictionary talks about it but repent as the bible teaches us about it.

The second corinthians chapter 7 verse 7 through 11 tells us about godly repentance and I want to leave you with these words in verse 11 that are associated with repentance that I want to encourage every single member here or every single person sitting here you are not a member of the family of God just because you're a member of this church you're not a member of the family of God just because your wife or your children are members of this church or member of the family of God you are not a member of the family of God just because your husband or your children are. You are a member of this church or you're a member of the church of God if you're part of the family of God and God must be our father. Verse 11, here's what repentance does.

There's an earnestness in godly repentance. There's a vindication of yourself, which means you go home and say, God, Sandeep asked me a question. I need you to answer it for me.

Show me, speak to me through your word. There's an indignation that the question could even be debated. There's a fear, there's a godly fear, there's a longing, there's a zeal, there's an avenging of wrong if there's any question whether that deepest foundation is cracked.

And here's the one last mark of true, proper repentance, joy. There's joy when a sinner repents. That's not in 2 Corinthians 7, but that's Luke 15, 7. There's joy when a sinner repents.

So you show me a Christian who repents and you don't show me an accompanying joy, I can tell you that's not godly repentance. But we have to learn how to properly repent. There must be an earnestness.

There must be a vindication of what is wrong. There must be a fear and a longing and a zeal. I hope I will inspire and encourage every single person here to go to the Lord and say, Lord, I want to know without doubt that I'm a child of God and I'm much more confident that you are my father than I've ever been.

Anxiety is dropping away. Grumbling and murmuring is dropping away because I'm a child of God, because you are my father. Self-pity is dropping away because I've got God as a father.

These are the things that we must have in our lives. If you're a member of this church and ask the Lord to search your heart, if you're a member of this church and the biggest reason you are here is because you trust the teachings of Zach Poonen, I want you to question whether you are a member of the family of God. The biggest reason you should be here is because you've got God as a father and you don't want to sin even once and you find company around people who are here.

If you ask the Lord to search your heart, if the biggest reason you are here is because you like the community of people here and how loving we are, how kind we are, and how sweet we are, and how much we study God's word, I want you to question whether you are really a member of the family of God, because you are a member of the family of God. God is your father and you don't want to sin even once. If you're a member of this church, search your heart before God, dear family, and if the biggest reason you are here is because you want your children to grow up in a good God-fearing church, I question whether you're part of the family of God.

It's not the reason, because something has replaced your first love and God told the church in Ephesus, repent, properly repent, and we want to keep NCCF, the spiritual church, pure by asking these kind of questions and making sure that we don't get distracted by a lot of other things that accompany being part of the family of God. Holiness, sanctification, good times, all those things are wonderful, but let's make sure that we are truly a family of God because God is my father and because God is my father, I have not lost this zeal against sin. Because God is my father and I'm on his lap, I hate to sin even once.

That must be growing in me because I'm becoming increasingly loyal to this person whose lap I'm sitting on all the time. Dear family, this is what it means to be a member of the family of God. This is what I hope it means to be part of a member of this church and I'm an elder means nothing.

I want to make my membership in God's family absolutely clear. May God help us.

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