

02 How Our Minds Can Be Transformed

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of a renewed mind and the role of the Holy Spirit in transforming our minds, leading to sanctification and serving God.

Duration: 1:01:47

Scripture: Luke 4:40, Hebrews 5:14

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having the mind of Christ, highlighting the need for a transformation in our thinking to discern good and evil according to God's perfect will. It stresses the significance of obedience to God's guidance, even when it goes against the advice of others, and the value of living a life that aligns with God's will, focusing on personal sanctification rather than just external ministry achievements.

Transcript

So, we'll continue where we left off in our last session. We were thinking about having the mind of Christ. Remember this, that every change comes through a change in the mind.

If the devil wants to make you sin, he has to get you to think in that way first. If a man wants to commit murder, he thinks about it first. He wants to commit adultery, he thinks about it first.

When he plans to cheat somebody, he thinks about it first. Or you are jealous of somebody, it's in your mind. Jealousy against somebody, it's in your mind.

The love of money, it's in your mind. It's not a question of how much you have, it's a question of the way you look at money. For example, when a woman dresses very immodestly, the sin is not in the dress.

It's in the mind, which has made her decide to dress like that. See, when she goes to buy a dress, a woman thinks, this, even if it shows my body a little bit, it's more fashionable. It's in the mind.

Or, nowadays they wear very tight pants, some women, just to show their body or tight dresses. All these tailors and designers know how these women think. The sin is not in the dress, it's in the mind.

You change your dress, you don't become holy. If you take off your jewels, you don't become holy. It's in the mind.

If the mind does not change, when you remove your jewels, your mind will always be criticizing other people who got jewels. You don't have a television in your house, you're always criticizing other people who got television. This problem is in the mind.

Then you're not doing these things to please God, you're doing it according to a law. If you can remove your jewels and never judge another person who wears jewels, then you become a godly person. If you get rid of your television and never judge another person who's got television, then you're not under law.

The mark of a person who is under law, one mark, is that when he gives up something, he expects everybody else also to give it up. That is one of the clearest marks that such a person is under the law. Their life is very miserable.

They can never come into this righteousness of the Holy Spirit. Whatever righteousness they do is a dead work. We must do our righteousness before God.

See, Jesus never committed adultery. He didn't judge people who committed adultery, He had mercy on them and forgave them. In Samaria, He had mercy on a woman who had divorced five times.

A woman who was sleeping with a man who was not even her husband. Of course, Jesus knows it's all wrong. But He had compassion.

If you have New Testament righteousness, you will have compassion on sinners. But if your righteousness is only external, then it is a legal righteousness. This is the biggest problem with people pursuing holiness.

A lot of their holiness is external. How they dress, what type of things they have in their home and don't have. Let's turn to Romans 12, verse 2. Here it speaks about the minds.

It's a very important verse about the minds. It says, Don't be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Now I want to read that verse slowly.

What it's saying is, Don't be conformed to the world in your mind. Where is worldly dress? In your mind or in your body? Here it says, worldly dress is in your mind. It's your way of thinking that is worldly.

There are many people who look very holy on the outside who are absolutely worldly in their way of thinking. They have no compassion on others. They have no freedom from dirty thoughts.

They are critical of others. That's a worldly way of thinking. Here it says, don't be conformed to the world in your thinking.

How to do that? It's not by trying to get rid of that way of thinking. Jesus said, if you cast out a demon and keep the mind empty, eight demons will come back. Jesus said, if you cast out a demon and keep the mind empty, eight demons will come back.

We must learn to think like Jesus Christ. But by reading the word of God and opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we will be transformed. Then we will understand the perfect plan that God has for our life.

God has a perfect plan for your life and my life. Every day of our life is planned by God. And if you live in that plan, you will live the best life you can ever live on this earth.

When I was 21 years old, I got baptized. One of the first things I learned was, God has got a plan for my life. But 50 years ago, I didn't know what that plan was.

In fact, even now, I don't know what God's plan for me is this year. But God leads us day by day. Like the pillar of cloud led the Israelites day by day, God leads us day by day.

But He's got a plan. And that's the best plan. See, when I look back over my life, if I had followed my own plan, I could never have done it better than God's plan.

And here it says, to know God's will, you must allow God to change your mind. If you don't allow God to change your mind, you will not understand God's plan for your life. People ask this question.

Why doesn't God speak from heaven like He spoke to Abraham and Moses? Because those days the Holy Spirit could not come inside. God was outside of man. So from outside only He could speak.

But now, after the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has come inside man. And He speaks from inside. But if our ears are deaf, we won't hear it.

That means when He says something and I don't obey, supposing God tells you, you spoke rudely to that person. Go right now and apologize to them. And you don't do it.

You think about it. Maybe God's asked you to apologize to your wife. And you don't do it.

You don't do it the next day. After some time, you will become totally deaf. Now if we become deaf in this year, we get really worried.

How is it so many believers are not worried that they are not hearing God speak to them? Supposing when you are sitting here, you can't hear me. You will go to a doctor straight away and say, I can't hear anything. Even if one ear is deaf, we will go to the doctor.

How is it we are not bothered when we can't hear God speaking in our hearts at all? That's amazing. See, that is the mark of a carnal person. One difference between a carnal person and a spiritual person.

A carnal person is more worried about his body's deafness than his spirit's deafness. If this year, one day he cannot hear something, One day, you wake up in the morning and you can't hear anything. You will take leave from your work.

You will go straight to a doctor. Even if he charges you 500 rupees, 1000 rupees, because this is so important. But in your spirit, you don't hear God for one week.

One month, God has said nothing to you. It's okay. That is the mark of a carnal Christian.

You say, but God may not be speaking. No, God speaks. You turn to the first page of the Bible.

What is one of the first message you get in the first page of the Bible? What is the first message? In the first page of your Bible, it speaks about six days. What is the common thing about the six days? Every day, God said something. Verse 3, God said.

Verse 6, God said. Verse 9, God said. Verse 11, God said.

Verse 14, God said. Again in verse 20, God said. Verse 22, God blessed saying something.

Verse 24, God said something. Verse 26, God said. Verse 28, God blessed him and he said something.

Verse 29, God said. I think it's about 12 times in that first chapter. What is the message in the first chapter of the Bible? The God of the Christians is not an idol who does not speak.

The God of the Christians is not like Baal, whom the prophets of God shouted, the prophets of Baal shouted for so many hours. But he did not speak. The God of the Christians is a God who speaks.

Not once in a year. What is the first message in the Bible? Every day. Sometimes twice a day.

Twelve times in six days. Sometimes once, sometimes twice, sometimes thrice. God speaks.

That is the message in chapter 1 of Genesis. You say, but I can't hear it. There could be two reasons.

See, Revelation chapter 1. See, it's only as we hear God speaking, that our mind can be changed. Revelation 1.10. John the Apostle says, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet speaking to me. Some people ask me, which is the Lord's day? For me, every day is the Lord's day.

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. And we must be in the spirit on every day.

And if we are filled with the Holy Spirit like that, God's voice will be as loud as a trumpet. But if you are deaf, because you did not apologize to that person, God told you to apologize to. The trumpet is sounding, but you can't hear it.

God is speaking. But you are not able to hear it. This is the trouble with many Christians.

God is speaking. Like in Genesis 1, He has been speaking every day. But they are not listening.

They become dull of hearing. Or they are not in the spirit. See for example, Right now, there are many voices in this room.

Can you hear those voices? There is some rock music going on in this room. Can you hear it? There are some speeches given by Muslim theologians going on in this room. Can you hear it? No.

If you get a radio or a television and tune to that frequency, you will hear those sounds. You choose in a radio or TV which sound you want to hear. You select a channel.

Oh, this frequency. I will listen to this voice. Everybody chooses.

I want to listen to music. I want to see some dirty thing. In the same way, in our mind, we choose.

We got a remote. Which channel shall I listen to? The devil is trying to accuse somebody to you. Why don't you click that channel, close it and go to another channel? You are listening, listening, listening.

Gradually, your mind is becoming polluted with bitterness against that person. Because you are listening, listening, listening to what the devil is putting through his channel into your mind. Your mind is not renewed.

After many, many years, you are still defeated by sin. Because you don't turn off that remote when the devil is speaking. The devil spoke to Jesus also.

Jesus could also hear the devil. Turn the stones to bread. He said, no.

Jump off the temple. No. Worship me.

No. Jesus turned it off immediately. I don't want it.

So, if Jesus, if the devil spoke to Jesus, definitely he will speak to you and me. And do you know that the devil even quoted the Bible to Jesus? It is written that his angels will take care of you. Sometimes, when you hear a word of scripture comes to your mind, you think it is definitely the Holy Spirit.

Not necessarily. If the devil can quote scripture to Jesus, why won't he quote scripture to you? But that is the wrong scripture for that time. Of course, it is written in the word of God in Psalm 91 that he will give his angels charge over you to keep you.

But that is not the verse for jumping off from the temple. No. That is not the verse.

So, sometimes the devil gives you a wrong verse which is not the right verse for your situation. So, be careful. The devil is trying to put into your mind thoughts which are not from God.

Supposing you want to marry a girl called Grace. And you are asking God for guidance. You are asking God for guidance.

And you read one day in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9. My grace is sufficient for you. Lord, thank you so much. This is exactly the guidance I wanted.

You are looking for that verse. Now, take another example. Your father proposes some ugly looking girl called Grace.

And you don't want to marry her. Her name is Grace. So, you go to 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9. My grace is sufficient for you.

And you tell your father God's grace is enough for me. I don't want this grace. God has told me His grace is enough for me.

You see, from the same verse you can get 2 different messages according to what you want. You think that the devil has got 6000 years of experience dealing with human beings. He can fool you with the Bible.

So, we got to be careful. We must allow the Holy Spirit to give us the mind of Christ. Then I will be alert and I will know that's the devil quoting scripture.

That's not the Holy Spirit. Do you know there are so many people who have gone out into missionary work in many parts of India but God never called to go to missionary work. And you see, they are not becoming holy.

They are complaining, grumbling. In my younger days I used to see some American and English missionaries in India. And I was a young man.

I just started serving the Lord. And I used to see some of these people 20-30 years older than me who had come here to India to work in India for 30 years. They are so sour and bitter and complaining.

They have no joy of the Holy Spirit in their life. And I said, these people are not serving God. I don't know why they came to this country.

India would have been a better place if these missionaries had stayed in their homeland. What's the use coming here and showing your grumpiness and sourness and bitterness after 30 years of so-called serving the Lord? I have been a Christian for 50 years now. 43 years in full-time Christian work.

And I have never been so happy as I am today in all my life. Joy and victory and peace and everything. And even health.

God's service is the best thing you can ever do. God's service is the best thing you can ever do. Many people don't understand what is the fruit of our serving God.

See Romans 6 verse 22. Romans 6 verse 22. It says how we can be servants of God.

First of all, you got to be free from sin. Then you become a servant of God. And when you serve God, what is the fruit that you get? It is not people.

Not even planting churches. It is sanctification in your own life. How do I know I am serving God? It's not a question of number of people who are blessed through my ministry.

No. That is a deception. Jesus once said, many people will come to me and say, Lord we cast out demons in your name.

And we did miracles in your name. We prophesied in your name. Were people blessed through their ministry? Hundreds and thousands were blessed through their ministry.

But they were not serving God. They were serving themselves. They were serving for money.

They were serving for honor. They were serving for some satisfaction that I am serving God. Maybe hundreds of people were healed.

Many people were blessed through their message. Maybe others were converted and went to heaven. But the preacher goes to hell.

The Lord says, depart from me you workers of iniquity. So just because people in your church are blessed through your ministry proves nothing. If I want to know whether I am serving God, I don't find out whether you are blessed through me.

That can fool me. Because I can stand before the Lord one day and say, Lord, I preached in Tuticorin and so many thousands of people were blessed. The Lord will say, that doesn't mean anything.

The fruit of serving God is sanctification in one's own life. Read it carefully. Being freed from sin, you become servants of God.

And then you get your fruit, which is sanctification. So, if I serve God for one year, it doesn't matter how many people are blessed, I will become more holy. And if I serve God for thirty years, I will be thirty times more holy.

More pure. More pure in my thoughts. More joy.

More peace. More compassion. More love.

Then I know I am serving God. Because the fruit of sanctification is coming in my life. Thirty times more free from the love of money.

But do you see servants of God like that today? They serve God for thirty years. And they love money thirty times more than they did when they started. And they are grumpy and sour and complain against others.

And their co-workers and they say, oh people are being blessed. It is one of the greatest deceptions in Christendom today to think that because people are blessed, I am serving God. If your life is not becoming purer and holier, you are not serving God.

All the brothers and sisters in the church may think you are a wonderful elder, but you are not serving God. The test of my serving God is how do I talk to my wife? Am I patient with my children? How do I talk to my difficult neighbor? How do I behave in the bus and the train when everybody is so selfish? How do I behave in the bus and the train when everybody In the bus and the train I can find out whether I am a servant of God. Not here.

Don't fool yourself. Christendom is being deceived by all this false teaching. This is the word of God.

This is not brother Zakkunen's idea. This is what the Holy Spirit says that when you serve God the fruit will be sanctification. So, how is it that these people say they have served God for 30 years as missionaries and they are so grumpy and sour? Because their mind has not been made to think like Jesus Christ.

How do we know Paul was a servant of God? It's not in the number of souls he has brought or number of churches he planted. See what he says at the end of his life. 2 Timothy chapter 4 2 Timothy 4 He says in verse 6 The time of my departure has come.

Yeah, and what does he say about his life? He doesn't say I have planted so many churches I have written so many scriptures. No. He talks about his life.

I have fought a good fight. He was probably about 67 years when he was dying. He had been converted when he was about 30.

So, for 37 years from the time I was born again I have fought a good fight. I have been tempted by the devil as a young man with all types of lusts. Even when I was 40, 50, 60 the devil was tempting me with lust in my mind.

I fought against him. He tempted me to make money through my preaching I fought against him. He tempted me to be careless with women but I fought against him.

He tempted me to be bitter against people who harmed me but I fought against the devil. That is the testimony at the end of his life. I have fought a good fight.

And as a result for 7th I have finished my course. I don't care what people thought about me. The work God gave me to do on earth I finished it.

And verse 7 I have kept the faith without compromising. So many people said Oh brother Paul please lower your standard your standard is too high. No, no.

Nobody can live like that. Maybe only you can live like that. He said I will preach it.

Even if I am the only man in the world living like that I will preach God's standard. I have kept the faith. And Paul what about all the scriptures you wrote? What about all the souls you were saved? What about that eutychus you raised from the dead? It's all not important.

It's all ministry ministry, ministry, ministry. This is my life. And this is what will prepare me verse 8 to get a crown of righteousness from the Lord.

It's not a crown of ministry brother, sister it's a crown of righteousness. The Lord the righteous judge will give me in that day. Not only to me he says but all those who are waiting for his appearance he will give it to everyone who wants to be in his presence.

to stand before the judgment seat of God. How much we need to change our mind. Today the Christian that we live is ministry, ministry, ministry.

This is what is important. What did you do for the Lord? How many souls did you help in your church? How many people went to your church? Paul was not disturbed by those things. Supposing you told Paul but Paul look at the condition of this church in Corinth which you planted.

What sort of church that is? You went there and planted it. Say what can I do? I did my best I warned those elders I wrote letters to them I corrected them I prayed for them I can't do anything about it. But I fought a good fight I finished my course I kept the faith Other people if they don't do it what can I do? Our ministry the Lord will not say we are a failure just because somebody else did not follow the Lord.

Your personal life if you walk with Jesus we cannot stand before the Lord and say Lord see the churches I planted see how much work I did for you on the earth That's not the mind of Christ Jesus lived on earth for 33 and a half years for 30 years He did not do anything which we call ministry Supposing you had to live like that in 33 years somebody asks you what did you do for 30 years? We live on this earth for 33 and a half years What did you do for 30 years brother? I helped my mother I brought water from the well I helped her little wash cleaning up the house and helping her in the kitchen I helped my mother in the kitchen What else did you do?

I worked as a carpenter and earned some money to take care of my family What else? I went to school If there was some poor widow or somebody I would help them Did you preach any sermons? No, no They won't allow me to preach in the synagogue But I did good to people I lived in my home How much did you travel? No travel I was in a small village called Nazareth all the time What did you do? You wasted your life But the father looked at that life and said this is my son I am very happy with him When he was 30 years old that teaches us that your life is more important than your ministry That is one of the greatest lessons that today's Christians need to learn Supposing I have no gift of preaching at all I cannot stand here Maybe I am just sitting there in the congregation like one of you I can still have a testimony at the end of 70 years The father can say I am happy with your life You never preached a sermon You never planted a church You never wrote a book You never healed a sick person But you lived faithfully in your life the life I called you to live You obeyed me When I told you to apologize to somebody you did it immediately When I told you not to handle money in that way you obeyed me Dear brothers and sisters This is the mind of

Christ To think the way Jesus thought Not to think that ministry is more important than our life The Holy Spirit will show us that Let's turn now to Hebrews 5 again In Hebrews 5 we saw A baby only drinks milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness But solid food verse 14 is for the mature Who by practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil This is a very important verse There is a good and evil described in Genesis 2 One tree called the tree of knowledge is to discern good and evil This good and evil is different I want to explain that to you When Adam was created He did not have the knowledge of good and evil He was like a baby born today who doesn't know what is good and what is evil He doesn't know the difference The baby doesn't know the difference between eating mud and eating rice He doesn't know what a knife is to be used for It has no knowledge of good and evil As it grows there is a conscience This good and evil mentioned here is something more than that In the worldly people also have a conscience Even they any family any religion any atheist child also has a conscience Their conscience tells them this is wrong this is right And there are some people who try to live according to their conscience and many who ignore their conscience And those who try to live according to their conscience we say they are good people But that is not the highest standard of good and evil That is the lowest level Conscience tells you don't kill don't commit adultery don't tell lies But here it's talking about that I can discern in a situation what is God's perfect will and what is not God's perfect will How does that come?

By practice their senses are trained it says here Let me show you an example In Luke's Gospel chapter 4 We read here that verse 40 Jesus was living in Simon's house Simon Peter's house in verse 38 And he healed his mother-in-law And when people heard that all the people in that village brought all the sick people to him Verse 40 And this ministry started at sunset And it says he laid hands on all the people who came He didn't just pray a general prayer He laid hands on each person That means it must have gone on for a few hours The demons were coming out Verse 41 I don't know when he went to bed that night Maybe midnight But early morning before Simon and his wife woke up Jesus had gone away from the house He quietly opened the door maybe 4.30 or 5 in the morning and went off Went off to some lonely place to pray Father It looks as if there is a great revival taking place here Many people are responding And my mind tells me I should stay here for some more days But what is your good and perfect will You know what is best for me What do you want me to do As he prayed There was no voice from heaven We also don't hear a voice from heaven But as he prays He gets a feeling in his heart That's how we also know God's will I am not supposed to stay here Through the Holy Spirit Go to other places He has got an understanding of what is good and evil now What is evil To stay in this place and preach You say to stay in one place and preach is evil If God tells you you are not to be there that is evil This is a much higher standard than that low level that all human beings live with This is the mind of Christ And so when people come to him Verse 42 Oh Lord don't go away from here Spirit of God is moving You must stay here We need you here So many people are asking for you He said no I have already heard my father I have to go to the other cities I have to go and do what my father told me to do Sometimes to do God's will I have to go against the advice of everybody When God called me to leave the Navy about 45 years ago and I put in my resignation it was not accepted I was in a church in Cochin Everybody in the church told me See God has not called you Your resignation is not accepted Everybody They all wanted me to stay there If I had listened to them I would not be here today I was young I was only about 24 years old I was young I asked God what should I do All these old believers are telling me I should not leave When I prayed God said to my heart When God said I will not let you go to Moses What did Moses do?

He went back When he said again I will not let you go Again he went back I got my answer I did not care what these other people said I applied again Again they said no Again I applied After two years I said okay go If I had listened to man at that time I would have completely missed the will of God for my life I would

not have gone into sin I would not have gone to hell I would not have done what God wanted me to do in the last 35 years You would never have seen me I would have been wasting my life as an admiral in the Navy or something Many people miss the will of God because they don't wait to discern Lord what is your will what is not your will But you can't ignore God's word ignore God's word and suddenly when you need a guidance say Lord guide me If you say give me your guidance you won't get it Many children for many years don't listen to When they come to a crisis they ask Lord tell me what should I do You won't hear his voice You must hear his voice everyday And the Lord says Pay it back Will Jesus remain in financial debt to anybody No Then you as a Christian don't be in debt Pay it back Be a son of a rich father in heaven Go to that number and ask for forgiveness the Lord says Do it And the Lord says Shut your mouth now and don't speak the way he is speaking to you in anger These little little things along the way You listen You listen You humble yourself You humble yourself and do what is right One day when you have a major decision to take Say Lord What shall I do You will hear the voice of God like a trumpet in your heart So dear brothers and sisters Allow the Holy Spirit to change your mind everyday Just like in Genesis 1 the earth was changed In the beginning of Genesis 1 the earth is like dark And your mind may be like that But little by little by little that earth changed Because the earth responded to the word of God everyday and responded to the moving of the Holy Spirit and responded to the moving of the Holy Spirit In Genesis 1 2 the same Holy Spirit moved over the earth He moved on our mind He said I want to change your dark mind till it becomes as bright like these lights He said your dark mind till it becomes as bright like these lights So if we allow our mind to be renewed by the word of God Why is our mind dark?

Because we have absorbed the values of the world from childhood We have read filthy stories We have seen filthy pictures We have watched movies, television Mind is corrupt and dark We have listened to gossip gossip backbiting Our mind is dark Now the Holy Spirit says I want to change that dark mind What a wonderful thing it is to have a mind that is bright like that light that can hear God speaking Why is it when you read the Bible you don't get anything out of it? Because the mind is dark If you try to read a book in the darkness can you read anything?

No The book is alright but there is no light The Bible is ok It is God's word But you are in darkness in your mind Because when God told you to do something you didn't listen From today you say Lord, it is going to be different You tell me the smallest little thing I will do it Just make it clear to me that it is you speaking and not the devil Not the devil quoting scripture Lord, once I am sure it is you I will obey immediately You will find your ears become clear and your mind gradually little by little by little becomes clearer and your mind becomes like the mind of Jesus Christ Let me show you one last verse See what the Apostle Paul could testify 1 Corinthians 2 Verse 15 A spiritual man can appraise everything That means he can put a value on everything In the world they have appraisers who value this house cost so much this house cost so much And a spiritual man alone can put the value on everything in this world Money Humility He can appraise everything But he himself cannot be appraised by anybody How does he do that?

Last part of verse 16 We have the mind of Christ That is how we become spiritual We have the mind of Jesus Christ Think that a human being can come there like Paul could Then we will be able to evaluate everything in this world correctly Otherwise our value system is all wrong Like little children who think a 2 rupee toy is more valuable than a 500 rupee note Because that makes a lot of noise They value the wrong things And they remain poor God wants you to be rich But you can be rich only if your mind is changed So let's seek to have the mind of Jesus Christ If Paul could have it why can't you and I have it Let's pray Heavenly Father Help us not to be occupied with theories but with reality We humbly ask in Jesus name Amen Amen

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