

(2006 Conference) 1.beauty and Perfection in Balance

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of balance in truth, self-examination, and listening to God, and warns of the consequences of not doing so.

Duration: 59:11

Scripture: Genesis 1:31, Luke 18:13-14, 1 Corinthians 14:33, 2 Corinthians 12:21

Topics: "Spiritual Balance", "Personal Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance of truth in our lives, churches, and ministries, drawing insights from Genesis 1. It highlights the need to examine ourselves daily, acknowledge our shortcomings, and seek God's order and harmony in all aspects of our lives. The speaker challenges parents, church leaders, and individuals to humbly assess their actions, repent where needed, and strive for completeness and balance in their walk with God.

Transcript

I'd like to turn to Genesis and chapter 1. You know we're going to consider the subject which we have on this screen up here called the balance of truth and as you see there are a picture of two balances, one which is imbalanced and the other is balanced. What that means is that we can give so much emphasis to certain truths that are very important for us, found in the Bible and give less importance to certain other truths that are also found in the Bible and over a period of time this imbalanced balance that you see there becomes worse and worse and worse and then it looks ugly. Now a balance does not look so ugly but if I could draw there a picture of a man, you know muscular on the right side and like a skeleton on the left side or muscular on the left side and a skeleton on the right side then you'll see what ugliness is.

That is imbalance. I mean if you had a child like that, very well developed on one side of the body and skinny on the left side, you would never be happy. No one of you parents would be happy.

Do you know that God is a father and he's not happy with children who are like this and not only children who are like this but who don't seem to be concerned that they're like this. That means they never stand in front of a mirror and see what they look like. What do I mean by that? They do not have the habit of judging themselves.

I want to ask all of you a question. Even the poorest among you, is there a single day in your life when you don't look at a mirror? I don't think there is. Every one of us looks into a mirror at least once every day.

The next time you look into a mirror, ask yourself whether you have judged yourself that day. God is my witness that I look into a physical mirror every day and I judge myself every day and I tell you it's made a lot of difference in my life because I discover, hey I'm getting more muscular on one side and skeleton on the other side and I want to be balanced. I want to spend more time developing that side of my body which I'm giving less importance to.

Can you tell me the truths that are most important to you? If you make a list or five or six of them, you will discover where you are imbalanced. Those are all scriptural truths. The part of our body we are developing are parts God has made, hand, leg, chest, everything.

The only thing is it's only one side. So that's what we want to consider because if you study the Old Testament, you see there that the prophets never came with a balanced message. No.

No prophet in the Old Testament came with a balanced message. Why? Because the people were imbalanced. When people are balanced, you can give a balanced message.

But if people are imbalanced, you need an imbalanced message on the other side to balance them. So people like Jeremiah, for 40 years he preached one message. That's all.

They were so imbalanced that even 40 years of preaching did not correct their imbalance. Perhaps I should show you that before I come to Genesis 1. In Jeremiah and chapter 20, Jeremiah chapter 20, it says here, please turn to Jeremiah and chapter 20. Jeremiah 20 in verse 7. You know, Jeremiah says in verse 7, Lord you pushed me into this.

I'm reading another translation. You made me a public joke. Everyone's poking fun at me because every time I open my mouth, the Living Bible says, Lord you have never allowed me to speak one kind word to these people.

You never allowed me to speak one kind word to these people. I wanted to speak. The people are all speaking about me.

My name has become a household joke. People are always speaking, this Jeremiah, he's so hard, he's so hard, he's so hard. Doesn't the fellow have any balance? He can't be a true prophet.

He was a true prophet because he was not balanced. It's those fellows who are ignorant of God who thought he should be balanced. Jeremiah went into God's presence and he just said what God told him.

He didn't say what he wanted to say. In fact, he complained to God saying, Lord, sometimes I feel like getting up and speaking a kind word to these people and you say no. Jeremiah, shut your mouth and speak what I say and it's a hard word.

And for 40 years, he says, you will just told me to proclaim judgment and violence and what is the result? Everybody insults me and treats me with contempt. And then I say, okay, forget it. I'm not gonna preach anymore.

Imagine a prophet felt he couldn't preach anymore because everybody opposed him. But then he said, when I said that, verse 9, that I won't mention his name again, his word was like a burning fire, Jeremiah

20 verse 9, in my bones and I could not keep quiet. I tell you, our churches need preachers like that.

Not men pleasers, not people who are trying to produce balanced messages, but people who listen to God and it doesn't matter if God tells them to say the same thing 50 times, they'll say it 50 times. Not try and get a reputation for saying something new. Oh, I preached that message last Sunday.

I can't preach it this Sunday. Can you imagine if Jeremiah ever said that? He would have had a new message every Sunday or every Saturday for 40 years. But he didn't.

He had the same message every Saturday for 40 years. Because he wasn't a wishy-washy compromiser like many people are today. He was a prophet and he couldn't care less what people thought about him.

He spoke what God said. Sometimes he didn't want to speak that. That's what it says here.

But he says, I said I won't speak and then it was like a burning fire. God put a fire in him and he had to speak what God told him to speak. We'd like to be like these prophets, but we can be if we stop seeking the honor of men.

If we spend a little more time listening to God, spend a little more time reading God's Word instead of reading the newspaper and watching television and gossiping. There could be women who prophesy too. If you spend a little time gossiping, backbiting, get rid of all that.

This morning God spoke a word to me and I want to share that with you. I've never heard it like that before. He said if you shut your mouth every time I tell you to shut your mouth, I'll be with your mouth every time you open your mouth.

That was a word from God to my heart. If you shut your mouth every time I tell you to shut your mouth, I'll be with your mouth every time you open your mouth. My brothers and sisters, take that from God.

There are times in conversation when God says shut your mouth now, don't say anymore. If you listen to those times, oh boy, you will prophesy. You young brother, young sister, you can prophesy.

The Bible says, I will pour my spirit upon your sons and daughters. Who are these sons and daughters? Teenagers, young people in their twenties who should be prophesying. But they are too influenced by their friends in the world and by their worldly friends in the church.

And so they cannot be God's mouthpieces. I want to challenge those. I hope there's at least 10%, if there's 10% in this congregation who will listen to what I say, my heart will rejoice.

I don't expect it to be more than 10%. I've seen through the years in many, many places, it's difficult to find a church which has got more than 10% of people wholehearted and spiritual. I don't think there's one like that in the world.

So I don't expect it to be more than 10%, but I hope there will be 10% who are radical. We're going to take this conference more seriously than any conference they've ever taken before. We're going to ask God to pull out of their hearts every wretched thing that's hindering them from following Jesus Christ.

Everything that's ugly, imbalance that's ugly. So I was telling you these Old Testament prophets, they were interested in balance. And that's why you find you read Jeremiah, it's different from Amos.

If you haven't read the Old Testament, of course you can't understand what I'm saying. But there was a difference because in their particular generation, that was the need among God's people. So they sought to know what is the need among God's people right now, and they spoke that.

God showed it to them and they spoke it. I believe in all of our churches, this is what we need. If you can have one brother, only one is enough.

In every church that will speak God's Word according to the need of that people, that will save that church. Otherwise it'll go down the drain. And you don't have to be 50, 60 years old before you do that.

Way back before the Old Covenant started, when God used a man called Joseph, He had prepared him from the age of 17. By the time he was 30, he was ready to fulfill his ministry. And he fulfilled it for 80 years.

And then under the law, we had another man who was also probably 17 or 18 like David. And when he was 30, he was ready for the ministry. And then you come to the New Covenant and you have John the Baptist prepared in secret and he's ready when he's 30.

And you have Jesus and he's ready when he's 30. And all the apostles on the day of Pentecost, I think they were all 30, 33, 27, 29, that was their age. All the 11, 12 apostles.

So don't let the devil tell you that you got to be 40, 50, 60. You can be an apostle at 30. If you're willing to let God discipline you, break you, humble you right from the time you're 17, 18, 19, 20.

And let God break you, break you, break you. You've got to go through that process. Don't think you're going to suddenly become a great man of God when you're 20, 25 years old.

That's a time of preparation. But if you fail in that time of preparation, you'll be 50 years old and useless. But I believe God wants people who will hear him and speak like these prophets, you know, these men.

One man would save a nation. I believe we need people like that. The Apostle Paul, one man, he stood in the church in Ephesus for three years and he said, as long as I'm here, you read in Acts 20, no wolf could ever get in.

Imagine. They were all scared. They were not scared of the fellow sitting in the church.

They were scared of Paul. Not one wolf could come in. But he says, I know what's going to happen when I go.

The wolves are just waiting at the door. They'll come right in. It's not because you brothers are evil, but he's talking to the elders.

He's telling, I don't know how many elders there were, maybe seven or eight of them sitting in front of him. And he says, not because you brothers are bad brothers, but because you brothers don't listen to God. You brothers are all men pleasers.

You brothers are all compromisers, diplomats. You brothers are all seeking your own. Some of you got interest in earth, earthly things.

Some of you are interested in making a little more money. Go ahead. But what's going to happen? The wolves will get in and I know what will happen.

You fellows will all start on your own little groups in this church and this church will be destroyed. You think they'll listen to that warning? No. Paul, he's too proud.

He thinks he's the only fellow who can preserve the church. We can preserve the church too. See what happened.

You read in Revelation chapter two. They ignored the warnings of a man of God because they had such high thoughts about themselves. They had no touch with God themselves and they wouldn't listen to a man who was in touch with God.

That was the tragedy. These things are written for our instruction. And if you read church history, you'll find it's the same thing through 2,000 years.

God raises up a man to say something nobody listens to. Like in Moses time, who said you are the only one Moses who can. We are also holy people.

God can speak to us too. What is the result? Moses went away for 40 days and the whole congregation went astray. 40 days.

One man preserved them. Dear brother, I want to say to you, be a man like that. For that you've got to be balanced.

For that you've got to look into the mirror spiritually every day and say, Lord, where are my skeleton and where are my muscular? Let me build up those areas of my life which are imbalanced. Let me, get me, give me light where I need to develop. So that's how these Old Testament prophets were.

They emphasized, and I'll tell you another thing we can learn from the ministry of these Old Testament prophets. The people of Israel never listened to them. There'd be one or two who would listen.

Most of the others wouldn't listen, especially the leaders. The leaders had such high thoughts about themselves. They thought, we are okay.

And the other ones who were led into captivity first of all. And their children were led into captivity. That's what happens.

The children, the leaders, and their children go astray too. And they say, oh it's okay. It's not okay.

These are ways in which God is trying to speak to us. What's he trying to say? Humble yourself. Humble yourself.

Something is wrong. You got to set it right. And if we don't listen, we're just all going to captivity.

Leaders and children and people and everybody. These things are written in the Old Testament for our instruction. And so if we take, pay heed to this.

I believe those who are leaders have a big responsibility never to seek popularity. Never to seek an honor for preaching a new message all the time. But to be willing to hear God.

To give more time and effort to listen to God. To prepare a message for God's people than your wife takes to cook a good meal for some visitors. I mean when she's cooking a meal for you and at home, like all of us, we would be willing to eat leftovers.

But you don't give leftovers to visitors. And certainly if you have the governor coming to your house for dinner, you're not going to give leftovers. I think your wife will probably start preparing two or three days earlier if the governor is coming for dinner.

What about if Sunday morning you're going to have a whole lot of kings and priests for whom you have to provide food. How do you prepare food for the kings and priests of God who are coming for a meal Sunday morning? Casually? Last minute throw something in hot spot and say okay you kings and priests here you are. That is the tragedy of our time.

That is why everywhere I go I hear people say it's so boring brother Zach. We don't feel like going to church. People say why aren't you wholehearted? Why don't you come to church? And the honest answer is because it's boring.

I'd rather watch a television program which is more interesting and that's true. That television program is more interesting than the church service. It shouldn't be.

Now I'm not talking about worldly people. I'm talking about people who really want God. They're saying that because the spiritual cooks are lazy.

They don't even take 10% of the effort their wives would take if the governor was coming for dinner. It's all casual. Last minute hot spot.

Okay governor's coming. The kings and priests are coming. Let's make something.

Here you are. My brothers you are totally unfit to speak God's Word if you're like that. You're a disgrace to be an elder if you're like that.

May God save our church from such people. Such people should quit the ministry. Keep their mouth shut and sit quietly and the tragedy is these people who don't have more than five minutes worth to speak.

Speak for one hour. Can you beat that? No wonder as imbalance and not only imbalance even the side that was muscular is becoming like a skeleton. So I believe we need to repent and judge ourselves and turn to God and say Lord we really want to be what you want us to be in these days.

We don't want to hear messages that tickle our ears. I was reading today in the book of Micah chapter 2. I mean it really struck me this morning as I was reading Micah chapter 2 and verse 6. You know this is the same thing they said to Isaiah, God's people. You read it in Isaiah also.

They say here Micah chapter 2 verse 6. I'm reading another translation. Don't preach all that stuff to us they say to the prophets. Nothing bad is going to happen to us.

You think God is going to lose his temper? No he's on the side of good people. He helps those who help themselves. So and so therefore verse 11 God says if someone shows up there some preacher with a nice smile.

These false prophets and a glib tongue and told them lies from morning till night and what is the subject of their message? I will preach sermons to you that will tell you how you can get anything from God that you want by faith. You think this is written in 21st century? No this is written 700 years before Christ. You want more money? You want the best food? You name it and the fellow who preaches like that you will hire him immediately as your pastor.

I'm not making it up. That's the message translation of Micah chapter 2 verse 11 and 12. See these are the days in which we are living.

People want to say nice things, make people happy, become popular or get money. With us elders thankfully we are not after money. Maybe only after popularity.

It's just as bad as money. I'll tell you that. Don't think that the man who seeks honor from others is any bit better than the man who goes around with his hands stretched out saying give me money.

There's no difference between the preacher who asks for money and who preaches in such a way that says give me your popularity. There's no difference. Absolutely we think there is.

There isn't. In fact it may be worse because the guy who asked for money looks ugly but the guy who's seeking honor doesn't look ugly and therefore it's worse. So I see that these Old Testament prophets were very faithful.

They're willing to die for their message and Isaiah did die. They killed him. They sawed him into two.

Killed him. That's how they killed him. So we want to look at this matter of the balance of truth and if you turn to Genesis chapter 1 we see something there.

We see many things and you've heard me speak on Genesis 1 many a time but I want you to see here first of all that every day, please listen very carefully, every day it says God examined what he himself had created. Now you would think certainly there's one person who does not need to examine what he's created. It's God.

You and I may need to examine something we have manufactured. Does it work? Does it okay? But God, why does he have to examine what he's created? Why does he have to look over what he has created? He does that. It says God looked at what he had created.

It was good. Then he moved to the next day and he would examine that day. He did something and God saw.

It was good. It was good. And then he suddenly saw something after five days of saying good, good, good and the first part of the sixth day he made the animals and he said that was also good.

We read that in verse 24, 25. He made the animals on the first part of the sixth day and said that was good and then God still continues to look around and he says not good. God is very honest.

Something is not good. He says it's not good. Not good because it is incomplete.

He looked at man and he said on the sixth day, verse 18 of chapter 2, not good. I like that. It was not God's mistake.

Everything was perfect. Good, good, good, good, good. And then suddenly, hey that's not good.

What is not good? Something which is incomplete. Man alone incomplete. I've got to make him a woman to complete him.

That's the meaning of what he said and he took out a rib from his side, made a woman and now he says in verse Genesis 1, 31, very good. Everything is perfect now. So what we see there right from the beginning of creation is that God looked for completion and when it was not complete, he said not good.

Not good. I want to ask you brother, what does he say when he looks at your life, sister? Of course, you look at your life and say very good. How do I know that? Because you don't judge yourself every day.

If you were humble, you would say if God examined things every day, well I certainly need to examine my life every day. God rested only after everything was complete. Now I'll give you a little bit of advice.

Don't rest until everything is complete in your life also. And that's why you know God got a Sabbath there in Genesis chapter 2 verse 1. It says God rested. He rested because all his work was complete.

If he had only made man incomplete without the woman, God would not have rested. He would not have rested. He's not good.

Only when he completed the work, made the man and woman complete and said very good, now I'm at rest. You know that rest, God is not tired. God's not a man that he should be tired.

He rested means he was resting in satisfaction. I'm happy now. It's complete.

Now why is it all written like that? It's written in human language so that we can understand. That is God's nature. And that's the nature Jesus Christ has given me by the Holy Spirit.

I thank God for it. And the result of getting this nature is, one of the results is, that I examine my work every day. For nearly 40 years I have examined almost every sermon I preach.

I preach and I go home and I examine it to see whether it was good, to see whether it was boring, to see whether there was something in it which is unnecessary, to see whether there was something which should have been there which is not added. I tell you 99% of preachers don't do that and that is why they continue to be boring all their life. They never examine their preaching.

How many of you elders go back home and examine every single sermon you preach? Be honest. You are bigger than God. Aren't you? God examines his work but you don't.

Because you think, I did it so it must be perfect. What do you mean it must be perfect? No wonder year after year after year you are the same boring person and your congregation is so kind they don't tell you that. And you bring death after death after death with all your Sunday morning hodgepodge's and you don't care about it because you don't recognize these people as kings and priests.

You recognize them as slaves. Here you are, eat this sloppy porridge. Come on, go home.

God's never going to back up such people, not in a thousand years. You got to respect God. You got to respect his people and you got to spend a little time alone with God and a little less time in all the other things you run around doing.

It doesn't matter if you make a little less money. I have made, God is my witness in the last 30 years, I have done my own business. I have literally lost thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands and tens of thousands of rupees because I have said, Lord your word and your work is first.

Therefore I have some authority to tell some of you to be willing to lose some thousands of rupees by putting God first. He'll honor you if you honor him. But if you think money is more important than God, God will say go run after it.

There's a price to be paid and God is looking for those who are willing to pay the price. Examine your work every day. Follow Genesis chapter 1. Follow God's example.

See whether everything is balanced and if it's not balanced, be honest and say about your own work, it is not good. Look at your church. I look at some of our churches and even in my weak eyes I can say it is not good.

It's not good the state of some things in that church. But those elders think, oh it's okay, everything's okay, people are all coming to the meeting. So what does that mean? Are they becoming spiritual? Are they becoming disciples? Are they becoming more godly? Are others who are seeking after God in your city coming to hear God's word in your church? If not, what are you sitting there with your few people and saying, oh we're having a great time.

Do you know that God may show you in eternity that he wanted to do a hundred times more through you than he could do because you were interested in so many other things. He could not do those hundreds of things through you in your town, in your city, because you never examined your work. Examine your work honestly, faithfully before God.

If you are an elder brother in a church, first of all ask yourself one simple question, the simplest ABC. Do you know the names of all the people in your church? That's the first thing. I remember when I was the elder in CFC, I knew the name of every child in CFC.

I took pains to do it. I look at the birthday list frequently. I would look at the names and I try to meditate on the names and sometimes I'd forget it.

I look at the names before visiting a person. I've got to know the names of these people. You don't know the names unless you keep on looking at them.

You don't bother about them. It shows that, by the way, do you know the names of your own children at home? Oh sure, because they are important to you. But you couldn't care less for these slaves, right? Who knows who bothers about the names of children of slaves, huh? My brother, you're not fit to be an elder.

Go and repent. Go and weep before God. Yeah, it's important.

Do you know the spiritual condition of your children? Are you keeping watch over them? Okay, once they get married and leave home, they have set up their own home. They're on their own. But till they get married, I don't care where they are.

Until they get married, you father and mother, you got to examine them. Like God examined His work. Those children are your work.

You and your wife produced them. How could you just produce them and say, oh well, God, I just pray for them. No, you got to examine them.

See how they are. See if they are developing spiritually. See if there's some imbalance and tell them.

You got to do them from the time they're small. You got to watch over them. Watch over them.

Watch over them. If you can't do that, it's better to be single. Look at Job.

Book of Job chapter 1. By the way, Job was the first book written in the Bible. You've heard me say that before. Because Job lived before Moses and Moses wrote Genesis.

Job was the first book written in the Bible. And because that's the only book in all the 66 books in the Bible which has no connection with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All the other books in the Bible have some connection with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, except Job.

No mention of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which proves to me is the first book written in the Bible. And what do we see in the first paragraph of the first book that God wrote? Listen. The first paragraph of the first book that God wrote, which is even before Genesis 1. You know what it is? There was a man, first of all it describes Job as a man who feared God, who had all his property and all.

And then it tells us what did he do? I'll tell you what he did. He did many things you read in Genesis 31, but that's not what is mentioned first. You read Job 29 to 31.

You read many things that he did. He helped the widows. He took care of the blind.

But that's not the first thing that the Bible says. God says, I'll tell you what Job did. Verse 4, chapter 1. His sons used to have a feast in the house of each one on his birthday.

They'd invite their sisters. You know they were all grown up and they had their own houses. And when the days of feasting were over, and all their parties were over, Job would get up in the morning and call all of them.

He would send for them. Hey, my boys and girls, come to my home now. Your parties are over.

Come home. And I want to pray to God for you. They said, Dad, what do you want to pray to God for us for? I want to offer a sacrifice for your sins.

Sin? Yes. And Job said, perhaps my sons may have sinned. Perhaps.

He doesn't know definitely. Look at the sensitivity of this man. The sensitiveness of this man, Job.

Perhaps. I don't know. I don't have clear proof.

But perhaps my children may have sinned and they may have said something against God in their hearts. I mean not even with their mouths. In their hearts.

And Job made a habit of making this sacrificial atonement for God, towards God for his children, just in case they had sinned. Boy, if we had fathers and mothers like this, we would have some holy children who were concerned. Perhaps my little boy has done something wrong in school today.

Let me find out. Perhaps my little girl misbehaved in college today. Let me find out.

Oh God, be merciful to my child. Please give me light. Please give me light.

How is it going with my children? Please protect them. What has God given us, you as father and mother, for? He wants to see that everything is good. Not only good but very good.

And when it is not good, please listen to me my dear parents. I'm also a parent. I speak to you in love.

Please, please, please listen to me. When it is not good with some of your children, please don't defend them. Please don't justify them unless you want them to go to hell.

Oh, I have seen enough parents in my life justifying their children. It's a tendency of all children of Adam to justify their own children. Go and see any heathen in the world if he doesn't justify his children.

Every single one of them will do that, except the men and women of God, like Job, who will look at their children and say, it's not good. God says, ah, there is one honest father. There is one honest mother.

I will do everything to make it good in their home. But you keep justifying your children, God will say, another child of Adam. That is how our children go astray.

That is why there is imbalance. Father and mother so wholehearted for God and children all wayward. Because you're not honest.

You don't examine their work every day. How many of you examine the school bags of your children to see what type of books they brought from school? Have they brought some romantic novels or some other type of magazines or something like that when they are little grown-up? You don't know what all they are looking at. Not them, their friends may have given it to them.

Do you check under their pillows if they are hiding any books there? Do you see what they are reading inside their physics book, another book inside? These are all old tricks. As old as Adam or as old as the printing. So think of these things, my brothers and sisters.

When you see something is not good, say it's not good. Even if God Almighty could say that it's not good, why can't we say it's not good? It's not humiliating. It's not complete.

Job said, perhaps, I don't know, perhaps my children have sinned. In their heart they may be drifting away from God. Oh God, please bring them back.

Oh, what a father. No wonder God could point him out to Satan and say, Satan, you've seen millions of fathers on earth. Have you seen one like Job? There's no one like him on the whole earth.

He doesn't justify his children. He acknowledges that perhaps my children may have sinned. Think of these things.

Don't assume everything is okay. When you are corrected by somebody, if your elder brother in your church corrects you, consider the possibility you may be wrong. Don't just justify yourself.

No, no, no, that's not like that. That's just another child of Adam. I mean, he's not talking off his head.

So consider that. Because if we acknowledge error, then God will help us to see where we are imbalanced, to see where we are wrong. If you go before God and say, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner, you'll go home justified.

You know that? If you're not familiar with that verse, let me show it to you in Luke 17, Luke 18, beautiful passage. Luke 18, beautiful passage. Two people went to the temple to pray.

Luke chapter 18 and verse 9 onwards. For whom did Jesus say this parable? Verse 9. Let me read it like this. He said it for those who don't judge themselves.

He said it for those who don't examine themselves every day. Verse 9. Why don't they examine themselves every day? Because they trust that we are righteous. Those are Jesus' words.

He spoke this. Do you know that in no parable does it say, this parable is meant for this group of people? You read in the Gospels. Always in the parable, he just spoke the parable.

This is the only parable, as far as I can remember, where he said, this parable is for a special group of people. These are the people who never examine themselves, who never judge themselves, who assume that, I'm okay. I'm righteous.

My children, oh, they're all godly children. My wife, nothing's wrong with her. She's okay.

She's a godly woman. This parable is for you. Two men went to pray.

And one person said exactly that. Oh, God, I thank you, all the wonderful things you've taught me, the doctrines I have, and I do this, and I do that, and I do the other thing, and I do all this big list before God. And the other person, and he looks at other people and says, oh, God, I thank you.

I'm not like that fellow over there. He was a bit of a gossip also, like some believers who say, ah, those fellows. But the other sinner, the tax collector, he wasn't a prostitute or a thief, but he knew he had done a lot of wrong things.

It says in verse 13, he would not even lift up his eyes to heaven. He was so broken. He said, God, I am the greatest sinner in the world.

In the NASB, it comes out very clearly. God, be merciful to me, not a sinner, but the sinner. When you say a table in a room, it means there are many tables in the room.

When you say the table, there's only one table in a room. The chair, the table, the sinner. Lord, there is only one sinner in the world, the sinner, that's me.

That's the type of person, it says here, verse 14, Jesus says, he went home declared righteous. There were two sinners on either side of Jesus on the cross. One said, Lord, there's nothing wrong with me, bring me down from the cross, I'm okay.

The other person said, I deserve this, please remember me. Jesus said, come with me to paradise. Paradise is made for those who will be honest about their sin.

And who will say, I'm the guilty one, nobody else, it's me. It's like that song, it's not my brother, Lord, it's not my sister, it's me, standing in the need of prayer. It's me, the sinner.

Lord, there's something not good here in my life, there's something not good in my ministry, there's something not good in my church, and it's not because of these wretched people, it's because of me, their leader. It's because of me the fault is. There's something wrong in my home, Lord, it's not my children, it's me, the father.

I've not been like Job. I've just justified my children day and night. No wonder they turned out like this.

Let me at least correct course today. I've been going in the wrong direction for so many years. There's still hope.

Turn around. Look what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12. 2 Corinthians 12, we read here in 2 Corinthians 12, the last verse, verse 21.

He says, I'm afraid that God will humble me before you. Why should God humble Paul before the carnal Corinthians? Isn't Paul a man of God who could say, 1 Corinthians 4, 1, I know nothing against me, my conscience is absolutely clear. Why should God humble Paul before the Corinthians? He says, because of your spiritual condition, that I will mourn.

I will mourn. I mean, Paul finished mourning for his own sins many years earlier. I will mourn because some of you have sinned, and you have not repented of your impurity, immorality, sensuality.

No wonder God has not humbled God, used Paul like that. He saw something in Corinth, and he said, it's not good. And he didn't blame the Corinthians.

He says, it's my fault. I'm the father. Supposing your school teacher of your children writes a note in the book saying, I want to see the parents, and you go to see the teacher, and the teacher says, your son is a real rascal.

He misbehaves in the class, morning till afternoon. And the principal says, I want to see you too. And he says, or she says, it's not only your son, your daughter, she's a rascal too.

Look at the way she behaves in her class. And you say, it's not me. I'm okay.

You want to talk to my children? Go and talk to my children. Why do you call me? I'm the father. I'm not the child.

Go and call my child. Will you ever say that? Or will you hang your head there in the principal's office and say, I'm sorry, sir, for the way my children behave? That was Paul. He was a father.

Teachers don't hang their head in shame. Teacher says, hey, you, misbehaving. Get out.

Don't come back for another week to the class. And you, get out. Don't come back for another week to the class.

Fathers will also be strict with their children, but they'll go home and hang their head and mourn. God, where are they? I want to ask all elder brothers here. Please listen.

When was the last time that you wept before God for some failure of someone in your church? For some of you, the honest answer is never. I shouted at them, yelled at them, preached to them, did this, but wept. I don't have to do that.

I was not the one who sinned. It's these wretched slaves who sinned. No wonder your church is in that pathetic condition.

No wonder the wolves come in and take over. The wolves couldn't come in when Paul was there, because he was a man who mourned in secret when he saw something wrong. Do you mourn in secret for your children when you look at something and you say, like God, that's not good, it's not complete with my children or my church? Or do you sit there with the honor of being a father or the honor of being an elder? We have failed and we are going to go before God in repentance and say, Lord, I failed.

Then there may be some hope for revival. And I hope that stirring up will last more than just the three, four days of the conference. It will be something permanent that God does in our heart.

I remember when one brother dropped out of our church and went away, I went before God and I said, Lord, what's wrong with me? Why did that happen? I never did anything wrong to him. And the Lord said to me, that's the problem. You didn't seek more fellowship with him.

Oh, has God to say to some of you parents, your children are going astray because you don't seek more fellowship with them. You're so busy making money with your work, work, work, work, money, money, money. And I tell you particularly these days, beware all of you fellows who are making 30, 40,000 rupees a month, working from 8 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock at night.

I hope you won't lose your children. That's all I can say. If you don't have quality time with your children and your wife, you'll ruin your marriage, you'll lose your children.

And one day your children will rise up and blame you. When something is wrong, go like Paul before God and say, Lord, where have I failed? Don't be so quick to point the fault at people in your church. For your children like Paul, God will humble me because of your failure.

I see. Now the only person who can recognize that is the man who, like Genesis 1, examines his work every day. How is it today? There was a godly man I've heard of who lived, I think, in the last couple of centuries ago.

He had a habit. He was a great church leader, but he had a habit of once a week going beside a river where he was all alone, kneeling down before God where nobody would see him, and say, Lord, show me my faults. Show me where I've gone wrong as a leader.

Show me things I need, sought for repentance, repentance. I believe we need to do that. We need to take time.

He rushed into the presence of God and rushed out of the presence of God and said, I'm okay. Years ago, there was a very popular book. The title of that book was I'm Okay, You're Okay.

That's most of today's preaching. It was a psychological type of book, just like today's preaching. I'm okay, you're okay.

Praise the Lord. Pass the bag around. Collect the money.

Okay, you're okay now. Go home. This is today's Christendom.

If God could say that's not okay, it's got to be said right. We'll make a woman and complete the man. What's wrong in our saying that's not okay in our church or in our home? God is a God of order.

Everything he created way back there in Genesis 1 was so perfect. Look how it's gone for thousands and thousands of years. The sun moving exactly, the stars.

God is a God of order. Everything moves perfectly in the orbit God has put for it. And that's the picture of how it must be in our churches.

When things are not in order in our church, something is wrong. Do you know what is the great chapter in the New Testament on the New Testament church meeting? You know that, 1 Corinthians 14. Have you noticed something there? There are two words there which says, two words in 1 Corinthians 14 which are very important for local church meetings and local churches.

1 Corinthians 14. Very, two very important statements that should characterize our local churches. 1 Corinthians 14, verse 33.

God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, or as the message says, brings things into harmony. God is a God of harmony. That means harmony is a musical word, where all the instruments are playing on the same scale, at the same speed.

Harmony, order. God is not a God of confusion, but a God of order. Therefore, therefore, verse 40, everything in the local church must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Our local churches must be orderly, balanced. No military regiment must be more orderly than our local church because this is God's work. That's man's work.

The military is man's work. This is God's work. That's why I say our meetings should start on time.

You never see a military parade anywhere in the world that starts even two minutes late. That only happens in Christian churches because we don't care for God or for order. Imagine if the sun decided, well I'm going to rise a little late today.

I know they've published in the paper, sunrise is going to be at 6.10 and all. I think we'll make it 8.10 tomorrow. It doesn't happen.

It only happens in churches because I'll tell you, we live in a generation that does not respect God. We are called as a New Testament church to restore that balance. Brothers and sisters, please receive this brief word of exhortation from one whose heart loves you and one who has humbled himself before God.

God is my witness. I judge myself in everything I say as bar heads in prayer.

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