

A Good Conscience And Justification (Tamil)

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the fullness of the gospel as revealed in the New Testament, particularly focusing on the teachings regarding the church of Jesus Christ. It highlights the significance of not only receiving forgiveness for sins but also embracing justification through Christ, which involves being clothed with His righteousness. The message stresses the need for believers to fully grasp and claim their inheritance in Christ, including having a perfect conscience, understanding the power of confession, and living in the truth of being in Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 22:11, Romans 5:1, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 9:14, Acts 24:16, 1 John 1:9, Romans 5:1, Hebrews 8:12, Luke 19:9, Luke 19:8, Isaiah 1:18

Topics: "Fullness of the Gospel", "Embracing Justification in Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the fullness of the gospel as revealed in the New Testament, particularly focusing on the teachings regarding the church of Jesus Christ. It highlights the significance of not only receiving forgiveness for sins but also embracing justification through Christ, which involves being clothed with His righteousness. The message stresses the need for believers to fully grasp and claim their inheritance in Christ, including having a perfect conscience, understanding the power of confession, and living in the truth of being in Christ.

Transcript

In connection with the theme of the full gospel that is written behind us. The church here felt that we should consider the teaching of the New Testament on the church of Jesus Christ as expressing His fullness. That's a major part of the full gospel.

One of the great mistakes that people have made who have used the expression the full gospel is this. There are many groups in the world that say we are preaching the full gospel. There are full gospel churches.

But I don't believe most of them are preaching the full gospel. They are preaching a lot more than many other churches, that's true. But the only place where we can find the full gospel is in the bible and if we compare it with the bible you will find a lot of things are left out by these churches.

Now we don't want to fall into that same mistake saying we are preaching the full gospel and leave something out. Gospel means good news. And one way we can look at it is like a will that Jesus Christ has

written for us.

That is the new covenant. It's like if your father was a multi-millionaire and before he died he wrote a will saying all this property and money in this bank and that bank and the other bank in different countries that's for you. Supposing you just take a portion of that well that may be enough for you to live.

But you can live much more comfortably if you get all of it. That is an earthly illustration that this son or daughter does not take all the inheritance that the father left for them. And maybe they don't know.

Or maybe some crooked lawyer cheats them of their inheritance. And because they don't know, they don't read perhaps what the will is themselves. So they just take a little bit of that property the father left for them.

And they are struggling to live month by month on that. This is how many Christians are. There is no spirit of triumph and victory and overcoming in their life because they haven't read the will fully.

They are struggling, struggling like this poor person who could have had millions if they had read the will completely. And then some Christians wake up and they read a little more of the will. They say our father has left something more for us.

They read in the Bible that Jesus has done something more for us. And those Christians get a little more. Now the question is, how much do you want to get of the inheritance that Christ left for you? I will tell you about myself.

I want all of it. That is the full gospel. I want everything that Jesus suffered so much on the cross to purchase for me.

And if your father, for example, earned all those millions of rupees after many, many years of suffering and struggle. And then if you waste it, that is very sad. If you don't take all that he suffered for so many years to earn.

And it's like that I feel that that's how Jesus feels about a lot of his children. I think God is disappointed with a lot of his children. Just like that father would be if he could know that his son or daughter is not claiming all that he spent so many years struggling to get for them.

Just like some parents are so disappointed when their children waste the money that they have received from their parents. That's how God feels when his children don't make full use of everything that Christ has purchased for us on the cross. And the first step is to know what Jesus purchased for us on the cross.

Jesus said you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free. So we should have a continuous longing in our heart to know more and more of our inheritance in Christ. See for example some Christians all that they know is that Jesus died for our sins.

Yeah that's part of our inheritance. That our sins can all be forgiven. But they still feel condemnation about some things done in the past.

In the old testament it says there was a remembrance of sins year after year. We read that in the book of Hebrews. There was a constant remembrance of sin year after year.

Otherwise there would not have been any need for any more offerings. That's why it says here God made a new covenant. See here in Hebrews chapter 9 first of all.

It says here in verse 9 that gifts and sacrifices were offered under the old covenant which could not make the worshipper perfect in his conscience. Why was their conscience always being disturbed in the old covenant? They have already offered this offering and sacrifice. But their conscience would still tell them yeah you have made that sacrifice but think of that terrible sin you did 10 years ago.

But now with the blood of Christ it says in verse 14 our conscience can be thoroughly cleansed. Because now the promise in Hebrews 8 verse 12 is I will not remember your sins anymore. Because now the promise in Hebrews 8 verse 12 is I will not remember your sins anymore.

This is also another part of our inheritance. Not only that our sins can be forgiven but that our conscience need never disturb us about anything that God has forgiven. Not only that our conscience need never disturb us about anything that God has forgiven.

Some people ask me what is the sin that God will never forgive. I say that is the sin you don't confess. Because 1 John 1 verse 9 says if we confess our sins he is faithful to forgive us all our sins.

The only sin in your life that God will not forgive is the sin which you yourself will not confess. The only sin in your life that God will not forgive is the sin which you yourself will not confess. Not only that God will never forgive the sins that you confess he says that God will never remember them.

Some people's sins have been forgiven but I am sure that God will never remember them again. If you don't read the freedom that is written in your life you will not be able to believe it. Definitely the devil doesn't want you to read it.

When Jesus says that I will not remember your past sins who is remembering them? But very frequently they are reminded of some of the great terrible sins they did in their past lives. Who is reminding them of that? They have confessed it not only once they have confessed it a hundred times. And they still get reminded of it.

Who is reminding them? The devil who is the accuser of the brethren. So when we think of the fullness of the gospel and having all that Jesus purchased for us this is where we must start. We must be absolutely sure that God has blotted out the past.

Now we may think that is very elementary but you will be surprised to see how even some mature Christians keep worried about some sins they committed in the past. You know if in your kindergarten class you were not taught the alphabet properly you will have trouble reading all your life. You won't be able to read because you were not taught the alphabet properly in the kindergarten.

This is something like that. People who have been Christians for so many years who should have settled this right at the beginning of their Christian life are still being bothered by it. Shall I tell you what your inheritance is? A perfect conscience.

A conscience that does not disturb me about anything. It's not going to be automatic. You got to do your part.

You know that nobody in the old testament could live like this? But see what the apostle Paul said in Acts 24. Acts 24 verse 16. I do my best to always maintain a blameless conscience before God.

Always. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Paul could not do this in the days when he was in the old covenant.

But now he says I can keep my conscience clear all the time. But it's not something automatic. He says I have got to do something.

What do I have to do? I have to confess that sin to God. And I have to say Lord I want to turn from it. That's all.

I can't cleanse my sin with my tears. The blood of Jesus alone can cleanse my sin. The blood of Jesus alone can cleanse my sin.

It is important to know that there is a tremendous power in the blood of Jesus to cleanse our past sins. It is important to know that there is a tremendous power in the blood of Jesus to cleanse our past sins. If you are certain about this, then you can tell others about this.

This is the only way to get rid of our past sins. And that's how it was in the old covenant. Now, how can we make sure that all our sins are really gone, I mean blotted out? I told you we have to confess our sins.

1 John chapter 1 verse 9. Now, I want to explain a little bit about confessing our sins properly. Supposing you have hurt somebody. And you confess your sin to him like this.

Brother, if I have hurt you, please forgive me. That's not a confession. The moment you say, if I have hurt you, it's not a confession.

Sometimes husbands and wives confess like that. I'm sorry, if I hurt you, please forgive me. The meaning is, I don't think I've hurt you.

But if you are stupid enough to think I've hurt you, then please forgive me. What type of confession is that? True confession is, you take the blame. See, this is another way people can confess.

Husband and wife can say like this. Yeah, I'm sorry about what I did. But don't forget, you started the problem.

What type of confession is that? In true confession, you take the blame 100% yourself. You know how Adam could not take the blame himself? He said, my wife is to blame because she gave me. So, ask yourself, whenever you have confessed your sin to God, have you taken the blame 100%? Every sin that you have confessed like that, I can assure you has been cleansed in the blood of Christ.

But, if you have gone and confessed sin to God in such a way that, yeah, I was not completely to blame, that person is also to blame. I don't know whether God cleansed your sin. I don't know.

Because God sees you don't take the blame. You are like Adam. See, what is the difference between Adam and Jesus Christ? Many differences, but here is one of them.

We were once upon a time in Adam. It's like a tree, Adam. We were one of the branches.

And now the Holy Spirit wants to take us out of that and put us in Christ. And if I really become a branch of this tree called Christ, I am finished with all the curses that I got from Adam. And all this foolish, stupid teaching that is going on in Christian circles today that even after you are born again, you can have some generational curse because your great grandfather did something wrong.

And how can that be if I am cut off from my great grandfather? See, if I am not born again, oh yeah, then there are lots of curses on me. But, if I am cut off from that and put into Christ, what generation curse is there for me now when I am in the tree called Christ? I am amazed that believers believe all this stupidity which is not found in the Bible. They quote some Old Testament verse under the law and I say, I am not under the law brother, I am under grace.

They say, oh, up to the third and fourth generation there can be problems, it says. Which episode does it say that? It's Old Testament law. I mean, if you are a follower of Moses, you better listen to that.

I am not a follower of Moses, I am in Christ. But here is one fundamental difference between Adam and Christ. Adam could not take the blame for his own sin.

Jesus Christ could take the blame for other people's sins when he died on the cross. What a difference! What a fantastic difference! What are you in now, Adam or in Christ? Can you make a mistake, can you admit it and say, that was my mistake, I don't want to blame anybody else? If you are in Christ, we are not worried about whose fault it is. We say, Lord, I take the blame.

That's very, very important. It can even be for elders in churches. Do you know, sometimes I have heard elders say this.

Yeah, what to do brother, it's not my fault, it's that person's fault in the church. I want to ask you brother, elder brother, are you a manager of a factory or a father of a family? Is your church an office or is it a family? If it's an office, you can sit in the manager and say, that's not my fault, that clerk over there, he did something wrong. But supposing my son, studying in school, did something wrong.

And the teacher calls me and says, I want to see the parent. And the teacher tells me, your son did something like this. What can I tell the teacher? It's not me, that's my son, don't tell me about it.

Can you say that? Not if you're a father. If you're a manager of a factory, you can put the blame on others. How many elders really say, if there's a fault in the church, it's one of my children who has misbehaved? Lord, show me where I have failed.

I'm not saying he has not failed. I don't tell the teacher, my son did nothing wrong. I say, yes, he did something wrong, but I'm sorry as his father, please forgive him.

I'm sure that you have done that as a father for your own children. If your children misbehave, you need to go before God and say, Lord, where did I fail as a father or mother, that my children misbehaved like this. If you are a true spiritual father, that's what every elder should be.

You will say the same thing. Say, Lord, this person is a member of my church. He's not a visitor.

I mean, if a visitor in your home misbehaves or somebody else's child misbehaves, that's like a visitor in your church. You're not responsible for that. I mean, in our church, we can have those who are committed members and then we can have a whole lot of visitors.

We're not responsible for the behavior of the visitors. Even in our church back in Bangalore, if I see something wrong with a visitor, it's not my business to tell him. I say, hello, how are you? Good to meet you.

Goodbye. If it's someone who's a committed member of the church, breaking bread with us, then I take it much more seriously if he's done something wrong. Even if it's a small thing.

I remember once when one brother sort of began to fall away. Many years ago, I said, Lord, where did I fail? And the Lord said to me, you know, you haven't encouraged him enough. I didn't realize that was a sin.

But that is one of the responsibilities of elders. You know, to sense that somebody needs a little encouragement. And to encourage a person takes about one minute.

That's all. Not even one minute. Half a minute.

Just to say something encouraging to him. I wonder how many elders do that. So, what I'm saying is, even in situations where you think it is not your fault, it could be partially your fault.

Even in situations where you think it is not your fault, it could be partially your fault. I hope all of you will really get convinced about this so that you never need teaching on this again. So that you can teach others.

That is my inheritance in Christ. We saw that in Hebrews 9. Don't forget. The Old Testament law, Hebrews 9.9 could not make anybody perfect in conscience.

And that was part of the problem with the first covenant. God abolished that first covenant. But now, through the blood of Christ, we can have, verse 14, complete cleansing in our conscience.

It becomes perfect. For that, we got to take the blame completely. And that's why Paul said, I do my best to keep my conscience clear.

And then I want to tell you another elementary thing, which maybe your kindergarten teacher didn't teach you properly. That's from Romans 5, verse 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are trying to go step by step through the full gospel.

Christ died for our sins. Why was he raised up from the dead? Can you give me an answer from the Bible? It's in the previous verse here. Chapter 4, verse 25.

He died for our sins. He was raised again for our justification. Understand this.

He died for our sins. All Christians know that. He was raised up from the dead for our justification.

He died to forgive our sins. He rose up to justify us. That is part of our inheritance.

It's not enough to have your sins forgiven. It's not enough to have your sins forgiven. You need to be justified.

I will explain to you why. If all your past sins are forgiven, you can stand before God. And on top of that, you will not remember your sins anymore.

Now my conscience is perfect. Absolutely clear. I can stand before God.

Not yet. There is one more thing I want to say about conscience before I move on. You remember the story of Zacchaeus.

He had stolen money from people. Now when you steal money from people, you sin against God and you sin against those people. When you hurt somebody, you sin against God and against that other person.

If you have only a bad thought, that's only against God. So to have a good conscience, it is also necessary to confess to the person you have hurt. Some people don't have a perfect conscience because they haven't confessed to that person whom they hurt.

Supposing Zacchaeus had said in Luke 19, Well Lord, you know in my old life I cheated people of thousands and thousands of rupees. Thank God all things are passed away. I have become a new person.

I am a new creation in Christ and everything is gone. But what about all those poor fellows whom you cheated? They can say you may have become a new creation but we still haven't got our money. You can't escape like that.

Some people think that. Oh that was all in my unconverted days. It doesn't matter.

Do you know what Zacchaeus said? I am going to give back all that money and I am going to pay it back with interest. So I will give four times so that nobody feels he was cheated. I am going to give back all that money and I am going to pay it back with interest.

So I will give four times so that nobody feels he was cheated. I don't know how many people are still living there. I can't keep that money.

I don't know where they are. Do you know what a half-hearted person would have said? Those whom I know, I will give back. Some others, what to do brother, I don't know their mailing address.

So I can only keep the money. Zacchaeus was a whole-hearted person. He said I cannot keep one rupee with me which I have not earned righteously.

Maybe I don't know that man's mailing address whom I cheated. Maybe I don't know that man's mailing address whom I cheated. Then I will give it to the poor.

Or put it in the offering box. Because all money ultimately belongs to God. If you don't know to whom to give it to, give it to God.

Because everything on earth belongs to Him finally. When Zacchaeus said that, He may have taken him five years to return all that money to go to different houses and all that. But he was not forgiven five years later.

As soon as he took the decision, without having even given one person's money back yet, Jesus said in Luke 19 verse 9, Today, Salvation has come. What a wonderful gospel this is. That God sees the intention of your heart to return, to set right.

He says okay, salvation has come. Sometimes it may not be money. Sometimes it may be just going to ask somebody forgiveness.

Please forgive me for the way I treated you. You must ask God to show you whom all you should go and ask forgiveness from. It's very very important.

And once you have cleared your record in the past, After that be very careful to ask forgiveness immediately. Don't accumulate another account. Don't accumulate another account.

Immediately clear your conscience. Immediately clear your conscience. Like Jesus said, when you come to make an offering to God, You suddenly remember somebody has, you have hurt somebody.

Go there first and settle it. This is the way to live with a perfect conscience all the time. Now I want to say one more thing.

There are certain things that we have done in the past, Which we can do nothing to correct now. Supposing you committed adultery with some woman. And maybe she is married to somebody now.

Please don't go and confess to that husband and wife and create more confusion. You must be wise. So what is the test to find out where shall we make a confession or not? This is the test.

If you go and make this confession, Will it make the fellowship better or worse? So it is not a law. The test is this. The whole purpose of confession and restitution is to make the fellowship better.

So there are some things we can only settle when we get to heaven. Because if you try to settle it here, it will cause a greater confusion like I just said. But don't use that as an excuse to avoid doing what you should do.

I am saying this so that the devil doesn't keep on condemning you saying, You haven't asked forgiveness from that person, that person, that person. And the second thing I want to say is, None of us will be able to settle all the wrong things we did in the past. It's impossible.

We have done hundreds and thousands of wrong things. So we don't have to keep on feeling condemned, No, I haven't settled everything, I haven't settled everything. Ask the Lord to show you what you should settle.

And he may tell you only two or three things. Those are the only things he brings to your mind. And those are the only things you can possibly do.

That's all you have to do. You don't have to have any condemnation. I say that because you know, even someone who is very sensitive to a message like this, The devil will then try to arrest them.

Sometimes the devil makes us have an under-sensitive conscience and sometimes an over-sensitive conscience. So, we must not fall into either pit. Now once we settle this matter of conscience, We go to justification.

Jesus died for our transgressions and he rose again for our justification. Just like nobody could have their conscience perfect in the old covenant, Nobody could be justified like we are in the old covenant. Now, justified means more than that it's as if I've never sinned.

More than that. For example, if the Lord has forgiven me and says I won't remember your past sins, Then I'm already as if I've never sinned. But justified is more than that.

So, let's try and understand that. We want to get our full inheritance and not let the devil rob us of anything. The full gospel.

And whatever lessons we didn't learn properly in kindergarten with our old teachers in some other churches, We want to learn it now. So that we can study better in the future. So, as I said, if God has forgiven all our sins and says I won't remember it anymore, We're still not ready to stand before God.

Why is that? If all my sins are forgiven, And God says I won't remember any of them anymore, Why can't I stand before God now? Because of one reason. I still have a flesh which is corrupt and in which dwells nothing good. My sins are all forgiven but my flesh has not disappeared.

And that's why there's a possibility of your sinning tomorrow. So, I can't come before God with this flesh. Even if my sins are all forgiven.

So, the Lord has to clothe me with the righteousness of Christ. That is called justification. That's not forgiveness.

Forgiveness is forgiving the past. And I won't remember that. But now, it's covering my unrighteousness.

Covering my filthy flesh. That is justification. And it says in Romans 5.1 that when we are justified by faith, Then only we have peace with God.

You know, there's this beautiful expression that you find particularly in Ephesians. Ephesians, many times in this letter, You read this phrase, In Christ. You see it first of all in chapter 1 verse 4. He chose us in Christ.

Verse 3 also. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Let's read verse 3. He is faithful in Christ Jesus. Let's read verse 7. In Christ we have redemption. Many Christians haven't thought much about this.

In Colossians. You see the opposite truth. Colossians 1 and verse 27.

Christ in you. The hope of glory. So think of these two things.

Colossians 1.27 Christ in you. And Ephesians 1.3 We in Christ. Now you ask yourself, which do you think about more? If you look at the songs we sing.

Most of the songs are, Christ lives in me. Praise the Lord. People have asked, ask Jesus to come into you.

Yeah, that's right. He comes in. You ask me how I know He lives.

He lives inside me. How do you know Jesus is living? He lives inside me. But most Christians don't think of this phrase, I am in Christ.

But that's a glorious truth. It's only when I understand that I am in Christ, that I understand how I could be crucified with Christ. How I could be buried with Christ.

How I could be raised up with Christ. How even now, I am sitting in the heavenly places in Christ. Not in the future.

If you think only of Christ in you, then you say, yeah, one day He will come and I will go and sit with Him. If you think only of Christ in you, then you say, yeah, one day He will come and I will go and sit with Him. But I am in Christ.

Christ is already there. Ephesians 1.3 says, I am already blessed with every blessing in Christ there. This is not just a technical difference of expression.

I am not teaching philosophy here. This has got practical results in our life. Every doctrine has got a practical result.

If you know Christ is in you, it produces a result. If you know you are in Christ, that produces a result. Now let me explain to you.

When I am in Christ, I come before the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. I am accepted by the Father just like He accepts Christ. It's a wonderful truth.

To be clothed with Christ. To be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. That is justification.

See, in Matthew chapter 20, this beautiful parable in Matthew chapter 22. Yeah, you heard me mention this before, but it's good to look at it again. That, there was this king who had a wedding feast for his son.

And he invited a lot of people and they didn't come. And that's the picture of the first invitation going to the Jewish people and they rejected Christ. And so, the king said to the slaves, verse 8. Those who were first invited are not worthy.

So, now go to all the highways and get all the beggars and all inside. Who are these beggars? You and me. We are invited to the king's wedding.

Because all the big shots who were invited didn't go. So, a beggar like me got a chance. And you know, these are really poor beggars.

With torn, dirty clothes. Some without any vest also. Some have got little torn vest.

Here you have this huge line of filthy beggars with all types of dresses coming to the king's gate. How would you feel if people like that sat at your son's wedding feast? The king wouldn't permit them to come like that. So, at the gate, he had all these thousands of white beautiful garments to give to everybody who comes.

Free, put this on and go in. And you know, those days people wore just a robe like Jesus wore. You could just put it on and go in.

And nobody would see your dirty, torn clothes underneath. And these beggars were excited. It's wonderful, nobody can see my dirty clothes now.

And everybody looks alike. The man who thought he was better because I've got only three holes in my benny and he's got ten holes in his benny. There's no difference now once you put the robe.

And I'm better than that guy who's got no vest at all. Everybody becomes equalized when this garment is put on. That's how God makes us in Christ.

You may be a terrible sinner like Paul or Mary Magdalene. Paul was a murderer. Mary Magdalene was demon possessed.

There were prostitutes, thieves. Even the thief who died on the cross. And along with them, there are some people who lived a very good life from childhood.

But when the robe is put, they're all equal. But when the robe is put, they're all equal. What do you think? A person who committed a very bad sin here and a person who grew up in a good way have been accepted by God in the same way? Do you believe that? Do you believe that? Not all believers believe that.

Those who are really wicked are very happy to believe that. Some of you who lived such a good life from childhood, say, how can God make me equal to those fellows? If you don't want to be equal, you'll be lost in God's kingdom. This is the wonderful truth of justification.

Now in this big line of beggars who are coming for the feast, there's one man with a suit and a tie. He decided to come along. And when he comes to the gate, they say, here's a robe.

I don't want the robe. I'm okay. The robe is all for these beggars.

My nice blue suit and tie, it's pretty good. The servant said, okay, if you don't want it, don't take it. It's free.

So he goes and sits there along with all the others. And it says here in verse 11 that the king came to look at all the people sitting there. Everybody is in white.

One fellow sitting there in blue. He said, who's that? The servant says, he thought his dress was good enough. He didn't want your dress.

And he called him. How did you come here, verse 12, without accepting what I gave you at the gate? He couldn't say nobody gave it to me. He couldn't say I was proud of my own dress.

And the king didn't spare him. You want to see how terrible pride is in God's eyes? Pride in what? Pride in what a good person you have been. The king said, bind him hand and foot and throw him out.

We don't want such a fellow. And he got to weep and gnash his teeth over there. He said, Lord, for such a small mistake.

For such a small mistake you throw him out, weeping and gnashing of teeth. He didn't commit murder, he didn't commit adultery. The Lord says, pride is worse than all of that.

Pride, proud people don't want to be justified. They are the ones who develop to become Pharisees in the church. They make rules and regulations for other people.

Saying, you won't be accepted by God unless you do this, this, this, this, this, this, this, this, this. Don't listen to them. Don't be like that yourself.

We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And we have peace with God. This is the foundation of the gospel.

Maybe your kindergarten teacher didn't teach you, but you can understand it now. Let's now bow our heads in prayer. Ask God to let these truths sink into your heart.

You may think they are elementary, but they are fundamental. Lord, let it come into my heart. Sink into my heart.

And help me to share these wonderful truths with others. Thank you father. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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