

(A Heavenly Church) 1. Secure in God Our Father

by Zac Poonen

We must be secure in God's love and share His burden in order to grow spiritually and be like one big, happy family in the church.

Duration: 31:23

Scripture: Isaiah 52:5, Matthew 6:33, Romans 2:24, 1 Peter 3:7

Topics: "Church Unity", "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not causing harm to others through our attitudes and words. He highlights the prevalence of insecurity and jealousy among God's people, which hinders the unity and growth of the body of Christ. The speaker acknowledges the selfishness that often exists within the church, with individuals seeking recognition and glory for themselves. He encourages believers to adopt a humble and loving mindset, treating each other with sympathy and tender hearts, regardless of their differences. The sermon also emphasizes the need to prioritize the things that God cares about and to learn from the mistakes of Israel in the Old Testament.

Transcript

God's will for all of us is that we might grow from the time we are born again. There are a number of verses in scripture that tell us that we're not to remain children, we're not to remain babies, but we must grow up. How do we know whether we have grown over the last year or in the years since we are born again? One way is to ask ourselves how much we have of the burden that God has in his heart.

When Paul spoke to the Corinthians, he said, we are God's co-workers and you are like God's field. They were babes. They never became co-workers, not until then in any way, and a co-worker is like a mature son.

And if a father is running a business, a grown-up mature son shares the burden of the father concerning his business. God has a business in this world and if you're a mature son, you will share the burden he has. That's one way we know that we are growing up.

And I'll tell you God's burden is not that you should make more money, but if that's what occupies your mind, you may be born again, but you're a baby. And if you continue like that, it's possible that you could

be a backslider and ultimately lose your salvation. There's a verse in Romans chapter 2, which many times comes to my mind.

First of all, in relation to the country in which I live, but as I travel, I see that everywhere. It was one of the complaints that God had against the Jewish people. The reason why three quarters of the Bible is in the Old Testament, even though the Old Covenant has been abolished and we're not under the Old Covenant, we're not under the terms of the Old Covenant anymore, yet God has given us a Bible with three quarters of it is the Old Testament.

And the reason is, one of the reasons anyway, to see God's dealings with Israel and to learn from the mistakes that Israel made. Because as I've observed Christians, I've discovered they make exactly the same mistakes that Israel made in the Old Testament. And a wise man learns from the mistakes of others.

He studies the mistakes of others and say, Lord, how can I keep myself from that? And one of the complaints that God had against the Jewish people was here in Romans chapter two and verse 24, Romans 2, 24. This is a quotation from Isaiah chapter 52, verse five. It's Isaiah the prophet spoke to Israel and said, this is the complaint God has against you.

The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. And that was Isaiah lived about more than 700 years after the law was given. And the name of the Lord was being blasphemed.

In my own country, in India, India has a population of a huge population, but only 1% of that is Protestant Christian, just little over 1%. And 1% is Roman Catholic. So we have 98% of people with other religions, but that's not our problem.

The problem is that the name of Christ is dishonored by most of that 2%. So very often I've thanked God that it was not 50%. It'll be much worse.

What is the great need that Christians stop living in a way that the name of Christ is dishonored. And if God had that complaint against the Israelites at that time, I certainly believe he has that complaint against lots and lots of Christians today. The name of the Lord Jesus is blasphemed because of the way Christians live, or the way Christians behave in their work spot, or the way Christians live in their family life as husband and wife, the way Christians bring up their children, the way Christians live together in a church, quarreling and fighting over silly little things, making all types of legalistic demands on one another.

And the devil watches the whole thing and laughs and the name of the Lord Jesus is dishonored. If you are a son, if you're grown up, that will cause you a concern. Lord, your name is dishonored.

That disturbs me. Think if somebody was scandalizing your wife in town, telling false stories about her, or your daughter, or your son, things that were not true. Would it concern you? Would it disturb you? It would disturb most of us.

And when we see a world which has got a wrong picture of Christ, because of what they have, the Christ they have seen in Christians, the name of Jesus dishonored, it should concern any son of God. It won't concern the babies and the children because they're not bothered. Babies and children are only concerned about their own name, their own family name.

Members of their family should not be dishonored. They should not be in any financial need. They should have plenty of money for the future.

That's all they're concerned about. But a mature child of God, his number one prayer, even in a time of recession or difficulty, if he's lost his job or whatever may happen, his number one prayer is what Jesus taught him to pray. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

That's a spiritual man. And I'll tell you the man who prays like that will find not only that he lives a life of spiritual triumph constantly in any circumstance, but God meets all his needs in amazing ways. I've seen that in the poorest villages in India where when you talk of a recession here, it's luxury compared to the way a lot of people live in the villages in India.

I'll tell you that. But God's honored when you honor God, God honors you. So the important thing is to try and understand and to have a burden for the things that God has a burden for.

Many years ago, some of you have heard me mention this before. I was in our church during the time of singing and a couple of the instruments were not playing together harmoniously and it disturbed me. It was a little jarring to my ear.

And as I was standing there with everyone singing, the Lord said to me, it doesn't disturb me. He said, what disturbs me is that there's a husband and wife here who are not in tune with each other. There are a couple of brothers here who are not in tune with each other.

There are a couple of sisters here who are not in tune with each other. That disturbs me much more than a couple of musical instruments not in tune with each other. And I prayed a prayer that day that I prayed many times since.

Lord, from now on, don't let anything disturb me that doesn't disturb you. And let the things that disturb you disturb me. That's how I know I'm in fellowship with the heart of God.

Anything that disturbs God's heart must disturb me. And anything that doesn't disturb God's heart shouldn't disturb me. We are disturbed by many things that don't disturb God's heart at all.

You know, a perfectionist husband or wife can make life miserable for his or her partner by demanding so many things which don't disturb God. But there are other most serious things in relationships that disturb God. I was reading 1 Peter chapter 3. I see something of God's desire here.

You know, one of the wonderful things of the new covenant, which they didn't have in the old covenant, was to be able to feel the heartbeat of God, to hear, to sense what God is thinking in his heart. And I want to read this to you in 1 Peter chapter 3. He's speaking about husbands and wives, but I believe we could apply this even to our relationship as brothers. Let me read verse 7. Even though it's relating to husband and wife here, let me read it as relating to a husband and wife, to two brothers.

You stronger brothers, verse 7, must be careful about your weaker brothers, being thoughtful about their needs and honoring them even though they are weaker. Remember that you and that brother are partners in receiving God's blessings. You're joint heirs of the grace of life.

And if you don't treat him as you should, I'm reading from the living Bible, your prayers will not be answered. My conviction is that the vast majority of believers pray and most of their prayers are not

answered. I would say more than 90 percent.

And after a while, unfortunately, believers get used to that. They'd never get an answer to their prayers are not answered. They don't, well, in a sense, they don't get what God wants them to have.

Let's put it like that. They don't seem to get what God wants them to have. And the reason is there's something wrong in their heart, in their relationship with either their husband or their wife or some brother or something.

I have seen this so clearly that I fear it now. I fear to have even a flutter of a wrong attitude in my heart towards any human being because it breaks my connection with God. My prayer won't be answered.

And I want my prayers to be answered. I want my prayers not to be hindered. I want to have a free line of communication with God all the time, 24 hours a day.

I hope you desire that. Your life will be totally different if you're like that. And then it says, I'm reading from the Living Bible.

This is the thing which I wanted to share with you. Verse eight. And now this word to all of you.

You should be like one big, happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. Imagine a church which is like one big, happy family, even though they have different backgrounds, different temperaments, different social levels, different economic levels, different levels of education, different outlooks on so many things, but they all love Jesus. And as a result, they're like one big, happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.

It's very rare to find a church like that. And yet, what is the will of God? That every single church that names the name of Jesus Christ should be like that. Every single home that calls itself Christian should be like that.

I know certainly for myself, that's the longing for myself, for my own home. And it has been for many years. It's been the longing I have for the churches I have responsibility for.

It should be like one big, happy family, full of people who are sympathetic towards each other. Not hard and demanding on each other, but sympathetic. Loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.

And I've asked myself, why is it not like that? Why is the name of the Lord dishonored in every place? And I have come to this conclusion through the years, that the number one reason is because most believers have never come to a secure relationship with their Heavenly Father. Most believers really don't know the Father. They don't know God as a loving Father who cares for every need.

And it's a tragedy, but it is true. I have to say that my own life, for 16 years after I was born again, I technically knew God was my Father, but I wasn't secure in Him. You know what happens when you find security in God as your Father? Let me tell you what happened to me.

You'll never again, never again be in competition with a single other brother in the whole world. You'll never want to show that you're better than another person, that you can preach better, pray better, do better. You will never boast about anything, that your ministry is better or greater.

Everything disappears when you find your security in your Heavenly Father. And you're not jealous of someone whose ministry is 10 times better than yours, or who's 10 times as wealthy as you are, or whatever it is. Insecurity is the root cause of a lot of jealousy, strife, competition in the Christian church.

They all technically know God is their Father, but they haven't come to security in Him. They do not know God as the one who loves them with as great a love as He loved Jesus. The devil is out, we know right from the beginning of human history.

He's always been out to bring division in a family. You know, if you turn to the early chapters of Genesis, you read about Adam and Eve, and you see the devil divided them. In the next chapter, you read about Cain and Abel, and the devil divided them.

That's his job. That's what he's been doing from the beginning of time. And wherever he finds the beginning of a new church, the devil is there to divide them.

In Adam and Eve, God is making a new beginning. He divided there. And wherever he finds someone trying to build a church that glorifies God, build something that's an expression of the body of Christ, he'll come and bring division.

And how does he do it? I believe that what the devil tried to sew into Eve's mind was a doubt about God's love for her. You know, implied in that temptation was, if God loved you, do you think he'd withhold this lovely fruit from you? Why does he do it? And Eve began to think, oh, perhaps God doesn't love me. Isn't that what the devil says to you sometimes when God doesn't answer a prayer the way you think he should answer your prayer? And the devil comes along and casts doubt upon God's love in your mind.

And once he's done that, he's got you. He's got you. And as long as you keep that in your mind, the devil's got a foothold in your life.

Once you get a foothold in your life, you get a foothold in your home, and you've got a foothold in your church. It'll be very difficult to evict him. So this is the area where we have to be extremely careful.

This is what we have to learn from that first incident where the devil came and God's made a new beginning with Adam and Eve, and the devil came and divided them by casting doubt in Eve's mind about God's love. Because if she was absolutely convinced and secure in the fact that almighty God loved her, she could have said, well, Satan, I don't know why God hasn't allowed me to eat this. Yeah, I agree with you.

This tree looks really great, and this fruit appears very tasty. It makes my mouth water, and I really don't know. It appears to me that according to my reason, what you say seems to be right.

That for some, God's withheld this from me. I don't know. But whatever my mind may tell me, deep down in my heart, Satan, I know that God loves me.

If she had said that, the story would have been different. And in the situations in life where you find doubts coming, does God know what's happening to me right now? Does God know the tough time I'm going through? If he knew, why doesn't he do something about it? Why didn't he do this for me? Why didn't he answer that prayer? And all these questions, you know, we are Christians, and so we're not supposed to speak them aloud, because we lose our testimony. But we've got them in our hearts.

And it's enough. If you keep those questions in your heart, that's enough for the devil to get in. You don't have to express it.

Just keep it in your heart, that little doubt. Does God really know every detail of what's happening to me right now? He does. He knows every detail of what is happening to us.

That's the living Bible paraphrase of what Job said in Job 23 10. He knows every detail of what is happening to me, and particularly in times of difficulty. If Eve had said that, the story would have been different.

But once she allowed doubt to come into her mind, she immediately lost her connection with God. And when you lose your connection with God because of that doubt, immediately her relationship with Adam was broken too. Your relationship with your wife, or your husband, or your brother breaks because your relationship with God is broken.

Yeah, it's true. The first commandment is not love your brother. The first commandment is love God with all your heart.

And when you do love God with all your heart, it'll be easy to love your brother. But if you lose that connection with God, your connection with your husband or wife is gone. And that's why immediately you see Adam accusing his wife.

When God asks him, did you eat of that tree? He puts the blame on his wife. That putting the blame on a brother, refusing to take the blame ourselves is all because of insecurity. Adam became insecure too.

There was a married couple there in Eden, united by God himself, but insecure and therefore unable to get along with each other, inwardly blaming one another. The reason they were insecure in their relationship with God. And that's why we can't be like one big happy family.

Well, I tell you my burden for this church and every church where I have any responsibility is that it'll become like one big happy family that glorifies God. And I pray that whatever church you are from, that'll be true in your church. But we must have a burden.

Lord, I want to be a part of a church which glorifies your name, where you can look at us as one big happy family. In the next chapter, you know, when we are insecure as parents, whether we know it or not, we transmit that insecurity to our children. And it's like diseases in the blood.

You don't have to make an active effort to transmit diseases in your blood to your children. It just goes automatically. There are weaknesses in our genes that our children get.

And it's like that spiritually too. When parents are insecure in God, even though they may pretend to be okay publicly before their children, somehow the other children get it. They become insecure too.

It's not enough to provide our children with a home where we give them food, clothing, shelter, education. That's all great, but that's not enough. The most important thing that we need to give our children is security in God.

It's the most important thing that we are the apple of God's eye. God cares for us. He loves us as he loved Jesus.

God is a father who's interested in every detail of our life. And because Cain and Abel, children of insecure parents who blamed each other and had tension with each other, they grew up like that. And Cain was jealous when God blessed Abel.

He wouldn't have been jealous if he was secure in his heavenly father. If he found the fire falling on Abel's sacrifice and not falling on his own sacrifice, and Abel is his younger brother, if he was secure in the love of God, he said, God, my younger brother seems to be better than me. He seems to have got your approval and I haven't got it.

Will you tell me how I can get it? And if he was really secure, he would have humbled himself and gone to his younger brother and say, Abel, tell me, what was it in your life that brought God's approval? I know I'm your older brother, but I'd like to learn from you. Are you so secure in God that you can go to a younger brother and say that? Brother, I see an anointing upon your life. I'd like to learn from you.

You can't do it if you're not secure in your heavenly father. In the body of Christ, there's no one who's big or small. We're all members of Christ's body and we're supposed to learn from one another.

I decided many years ago that I would learn from everyone. If I saw something Christ-like in a brother who's old enough to be my son, I would try to learn from him. There's something Christ-like there in that fine young man.

Lord, I want that. I want to get a little fellowship with him so that can rub off on me. And you know, as I live like that, and it's not just with people in my denomination or with people who agree with me in every little doctrine.

Oh, cross their T's and dot their I's like I do. No, I've seen Christ-likeness in people who don't agree with me in doctrine. And I know they're born again.

They love the Lord. I can learn something from them. The end result is I become a very rich man spiritually.

I'm just going around collecting riches from all types of people. You can be like that unless you feel, well, how can I acknowledge that that brother has got something more than me? He's half my age. You know, this is the trouble with Saul.

Saul couldn't accept the fact that God anointed David who was less than half his age. How in the world could God bless him? I'm the throne. I'm the one who's been sitting here.

I'm the experienced person and I'm all this, that, and the other. That was Cain's attitude. And you know what it led to? It led to murder.

And in Saul's case also, if David hadn't moved his head when Saul threw the javelin, it would have led to murder there too. Today, we don't murder with javelins and stones. It's with attitudes and with our tongue.

There's so much of insecurity among God's people. Which makes them jealous of others, unwilling to learn from others. The body of Christ suffers.

It all shows how selfish we are really. We talk about the glory of God, but we're concerned about ourselves really. We want people to recognize us.

We're the great men and women of God. Rubbish. We're just ordinary people.

Ordinary brothers and sisters. I often say to myself, to remind myself as to who I am. I say, Lord, your work went on for thousands of years before I was even born.

And it'll carry on wonderfully even if I'm gone.

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