

# An Axe That Sets Us Free (The Truth Will Set You Free)

by Zac Poonen

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*Jesus came to set the captives free, and we must be careful not to bring people into bondage with our words and actions.*

**Duration:** 1:04:04

**Scripture:** Isaiah 61:1-2, Matthew 3:1, Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 6:33, Luke 4:18-19, Luke 4:21

**Topics:** "Freedom"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and humility in preaching the word of God. He encourages preachers to evaluate their sermons and strive to improve each time. The speaker highlights the ministry of Jesus, which was focused on setting people free and bringing them closer to God. He urges preachers to follow Jesus' example and preach the good news to the poor, setting captives free, opening people's eyes to God's love, and freeing them from oppressive rules. The sermon also emphasizes the need to avoid anger and judgment, as Jesus taught that anger is the first step towards hell.

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## Transcript

Let's continue to worship God in our spirit, for the Father seeks for those who will worship Him in spirit and truth this morning. Be still and bow our heads and close our eyes and be still for a moment in the Lord's presence as we fix our minds and our thoughts on Him and cast all the thoughts and anxieties and worries of our earthly life, and there may be many of them, aside for a moment and say, Lord, all those things will be solved much better if I can hear you clearly this morning. Many of our problems are not solved because we try to do it on our own.

Let's give God the first place this morning, and I want you to pray that God will give you a word for your own heart, not a word that you think is good for somebody else. Lord, we are here only for three or four days, and we don't want to miss what God wants to give us. Call upon the Lord when He is near, seek Him when He can be found.

We worship you, our Father, you are God Almighty, ruler of this universe. You have given us Jesus Christ, conqueror, your son as our head, and we want to live it with the dignity and the humility that is becoming of those who are your sons and daughters. Give us grace to be that, your mighty power come upon us this

morning, your Holy Spirit move in our midst, we seek you, we wait upon you, those who wait on you will never be ashamed, break every fetter, every chain, everything that binds and set us free, Lord.

We seek you with all of our heart, O God, give us a word according to our need, we seek for prophetic utterance, we seek that the Holy Spirit will be upon us this morning. Every good and perfect thing comes only from you. Lord, give us revelation, fresh revelation from heaven, show us that which we have not seen before.

We seek you with all of our heart, in Jesus' name, Amen. There is a word found in Matthew chapter 3, with John the Baptist preached as the prophet forerunner of our Lord Jesus and the one who came to prepare the way for the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that the ministry of Jesus was a ministry of setting people free.

He said that in his first sermon in Luke chapter 4, he made it very clear, the Spirit of God had anointed him, he said in Luke 4, 18 onwards, quoting Isaiah 61, verse 1, to set the captives free. Please remember that, and I want to say to all of you, especially who share God's word with others, if you want to be a true representative of Christ when you stand up to preach God's word, remember your responsibility, if the Spirit of God is really anointing you, it will be with the same anointing that came upon Jesus, to set the captives free. You know what is happening in many pulpits today, there are people who are already captives, and the elder brothers get up and preach and put some more chains around them and make them bigger captives.

They were in one prison, and the elders build another prison around them, and they are in two prisons now, at the end of the message. What a fantastic work the devil has done. I tell you, when I look at the way the devil fools and deceives so many believers who have heard the truths we have preached for twenty years, I tell you, I am amazed at the cleverness of the devil that he makes preachers build prisons for God's people, instead of setting them free.

They are already in a prison, imagine preaching a sermon which will build another prison around them, or put one more chain on their leg. That is exactly what is happening in numerous places all over the world. So that's why Jesus cannot say of all these people, these are my co-workers.

How can you be a co-worker when you are binding people and Jesus is setting people free? You go and put a chain on somebody, and Jesus comes and breaks that chain one day through some other ministry, and then you come back and put another chain there. You are not cooperating with Jesus, you are fighting against Jesus, and the Bible has a word for those who fight against Jesus, it is called the Antichrist. Let us understand what Christ is and the Antichrist.

The word Christ means anointed. So maybe we should look, before we look at Matthew 3, I want you to look at Luke 4. The word Christ means anointed. So, Christian comes from the word Christ, it means a junior anointed one, that's what all of us should be.

Okay, why was Jesus anointed? Why was He called the anointed one, Christ? Luke 4 and verse 18, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me and He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. That means good news to those who are needy. It's not just poor financially, because if I am to preach the gospel to those who are poor financially, all of you should get out of this room.

We must get all the beggars and all the people who live in the shacks here for the conference, because all of them are poorer than all of you. The poorest person here is richer than those people. So it cannot mean poor financially.

Do you have to become poor financially to get into God's kingdom? The Bible doesn't teach that. But it means what it says everywhere else, blessed are the poor in spirit. So the gospel is preached to those who have a sense of need.

So I don't waste my time going trying to push the gospel down the throat of fellow who has no sense of need. It's a waste of time. And when we preach in a congregation, there are a few people with a sense of need and there are a lot of people sitting there who have no sense of need.

You've got to ignore them. Listen to me. You've got to ignore the people in your congregation who have no sense of need.

Let them go to hell. I couldn't care less. God himself allows them to go there.

Speak the good news to those in your congregation who have a sense of need. Whatever their salary is, is unimportant. Do they have a tremendous sense of need? God, I am the needy one.

Speak to them. Jesus spoke to such people. A person who does not speak to such people and is always pampering the rich and the clever who are self-sufficient, he's an antichrist.

Because Jesus Christ was anointed to preach the gospel to those who have a sense of need. And I say, I'm only interested in gathering those who have a sense of need in our churches. I'm not excited when our churches grow in size.

Not at all excited. I want to say, are these fellows who've got a sense of need in their life? Then I'm excited. But if people come to us, oh, my brother comes to this church and he said, it's a good church.

We'd like to join here. Or I heard the preaching here is good. I'd like to come here.

Oh, brother, I'm not interested in you. Because God's not interested in you. You know why? Because you're not poor in spirit.

God is reaching out to those who have a sense of need. He told the Pharisees who were rich in spirit, I have no time for you fellows. You think you're quite healthy and okay? The doctors are needed by sick people.

The sick need a physician, not the healthy. He was being sarcastic. Jesus was a master of sarcasm.

He used to look at the Pharisees and say, oh, you guys are healthy, right? What do you mean healthy? They were the sickest people in the world. But they thought they were healthy. They had no sense of need and Jesus bypassed them completely.

You know that song we sing, pass me not. Oh, gentle Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.

If you don't have a sense of need, He will pass you by. You can sing that song for a hundred years. If you don't have a sense of need, He'll always pass you by.

He's not going to stop by you just because you sing that song. But even if you don't sing that song, if you have a sense of need, He'll stop by you. This is the most important requirement.

Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel to those who feel a sense of need. Who are poor. And I tell you in every conference, the people who are going to be blessed the most are those who have a sense of personal need.

If some of you were excited because I gave some corrections to the elders last night, boy, God will pass you by. Because you said, thank God, those elders listening to that. And you are the wretch whom God will ignore.

Because you come there thinking that's a good word for the elders. It's not for the elders, it's for you. You are more miserable than them.

How many of you felt excited when you heard last night some of the corrections to the elders? Do you know what a wretched condition you are in? I hope God will open your blind eyes to see that. Dear brother, sister, wake up before you miss what God has for you completely. Don't rejoice thinking this word is for somebody else.

You have no sense of need. The gospel is not for you. The good news is not for you.

It is for those who are poor in spirit, who are not thinking, thank God those guys got that message. But who sit with a sense of need and say, Lord, that's for me. It's very difficult to come there.

Because husbands sit and think, boy, that's good, my wife is listening that she should submit to her husband. You think such husbands have a sense of need? Not at all. God will pass them by every time.

No matter how much they pray, they can come for a hundred conferences, they'll get zero from God. Because they have no sense of need. Because Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel only to those who are poor in spirit.

The entire kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit. And I want to encourage you, if you want to possess the kingdom of heaven, remain poor in spirit from day one till the end of your life. I'm not preaching what I don't practice.

I go before God and judge myself every single day of the year. Because I see need in my life. Every single day of the year.

I never preach a sermon without going home and judging myself whether I did it right. Lord, can I do it better? Did I do something wrong? Did I say something unnecessary? Did I speak too long? Did I waste people's time? Did I bore people? Please go and ask yourself these questions after you've got up in the meeting and preached. And I tell you, next time your sermon will be a little better.

And the next time it'll be still better. And you'll get better and better. And people will long to listen to you.

But we don't judge ourselves. Why? Because we have no sense of need. We think, oh, I'm alright.

The problem is with other people. It's not with other people. It's with us.

I mean, if you cook a bad meal. And nobody appreciates it. And you say, yeah, that's because they don't have a good sense of taste.

It's not because they don't have a good sense of taste. It's because you're a rotten cook. Why not admit that? What a tremendous pride there is in us.

Even though we have heard the message of humility for so long. So please remember this. The anointed Christ preaches the gospel, the good news only to the poor.

And if I am a co-worker of Jesus Christ and not an anti-Christ. I will not go after the rich and the self-sufficient and the people who think that they know everything. I'll go to those who have a sense of need.

Whoever they are. Whether they are financially rich or poor makes no difference to me. But do they have a spiritual sense of need? The second thing it says is, He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives.

Christ was anointed to release captives. The world is full of captives. Our churches are full of captives.

And every message we preach must be breaking one more chain. Breaking a chain, setting them free. Not putting one more chain on them.

Anyone who puts chains on God's people is an anti-Christ. Anti-disanointing, that's what I mean. An anti-Christ is one who is against that which Jesus was anointed to do.

He came to set the captives free. I've heard believers. I've heard preachers tell believers, I think you've got a demon.

What a horrible thing to say. I have rebuked people who have said that. I said, first of all, I don't believe any believer can have a demon.

How can Jesus Christ and a demon sort of live comfortably in the same room? You've got to be off your head to believe that. But these poor people don't know the Bible, they accept it. Because some preacher says, Oh, you don't have a demon, you're demonized.

Some crazy thing which some American preachers have started publishing in their books, which blind, stupid Indians just receive blindly like most Indians do, because they think every white man has got the truth, and they get around and preach it, and bring a whole lot of people in India into bondage. Well, I'm determined to set them free. I don't care what people think.

That's absolutely wrong. There's not a single case in the Bible. The Bible says very clearly, What fellowship has light with darkness? What fellowship has Christ with Belial, a demon? And in spite of all these scriptures, they say, a believer is demonized.

And what happens? That poor believer who's already probably suffering depression, discouragement, this guy has gone and put one massive chain around him, or her. And they get... Do you know they can never get it out of their head? 50 years later, they will remember some preacher told them that they had a demon. This wretched, miserable servant of the devil went and told somebody that he had a demon.

Do you know that Jesus never, never, never, never, never told anybody you have a demon? Show it to me in scripture, where Jesus said that to people. People said that to Jesus. Yeah, they said that to Jesus.

Oh, you are a Samaritan, you got a demon. Those are the Pharisees, and you're following the Pharisees when you tell people you got a demon. Do you know what Jesus did when he saw people who had a demon? He never told them he had a demon.

He just cast it out. I have never in my life told a single person you have a demon. If I sense he has a demon, I cast it out in Jesus name, and every single time they go.

Because they are afraid of the authority of Jesus Christ. So please don't do these stupid things that you read in American books. Charismatic books especially, that believers can have demons.

It's one of the biggest lies propagated by the devil. If a person who calls himself a Christian has got a demon, I would say that guy is not even born again. He was never converted.

There are lots of people like that who call themselves Christians. 90% of Christians are not born again. But please don't swallow everything that you read in these books that come from the West and all that you watch on Christian television.

Get your knowledge from scripture. Get your understanding from scripture. See if there is any case like that in the Bible.

Please, please. Because I am concerned that the number of people are being put into bondage with all these false teachings. If you feel somebody has got a demon, cast it out like Jesus did.

Otherwise just keep quiet and say, I don't have the ability to cast it out. At least keep your mouth shut. So important.

He came to set the captives free, not to put more bondage on people. If you can't set a person free from sin, my dear brother, sister, if you don't have the ability to lead a person to be free from sin, because you are not free from sin yourself, at least do one thing. Don't put them under the law.

And bind more chains on them. Just say, dear brother, I am also defeated by sin. Please pray for me.

I will pray for you. That's the best thing you can say. And that's the best thing you can get up and preach Sunday morning.

Instead of preaching all the rules and regulations to bring people into bondage and shouting at them and yelling at them. And making them feel condemned and discouraged. And you imagining that you are some type of prophet.

You are not a prophet, you are an antichrist. If you are getting people into bondage. Please remember that.

If you got the ministry of setting people free, because Jesus has set you free, go ahead and do it. Christendom needs that message of people being set free. I don't mean people being comforted in their sin.

You see, people can go swing to the other extreme. We have got this pendulomitis disease. You swing from one extreme to the other extreme and then you do this psychology method of make people feel nice.

Ah, God loves you brother. Yeah, sin it's okay, it's not serious. That's another lie.

Who said sin is not serious? They are in captivity to sin. They need to be set free. You can't comfort them in their sin.

You got to deliver them. If you can't deliver them, send them to some other doctor. Don't let them die in your hospital.

Just humble yourself and say, I can't treat this disease. Brother, find somebody else who can help you. It's good if you are humble.

God will give us grace. Set the captives free. That is our ministry from now on.

If you haven't done it till now, let's begin now. First of all, Lord set me free from all the wretched traditions and things that hang ups in my life and then let me set people free wherever I go. Let me not bring people more into bondage by anything I say.

We have to be so careful. All who open their mouths in the name of Jesus Christ must ask themselves, what I am saying, is it setting people free or is it bringing them more into bondage? Is it making them comfortable in their sin? Or is it encouraging them to fight the battle against sin and be an overcomer? Jesus came to set the captives free. Further, Luke chapter 4, He came to give recovery of sight to the blind.

He came to open people's eyes to see what God was like. The true God, a loving Father, a compassionate Father who cared for them, who would provide for them. We got to open people's eyes to see that.

To open people's eyes to see the wonderful truths hidden in scripture. To set free those who are oppressed. Oppressed means people weighed down with weights and rules to set them free.

Come on, take off all those weights off your back and walk in freedom, fly like the eagle. You know, this is what it means to be Christ and Christian, anointed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. That means this is the year, till Jesus comes again, this is the year of God's favor.

This is not the year of God's judgment. You've heard me say this before. Let me repeat it for those who don't know.

This passage comes from Isaiah 61. And in Isaiah 61, where Jesus was reading this passage in the synagogue in Nazareth, He turned to Isaiah 61 and He read this. And in Isaiah 61, it reads like this.

It's a little more expanded there. The Lord has anointed me, verse 1, to bring good news to the afflicted. And that's clearer.

Those who have a sense of need. It's not talking about financial poverty at all. To bind up the broken hearted.

People who are broken in their heart because of their sinful life and who are weeping and mourning to encourage them. To proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners. And to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God.

But Jesus stopped before saying and. He stopped in the middle of the sentence and said to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. And you read in Luke chapter 4, He did not say the rest of that sentence.

And the day of vengeance of our God. Why didn't He say that? Because the day of vengeance has not yet come. Don't proclaim a day of vengeance today.

It has not yet come. This is the favorable year of the Lord. And notice another thing.

It's a year. 365 days of favor. And one day of vengeance.

That is the proportion. God's love with His judgment. He is 365 times more compassionate than He is desiring to judge.

If you are more desirous to judge people than to have compassion towards them. That is the spirit of the Antichrist. A lot of Christians are 365 times more interested in judging others than in having compassion to them.

They are 100% Antichrist. Because God is 365 times more interested in showing compassion to them than in judging them. Let's ask ourselves.

Dear brothers, I'm speaking to those who are poor in spirit. I'm speaking to those who have a sense of their own need. Do you feel that you are 365 times more desirous to judge people than to have compassion on them? You husbands, are you more compassionate towards your wife? Or quick to find fault with her? You wives, are you quick to find fault with your husbands? That's the spirit of the Antichrist.

Anti the anointing. Because the anointing proclaims one year, 365 days of favor one day of vengeance. That should be the attitude of our heart towards other people.

Ya, there are things wrong in you. If my son is wrong, my child at home is wrong. I want to be strict with him.

But I want to be 365 times more compassionate to him as well. That's Christianity. That's the anointing.

And that's how we should proclaim the message. And Jesus stopped in the middle because the day of vengeance, the day of judgment has not come yet. So we must not threaten people that today is the day of judgment.

It's appointed unto men what's the rest of the verse? Once to die and after this, Hebrews 9.27 the judgment. Listen to it again. Hebrews 9.27 It's appointed unto men, once to die and after this the judgment.

Now question. When does God judge people? Before they die or after they die? When? After they die. When do you judge people? Before they die or after they die? So are you anti-God or pro-God? You tell me yourself.

That's what I mean by anti-Christ. God waits till a person dies because he's compassionate. But you are so holy that you say, I can't wait till the fellow dies.

He's got to be right right now. God says, give him a few more days. He may change.

Think of that fellow who hung on the cross. I think everybody would have given up hope for him. I thought at least before he is condemned to death, that guy will be saved.

Now there's no hope for him. From childhood I've been telling his mother and father, don't bring him up like that. And I saw how he became a wretched thief, a murderer.

Now he's on his way to hell. But Jesus didn't give up hope and saved him at the last minute before he went to hell. That's how God is.

Praise the Lord. I thank God. This is my father.

He's got hope for a person right up till the last minute when everybody else has given up hope for him. They see that thief carrying the cross and they say, see I told you this is the final end of such people. It was not the final end as far as God is concerned.

Don't give up hope. I give up hope for a person when he dies. And that also sometimes you're not sure they're dead.

Sometimes they're only in a coma or something. When the coffin is nailed, buried underground, ah then I think he's really dead now. I give up hope.

But till then I don't. I don't care how deep he has fallen. I don't care how many stupid mistakes he's made in his life.

God has got hope for you, my brother, sister. Even when men give up all hope for you, when your elder brothers have given up hope for you, God's got hope for you. Because he's compassionate.

That is the message of the anointing. That's how we are to set people free. Now we turn to Matthew chapter 3. Matthew chapter 3. John the Baptist when he was preparing people for the ministry of Christ, he said, somebody's coming after me.

I'm only baptizing you with water. Verse 11, Matthew 3, 11. But there's someone coming after me.

He I'm not even fit to remove his sandals. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit. And then he said this.

I want to tell you something what this new person is coming after me is going to do. And he said that in verse 10. The axe is already laid to the root of the trees.

And every tree that doesn't bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. If we want to live this life of freedom, this anointed life, we must allow Jesus to lay the axe to the root of another life that we have got from Adam. If we don't allow him when he comes with the axe, you say, no, no, just hang on Lord.

Don't expect this wonderful free resurrected anointed life to come into you. Open your being and say, Lord, that's what I need, the axe to the root. You know, many a time God brings circumstances into your life.

He wants to lay an axe to the root of that self-centered life that you and I got from Adam. And he says, the reason I've got to pull this out completely from the roots is because if I don't do it and in the same place I plant the seed of this new life, you know what will happen? That old tree will compete with this new tree and crush out this new life. So I've got to first dig out the other one from the roots.

Will you let me do it? That's what the Lord is asking you. It's wonderful to hear about this message of freedom and like the bird flying in the air and all, it's great. But there is a John the Baptist who was

preparing the way for the ministry of the Messiah, Christ.

He said, the axe is to be laid to the tree first and there is already a tree bringing forth bad fruit and that is this self-centered life. Jesus lived a God-centered life. And let me tell you in simple words, the self-centered life is a life of bondage.

The God-centered life is a life of total freedom. The life like the eagle flies in the air is a life centered in God. And the life inside a cage is the life wrapped up in yourself.

When all your thoughts revolve around I, me and my family, me and my family, that's the thickest cage you can ever build around yourself. And you sit inside this cage where all your thoughts revolve around me and my family. How can I make it good for my children? And you are partial towards your children.

That also happens. There are people who are partial towards their children and very hard on other people's children. That's the biggest cage you can put yourself and your family in.

I saw that years ago. And I said I'd never do it. I'll never be partial towards my children in any area.

I will never let my thoughts revolve around me and my family the whole time. I'm not going to build a cage for me and my family. I'm going to set them free in Christ.

But the whole world says, no, no, no, no, don't do that. You take care of yourself and your family like they say, take care of number one. Number one means myself.

If you don't take care of yourself, nobody else is going to take care of you. Everybody is interested in themselves. I remember once where I was preaching this message somewhere of not where Paul said about Timothy.

He said everybody seeks their own except Timothy. And there was this sister who was a believer for ages. The wife of the elder there.

It's not one of our churches, another place. She said to me, Brother Zach, very older than me, sister. She said, Brother Zach, who is there who doesn't seek their own? Everybody seeks their own.

In other words, this message is impossible to fulfill. Okay, brother. I'm not speaking to you.

You believe this is impossible? Go ahead. Live like that and live in bondage. Live in your cage.

I tell you, that's why you're defeated by anger still. That's why you're so often discouraged. That's why you still love money.

That's why you're bitter. That's why you can't overcome so many sins. Because the devil has convinced you it is impossible to escape this self-centered life.

The day you start believing God's word that it is possible to break free, something will happen. But if the devil can convince you, you'll never get out of this cage. The devil had convinced that sister and that was years ago and that sister is still inside that cage today.

Oh, we can never get out of this. You convince that eagle, you can never get out of this cage. I'll tell you what will happen.

Even if Jesus opens the door, the eagle will sit inside. Because the devil's fooled him. You can't get out of this.

Do you believe that God can deliver you from this self-centered life? You know that all your life, your mind is only revolved around how will this affect me? How will this affect my family? How will this help me? How will this help my children? How will this help my family? And you revolve around that. That's how every human being in the world lives. Not only that, that's how every animal lives.

That's how every animal lives. They're interested in themselves. The dogs and the pigs, you think they're interested in the others? No.

They're interested in themselves. It's only one person who walked on this earth who was not at all interested in himself. That was Jesus.

And then, after him, came a few people. Not many, few, like Paul and Timothy, who didn't seek their own, and through the centuries, there have been a few who did not seek their own. My brothers and sisters, that is the type of church we must build.

I'd rather have a church of ten people like that than two hundred people who are all seeking their own, who are saying, Hallelujah, praise the Lord, and all that. Because God can accomplish much more with ten people who don't seek their own but seek his kingdom and his glory. So this axe has to be laid to the root.

And that's painful. Imagine if somebody were chopping off your leg with an axe. That's not comfortable.

That's how a tree feels when you chop. It bleeds. You see the bleeding of that tree when you chop it down, and not just the branches.

I think many of us are cutting off the branches. Some of us are only cutting off the fruits. Some are going a little more and cutting off the branches, and you're better than the people who cut off the fruits.

But it still doesn't solve the problem, because have you seen what happens in a tree when you cut off the branch? I've seen it. The branch grows again. Have you seen what happens in a tree when you cut off the fruit? The fruit grows again.

The only way to stop it cut it out from their root. It'll never grow again. And I believe that's the reason why many, many people are never experiencing this wonderful resurrection life.

They are trying to have a resurrection without a death. Even Jesus didn't have a resurrection without a death. You know that.

How can I have a resurrection without a death? How can I have a being raised from the dead if I'm not willing to die first? That's why Jesus said, take up the cross every day. Now what will happen if I die every day? Like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, I die daily. What'll happen if I die daily? You know what'll happen? Here's the best part of the news.

I'll have a resurrection every day. Isn't that great? How many of you would like to have a resurrection every day? I'm sure you'll all raise your hands. Okay, next question.

How many of you would like to die every day for yourself? That's the only way. That's the only way to the resurrection. You want to bypass the cross and come to the resurrection? It's not possible.

I must allow God to lay the ax to the root of my self-life every day if I want to. That's what'll set me free because when the ax is laid to the root of this chain, boy, I'm liberated. What does that mean in practical terms? It means I have to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

You know, the Holy Spirit, you couldn't live this life in the Old Testament, and I'll tell you why. I mean, even Hinduism teaches self-denial and they were preaching it 1,000 years before Christ was born. You know that Hinduism was preaching self-denial 1,000 years before Christ was born? A lot of great philosophers have preached self-denial.

That's an old religion. It's not a new religion. But Jesus was the only one who said something more than self-denial.

You'll have my spirit, the Holy Spirit, within you. Otherwise you can deny yourself for ages. You'll never become spiritual.

You'll just become proud that you're better than everybody else. But the Holy Spirit, when He comes in, He will prompt you. That's why they couldn't do this in the Old Testament because they didn't have the Holy Spirit within.

The Holy Spirit will tell you what to do in each moment. You know that verse in Isaiah 30, 21, which says, your ears will hear a word behind you saying, no, not this way, this way. Not to the right, but to the left.

And I'm not talking about driving your scooter and the Holy Spirit telling you where to turn. For that you better have a map. But I'm talking about something more important than finding your way in a town.

I'm talking about finding your way through life where you don't have a map. Where the Holy Spirit says, no, don't open your mouth now. Keep your mouth shut.

Turn left. When you want to turn right and give that person a piece of your mind, maybe your wife or your husband, and the Holy Spirit says, no, turn left. You listen to that voice.

Or the Holy Spirit says, no, I know you spent a long time writing that letter, but don't post it. How many of you had the experience spending a long time writing a letter and the Holy Spirit says, don't post it? Do you know the number of times I got that experience? I spent hours writing a letter and the Holy Spirit says, don't post it. Or maybe I have to correct something.

I say, okay, I correct it, correct it, correct it, number of days, and the Lord says, don't mail it. I finally tear it up. And I haven't regretted it.

I tell you, listen to the voice of the Spirit. They never had this in the Old Testament. So often, we don't listen to that voice, and our self-life is preserved when God is trying to lay an axe to the root of a tree.

I remember reading in a story of one of Watchman Mead's books, he felt it was right once to go and correct a certain brother who was wrong in his church and he walked right up to his house and as he was about to knock at the door of his house, the Holy Spirit said, put your hand down and go home. He was just about to knock at the door. He had come that far.

And he listened to the voice of the Holy Spirit and walked home and that brother never even knew that Watchman Mead had come to his house. I'm not surprised that God used a man like that who was willing to turn back at the last minute. God said, no, don't do it.

Oh, I want to be like that. I want to be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit when He says, turn back. Don't go there.

No, that's not the time to read the book now. It's time to pray a little. Seek my face.

Put that down. Or don't say that. Or say something else.

And when you listen to the voice of the Spirit, you know, that great desire that you had to do something is killed. Great. The axe is laid to the tree of your strong self-will.

You want to say that. You say, well, if I don't say it, my husband will keep doing that stupid thing again and again. Keep your mouth shut.

God can teach him better than you. Well, I don't say that. My wife will go and do that stupid thing again.

Just keep your mouth shut. Relationship is more important than some wretched thing in the home. The Holy Spirit knows that.

So often we destroy relationships because we want to have it our way. Many a times I have felt this even in speaking God's Word where God has said, don't say that. No, there's a better way.

Like Paul said, I show unto you a more excellent way. He says in the last verse of 1 Corinthians 12. I will show you a better way, he says.

And then he goes into 1 Corinthians 13 that wonderful chapter on love. This is the way of love. That is the more excellent way.

And I believe we need to hear that voice many a time. I'll show you a better way. It's the way of love.

I'll show you a better way. I'm not saying that I've always found it. I know in my younger days I was stupid like all young people are and did and said a lot of stupid things which I regret now.

But I never had an older brother who watched over me to correct me. You guys are lucky. You have somebody to tell you.

Take advantage of that. You don't have to do the stupid things I did. You can live life in a better way.

You know, to listen to that voice which says you didn't have to say it like that. You could have said that in a more gracious way. Thank you Lord.

Let me remember that next time. Well, we make the same mistake again. And the Lord says He doesn't scold us.

He says, son, daughter, you know, there's a better way. And one day we learn it. And we, when the day we learn it, a little more of the root goes away from our self-life.

That's the way to this resurrection life. It's because of this self-centered life that we have a tremendous problem with pride. If you don't allow Jesus to lay the axe to the root of your self-centered life, I'll tell you one thing.

There are two sins you'll have a tremendous problem with. One is pride and the other is lying, telling lies. Many, many believers never seem to overcome spiritual pride and telling lies.

Even after many years of being a believer. Because every time God tries to lay an axe to the root, they resist it. They say, no, let me have my say and then Lord, do what you like.

But by the time you've had your say, you've strengthened the root so much. It may take another six months before God lays the axe to the root again. Why do I say pride and lying? Listen.

The first two sins that were committed in the universe, before Adam committed his first sin of disobedience, before Adam and Eve sinned, there were two sins committed. One was the sin of pride and the other was the sin of lying. Both were committed by Lucifer.

He was the head of the angels and he there was no sin anywhere in the universe, a beautiful universe without sin. And one person began to think, I want to be somebody here. And that's how sin came.

Whenever you want to be a somebody, you're following the devil. Please remember that. All of you who want to be a somebody in your church, be careful whom you're following.

You're just following Lucifer. But he's hidden it so carefully from you that you don't realize you're following a Lucifer when you want to be a somebody in your church. You want to assert yourself in your home, you're following Lucifer.

That's what he wanted to be. He wanted to be a somebody in heaven. He wasn't willing to be just what God placed him to be.

He already was a very important person, but he wanted to be more important. Six thousand years of man's history has shown numerous examples of people to whom God gave a ministry and they were not satisfied with that. They wanted more.

They wanted to be bigger. And God destroyed them. I've seen that happen in our churches through the last 30 years.

Elder brothers whom God gave a tremendous ministry to, it went to their heads. Their heads got swollen. They got what the doctors call hydrocephalus.

You know what hydrocephalus is? A swollen head. I don't know whether you've seen babies with a huge head. And you look at that baby if you don't know the truth, you'll say, boy, what a brainy child that must be.

Look at the amount of brains he's got. It's not brains, it's water. Such children don't live long.

And such Christians don't live long either who got big heads. It's all water. It's not spirituality.

You puncture it, all the water comes out. That happened to numerous people in our churches. And God finally put them aside.

What I think of people, young people who've grown up in our churches, brothers who've come to eldership who could have had a ministry across the nation of India today. But they're sitting rotting away because they were too proud. They were too proud in their younger days to humble themselves under any

authority.

They wanted to be an authority on their own. Some of them destroyed themselves and left the church. I don't know where they are today.

Some of them just sit around and rot away. Dear brothers and sisters, learn a lesson from what's happening around you. Humble yourself.

Don't follow Lucifer saying, I want to take care of myself. He's the one who doesn't take care of himself whom God cares for. That's why when Jesus, the anointed one, who came to set people free, why did he have to humble himself all the time? From heaven he came down and when he came to earth he could have been a king.

Do you know that if Jesus had become a king on earth, it would still have been the greatest humbling from God to an earthly king. Can anybody humble themselves so much? From God to an earthly king? If you humble yourself and become a worm, even that won't be as great as God humbling himself and becoming an earthly king. That would have been enough for Jesus.

But when he came, he went even further down. He said, I won't be a king. I'll be a servant.

And on the last day of his earthly life he was just doing the slave's job of washing people's feet. You make that your goal, dear brothers and sisters. Say, Lord, I've got a goal in my life and my goal is that finally when I reach the pinnacle of glory, the height of spirituality on earth, I want to be found at the feet of my fellow believers washing their feet, doing dirty jobs for them.

That's my goal in life. To go down, down, down, down, down, down, down, down to the feet of people and I want to die there. Then you're going the right direction.

Then you're a follower of the anointed one. And you'll be able to set people free. Because people have bondage because they're going up like Lucifer.

Anyone who's going up inwardly, God pushes them down. He who exalts himself will be humbled. Let God exalt you.

It's God who can set you free like the eagle. But you've got to go down and humble yourself. And this self-centered life doesn't want that.

If you have the slightest desire, the slightest desire to show that you're cleverer than another, better than another, when you, in your conversation, if you try to make other people feel small, you go around talking about other people and make them all small in the eyes of others, you're doing the work of the devil. The devil is called the accuser of the brothers. And when you go to different homes in your church and tell them this is what's wrong with that brother, and this is what's wrong with that brother, and this is the problem with our elder brother, the devil says let's hold hands a little better.

You're doing a great job for me. I wanted a few more agents like you in the church who will accuse the elders and accuse the brothers for me. Thank you very much my servant.

You wretched, miserable servant of the devil. Let me tell you. Let me open your eyes today to see that you are an accuser of the brothers.

And you're an accuser of the brothers because you are proud. Maybe you didn't get a chance to be an elder yourself. And that's why you're an accuser.

May God save you before you end up in hell right into the devil's lap. Because I tell you one thing. No accuser of the brothers will ever enter heaven.

Impossible. Let me give you my word. You may have been a wonderful saved brother or sister some years ago, but you could be lost today.

I don't believe in one saved always saved. You may have been saved ten years ago. You may be on your way to hell today because once upon a time you were a wonderful brother or sister.

Today you are an accuser of the brethren. You started holding hands with the devil because your self-life got a bit hurt somewhere. You're back in the cage.

And you're trying to get other people into your cage. Get them also to be accusers. Get as many people as possible in your church to be accusers so that you can have company inside the cage.

Get crowded inside the cage. And the devil says, great, I'll help you. I'll help you, man.

I'll do anything you want. I'll give you all the glory of the world. You're bowing down to me.

And that's what's happening. I've seen that people who accuse the brethren, they get many things in the world. I say, how do they get that? Because the devil says, they bow down to me.

Jesus didn't. But they bow down to me. I give them everything in the world.

Sure, they can have it. But those people think, the foolish prosperity gospel, they think, oh, God's blessing me. God's not blessing you.

You got all that because you bow down to the devil. Open your eyes. That's not from God.

Be careful. Let Jesus lay the axe to the root. The second thing is lying.

The second sin that was committed in the universe was also by Lucifer. You see, from pride, there are many other things that come out of pride. And I don't have time to tell you about all that, like discontent with one's boundaries, etc.

Satan was not content with his boundaries. That's all because of pride. We can talk about that some other time.

But the second sin that he committed was lying. And that was in Genesis chapter 3, when he told Eve, you will not die. That's before she had committed a sin.

Satan committed another sin. He told man, even if you disobey God, it's not serious. You won't die.

And do you know the number of preachers who are preaching that today? Haha, it doesn't matter if you sin. It's okay. We'll all sin.

We'll all keep on sinning till we die. That's the message we preach. Many preachers are preaching.

Don't worry, brother. You said the magic words, Lord Jesus, come into my heart sometime when you were young. You're okay.

What about my sin, you asked the preacher. No, we'll keep on sinning till, but won't I die? No, no, no, you will not die. You know who said that first? Satan.

You know what the Bible says? You know what God told Eve? If you disobey me, you'll surely die. That's God's word. The devil said, you will not die.

What about in the New Testament? In the New Testament, it says in Romans chapter 8, written to believers, so then brethren, verse 12, Romans 8, 12, brethren, this is not written to unbelievers. So then brethren, you believe that's for you? We are not under obligation to live according to the flesh because if you live according to the flesh, brethren, born again believers, you will surely die. And the devil says, you will not die even if you live according to the flesh because you said the magic words 20 years ago, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

I say to you what God's word says, you will surely die if you live according to the flesh no matter what magic words you said last year or 20 years ago. Now you have a choice. You believe God or you believe the devil.

Eve had a choice, either believe God or believe the devil. I believe what God's word says. Brethren, if you live according to the flesh, you will surely die.

And the enemy of our soul says, you will not die. It doesn't matter. Sin is not so serious.

I tell you it's very serious. Why have you heard me preaching for 30 years against anger? Because Jesus said anger is just three steps away from hell. That's what he said.

Three steps from hell. Have you seen Jesus saying that? It was the first sin that Jesus spoke against. Anger.

Matthew chapter 5 and verse 21. You have heard that the olden people times they were told you shall not commit murder. But I say to you verse 22 every single person it doesn't matter who he is believer or unbeliever every single person who is angry with his brother will be guilty.

He hasn't said anything. It's anger in his heart. That's all.

Are you angry with your brother? Are you angry with your sister today about anything? I don't care what the thing is. Concerning yourself. Something that he didn't do the way you wanted him to do it or she did not do the way you wanted her to do it.

And you're angry maybe with your maid servant. You're angry. You're angry with your child.

Maybe your child did something wrong. Okay. You're angry.

The bible says you're guilty. How many of you hear that? How many people preach it? Jesus preached it. Anger in the heart.

He hasn't said a word. He's guilty. Step number one.

He's already taken it. Second step. He goes to that person and says, you fool.

You're good for nothing. Second step. Third step.

He goes to him and says, you fool. He'll be guilty to go to hell. Verse 22.

Did I teach you correctly? Anger is the first of three steps to hell. Those are the words of Jesus. Starts in the heart.

Comes out through the mouth with one bad word. And after sometime comes out again with a bad word. Have you seen people who get angry? They'll come and tell you something and then they'll go away and you think, okay.

The volcano has subsided. No, it hasn't. After ten minutes, it erupts again.

They come back and tell you again something. They're ready for hell. Do they think they're ready for hell? Ah! They say, this is a wretched maid servant.

Who cares? God doesn't care for maid servants. I'm the rich man here. God cares for me.

Rubbish! God cares for that maid servant a million times more than He cares for you, rich person. You are guilty enough to go to hell. You won't hear other preachers tell you that.

Well, I'll tell you that. Because I don't want your blood on my hands. And if you go to hell, don't ever say, brother Zack did not warn you, that anger will take you to hell.

I decided when I read it, to fear God and get rid of anger totally in my life. Before it comes out of my mouth, in my heart. I preached it for 30 years here.

I've seen many people here have not taken it seriously. Your blood is not on my hands. But I'll tell you what God says.

Anger is the first of three steps to hell. What about lusting with the eyes? That also. That's the second sin Jesus spoke against in Matthew chapter 5. I say to you in verse 31, 29, if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out.

Because verse 28, everyone who commits adultery, who looks at a woman with lust, has committed adultery. That's why you need to fight. Sins of the tongue, sins of the eyes are extremely dangerous.

Unfaithfulness in marriage, impurity. Fight it, fight it. Because it says here, it's better to pull out the right eye and throw it from you.

Otherwise you can have both eyes and go to hell. So what Jesus is saying is, do you want to go with one eye to heaven or with both eyes to hell? If you go with one eye to heaven, you'll get your other eye back there. You know that.

You won't be a one-eyed man in heaven. There are no one-eyed people in heaven. But the meaning of it is that you are so radical.

What is the meaning? You know you can get rid of your right eye and you know you can lust with your left eye also. How many of you know that you can lust with one eye also? You don't need two eyes to lust. What did he mean? What's the spirit of it? The spirit of it is, act like a blind man when you're tempted.

Act like a blind man as if you've lost your eyes. When you're tempted with your eyes, turn it away. Like David prayed in Psalm 119.

Is it verse 37? Turn away my eyes, O Lord, from beholding emptiness. Turn away my eyes, O Lord, from beholding emptiness. I want to live in God's kingdom.

Allow Jesus to lay the axe to the root. Lying is the other sin. Dishonesty, it's serious.

Jesus said there, let your yes be yes and your no-no further down in Matthew 5. It's such a serious thing to give other people a wrong impression. God loves those who love the truth. These are areas where we need to allow Jesus to lay the axe to the root and say, Lord, if it takes 10 years to get this root out of my system, get it out.

This root of anger, this root of impurity, this root of dishonesty, if it takes 10 years because the root is so deep, take it out, Lord. Boy, imagine if you had started 10 years ago when you heard this message first. Where you'd have been today if you had taken it seriously? Will you take it seriously today? Maybe there's some hope 10 years from now in the year 2015 you'll be delivered.

It won't happen overnight. But you can start today and say, Lord, I don't care how long it takes. You've got to lay the axe to the root and bring me into this, break every chain, break everything that locks me up in this cage.

I want to be like that bird flying in the air. And I tell you, God has got no partiality. What he's done for others, he'll do for you.

Say, Lord, I want to take sin as seriously as you take it. I don't want to be brainwashed by all this superficial message of Christianity going around the world today. Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads before God. Dear brothers and sisters, no word of God is ever spoken to condemn you or to make you feel discouraged. It's to liberate you.

Jesus has come to set the captives free. He speaks sternly to you because he doesn't want you to land in the devil's lap. He doesn't want you to be an accuser of the brethren for one more day in your whole life.

He doesn't want you to live with anger or bitterness or lust or lying in your life for one more day. He doesn't want you to seek to go up in pride even for one more day. He wants you to go down so that he can set you free and make you a liberator of other people.

He loves you so much. He's been so disappointed that you didn't start on this way earlier. But he says, start now my son, my daughter.

It's not too late. Start today. He can do a miracle in your life.

And if you're wholehearted, it may not take ten years. It may take only one year. By next year you'll be a free person.

But determine that you're going to be free like that eagle. Heavenly Father, apply the truths to our hearts. Give us repentance and sorrow for our sin.

Deep repentance and sorrow along with all our hallelujahs. A deep repentance and sorrow for taking sin so lightly. And help us to honor you.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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