

Be a Disciple and Not a Scholar

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of transitioning from being a scribe, knowledgeable in the Bible, to becoming a disciple of the kingdom by living out the teachings in daily life. It highlights the significance of honesty, walking in the light, and guarding the heart as the source of life. The focus is on living a transformed life that reflects Christ's character and teachings, rather than just acquiring knowledge or preaching effectively.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 12:34, Matthew 12:33, Matthew 12:35, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 2:6

Topics: "Transformation", "Living Out Faith"

Description

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Transcript

So it's a real pleasure to meet you all after a whole year or more. Where I come from, they don't permit public church meetings. It's locked down all the time.

And so this is the first time I've been in an open church meeting for seven months. But it hasn't been limiting the ministry in any way, because I think I've spoken in more meetings in the last seven months than in any other seven-month period because of Zoom technology. I praise the Lord that God has arranged that technology at this time, certainly for the sake of the church.

With so many believers locked down, one advantage of it is that a lot of people in lonely places have been able to participate in a church service who could not do so earlier. So God works everything for good. I want to turn to a passage in Matthew chapter 13.

And here we read of seven parables that Jesus spoke about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. They're basically the same thing. And at the end of it, he said in verse 52, and Jesus said to them, therefore, every scribe, you see, a scribe is a person who studies the law of God, the word of God.

And every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old. So here he speaks about a scribe having to become a

disciple. And the meaning for us is that this academic knowledge, the knowledge of the Bible that we have in our head, which is like a scribe reading, understanding, and even knowing it so well that we can preach and teach to others.

You're still a scribe. A scribe could teach. A scribe could understand.

A scribe would spend hours and hours of studying the word of God. But he was not necessarily a disciple. And there is always a danger that we can face when we come to a church where there's so much of new teaching that is not even heard in other places.

And we can have our heads and minds filled with so much information. And if we are intelligent, we understand all that so well that we can even teach it to others. And then we are scribes.

But the disciple is the one who has practiced all that he has understood in his daily life. And the first area of discipleship is in our closest relationships, not in the church relationship, but in our family relationships. Now, the scribe may have a very poor family life.

And he may not be very upright in his business. But he's a very good scribe, excellent preacher, great knowledge of the word of God. He can explain every doctrine.

And here Jesus said at the end of these parables, the scribe must become a disciple of the kingdom. So that's the thing we need to ask ourselves. Are we scribes of the new covenant or disciples of the kingdom? The scribe is not particularly concerned about the condition of his heart.

He's only concerned about the impression he gives to others of one who is knowledgeable in God's word. And the impression he gives to others that I'm a good Christian. Whereas a disciple is not much bothered.

He is concerned about his public testimony, sure, that he should not bring dishonor to Christ. But he's much more concerned about his heart. That's the main difference between a scribe and a disciple.

A scribe knows the word of God, knows the teachings, but is more concerned about his testimony before others in the church. Whereas a disciple is primarily concerned about his testimony before God. And a disciple, as I said, is primarily in his relationships with his closest relations.

I say that because if you turn to Luke 14 and verse 26, he spoke to a huge crowd, a lot of people in Israel who had heard Jesus. It says many times they were amazed at his teaching. And I'm sure many of them understood it so well and they could even preach it.

But here it says he looked at this big crowd in Luke 14 and verse 25 and said to them, I mean, if I were to paraphrase his words, you guys have heard so much of me, but it's not enough just to listen to what I say and understand it. If you want to be my disciple, you have to hate father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and his own life. And in Matthew, that's explained as love me more than.

That's the meaning of hate his own father. You have to love me more than father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children. So you see, discipleship begins in our closest family relationship first.

He's not talking about the neighbors and people in the church primarily. Father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters at home. So it's in family relationships that discipleship begins.

So there, you see, in our home, we don't try to impress people with our Bible knowledge, at least I hope not. Trying to impress people with Bible knowledge is mostly outside our home, with other people, or in a church, or something like that. In the home, we are ourselves.

More than any other place in the world, we are completely ourselves in our home. And there, Jesus said you must be a disciple. That means you love me in your home more than anybody in that home.

Your life is determined by your love for me in your home. Whether you're living with your father and mother, or your wife and your children, or your brothers and sisters. Your life must be determined by your love for me as supreme.

And so the disciple is not so much interested in understanding doctrine as much as in living the life. When Paul was writing to Timothy, I want you to turn to 1 Timothy in chapter 4. Timothy was by this time maybe about, he was, I think about 20 years younger than Paul. So he must have been about 40 years old at this time when Paul wrote to him, 40 to 45 years old.

And he'd walked with God, I mean, he'd been with Paul for 20 years. And he was one of his finest coworkers. And to this man, Paul has to give this exhortation.

Verse 1 Timothy 4 and verse 15, take pains with these things that I'm writing. Be absorbed in them, so that your spiritual progress will become evident to others. And then he says, there are two things you must pay close attention to.

Pay close attention, first of all, to your life, and then to your teaching. Because he was a teacher, he had to pay attention to his teaching. But he says, even if you're a teacher, you must first pay attention to your life.

Pay attention to your life, and then to your teaching. That's always the order in the New Testament. That's one of the fundamental things about the New Covenant, life first, and then teaching.

You see the same thing in Acts of the Apostles chapter 1 and verse 1. The Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke. He's the only non-Jewish writer in the Bible. All the other 64 books of the Bible were written by the Jewish people, Israelites, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Luke was the only one who was a Greek, and he wrote two books. The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles. And he wrote them to a man called Theophilus.

We don't know who he was. And he refers to the Gospel of Luke in Acts 1 verse 1. He said, the first account that I composed, oh Theophilus, that's in Luke's Gospel, he writes to Theophilus also. He says, that account, the Gospel of Luke, which we call the Gospel of Luke, if I were to put a heading for that, if you asked Luke, give a title for the Gospel of Luke, he would say, here it is in verse 1, all that Jesus began to do and teach.

That is Luke's title for his Gospel. All that Jesus began to do and to teach. Again, you see, life first and then teaching.

Jesus set an example. He did and then he taught. He never spoke about anything which he had not done.

And that's a principle we must have in our life. We must never speak to others about something we haven't done. Because that is how the Pharisees were.

Jesus told them, you speak so many things, but you don't do them. So I switched from a follower of Jesus to a follower of the Pharisees, very quickly, if I begin to speak about things I've never done in my life. And that's a very important decision.

And we must be concerned if that happens ever in our life where we are, testifying to things which are not true in our life or speak about things which are not true in our life. Many parents try to impose a standard on their children, which they themselves don't follow. They're hypocrites.

Very often their children go astray. I know in my own life, many years after I was converted, I came to a point in my life where I discovered, 16 years after I was converted, that I was preaching a lot of things which are not true in my life. It was true, scripturally it was true.

There was no false teaching. But it wasn't real in my heart, it wasn't real in my home life, it wasn't real in my personal life, but I was preaching it. And in my personal life, if I failed, of course, I would repent and ask the Lord to forgive me.

But I was preaching it and people got the impression that that was true in my life. So I was not first, like Jesus, doing and then teaching. I was teaching and not doing.

Then I was a scribe, and I never realized I was a scribe. But I got so fed up of that life. Nearly 50 years ago, I got so fed up of it, and I said, Lord, I don't want to continue like this.

This is not Christianity. And I tell you, I'm so thankful that I got so fed up, that I began to seek God in prayer and fasting and weeping and crying out and saying, Lord, I want you to meet with me. I feel I need a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.

That's what I need. Not some new teaching, but a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit that completely reorients my life, where my life becomes more important for me than what I speak, and that I will never speak of what I do not do. And I tell you, God answered my prayer about 45 years ago, and it changed the complete 46 years ago, nearly changed the direction of my life completely, and it's six months after that that we started the first CFC church.

And I'm very happy that we began CFC with life more important than teaching. So if Luke were to give the title to the Gospel of Luke as what Jesus began to do and teach. If you were to ask Luke, well, what title will you give to the Acts of the Apostles? I think he would say, what Jesus continued to do and teach through his spiritual body.

Luke's gospel is what Jesus began to do and teach with his physical body on earth. And Acts of the Apostles is what Jesus continued to do through his body, the church, on earth. So it's a continuing of the same thing.

What Jesus began to teach and what Jesus continued to do and teach. Now 2,000 years later, we are the church, the body of Christ, and we have to continue. Jesus has to continue doing and teaching through us in your home.

Jesus has to continue living the life through you and teaching through your children. They have to see the life of Jesus in you first before they hear what Jesus taught. We are so eager to tell our children what Jesus taught.

We must be more eager that they see in us the life that Jesus lived. That requires humility, repentance, brokenness, prayer. Maybe fasting in prayer, maybe weeping.

But a great desire that we shall not be scribes. We must not be scribes to our children. We must be disciples.

Remember what the first verse we began with? The scribe must become a disciple. The one who only teaches must first learn to do, do and teach. So that's what Paul told Timothy.

Take heed first of all to your life, he told him. Now I'm sure Paul emphasized that to Timothy numerous times in the 20 years they walked, they traveled together. But again, he feels a need to repeat it to Timothy in his letter in 1 Timothy 4.16, which we just read, pay close attention.

What a word it is, 1 Timothy 4.16, pay close attention first of all to your life. Then to your teaching, that means don't teach anything false, because they didn't have a written Bible those days. So he was telling him, remember carefully what you heard from me, make sure you teach it properly.

But more than that, pay close attention to your life. And that's the thing I want to ask you as I ask myself, am I paying close attention to my life? I can go through the motions of Christianity, which is read the Bible every day, go to church at least on Sundays, and all the external things. But it must begin with doing and then teaching.

Pay close attention to your life, especially with father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, those are the areas where discipleship begins. And that's why when John writes his letter in 1 John, remember, John was also the one who wrote Revelation. Can you think a little bit, sometimes we must use our imagination a little bit, and think of how it was with John.

John was about 95 years old when he writes this letter. And he had seen the development of the church for 65 years. He was there on the day of Pentecost, and they were all waiting and praying, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

And they spoke in tongues, and tongues of fire appeared on them. There was a rushing wind, and they were filled with the spirit. And he was there when he saw Peter stand up and preach.

And with a 15-minute sermon, 3,000 people were converted and were baptized on that very first day. The church started with 3,000 people all of a sudden. And John saw all that.

And subsequent days, you read in the next chapter how Peter and John saw that lame man walk, and they went to different places. And churches were established, wonderful churches, established by the apostles. But then John sees now, 65 years after the day of Pentecost, those churches have declined, their spiritual life has gone down.

You read that in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3, where the Lord told John, I want you to write these letters to these churches. To one church, he says, and to its leader, and to its elders. You don't love me like you did at first.

When you were first converted, you had such a passionate love for me. That's gone. And because it's gone, I'm gonna take away the anointing from you.

He says, write that and tell them. To another church, he says, you've got the teaching of Balaam there. The teaching of Balaam is running after money.

Balaam was a preacher. And he went to the king when the king offered him more money. And he says, it's sad that you guys have got preachers there who are interested in money, like a lot of preachers today, who are not interested in leading people to godliness, but only collecting their tithes.

And then to another church, he says, you elder, your wife is running your church. Your wife is such a strong woman. She controls you, and she dictates what you should preach.

I call her Jezebel. That's what the Lord told John to write. That was the condition of one church.

Remember, these are all churches that started with the apostles. To another church in Sardis, he says, you only have a name that you're alive. You've got a great reputation like a mega church.

There's no life in you, even in the leader. And to the church in Laodicea, he says, you're so wealthy. You think you don't need anything because you've got so much money.

And you think money is everything. But you don't realize spiritually you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Think of the condition of these churches which 50 years ago were powerful churches.

What I learned from that is every church declines if it does not have strong spiritual leadership that is always challenging them to the highest. And I pray that all our churches will have such leadership that will challenge people to the highest with leaders who first live that life and then teach it. In all our churches, that is my burden.

So when Paul, John writes his letter now to the Christians of that time, think, now you've got a picture, I've described to you the picture of, now all Christians were not like that. Because there were two churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia who were very good churches, wholehearted, faithful to God. In fact, the Lord told one of them that you're so faithful, I'll make you a pillar in heaven.

Wow, in the house of God. So there were some who were wonderful, but the majority were all backslidden and away from the Lord. So to such Christians, what does John write? He does not write one word about speaking in tongues.

He does not write one word about healing. He does not write one word about Jesus will make you wealthy. These are some of the most common things being preached in Christendom today, particularly by Pentecostal charismatic people.

I'm not against them. There are my brothers and sisters there and God bless them. But I don't agree with this emphasis because I don't see that in John writing to a backslidden, conditioned church.

No emphasis on these external gifts and all that. Amazingly, not even any emphasis on evangelism, which is another thing a lot of people emphasize. What does John emphasize to a church which is declining to protect them? First of all, he says, you must walk in the light.

I believe that's one of the very first things we need to understand. If a scribe must become a disciple, 1 John 1.7, if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And what does that mean? Light is that which reveals everything.

When a man wants to commit sin, he commits it in the darkness, when nobody can see him. A thief who's trying to steal something will be terrified if somebody shines a torchlight there. So to walk in the light is very, very simple.

You don't have to be a great spiritual man to walk in the light. To walk in the light means be honest. Is that difficult? A prostitute can be honest.

She can say, I'm a prostitute. She's coming into the light. It's the Pharisees who refuse to acknowledge their sin.

They were in darkness. Not because they were greater sinners than the others, but they wouldn't acknowledge their sin. So the first step to the Christian life is to be honest.

Even to an unbeliever, I would say, be honest. I even once, I was witnessing to an atheist who said he didn't believe in God. I said, fine, we can start there.

Can you say like this? Oh God, I don't even know if you exist there, but I don't believe in you. And that's what I told him to say. But if you do exist, can you reveal yourself to me in some way? I asked him, will you pray that prayer? I tell you, God will meet with you.

If you're honest, because you're being honest, don't pretend that you're praying to God. You don't believe there's a God there, but no harm in saying it. If there's no God, nothing happens.

But if there is a God and he sees your honesty, he'll come and meet with you even though you're an atheist. God is not offended that you're an atheist. He loves you.

Jesus died for atheists. So walking in the light is the first step. Be honest.

Be honest about your failure to God. Walk in the light with God. And when you walk in the light with God, you'll be able to fellowship with other people who walk in the light with God.

It's very easy, I find, and I have found, to fellowship with a person who is just himself. Not pretending to be spiritual. It's very difficult to fellowship with a person who's pretending to be spiritual, with spiritual language and all that type of stuff.

But if he's just his normal self, I don't care what his spiritual level is, I can have fellowship with him. I can converse with him. Imagine, Jesus could freely converse and talk to a Samaritan woman who had been divorced five times and was now sleeping around with a man who was not even her husband.

But Jesus had no problem speaking to that person. And when Jesus confronted her with her sin, she didn't cover it up. No.

She said, you're right. You're a prophet. What you said is right.

The man I'm living with is not my husband. So, and then Jesus went on to use that woman. Think of this.

A five times divorced woman sleeping around with a man who was not even her husband. And just because she was honest with Jesus and didn't try to pretend that it was not true and said, I don't have a husband, that means I'm not legally married. You know, that's the one truthful thing that Jesus appreciated.

She was living with a man who was not her husband. She could have pretended that that was her husband. When Jesus said, go and call your husband, he could have, she could have brought that man because she didn't know Jesus was a prophet.

But she didn't bring that man. She said, honestly, I have not been legally married. I don't have a husband.

That was truth. I'm living with a man, but he's not my husband. And because of that one honest statement, Jesus went on to lead her and to do what? She went back to the city of Samaria.

You read in John chapter four and told people about Jesus. And through her witness, hundreds of people came out to meet Jesus. Wow.

What evangelism that was by a woman who was divorced five times and living in such sin. I'm tremendously challenged there by the fact that Jesus loves honesty. And I want to encourage all of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get rid of honesty in your life.

You don't have to honestly confess your sins to any other human being. Like they teach in the Roman Catholic church to go and confess your priest. No, you confess your sin only to God.

You're answerable to God. Of course, if you sinned against another person, you yelled at him or hurt him in some way, then you have to ask his forgiveness. So sin must be confessed in the circle in which it was committed.

For example, if it's only in your thoughts, the only person in that circle is God. Then you confess it only to God. But if you got angry with somebody, then there are two people in that circle, God and that person.

Then you have to confess to God and to that person. So sin must be confessed only within the circle in which it was committed. We never have to confess our sins to each other, only to God.

Walk in the light. And it's a wonderful promise here that if we walk in the light, we can have fellowship with God. He's not asking you to be perfect.

He's not even asking you to have the life that that saintly man has, who has walked with God for 10 years. No. Walk in the light you have.

That's enough. And as you walk in the light, you'll get more light. You know that verse in the Psalms, Psalm 119 verse 105, a well-known verse, Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path.

Or using today's language, we could say a torch. In those days, they had a lamp. Lit with oil.

Today, we have a torch. Thy word is like a torch. But a torch gives me light only up to a certain distance.

So God's word is like a torch that gives me light for the next step. That's all. If I take that step and the torch is with me, I will see the next step.

That's how we walk with a torch. You can't see the whole way. But your immediate step you can see two or three steps.

You take that, you'll see the next two or three steps. And that's how we walk. And that's how walking with the Lord, with the word of God is.

God's word is like a torch that shows me the next step I should take. Now, if you want to know what step should I take a hundred feet from here, you won't know it. God won't show you.

God says you take the step that I'm showing you now. If you move forward with the torch, you'll see more. So in other words, you take the step God has shown you in his word.

Something God's told you in your conscience, perhaps. This is what you must do. You must forgive that person who hurt you.

You don't do it. Don't ask God for further guidance. Because he's already shown you.

What is the next step? You have to forgive that person whom you haven't forgiven till today. This is the reason why many people never get guidance in their life. They haven't taken the first step God has shown them already.

Or he may say, you must go and ask forgiveness from that person whom you hurt one week ago. The torch is showing you that and you refuse to move. And you want to know God's guidance about something a hundred yards away or something's going to happen next week.

You don't get guidance. You can imagine that God is speaking to you. A lot of people imagine God is speaking to them and they're doing their own will.

So remember this principle. Walk in the light. Don't stand still in the light.

There's no such verse in the Bible which says, standing still in the light. It's walking in the light. And walking is not 25 steps at a time.

How do you walk? One step at a time. And that first step is what God has shown you honestly. That is for the scribe to become a disciple.

You begin with taking the first step of honest, walking in the light. And then if you continue like that, it goes on to the next step which is progressive. In 1 John chapter 2 verse 6, to walk in the same manner as Jesus walked.

That's a very high standard. You begin with taking the steps that God shows you. The one step and then another, another.

And then you gradually begin to say, hey, that's wonderful. And God begins to show you the life of Jesus, how Jesus walked. And then little by little, your walk becomes in the footsteps of Christ.

And then you'll be able to say, like Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ. And you may say, oh, brother Zach, I can't use such strong words. I'm a young believer.

Why not? You're not saying you're a great saint. Think of the Christian walk like climbing a very high mountain. And Jesus walked this path all the way to the top.

And here is a mountain covered with snow where you can see the footsteps of those who've gone ahead. That's why I chose the example of a mountain, snow covered mountain. And Paul saw those footsteps of Christ, how Jesus walked, and he puts his feet in those footsteps.

And he tells the Corinthians, who are very immature Christians, in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 1, he tells them, follow me as I follow Christ. He says that to the Philipians also. So the Philipians and the Corinthians are way behind Paul, maybe way down close to the foot of the mountain.

But he says them, I was in your midst, you remember? You Corinthians and Philipians, you remember how I was there in your midst for quite some time? And you saw my footsteps, means you saw how I lived with you. You saw the language I used. You saw how I always spoke respectfully to you, even though many of you are much younger than me, spiritually and physically.

I always spoke respectfully to you. You saw how I spoke respectfully even to the children. And you saw how I lived among you.

You saw how I was not at all interested in your money. I was always interested in your spiritual welfare. You saw some footsteps there, even though I was with you for a short time.

Put your foot in those footsteps. And then you can look back at your children who are younger than you and say, my dear children, follow me as I follow Paul who's following Christ. So you can also say, because those are the, Paul is putting his footsteps in the footsteps of Christ and you're putting your steps in the footsteps of Paul, which are the steps of Christ.

So you can say to others, to your children, follow me as I follow Christ. And as you take more and more steps, there'll be other younger believers in the church, perhaps, to whom you can say, follow me as I follow Christ. That is a disciple.

Now it's not a question of just preaching God's word or explaining a doctrine. It is a life from which comes what we teach or share with others. I believe if you follow this simple principle, that is the principle by which God wants every Christian to live, we will have a very strong church.

Imagine if everybody here decided to take that exhortation of Paul to Timothy seriously. Take your life seriously, more seriously than what you speak. Take your life seriously.

And we know our life comes from our heart, not from our head. In our head, we can have a lot of information about many, many things in the Bible. It does not make us spiritual.

The Pharisees could preach the Old Testament scriptures better than Peter, James and John. But Peter, James and John had a far better life than the Pharisees, even though they couldn't preach like the Pharisees. So never be impressed by a preacher when people listen to somebody on the Internet.

I hear a lot of people sometimes send me emails. Oh, brother Zach, you should listen to this man. You should listen to that man.

OK. But I tell them, I don't know how he lives. I don't know how he lives with his family.

I don't know what his attitude to money is. I don't know how he's brought up his children. I don't know any of these things.

I don't know how he's OK, he's teaching some very clever things, which shows me he's a very clever man or he's a very gifted speaker. I'm not interested in that. I'm not interested in being more clever.

I'm not even interested in being a better preacher. I'm interested in living a better life. And I'd like to know what this man's life is.

He cannot stand up in the pulpit and preach. Is he telling me, follow me as I follow Christ? I need to see that. That's why I say we have to be very careful about listening to people on YouTube whose lives we know nothing about.

Because you'll be impressed by a powerful sermon. And it may not lead you to life. It may teach you some good practical principle.

I'll tell you, you can go to a psychologist. They will also tell you some very good practical principles. A lot of things that psychologists teach are very, very good.

I was reading something the other day that a psychologist wrote, a Christian psychologist wrote on relationships between husband and wife at home. Excellent. You would almost think he was a Christian.

He was not a Christian. He was a nominal Christian. So that's what you can get from teaching.

But Jesus did and taught, did and taught. And that's how the church must be also. So since our life comes from our heart, you know this verse, turn with me to Proverbs in Chapter 4, Proverbs 4. Have you read this verse? Have you meditated on it? Believed it? Proverbs 4, verse 23.

Proverbs 4, verse 23. It's a command from God. Watch over your heart with all diligence because from it flow all the springs of your life.

And that spring can be polluted and dirty or it can be fresh and clean. That depends on what condition your heart is in. So watch over your heart with all diligence because it is from there that all the springs of life flow out.

The rivers of living water, Jesus said will flow out from a person's innermost being. Turn to what Jesus said in Matthew Chapter 12. Our conversation, not our conversation when we are careful in public, but our conversation when we are relaxed at home.

The way you speak to your family members, the way you speak to your husband, to your wife, to your children, to your parents. That's where we must test our conversation, not how we speak on Sunday morning to each other. At home.

Matthew Chapter 12, verse 34, the last part. The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. If a cup overflows, whether it's bitter water or sweet juice, whatever is inside will overflow.

When you shake it, what is inside will come out. So if somebody comes and shakes you up really badly with his language or some action, what comes out will be what is inside your heart. Because you shake a cup as strongly as you like.

If it is sweet water inside, not one drop of bitter water can come out. You can't say the man's shaking made the sweet water bitter. No, the shaking only brought out from the cup what was inside.

So when you find angry words coming out of your mouth or words which are hurting to others or insulting to others, you must face up to it and say, Lord, you said the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. Today I discovered what was in my heart. And this man who hated me helped me to see it more than all

my friends who spoke nice things to me.

You see how God can use our enemies to help us. I thank God for situations in my life where I discovered what was in my heart by being provoked by people who hated me. I say thank you for that person.

I discovered something in my heart which I can cleanse. Thank God I'm still alive. I'm not in the grave yet.

I've got an opportunity to cleanse myself. I don't want to discover these things after I die and stand before the judgment seat of Christ and discover that my heart was like this. Oh God, don't let that happen to me.

I prayed this prayer. I said, Lord, don't reveal to me anything at your judgment seat which you don't reveal to me now. I don't want to discover anything at the judgment seat of Christ.

I want to discover it now because I can cleanse myself now. I can't cleanse myself in that future day. I want to cleanse my walk with the Lord now.

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. And so Jesus said in verse 33, you've got to make the tree good for the fruit to be good. You can't just buy good fruit in the market and hang it up on this tree and make fool everybody that it's a tree producing good fruit.

I think a lot of Christians are like that. Their heart is quite bad. But when they speak to other Christians, they hang up these nice words.

We're only fooling people. We're not fooling God. Watch over your heart with all diligence because all the springs of life come from there.

And the good man, verse 35, from the good treasure in his heart brings forth what is good. The evil man, evil treasure brings forth what is evil. We may not like the Lord calling us evil.

It's good to humble ourselves and say, Lord, what I spoke for you right now was evil. What I spoke to my wife was evil. What I spoke to my husband was evil.

What I spoke to that neighbor of mine who irritated me was evil. That tells me nothing about him. It tells me something about my own heart.

And I want to judge myself and cleanse myself. What a wonderful life our life will be if even in the remaining three months of this year, October, November, December, we pursue what we heard today. You can begin the new year in a far more glorious way than all the years gone by.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to apply to our lives the truths we have heard. We pray in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/OEFF3L7Tx3k.mp4>

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