

# Being Honest About Our Sins

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility in understanding God's way and living a peaceful life, and warns against the consequences of not following God's way.*

**Duration:** 55:45

**Scripture:** Psalm 32:5, Proverbs 14:12, Mark 10:51, Luke 18:14, Luke 19:10, John 8:7, James 4:10

**Topics:** "Repentance", "Sanctification"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of submitting to God's way rather than choosing our own way. It highlights the need for humility, honesty, and confession of personal sins to experience God's salvation and transformation. The message stresses the significance of understanding and following God's ways, which lead to blessings, peace, and a deeper relationship with Him.

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## Transcript

The mistake that man made right from the beginning was that he did not submit to God's way but chose his own way. God's way, he did not choose God's way. He chose his own way.

We have a good verse here at the back that if you are humble, God will show you his way. And so, if you don't understand God's way, you know the reason. If God doesn't teach you his way, then you know the reason.

That is because we are proud. Because all who are humble, God will teach his way. And the more you remain humble, the more God will teach you more and more of his ways.

And your way on earth, your own life and your way on earth will be blessed. Man, you understand God's way. God's way is not just slightly different from man's way.

It is very much different. Turn to verse Isaiah chapter 55. In Isaiah 55, we read in verse 8 and 9. Here we read, God says that my ways are not your ways and your ways are not my ways.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways. So, when you talk about heaven, you are like God who else? It is so much higher than man's, than the earth.

I mean, if you were to compare the intelligence of a small ant that crawls on the floor with a human being, what a fantastic difference that is. An ant is very stupid compared to a human being. Even the ant has got some wisdom, the book of Proverbs says, to store up for the future.

But there are some animals that are even more foolish than the ant. So, whatever is the most foolish animal in the world, compare a man with that, the most intelligent man with that animal. It is so different.

And the difference between God and us is more than that. So, how foolish it is for an ant to stand up in pride before a man and say, no, I know better than you. What does an ant know about computers and television and all that? It is so stupid for an ant to stand before a man and say, I know better than you.

It is the same when a man stands before God and imagines that he knows better. A humble animal would accept that its master knows better. Like an obedient dog you have in your house.

And why does that dog obey the master? Because it knows, the master knows more than me. If we had as much wisdom as that dog in the house, we would all be very humble people. And we wouldn't have any problems in our home or in our churches.

You know that all the problems in homes and churches come because of pride. And that pride is because we think we know what is right. And that's why when you read the Bible, you don't get any revelation from God.

Because God, like we read in that verse, Psalm 25, 9, reveals His way only to the humble. So, you just take that one verse and use it for the rest of your life. Say, Lord, I am determined to be humble every day.

I am determined to humble myself, to acknowledge that I know nothing. And you will find God's way very quickly. That's why when the disciples asked Jesus, Who is the greatest in God's kingdom? He took a little child and said, If you can humble yourself like this child, then you are the greatest.

See, we cannot physically become like children anymore. We are already grown up. We cannot unlearn all the things we have learned from childhood.

That is impossible and not necessary also. What did Jesus mean when He said you got to become like a little child? Have you seen little children when they are one or two years old? They will ask so many questions. Why is it like this, daddy? Why is it like that, mommy? How do you do that? How do you ride a cycle? How do you increase the speed in the scooter? They don't know anything.

And they are not ashamed to admit that they don't know anything. That's why they ask and ask and ask about every little thing. And if you can be like that before God, Not just when you begin your Christian life.

See, I have been a Christian for 46 years. I will tell you my testimony. Today, I know so little about God.

Very little. When I was young, I thought I knew a lot about God. Today, as I have come closer to God, I realize I know so little of His ways.

And that's what happens when we come closer to the Lord. We think we know so much. But the closer we come to God, the more and more we become like little children.

When we come to God like that, He shows us amazing things in the same Bible that we read for so many years. And our life becomes more peaceful. Our home becomes more peaceful.

It becomes easier to fellowship with other people who are different from you. And we don't find fault with people so much. All this finding fault and criticizing others is all because you are so proud.

If you have a difficulty with another brother, don't you feel the problem is with the other brother always? Yes. Because you are proud. The humble person will say, perhaps the fault is with me.

Supposing two brothers are given a lot of numbers to calculate, say total amounts of money. They both come with different answers. Now who is wrong? The humble fellow will say, let me calculate again.

Maybe I am wrong. And the proud fellow will say, no, no, no. I used to get 95% in maths.

I am not wrong. He must be wrong. And afterwards you will discover he was the one who was wrong.

See, God humbles us when we are proud. So it's very important for us if we want to live on earth as God wants us to live, that we understand God's ways. You take driving a car or a bus or a scooter, isn't it good if you know how to drive it? But if you know how to repair it, it's even better.

Scooter stops along the way. I know my scooter stops along the way. All I know is how to clean the spark plug or change the tyre.

I don't know anything more than that. A person like Vettai Saravanan knows more than that, so it will be easier for him. But because I don't know, I am stuck there.

I am stuck till somebody comes and helps me. Isn't it good to know certain things on earth? It helps us in our life. That's much more in the Christian life.

If I understand God's ways, I won't waste my life like wasting my time standing on the roadside with a scooter not moving. I have decided I may waste my time on the scooter standing on the roadside, but I am not going to waste my life not understanding God's ways. So many things on earth I may not know how to do.

I can't cook anything more than an omelette, but God's ways, I want to understand all of it. The other things on earth, if I get time, I learn, but it's not so important for me. I know God's ways.

It's so good to look up a good doctor who knows exactly what is wrong with you. As soon as he examines you, it's like that when we know God's ways. You come to a situation and you know immediately what to do.

Because for years you have spent your life studying God's ways. My wife used to tell me of one senior doctor in Vellore. He was so good that he could look at a man's walk and face and say immediately what the person's sickness is.

Amazing! Because he spent so many years dealing with patients. So a lot of people would go to him because they know that this man will give the correct diagnosis for my sickness. Like that in the Christian life.

Otherwise you can't become doctors like that. Because that requires a lot of money, a lot of intelligence, a lot of study. But in doing God's ways, which is more important, all of us here including children can understand it.

That's the most important thing, lesson you must learn in your life. What is your way Lord? I know my way. For example, I earn money.

How do you spend it? You can spend it your way or God's way. And if you spend it God's way, you'll never get into debt. I have been in times in my life, when I first got married, I earned so little.

I think less than almost anybody sitting here. That was 37 years ago. But even in those days, I decided I will not get into debt.

Never buy any clothes, which I can't afford. Never buy food, which we can't afford. Never travel anywhere, which we can't afford.

If I don't have money to buy a ticket to go for a conference, I won't go for the conference. Because going to a conference is good, but getting into debt is bad. So I say, oh God, if you want me to go, you give me the money.

If you don't give me the money, I can't go. Because God's word is more important than even attending a conference. Even it's more important than food, more important than clothes.

God's word says, don't get into debt. I decided that is more important than buying clothes or food or anything. Because I took that decision, in 66 years, I have never been in debt for one day.

You may say, brother Zach, that's because you got plenty of money now. That was not true 37 years ago. And even in those days, I was not in debt.

Because I believed God's word. Man lives by God's word and not by food. In God's word, I find God's ways.

If I am humble, I say, Lord, I only want to do what you want me to do. What I want to buy, I will get into debt. Where I want to travel, I will get into debt.

Lot of problems come in the lives of many believers because they don't obey God's word. You know the first chapter of Genesis. You see there, for six days, every day he said something.

It says in verse 3, God said something. Verse 6, God said something. Verse 9, God said something.

Verse 11, God said. Verse 14, God said. Verse 20, God said.

Verse 24, God said. Verse 26, God said. Verse 29, God said.

See, in those six days, Nine times we read the word God said, God said, God said, God said. What does that teach us in the first page of the Bible? Everything that God said, the earth said, okay. Heaven said, okay.

They never questioned. God said something. Heaven and earth said okay.

What is the result? He says in the last verse, everything was very good. Why are so many things so bad in our life? Everything can be very good. Every day of my life I can end in a very good way.

If I follow the same principle written in the first page of the Bible, God says something to me. Get into debt. Okay Lord.

Finished. No discussion. Nothing.

But I need this. But I need a refrigerator. I don't know.

I need nothing. God said that's enough. I have seen people ruin their Christian life because they don't live by that first principle of the first page of the Bible.

You don't have to go to second page. First page itself you can learn it. Whatever God says.

Like the heaven and earth said okay. You say okay Lord. Just say that your way is better than my way.

All the confusion in our life has come because we have walked in our own way. See Proverbs chapter 14. It's a very important verse here.

Proverbs 14. Proverbs 12. There is a way which seems right to a man but its end is the way of death.

Now clever people can say yeah I know how to handle my own life. But there is a way which seems right to you. But it leads to death.

Otherwise if we had humbled ourselves and said Lord my way will only lead to death. Your way, the truth and the life. Your way only will lead me to life.

I humbled myself like that from the beginning of the time I was born again. You have done that from the day you were born again. How well you would have been today.

You would have been way up there. Let me give you an example. It's like a child who goes to school.

In the nursery class, he is being taught the alphabets. Teacher tells him how to write it like this. And he says no.

That's not the way to write ah. Teacher says how should we write it. He scribbles something on the board and says this is how you should write it.

Teacher says you want to learn it like that, learn it. How far do you think he will progress in his education? 50 years later you see this old man sitting in the nursery class. Because he refuses to give up his own way.

And the other people who joined with him 45 years earlier. PhD they are about to retire after making lakhs of rupees. What is the difference between them and this fellow? Every class they said ok teacher you are right I am wrong.

But as this fellow sat 45 years arguing with the teacher that is not the way to write ah. That is exactly the picture of a lot of believers. In their personal life the Lord says take up your cross everyday.

Say no to yourself. Die to yourself. And follow me.

You say yes. That enemy of yours, love him. That chap who is persecuting you, pray for him.

That chap who is cursing you, bless him. And somebody fights with you, don't fight back. Somebody gets angry with you.

Proverbs 15 next chapter verse 1 says a gentle answer will turn away their anger. Proverbs 15 next chapter verse 1 says a gentle answer will turn away their anger. I have seen that on the road sometimes.

We all make mistakes when we are riding the scooter. Sometimes you know you come pretty close to somebody or you touch each other without harming anybody. And we don't know whether it is his fault or your fault.

He is sure it is your fault. So if I say I am sorry sir, excuse me. He says it is ok, it is ok.

But you say what are you doing? Half an hour you will be arguing there only. It is foolish. Look at God's way.

Gentle answer. Even if he starts shouting at you. He says I am sorry sir.

It is fine. I have never seen a man in my life who remains hard after he says I am sorry. But we are so proud.

We continue the quarrel sometimes for years. I have celebrated property disputes for 20 years. I have spent money on lawyers more than the cost of the property.

Foolish and lost their health and lost their sleep and lost everything. God's way is always better. I have been a believer for 46 years and I have found that to be true.

Your health is better, your sleep is better. Your understanding of God's word is better. There will be a greater anointing upon your life.

If you humble yourself. Say Lord I choose your way. God says don't love money.

Say Lord I love money, please help me to be free from it. Many years ago I said this to the Lord. I said Lord I am not different from other people.

I don't claim to be better than any human being in the world. So if people in the world love money, I must also be like that. I must be a lover of money.

But the difference is they will not admit it. I admit it. I am lost.

I am lost in the pit called the love of money. I can't save myself. It's too difficult to climb out of this.

I try climbing up, I fall down under 3-4 feet. Lord you came to seek and to save those who are lost. Save me.

And he saved me. It changed my life completely. Why? Because I was humble enough to admit that I was in a pit called the love of money.

I met one brother once. He used to be in our church, he is not with us now. He said to me, Oh brother Zach, I finished with the love of money long ago.

Today, he is lost, he has gone much deeper into the love of money. Why? He was not honest enough to admit it. Where did I get this understanding from? In Luke chapter 19, We read there of a man called Zacchaeus.

And it says here that Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house. And all the people saw it, said verse 7, He has gone to meet the guest of a man who is a sinner. Everybody in the town knew Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was not a man fooling around with women, that was not his sin. His sin was not killing people, he was not a murderer. He had one main sin.

And that was the love of money. And he cheated, cheated, cheated and made money. But that day, He confessed his sin.

And he got saved. And Jesus said in verse 9, Salvation has come to this house also today. What from? What did he get saved from? Not from fooling around with women, that was not his sin.

From the love of money. When a man gives 50% of his goods to the poor, As it says in verse 8, you can be pretty sure, He is saved from the love of money. How many people have you ever heard of who give 50% of their money to the poor people? I have never met such a man in my life.

This man was realistic. How in a moment Jesus could save him? Then Jesus said, he explained it. Verse 10, The son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost in the love of money.

That's where I got my message for my need. Lord, I haven't cheated anybody as far as I know. But I love money like Zacchaeus.

But you came to seek and to save such people. Zacchaeus even cheated people. You could save him, can't you save me? The Lord said, Zacchaeus was honest.

I said, I will be honest too. I will tell you something God's way. God's way is, Whatever sin you confess is true of you.

You are eager to be saved from, he will save you from that. Whatever sin you confess is true of you. Suppose you young people go to God and say this, Lord, I am committing adultery everyday.

Sometimes 3-4 times a day Lord. And say Lord, really you are committing adultery 3-4 times a day? Yes Lord. How? Not physically Lord.

But in my mind. The Lord says, you really believe that is as bad as physical adultery? Yes Lord, I believe. That's what the word says there.

And I want to look at myself, As a man who is physically committing adultery 3-4 times a day and coming to a meeting and sitting like a holy man. Lord, I am not only an adulterer Lord, I am a hypocrite. In fact Lord, I think I am one of the biggest hypocrites sitting in our church.

And to make it worse, I even get up and testify like as if I am a holy man. And some of you may also have to say Lord, on top of that I am even an elder. And the Lord says, you really want to be free from that? Yes Lord, I am in a pit.

I have tried for years to get out of it. I can't get out. You got to seek me and save me.

Do it, you have done it for others, do it for me. He will do it. Mary Magdalene was worse than you.

She became so pure that God chose her to be the first one to see the resurrected Lord Jesus. What a miracle God can do. He can make a crooked man like Zacchaeus give half his money to the poor which

we haven't done.

We haven't done that. Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. She became the holiest woman.

Do you believe that Jesus can take a prostitute in a town and make her the holiest woman in that town? Yes. But God's way is this. You do it only when a person admits his sin.

So the first thing you need to learn about God's way is that God loves honest people. If you have a fight with your husband or wife, and you tell the Lord, Lord that this stupid wife of mine is like that. Or you say, foolish husband, I don't know, all the time he is causing problems for me.

If it's like that, I might as well tell you the next 50 years you will be fighting all day. You are acting as if you never made any mistake. You say, but he also made a mistake.

But you say that he also made a mistake. That may be true. But nowhere in the Bible are we asked to confess the sins of somebody else.

Do you confess somebody else's sins? Do you say my husband is like this, my wife is like this? Or that brother is like this? Or that elder brother is like this? Why are you confessing his sin? If you are an angel without any sin, then you can confess somebody else's sin. I'll tell you when you can confess somebody else's sin. When you are finished confessing all your sins.

I don't think I'll finish till Jesus comes. You know who is the first person to confess somebody else's sin? Who is it? Adam. The Lord asks him, what did you do? I'll first tell you what my wife did, Lord.

The Lord is asking you, what did you do? I'll tell you what my wife did. I know that was a sin. Why confess your wife's sin when God is asking you what you did? Why confess your husband's sin when he is asking you what did you do? Haven't you seen that when two of your children fight? And they come to you.

When one boy says, Daddy, he hit me. When one boy says, Daddy, he hit me. What did you do? He hit you.

Did you do anything? Put his head down and say, yeah, I also hit him. He won't say that first. See, that is Adam's nature.

Jesus was different. He never went around confessing other people's sins. He had no sin of his own.

After 33 years. And he hung on the cross. He took the blame for your sin.

In my sin. And he acted as if it was his own sin. That's why the Bible says he was made sin.

Whose sin? Nothing of his. The blame was put on him and he just kept quiet. God was so delighted with him that he raised him from the dead.

See, that's God's way. God loves those who don't blame other people. He will humble themselves.

And like a little child say, I don't know, I want to learn. And I want to say to you, brothers and sisters. Many of our churches, there are many problems.

All of those problems will disappear if we all learn to be honest about our own failure. Our homes can be like heaven, but they are not like heaven right now. I can say that my home is a little bit like heaven today.

But it wasn't like that when I started also. Because I did not know this way when I got married. I took 16 years to find it.

All of you who get married now are so lucky. You can hear this message right from the beginning. A way of honesty.

A way of taking the blame. A way of humbling ourselves. A way of not blaming other people.

The way of confessing our own sin. And full stop. When I finish my sin, full stop.

Even in the Roman Catholic churches, nobody is allowed to go to the priest and confess somebody else's sin. I have never been a Roman Catholic, but I have heard that people go to the priest and confess their sins. Some of you who are Catholics, tell me.

Could you confess somebody else's sin to that priest? I don't think so. Well, you certainly can't confess somebody else's sin to God. Whenever Jesus wanted to help somebody, He always asked that person to say what his need was.

We read once of two blind men who were following Jesus. And the question Jesus asked them was this. I think it's Mark chapter 10.

Two blind men. And one of them is mentioned here, his name is Bartimaeus in 46. And Jesus, He was crying out, have mercy on me, have mercy on me, have mercy on me.

And Jesus stopped and said, call him here. Now when a blind man comes to Jesus, Even a stupid person like me knows what he wants. You think Jesus didn't know? Of course He knew.

But He asked him, what do you want me to do? Even I could have told the Lord, Lord that's obvious, He wants to know, get aside. The Lord would say, you keep quiet, let me hear it from you. And he had to confess his need.

Lord, I am a blind man. Please open my eyes. Verse 52.

Know your way, your faith has made you well. Immediately he gained his sight. Immediately he gained his sight.

So when the Lord comes to us or we go to the Lord, He doesn't ask you, what did Bartimaeus say? Lord, there's a friend of mine over there who's blind. Can you do something for him? He can say that after your eyes are open. When your own eyes are blind, what are you telling about your friend who's blind? Sister, your eyes are blind.

Your husband's eyes are also blind. Go to God for your own need first. Say, Lord, I'm blind, please open my eyes.

And if my friend is blind, Let him also to the Lord. Let him tell his need to the Lord. That honesty.

That is God's way. It's so simple. God has not made his way complicated.

And it's very easy for a humble person to be honest. Like the woman caught in adultery. Let's turn to that story in John chapter 8. All the people were confessing her sin.

What was the problem with these Pharisees? Verse 3 and 4. What I've been telling you from the beginning. They did not confess their own sin, they confessed that woman's sin. What they said about the woman was right.

And all the bad things you have said about your husband may be right. Your husband may be so bad. What you say about your wife may be true.

She may be so bad as you say, correct. That is not the question. What you say is all wrong.

What the Lord said to them basically was. Let's hear you confess your sin first. Before you deal with her sin.

That's basically the question. So he said, if anyone is without sin, you throw the first stone. What did they do? They should have knelt down and said, Lord, I'm sorry for accusing somebody else.

Please forgive me, I'm also a sinner. My sins are most secret. Verse is open.

But I also deserve to be stoned. Only thing, I was not caught. Poor lady, she was caught.

If there was one Pharisee who knelt down like that. He would have also been saved. But what did they do? They all walked away.

None of them would confess their sin. Older ones walked away first. He was left there to confess his sin.

She was saved. And she was the worst of the lot. She was much worse than those Pharisees.

And she was the only one who was saved. That is God's way. He saves those who are honest.

Whatever sin you honestly confess, you'll be saved from that. You sit there and say, I've got a good testimony in the church. Everybody thinks I'm a wonderful young brother or sister.

The Lord will say, okay, you sit with your testimony. You'll be a hypocrite till the rest of your life. Thirty one years ago, I decided, I will not be a hypocrite anymore.

I'm such a hypocrite like you. Sitting in the church, pretending to be holy. I got sick and tired of it.

And I said, Lord, I want to be free. And he set me free. When I was honest.

God loves honest people. And she got saved. And all the others were lost.

They could have easily escaped if they were honest. You think God doesn't know all the things you've done in secret? He doesn't expose it. Jesus didn't expose these fellows in saying, I know what you did, I know what you did.

He could have humiliated them. He could have said, you old man, I'll make a list now of what a hundred sins you've committed. They would have run away.

I think they went away because they were afraid that he might do that. It's sad. Jesus doesn't humiliate us like that.

He knows our sins, but he won't tell anybody about it. That's his goodness. God is good.

Think for a moment, my brothers and sisters. Haven't you committed many, all of you sitting here, haven't you committed sins that you'd be thoroughly ashamed if it was shown here on a video screen to all the people here? Those people who think you're a holy person, they'd be like running away from here if it was shown on the video screen, what all you did in your past life. But how good God is.

He not only forgave you, he says, I will not tell anybody about your past sins. Now let me ask you. Have you treated other people like that? Have you been good to other people the way God has been good to you? God has rid all of your past life completely.

Why do you go around talking about the evil of other people? If you keep doing it, one day God will expose your sin also to everybody. At least for your own sake, stop it from now. So Lord, from today onwards, I'll confess only my own sins.

Not my wife's, not my husband's, only mine. Have mercy on me, the sinner. That's the first lesson we need to know about God's ways.

May God help us to learn God's ways.

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