

Blessed By God, In Order To Bless Others

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the concept of being accepted in Christ, highlighting the need for believers to understand their identity as accepted and forgiven by God. It also touches on the importance of acknowledging our sinful nature, desiring to give up sin, and believing in Jesus' sacrifice for our sins. Additionally, it discusses the significance of forgiving others and having a burden to share the message of salvation with those around us.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:6, John 14:18, Romans 3:23, 2 Peter 3:9, Acts 20:35, 2 Peter 1:9

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "Forgiveness and Evangelism"

Description

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Transcript

So, I would like to continue from what we heard from George just now. Christ died, the just for the unjust, that we might bring us to God. There's a beautiful expression in Ephesians in chapter 1, which says in Ephesians 1, 6, 5 and 6, He predestined us to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to Himself.

It says in verse 6, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. I used to read the King James Version when I was first converted in way back in 1959. In those days, there was no NASB.

This verse is translated in a very beautiful way there. It says, He has made us accepted in the Beloved. And that's a phrase that has stuck with me for many years.

Because, you know, Jesus said that we are like orphans in John 14, and the Holy Spirit has come to deliver us from being orphans. Many believers act like orphans. They don't feel that the Father in heaven has really accepted them.

You know, it's like a home where there are the father's own children, and then they adopt one child. And that child always feels that I'm not accepted in the same way as all the other children, because I'm adopted. I'm not a real child.

And I found many believers are like that in their relationship with God our Father. They're not so sure whether God has accepted them wholeheartedly. I mean, how many of you believe that God has accepted you? Just like He accepts Jesus.

If you're honest, I don't think you believe it, most of you. But do you know that's what God wants us to, if you're really born again. And so let me begin with that, just to make sure that even the children here understand what it means to be born again.

First of all, Romans 3 and verse 23. All have sinned. Verse 10, there is no one righteous.

You got to begin there. You know, as children, we think somebody is a good child, somebody is a bad child. You may think you're better than somebody else.

There's no hope for you to be saved then. I used to sometimes tell the Lord, Lord, the worst terrorist in the world. I'm like that.

I'm no better than that person. And I really believe it. I don't know whether you believe it.

You look at the worst child, you children, think of the worst child you can ever think of. The most ill-behaved child. Ask yourself, do you really believe that you're like that? That's why I'm thankful for my salvation.

I believe what it says here, there is no one righteous. Everyone has come short. Why do I say I'm like that? Because we all have failed.

In God's standard, past marks is not 40% or 90%. It's 100%. And nobody, everybody's failed.

Somebody got 90, he's failed. Somebody got zero, he's failed. And so we have a tendency to compare ourselves with one another.

And children must understand right from the beginning, if you come to God thinking you're a little better than others, you will never experience the joy of salvation. You come to Jesus and say, Lord, I'm no better than others. I'm very clever at concealing and hiding some of the bad thoughts I have.

I'm very clever at pretending that I'm very good. But you know my heart and I'm all by myself. I see all the dirty, wretched things inside.

I'm absolutely no good. Then you can come to Christ. Because he did not come for holy people.

He said once he came for sinners and the worst of them. And how does he forgive you? He forgives you freely. Because you acknowledge you're a sinner, number one.

And secondly, you sincerely say, I want to give up those sins. Not I have given it up. It may take you your whole lifetime to give it up, but I want to give it up.

Can you say you want to give it up? So what's number one? I'm not better than anybody else. Number two, can you say you want to give up everything that's bad in your life? Good. Then you qualify.

And the only other thing you need to believe is that Jesus paid the punishment for all your sins. He paid the price. It's like if you're in debt to somebody for a million dollars and somebody's paid that debt, you're free.

You're not afraid of meeting that man anymore. Say, hey, I'm not afraid. I know I owe you a million dollars, but I'm not afraid to meet you.

Somebody paid my debt. I'm not afraid to stand before God today. Can you say that? You can say that, little children, because Jesus has paid your debt completely.

Believe that. That's that phrase, accepted. Not in myself, but in Christ, in the beloved.

I'm also beloved now, accepted by him. That's number one. And then God wants us to make us a blessing to other people.

Once we are accepted ourselves, there's a verse that's come to my mind again and again in 2 Peter chapter 3. You know, when I think of some people who have, say, treated you very badly, I've experienced many people who have treated me very badly, told all types of false stories about me. How do I feel about that? Do I wish that they go to hell? Oh, no. When I think of the people who have treated me worst in my entire life, the word that comes to my heart is 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 9. God does not want anybody to perish.

He wants everybody to come to repentance. Everybody, even those people who treated you so badly. You may not want them to come to repentance, but God wants them to come to repentance.

So when you say, Lord, I want to be like you, okay, that means you want that worst person who treated you so badly, you want him to repent and become good. Then you can be like God. Is that difficult? It's not difficult when you see that God took you, who were such a filthy sinner, and forgave you on the cross of Calvary.

Why can't he forgive that person? So have an attitude and say, Lord, I want to forgive that person completely, and I want him to be saved. I want him to become a child of God. Say that about the people who have treated you the worst in your life.

Say that, because, you know, we ourselves have been so bad in God's eyes. There's another verse in 2 Peter 1, which says, this is the way you will not grow in your Christian life. He's talking about so many things in 2 Peter 1, about growing in verse 5, and faith, and excellence, and moral excellence, knowledge.

Verse 6, 2 Peter 1, 6, and self-control, and perseverance, and godliness. Verse 7, and brotherly kindness, and all these things are yours, he says in verse 8, and you will grow in them, increasing. But verse 9, if you forget the last part of verse 9, if you forget what a wretched sinner you were once, and how you were purified, if you forget that, then you will not have these qualities.

You will remain, verse 9, blind and short-sighted all your life. So, I read that once and came home to my heart that these are wonderful qualities I want to have, but I won't have them. If I forget what a wretched sinner I was once, and what God cleansed me from, which makes me look down on others, I never want to forget it.

God's forgiven me completely, not only has he forgiven me, he says, I won't even remember your past. But God may say, I don't want to remember your past, but I want to remember it. That's what this verse says.

If I forget my purification from my former sins, then I become short-sighted and blind. The reason why some people read the Bible and get nothing out of it, this is the reason. They are blind.

Why are they blind? Because they have forgotten what a wretched sinner they were once. I was converted 63 years ago, but I haven't forgotten what a sinner I was. I'll never forget it, not even in heaven.

I'm not guilty. I'm accepted in the beloved. I'm not an adopted child.

I'm a real child of God. I'm absolutely convinced, whether you believe it or not, that God has accepted me just like he has accepted Jesus Christ. You think that's boasting? It's not.

That's what the Bible tells me. He's accepted me in the beloved. But I never forget what I was.

So one last thing. Acts 20, verse 35 says, it's a beautiful verse. What God has given us, we must have a burden to share it with others.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. If you have received blessing from God, that's good. But you could have received more if you had a burden to share what God gave you with others.

So we must pray, Lord, I want to share the wonderful message you've given me with other people. And if you get some opportunity to give it, give it. Sometimes the most unlikely opportunities.

I remember once somebody came to our house in Bangalore. You know, one of these people who go house to house selling something. And so my wife opened the door and that lady was saying, I'm selling something.

And she took my wife, listened to her for about five minutes about the product that she was selling. And of course, she had no intention to buy it, but she listened to listen, listen to it. And when she finished, my wife said, now you listen to me.

I listen to you for five minutes. Will you listen to me for something I have to tell you for a few minutes? She had to listen because my wife had already listened to her for five minutes and she gave her the gospel. You see, if you want to get an opportunity, if you have a burden, God will give you opportunities.

But if you have no burden, that lady just come to sell something. I'm not interested. Let her go to hell.

Then, of course, God will never use you. But if you have a burden to give to others, the message that changed your life, to your relatives, to your children, to your parents, say, Lord, I'm not better than them. It's more blessed to give than to receive.

Pray for one thing. Lord, let me be alert to every opportunity to give to others. I think my wife did that once on the phone also, if I remember right.

You know, these phone calls trying to sell you something, which we normally just put down. I'm not interested. But she listened.

Listen, listen, listen, listen. OK, thank you very much. I'll think about it.

I don't need it right now. Now, can I share with you something for two minutes? Give the gospel. Have any of you done that? Do you get phone calls like that or people trying to sell you something? God bless you.

Let's learn to give. It's more blessed than to receive.

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