

Born Again Through Repentance and Faith

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's love through His rebuke and the necessity of repentance for spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:12:20

Scripture: Matthew 3:2, Matthew 22:36-40, John 6:37, Acts 20:21, Romans 8:9, Ephesians 1:13, James 2:14, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Repentance And Faith", "Salvation Assurance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding who Jesus is speaking to in the Bible, highlighting the need to discern the intended audience to grasp the message correctly. It delves into Revelation 3:20, explaining that Jesus' message is often misapplied to unbelievers when it was directed to believers, specifically the elder and churches in Laodicea. The sermon stresses the significance of repentance and faith, urging listeners to genuinely desire to love Jesus above all and treat others as they want to be treated. It concludes with a call for individuals to invite Jesus into their hearts, emphasizing the assurance of salvation and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

I want you to turn with me first of all to Revelation and chapter 3 and a verse that you're not so familiar with, though you may be familiar with the verse that comes after this, the next verse. Revelation chapter 3 verse 20 is a verse most Christians know, at least many Christians know, where Jesus said, behold I stand at the door and knock. Remember, this is not spoken to unbelievers.

Whenever you read scripture or you read Jesus speaking, find out who is he speaking to. Did he look at his disciples and say, you generation of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of hell? Those are the words of Jesus, but they were not spoken to Peter, James and John. They were spoken to the Pharisees.

So you have to see who is he speaking to, then only you'll understand who the message is for. So if you're a Pharisee, then that is for you, you generation of vipers, how will you escape the judgment of hell? So here we have to say who is he speaking to? Verse 14, to the messenger, that is one of the elders of the church in Laodicea. Among the elders, there are always more than one elder in every church, and usually one of them would be the messenger who brings the message most Sundays.

To the messenger of the church in Laodicea write, I'm standing at the door and knocking. And it says in verse 22, if you have a year, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. So it's a message to the elder and to the churches.

It is not to unbelievers, that's what I'm trying to say. But yet that verse is quoted most of the time to unbelievers. To unbelievers say, you know Jesus is standing at the door and knocking, and you show the unbeliever this verse, and if he has some sense, he says, let me read.

Whom is it written? This is not written for unbelievers, this is written to an elder. This is written to a church. I'm not an elder, I'm not a church, how can you quote this verse to me? You see how carelessly we read the Bible, because we have the habit of reading independent verses.

If you want to misunderstand the Bible, read independent verses, favorite verses. If you get a letter from your father and you read one sentence in the middle of page 3, you may get a completely wrong understanding. Nobody reads like that.

If you read a sentence in the middle of page 3, you'll read the whole letter perhaps, at least the whole of page 3 or the whole paragraph to understand. So whenever you read, many people have come to me and said, brother what is the meaning of this? I said, read the verses before it, read the verses after it, and you'll understand the meaning. You don't even have to come to me.

But you don't read the verses before, you don't read the verses after, and you try to understand one verse by itself. You never do that with any letter you get from anyone. You never read that with a book you read, and because the books in the Bible are broken up into verses, we read verses.

But you know the original letters that Paul wrote, and the original books that were written, John's gospel and all that, it was not broken up into verses or even chapters. Maybe it was put into paragraphs, but it was never, never broken up into verses and chapters till about maybe 300 years ago. That's how it was.

So to the elder brother, oh well, and it must refer to believers also. It could apply to all of us here. You know what Jesus is saying? I stand at the door and knock.

If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, will dine with him, and will he with me, and then you will be able to overcome. Next verse, as I overcame, you'll sit with me on my throne. Okay, so when you read all of that together, it's leading up to being an overcomer, which is what we preach in our church.

We all want to be overcomers. But let's begin at verse 19, which tells us how we hear the knocking of the Lord. How do you know? How do you hear the Lord knocking at your door? I'll tell you.

Those whom I love, I rebuke, reprove, and discipline. That's how we hear the Lord knocking. You hear the Lord rebuking you, reprovng you? That's his knock.

Will you let me come in? You get offended with that rebuke. That rebuke may come directly from the Lord as you read the Bible. If you have been sensitive to the Lord's voice for many years, it may come directly to you without the Bible.

Or it may come to you through another servant of the Lord. In this case, it came through the Apostle John. It was not directly.

God, Jesus did not directly speak to any of these churches or any of these elders. He spoke to them through an apostle. And through the apostle, he rebuked them and reprovved them.

And that was the Lord knocking at the door of their heart saying, will you let me come in? Because this reproof, verse 19, is a proof of my love. That's what I wanted you to see primarily. Those whom I love, I reprove and rebuke.

I've often said, there's no young man I have reprovved and corrected in the world more than my four sons. Nobody in the world have I ever corrected as much as I corrected my four sons. And I don't regret it one bit.

Because I didn't have authority over the others. As an elder, I have had the responsibility for having to reprove and rebuke some people. The moment they leave our church, as some people have done, I immediately stop correcting them.

Immediately. It's always hi, sometimes just hi and bye. Hi, I hope you're following the Lord.

But go and ask all the people who have left our church. Ask them if they ever got one email from me correcting them. Never.

Ask them if they got emails from me before they left the church. Yes, plenty. After they left the church, always, hello, thank you for writing.

Good to hear from you. God bless you, if He can. I hope you're following the Lord.

As many as I love, Jesus says, I reprove and I rebuke. So when I was young, when I was a young Christian, I didn't know that. Nobody explained Revelation 3.19 to me.

I should have known it from the day I was converted. If I had teachers who would teach me the Bible, I would have known it when I was 19 and a half, that one proof of God's love for you is that He rebukes you. But you know, we live in a world where we think rebuke is somebody who hates us, only rebukes us.

One who loves us will always say nice things to us. It's like thinking a good doctor will always say you're healthy, even when you're dying of cancer. And it's only somebody who hates you who says the scan shows you've got cancer.

We never think like that about a doctor. But we do think like that about brothers and the Lord's servants. That shows how the devil has blinded us.

We are more concerned about our physical health and our spiritual condition. We will go to a doctor for understanding what is the problem with us, but we'll never think that a brother could perhaps show us what's wrong with us spiritually. Oh no, I can take care of myself.

Go and see all the people who treated themselves medically without consulting a doctor and see their physical condition today. They messed up their physical condition because they treated themselves. They didn't go to someone who was a little wiser, a doctor, and say can you please tell me what's wrong with me.

We value our physical health so much that we will not treat ourselves. We will go to a doctor even for a little earache or a toothache. But much more serious spiritual conditions we say I can handle that myself.

And I believe that's the reason why many of us are in a very poor spiritual condition. Because we don't go to the Lord and say Lord please tell me what's wrong with me. As many as I love are abused.

So when I was a young Christian, the only way, if you had asked me how do you know Jesus loves you, I would have said he died for me. I know he loves me. Jesus loves me.

This I know because he died for me on the cross. Today if you ask me the same question, how do you know Jesus loves you, I'll say he reproves me. He disciplines me.

And you say brother Zach, he still disciplines you after 57 years of being a believer. Yes, he's not stopped loving me. He reproves me and disciplines me in ways that you don't know.

And I need it. When will it stop brother Zach? It'll stop the day I become like Jesus Christ 100%. That's the day he returns.

That is the proof of his love for me. Because he doesn't want me to go even one millimeter off the straight line. Sometimes I slip up, not with many inches away from the straight as in the olden days, but one millimeter off the Lord reproves and disciplines.

I've been so delighted that the Lord corrects me in a slight deviation. If you can speak one rude word to anybody, unbeliever, believer, petrol station, the petrol pump attendant, or shopkeeper, or a auto rickshaw driver, or a porter in the railway station, if you can speak one rude word or to a beggar and not be convicted about it, I would say you're sick. You are sick.

You've got a little bit of leprosy. You don't have sensation. You know lepers don't have sensation.

When they lose, get leprosy here, you touch them, they don't feel it. You pin prick them, they don't feel it. And that's happening to you.

You spoke a rude word to somebody and you didn't get convicted about it. You didn't go and apologize to the Lord. You didn't go and apologize to that person.

Maybe after one week you decided, okay I better write him a letter, tell him I'm sorry. One week you had no sensation? It's leprosy brother. You better do something about it because leprosy has a habit of spreading.

I never wanted to be like that. I was a leper when I came to Jesus. There are many things I had no sensation about.

But I'm being freed from it gradually, little by little by little by little by little. I'll be completely free when Jesus comes back. There will not even be a speck of it.

But the flesh is still there and nothing good dwells in the flesh but its area is becoming reduced, reduced, reduced. Isn't it good to see the leprosy reducing in your life? That you're becoming more sensitive, quicker to something wrong you said. You're quick to go and apologize to your wife or your husband.

That's an indication. Leprosy is becoming less. But I'll tell you something I've noticed.

Many brothers are very quick to apologize to their wives because they need food. She's the one who cooks food and they need it on time. They need their clothes to be washed.

They can't afford to have tension at home even for 24 hours. But when it is a brother in the church, why are they not so quick to go and set it right? They know something, tension has come there. Why don't they set it right? Because he doesn't cook my food.

He doesn't wash my clothes. He doesn't do anything for me. Why should I be bothered? You are a leper.

Let me tell you straight. You're a leper. You're a self-centered leper.

You're careful when it concerns your own wife because you're concerned about yourself. You love yourself. I need my food.

I need my clothes washed. I must keep a good relationship with my wife. But this brother, I can afford.

I can think about it. Let me pray about it for one or two months and then we'll see. My brothers and sisters, I want to tell you the truth.

You come here, you'll hear the truth. You'll get a scan as to why you are not growing spiritually much faster than you could have. I'm not saying you all haven't grown spiritually.

Many of you have grown spiritually tremendously from the time I first knew you, without a doubt. But let me also say that the number of you could have been miles further ahead than you are today. Your growth could have been much more if you had been a little more sensitive to sin and allowed the Lord to rebuke you, reprove you, discipline you.

You know that Old Testament Psalm that says, let the righteous smite me. It's like oil on my head. It's like Psalm 141.

You let the righteous smite me. It's like anointing me with oil. Anointing with oil is the way people were blessed and anointed for service.

So that's a great verse. In case you don't know it, I think you should know it. Turn with me to the Psalms.

Psalm 141 and verse 5. If you don't know this verse, you must remember it all your life. Let the righteous slap me on my face in kindness and let him reprove me. It's like he's anointing me with oil.

Don't let my head refuse it. I mean, if we said, brother, we want to appoint you as an elder now and we want to lay our hands on you and come here. We want to anoint you and oh how many of us would rush forward for that.

But this is the same thing. The same thing. Let the righteous smite me.

Let not my head refuse it. Don't let me pull back. Let me submit to that and say, do it brother.

I want to be an anointed person. I have tried to follow that all my life. I remember when I was a young man and I was misunderstood in a church I used to attend and some people falsely accused me to the older brothers and the result was I was not allowed to speak in that church.

Not for one or two Sundays. I used to speak every Sunday in that church. It was when I was about 30 years old and because of that misunderstanding and the elders never sought to clarify it, for the next three years or two and a half years at least, I was not allowed to preach in that church.

Not a single Sunday. And the Lord said to me, keep quiet. Accept it.

Don't question it. Submit to the elders. Nobody taught me about submission in all those days, but the Lord spoke directly to me and I kept quiet and my wife and I would sit at the back of the hall and people would come up to me and say, oh brother Zak, what happened? I wouldn't say anything.

I would not open my mouth in one word of self-defense. I would not say they misunderstood me. I can speak about it today because you don't even know who they are.

But if I had spoken about it then, people would have known who I was referring to. They are dead and gone now. But I knew much later and after those three years, I left that place and I moved to Bangalore.

I wasn't here. Otherwise I would have still been sitting there. And after we came here and two and a half years, three years after we came here, the Lord established CFC.

Then I knew why God had taken me through those three years of reproof and rebuke and misunderstanding. He was testing me to see whether I would obey him and keep my mouth shut. And I believe that if I had, listen to me, in those years, if I had not kept my mouth shut and I had risen up in defiance against those elders and said these guys have misunderstood me and tried to speak against them to all the others, I tell you I would not be sitting here today.

I would not be involved in raising CFC. CFC would have been built by somebody else, not me. God's work is not going to depend on one man.

If one man fails, another man takes over. My belief is that Judas Iscariot was supposed to write the epistles because he was the cleverest of the apostles. He missed out on it.

So what? God found Paul. If I had failed, God would have found somebody else. Definitely.

That I don't have any doubt. But I wouldn't be here. And it's possible that God has a plan for you and he's taking you through a period of discipline and reproof.

I'm talking to young people here. You don't accept it. You're disturbed that somebody smote you.

Not physically, but in words that humiliated you. And you don't accept it. You're missing out on a ministry God has for you in the future.

I'm not saying that you should accept it for the sake of a ministry. That's pretty selfish. But because God is knocking at the door of your heart.

As many as I love, I rebuke, I discipline. That is the way I'm knocking at the door of your heart. Did you ever connect those two verses together? Revelation 3, 19 and 20? That is the meaning.

How do you know that Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart? Read the previous verse. Don't read a verse by itself. You'll misunderstand it.

The previous verse explains it. I rebuke and I discipline. That's the knock.

I'm knocking loud and clear. Will you open it? Will you submit to it? Will you accept it? Or will you reject it? No, no, no. Then you wonder, why is the Lord not near to me? Why doesn't He come and sup with me? Because you don't accept His correction.

And those of you who have come here regularly through the years, I'm sure many a time you have heard the Lord knocking at the door of your heart on a Sunday morning. Somebody wrote an email to me last week saying to CFC, why doesn't Brother Zach give us more milk? It's always meat, meat, meat, meat. We need some milk.

So, some other brother was replying. I told him, please reply to him saying there are hundreds of thousands of milkmen distributing milk all over. You don't have to go to Brother Zach for that.

But if you want to go, please read Good Foundation and Purpose of Failure. There's some milk also in our literature. But the great need is what Paul said to Timothy.

The time will come, 2 Timothy 4, when they will not want to hear hygienic words that lead to godliness. They will heap to themselves these hundreds of thousands of milkmen, teachers who will just tickle their ears. And Paul told Timothy, I reprove, rebuke, when you feel like it and when you don't feel like it.

You read it for yourself in 2 Timothy 4. Because the time will come when people will not want to listen to it. We are living in those times. That's what I said.

And some days, some weeks ago, I said this, if you remember, that if Jesus were to come today, some of you sitting here would go to hell. Because I don't believe you are really born again. That's the truth.

I feel that way. And I want to say a few words to such people. Because I don't want anybody sitting here this morning, or anybody hearing this message later on, not to know how you can be really born again and be sure of it.

So I just want to take a little time and explain that. The first thing, if you want to understand the way for Jesus to come into your life, is to listen to the message of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was sent, in Matthew chapter 3, he was sent by God to Israel to prepare the way.

He's called the one who came to prepare the way for Jesus to come to Israel. And spiritually, his message is what prepares the way for Jesus to come into our heart. Because they rejected the message of John the Baptist, they rejected Jesus.

That's why Israel rejected Jesus. Before Jesus came, God sent a prophet to prepare the way for Jesus to be accepted. They rejected him, they rejected Jesus.

So what is this message? Let's turn to Matthew chapter 3, verse 2. John the Baptist, verse 1, came preaching saying, repent. Now repent is a word which we don't really understand. The best translation I've heard of repent is in Tamil.

Tamil has got some wonderful translations, I've discovered. In Tamil, it is Manam Thirumbal, which means turn your mind. A very beautiful translation.

Change your opinion. Turn your mind around from the way it is thinking, the way it is facing. Turn it around.

Turn it around. Turn your mind around. That's what John is saying.

Because the kingdom of heaven is near. The kingdom of heaven was what Christ came to bring into our hearts. This is the one about whom Isaiah the prophet said, the one who is crying out in the wilderness to

make ready the way of the Lord.

This is how you make ready the way for Christ to come into your life. Repent. Turn.

And how will you know that your mind has turned? You know there were some Pharisees in verse 7 who came and wanted to be baptized. See baptism was offered by John the Baptist only to those who really accepted his message. It wasn't a ritual.

It wasn't say, I want to join this church so I get baptized. John wasn't building any church. So there was no question of joining anything.

He wanted to, if they accepted his message, he could be baptized. Baptism followed repentance. But some people came, like some people come today also, who want to be baptized.

And John the Baptist has such discernment. It's an amazing thing how God gives discernment to his servants. It's the greatest need in any elder brother or any true servant of God.

Discernment. That people who speak the right words, you can turn around to them and say, you haven't repented. You're speaking the right words, but you haven't repented.

I can see that you have not repented. Even though they're saying the right word, yeah I believe, I've done this, I've given it up and I'm there. And you can see through the whole thing.

John the Baptist could be like that. The tragedy is Christian churches do not have many people like that. And that's why we have a whole bunch of people nowadays who get baptized and never repented.

John the Baptist would never allow them to be baptized. He turned around to them and said, you brood of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? I don't see any fruit in your life in keeping with repentance. Verse 8, I don't see your mind having really been turned around.

And don't say Abraham is our father. Don't say, I listen to Brother Zach's messages. So what? God can pick up stones and make his children from there.

There are different things people say to find acceptance. No. The axe is laid.

Here's what repentance means. The axe is laid to the root of the tree. In the Old Testament, it was only the fruit.

By the fruit came out, they'd be punished. The root was never touched. In other words, you know the Ten Commandments, don't murder.

If you murdered, you'd be punished. But the root was hatred. People murder somebody because they hate them.

So the root was not touched. You could have hatred to a person, intense hatred, go around speaking evil about him all over the country. But so long as you didn't kill him, you were a good Jew.

You could take part in the Passover and the feast and be considered a good person. You could even be a priest. Because the fruit never came out.

But now John the Baptist says things are changing. We are coming into the kingdom of heaven where fruit is not the main thing. Root, the axe is laid to the root.

We can say in the Old Testament, scissoring was put to the fruit. The bad murder, cut off. Adultery, cut off.

Stealing, cut off. But what about the root? Lusting after a woman in the heart, that's the root. John the Baptist says now the axe is being laid to the root.

And if a tree does not bring forth good fruit, it's going to be cut down and thrown into the fire. So repentance is an axe being laid to the root. It is not an external, okay, I've decided to stop killing people.

I've decided to stop picking pockets. And I've decided to stop stealing. I've decided to stop committing adultery.

That's all old covenant. You can be a good Jew, not a Christian. For a Christian, repentance must go to the root.

Lord, I have lived a self-centered life. I have lived for myself. I want to turn from that.

You say, Brother Zach, that type of repentance is not preached. I know. Paul said that in 2 Timothy 4. People will not want to hear it.

They want preachers who will tickle their ears and say, have you given up your drinking and your gambling and your smoking? Okay, come. So why did Jesus say the gate and the way to life is very narrow? If the gate was only, don't murder, don't steal, don't commit adultery, don't gamble, don't smoke. That's a very wide gate.

There are millions of non-Christians who can come in. But the gate is very narrow, which says you shouldn't get angry. You shouldn't lust after women in your heart.

You must speak the truth. You must love your enemies. You must not live a self-centered life.

I'm not saying you must be perfect. You must be willing to go this way, willingness. The question is not whether you've given up all anger.

No. Do you want to give it up? The want to, want to, that is the mark of repentance. If you don't want to, I would say you have not repented.

I've often said this to people. Supposing you are a person who really wanted to give up your anger and all your life you battled it. Every time you fell, you would apologize and ask forgiveness and but you were still falling.

Even after 20 years of wanting to give up anger, you were still falling. You were still falling but you were fighting, repenting, apologizing and you die and go to heaven. God will credit you with, you got victory over anger.

Promise you it'll be like that because where there is an intention, God sees the intention of the heart. I'll show you a verse which proves that. Turn with me to 2nd Corinthians.

It's a very liberating verse. It's helped me tremendously many times. See a lot of people say that we are preaching salvation only for those whose lives are perfect.

That's garbage. We are preaching salvation for those who have a want to live this life. Sincerely want to, not play the fool.

2nd Corinthians 8.12 says, if the willingness is present, the willingness, the readiness, it is accepted according to what a man has, not what he does not have. He did not have that victory. No, it's okay.

But was there a willingness? Let me paraphrase that in relation to anger or lusting after women or anything. Was there a willingness, an eager desire to be completely free from anger, to completely free from lusting after women, but you didn't have it yet. You will not be judged according to what you don't have, but that readiness.

See here it's applying to money and saying, if you read the context, he's telling people to give some money for the poor believers and Paul never asked money for himself, but he said, please give some money to the poor believers in Jerusalem. And here's a man who really wants to give, but he's so poor that he can just about, his earnings are just enough to keep his family together, pay the rent and look after the food, the eggs, meats, the children's food and all that, that he wants so desperately to give to the Lord, but he has hardly anything. And he feels so bad because some rich people can give so much.

I wish I could give like that. The Lord says, don't worry. I see your heart's desire.

I see that you don't have much to give, doesn't matter. Your heart's desire that you want to give and if you had, you would give so much. I accept it as if you have given so much, more than that person.

You remember the story of the widow who put in something like two paisas or some small amount, two coins into the box and Jesus is watching it. It says Jesus was sitting beside the offering box watching it. He's sitting beside the offering box today also.

You don't see him, but he's there and he's not watching how much you put in. That's the point of that story, but how you put in. The Pharisees may have put in that tithe, but tithe from such a huge millionaire is nothing.

He's got 90 percent, many more millions to live on. It's not a great offering, but when a person gives with sacrifice, who wants to give more but has so little, that is what Jesus values. So what I learned from that even in relation to sin and everything is God sees the desire of the heart more than the action and that has a reverse consequence also.

You can do a very good action and your motive may be bad. For example, preaching is a very good thing, preaching the word of God, but most people, most preachers today in the world preach to get money or honor, fame, position in their church or something like that. All are evil in God's eyes, but you listen to the message.

Oh, what a wonderful message. I know a lot of CFC people who listen to these some of these television preachers, men and women, who they say, wow, Brother Zach, what a message. Yeah, yeah, go to the internet and see how that preacher makes money.

You'll never want to listen to that person again. I know people who have traveled long distance to listen to some of these preachers in India, because they're such fantastic preachers. Have you ever found out how these people make money? You're not bothered by that.

I'm not fooled by all this. When I listen to that, I don't need to check the internet. When I listen to a person now, I can make out from his his or her mannerism and the way they speak.

I can make out, is this a woman of God or a man of God? Is this a humble person or not? I tell you 99% of them are not. God looks at the heart. You must never forget that.

Repentance is from the heart. The axe is laid to the root of the tree. We are not living in the days of the scissors.

But many Christians are. Oh, it sounds so nice. It's so correct doctrine and they are encouraging so many people and so many people.

I see 10,000 people listening to this lady or this man. Yeah, yeah, but can't you discern the spirit there? That person will never lead you to godliness. That I'll tell you.

That person will lead you to a nice psychologically good reformed life on the outside where you'll get some honor for your Christianity. I don't want that. I want an axe to be laid to the root.

I'll tell you what the root is. Somebody once asked Jesus in Matthew 22. So you need to get repentance from here.

Matthew 22. Somebody asked him in verse 36. Teacher, Matthew 22, 36.

What is the great or the greatest commandment in the law? Now if you had gone to a Jewish person and asked that question. See the Jews don't go around committing the God-fearing people, didn't commit murder, adultery and all that. No use mentioning those things.

You must keep the Sabbath day holy. You go and ask some of our seven-day Adventist friends today. What is the greatest commandment in the law? You must keep the Sabbath day.

They're living in the old covenant. One of them, one of their leaders supposedly had a vision of the tablet, 10 commandments tablets and a light shining on the fourth commandment. Keep the Sabbath.

All a deception. I don't believe in all these visions. But when they asked Jesus, they expected him to say Sabbath.

He said no. He didn't even mention Sabbath. He said here is the great commandment in the law.

The great and number one commandment. You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, that is your mind, emotion and your mind. All your emotion, all your mind, all your will and all your heart must be to love God.

This is the first and foremost and he says I cannot stop there. You asked me only for one but when I show you a coin, I must show you the other side of the coin also. There's something written on the other side of this coin and I cannot just show you one side.

The other side is you must love your neighbor as you as you love yourself. The entire law and the entire law and the prophets is in verse 40 is an expression for the Old Testament. The entire Old Testament hangs or depends on these two commandments.

The entire Old Testament can be summed up in two commandments, Jesus said. That is the law. You don't need 10 commandments, just these two.

So when the axe is laid to the root, you know it is disobedience to these two commandments that is the root of sin. You must always see it. You see if you get your repentance right, you'll get your salvation right.

The repentance means 180 degree turnaround but I need to know what I'm turning around from. If some preacher tells me I will turn around from drinking, getting drunk, I don't need to turn around. I have never got drunk in my life.

I must give up smoking. I never smoked in my life. So what does 180 degree turn mean? Stealing, I never stole in my life.

What does 180 degree turn mean? Gamble, I never gambled in my life. So what I mean there are a lot of non-Christians who say what is your repentance? What are you telling me to give up? All these external things, turn around, turn around from the fact that you don't love God with all your heart and your mind and your emotions. There are other things you love more than God, primarily your own self, your money, your job, your house, your family, your father, your mother and some other things you love, maybe your children, but you don't love God supremely.

That is repentance, the axe to the root. And the second thing is to love your neighbor as yourself. How do I know whether I love my neighbor as myself? That's a good phrase to think about.

I'll show you one verse that helps. Matthew chapter 7 and verse 12, many people call this the golden rule. However you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way or treat others in the same way you want to be treated yourself.

That is how you love your neighbor as yourself, practically. Do you like other people gossiping about you, saying evil about you behind your back? No. If they've got something against you, okay, let them tell you to your face.

Then they can talk about that to others. But if they don't tell you that to your face, would you like that? You don't like other people speaking evil about you behind your back, you also don't do it. That is repentance.

Whatever you don't want other people to do to you, don't do it to them. Treat other people exactly the same way you want to be treated. Let me ask you, do you like somebody yelling at you in anger? No.

And don't yell at your wife like that. That is repentance. Don't yell at your husband like that.

Do you like to be yelled at like that yourself? You definitely say no. And don't yell at anybody else like that. So if you really search your heart, you'll see how in many many cases you're not really repentant.

We love ourselves so much. You know young men when they want to get married, they say I've messed up my life, I fooled around with so many women, but when I get married I must marry a girl who's never messed up with any man. Uh-huh.

What a nice fellow you are. You messed up so much with so many girls and you want a girl who's never been with a boy. You know what that's called? Utter selfishness.

And you think you're a Christian. That's amazing. You know we don't see ourselves.

You hear something like this and you suddenly say, hey now I see myself. I hope you do. I'm not saying that you should go and marry a prostitute.

That's not what I'm saying. Don't misunderstand me. I'm saying why do you look like that? Isn't that an evidence of your utter selfish nature where you want to dump yourself on a pure girl? I've come across cases like this.

People have fooled around with so many girls. When they come to marriage, no no no that girl I don't want. She's fooled around with others.

What about you? If people knew your past, by all means go and marry a good girl but don't have this attitude as if you're such a holy person. And you know what? They've got a religious language for it. My past is under the blood.

It's under the blood. Praise God. God doesn't look at my past anymore.

What about that girl who's messed up? Is God looking at her past? No. Then why you make such a condition? I'm just telling you, showing you, we are absolute hypocrites. And if you acknowledge that hypocrisy, there's hope for you.

But if you don't, you act very holy. My past is all under the blood. I believe in justification.

God does not remember my past anymore. But when I look at this person, I want to find out all about that person's past. You know there's a lot of hypocrisy among Christians and that is why they never grow spiritually.

I'm not saying that you should have lived a pure life. One of the holiest women, one of the holiest women in Jesus' time was an ex-prostitute, Mary Magdalene. Not only a prostitute, she had seven demons in her.

Why do I say she was one of the holiest women of her time? Because when God decided who should be the first person to see the resurrected Jesus Christ, God did not choose his mother Mary, Jesus' mother Mary. He chose Mary Magdalene. He did not choose Peter.

Mary Magdalene's past was under the blood of Christ completely. So I believe in forgiveness. I believe in our past being blotted out.

All I say is, treat other people the way God has treated you. That's all I'm saying. We believe in complete blotting out of our past sin.

I'm thankful for that. I don't live in condemnation over my past. I wouldn't be able to come near God at all.

So why do I emphasize repentance so much? Because I believe the main reason many people are not really born again. They got a half conversion. The foundation is all shaky because they didn't lay a proper foundation.

Now I'm not talking about perfection. I'm talking about want to. That's all.

I said that in the beginning. Do you want to love Jesus more than everything and every person on earth? I want to say to you, if not, you have not repented. As far as I'm concerned, you haven't.

Do you want to? Not have you done it or you will be able to do it. Do you want to? Want to, want to. Do you want to treat other people the way you like to be treated yourself? That's all.

You may not succeed in doing it for 50 years. Okay. I don't believe I have come to that level of perfection that Jesus had where he could treat everybody with perfect love.

But I'm pressing on. It's far better than it was even a few years ago. But want to was there from the beginning.

That's how I know I repented. So we're not talking about perfection. We're asking, do you want to love Jesus with all your heart? Do you want to treat other people the way you like to be treated yourself? Then you're ready to be a Christian.

Then you have really repented. And the other thing required for salvation, repentance, is faith. Repentance and faith.

See, Paul said that in Acts chapter 20. I want to show it to you all in scripture so that you have no doubt in your mind. Acts 20, he said, everywhere I go, when he talks about Jews and Greeks, he's saying the whole world.

In the Jewish mind, in the Jewish mind, there were only two groups of people in the world. Jews and non-Jews were called Greeks. Just like in many upper caste people, they say there are only two people in the world, upper caste and all others.

That's how it is. So Jews felt like that. Jews and all non-Jews.

So in Acts 20 verse 21, he says Jews and Greeks, which means the whole world. I solemnly, seriously testify to all people in the world, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That's it.

Like the two wires that make electricity to flow. You know at a switch, in any electric switch, it's just two electric wires that are kept very close to each other. You put on the switch, the two wires touch.

That's how the light comes on, fan comes on, everything comes on. But you can't do it with one wire. Electricity can never flow with just one wire.

But as soon as the two wires touch, light comes on, fans come on. So repentance and faith by itself, no use. You can have repentance by yourself, you'll never be saved.

You can have faith by itself, you'll never be saved. Now today, unfortunately, a lot of people are preaching faith by itself and that's why many people are not saved. Equally, repentance by itself will not save people.

But repentance with faith, and faith means more than just intellectual faith. Turn with me to James, because we want to get faith right. We don't want to get it, my whole future depends on this, so I don't want to get it wrong.

I want to be sure the medicine I'm taking is the right medicine. Not that someone's, it sounds the same name, but it's not the same name. I have to ask the pharmacy, is it the same name which the doctor has written down? And he says, no, it sounds alike.

I don't want it to sound alike, must be the same. Faith. And James says, chapter 2 verse 14, what is the use, my brothers, if a man says he has faith, but no works to show his faith? Can that faith save him? No.

Verse 26, just as the body without the spirit is dead. In other words, he has a body with 10 fingers and 10 toes, but there's no breath in his body, he's dead. Like a dead man, you count all his fingers and toes, they're all there.

But he's not there, he's not there. So when he says, there can be a faith, which is just like a dead man, all the doctrines are correct. I fear that can happen to a lot of people in CFC.

The doctrines are all correct. 10 fingers are there, 10 toes, 2 eyes, 2 ears, like a dead man, but there's no breath. It says faith without works is dead.

So we need a faith which produces some result, like repentance without works, John the Baptist wouldn't accept. So what is this faith with works? I call it faith in the head and faith in the heart. Faith in the head is knowing something to be true.

2 plus 2 is 4, okay. Jesus died for my sins, okay. Jesus rose from the dead, 3 plus 3 is 6. It's in the same category.

Jesus went to heaven, 4 plus 4 is 8. Jesus is coming back also, 5 plus 5 is 10. You don't become any more saved by knowing 2 plus 2 or 3 plus 3 or 4 plus 4 than believing Jesus died for my sins, rose again, gone to heaven, is coming back. Where are the works? Where is the resulting committing of yourself to that person? And the best illustration which the Bible also uses is marriage.

It says we are married to Christ. You know where that's mentioned in Romans chapter 7? It says we are married to him who was raised from the dead. Romans 7.4, we are joined or married to him who was raised from the dead.

It's a marriage, a joining, where Christ becomes our bridegroom in one sense and married in our spirit. Okay, so what does this marriage mean? Think for example a marriage going on here and I ask this girl, do you believe in this man? What am I asking? Are you willing to commit yourself to this man for the rest of your life? Are you willing to change your last name and take his name from today onwards for the rest of your life? Are you willing to be totally true to him, be loyal to him, never go after anybody else for the rest of your life? And she says, well that's asking too much. I mean, we think about it.

Okay, let's postpone this wedding then. That is faith. I promise I commit to him and to nobody else for the rest of my life.

That is a faith with works. But if a girl says, I think he's a good guy. He's a very upright person.

He's a very honest person. I think he'll make a good husband. I don't want to commit myself to him.

She's got a very good opinion about him and like you got a very good opinion about Jesus Christ, but you don't commit yourself to him. There's no marriage. A girl can praise a man to the skies.

He's wonderful, so considerate, so kind, so helpful. He does so much of work in CFC. They're still not married.

It's admiration and a lot of people admire Christ, but they're not committed. Faith is that which commits yourself to that person and say, Lord, I'm yours, not just for one or two days. I say, isn't it too much to ask for the rest of my life? Isn't that how you got married? Didn't you get married and say, for the rest of my life, I'm committed to this person? Do you want to think about other people after that and wonder after others? Then you're an adulterer, adulteress.

You're committed to one person. This is faith. It's a heart faith.

It's not just believing he's a good person and he can save me and all that. It's a committing of oneself. When you do that, it's an amazing thing that happens.

It happened to me 57 years ago and it happens to everyone who's really born again. The Spirit of Jesus Christ comes into you. That's being born again.

The Holy Spirit comes in and you are born again. Now you may be filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit much later, but the Spirit comes in the moment you're born again. That is the proof that you're born again.

It says in Romans chapter 8 and verse 9, the last part, if you have not received the Spirit of Christ, you don't even belong to him. You don't belong to him if the Spirit of Christ does not come in. And it says in Ephesians and chapter 1. It's good to see these things from scripture so you don't think it's just my telling you these things.

In Ephesians chapter 1, it says here in verse 13, in whom, in him rather, Ephesians 1.13, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel, the good news of your salvation, having believed or as soon as you believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit, a promise. Something happened. The Spirit of Christ came in.

See, many people say you've got to ask Jesus to come into your heart first and the Holy Spirit to come in later. You can't do that. You can't separate because Jesus is in heaven.

He hasn't come to this earth for 2,000 years. When you say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, who actually comes in? Does a person come into your heart? Yes. Not Jesus.

He's in heaven. It's his Spirit. When Jesus was on earth 2,000 years ago, you could invite him into your house.

Many people like Mary and Martha said, come into my house and Jesus would come into their house. But when Jesus went up to heaven, his presence was replaced by the Holy Spirit. He said, just like I was your comforter, now another comforter will come.

The Holy Spirit has come in. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is on the earth today. And when you invite Jesus into your heart, it's the Holy Spirit who comes in and you're born again.

That's why it's called born of the Holy Spirit. Born of water, which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Born of the Holy Spirit.

Don't confuse that with baptizing the Holy Spirit, which is being filled. Baptism means immersed, where you get empowered to live the Christian life. There's a confusion on this and I don't want you to remain in that confusion.

The moment you receive Christ into your heart, the Spirit has come in. But many do not surrender themselves. Some people are filled with the Spirit as soon as they're born again, because they surrender everything.

God is patient. Some people take a little time. He must be filled with the Holy Spirit too.

That's later. That we can talk about later. But I'm talking about being born again.

Now the Spirit comes in and you know something has happened. It's like a very important visitor has come to stay in your house. You can't be in that house as if nothing happened.

A very important dignitary has come and is staying in your guest room. You'll be aware of it all the time. It's really like that.

Christ has come in and you can gradually listen to him and hear him speak to you. Even without the Bible, for 1400 years people did not have a Bible at home, Christians. But they could still hear because the Holy Spirit was there.

And of course we have the Bible. We can hear it even more clearly. Then we are sure.

That's why I never tell a person you are saved. I say that's the Holy Spirit's job to tell you you're a child of God. And the Holy Spirit will tell you you are a child of God.

You must know that. The same way with being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must tell you you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's very important. I believe that's the next step to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But we don't want to go into that right now.

But be sure that you're born again. And when Christ comes into your heart, the devil has no place there. There are some people who say that the demon can also come into a believer.

That person has not really been converted then. They say we've seen demons being cast out of believers. I've never seen that in my life.

I've seen many demons cast out, but never from a believer. If a so-called believer has a demon, that fellow was never really born again. Because a demon and Christ can never live in the same heart.

So don't believe those lies. When Christ comes in, and if you're really sincere, I mean, remember, I'm not talking about perfection. I'm talking about want to.

All that I said today, do you want it? Not do you have it? Do you want it? Do you want to? You can be born again right now. You say, Lord, I want to love you more than everything and everyone on this earth. Even you young people, children who have grown up in CFC.

Do you want to love Jesus with all your heart? Do you want to live according to his word? Do you want to treat other people the way you want them to treat you? You're ready to be born again right now. I'm not saying you'll be perfect. No, you'll make mistakes.

Like a child learning to walk, you'll fall down, get up, fall down, get up. One day you'll be walking. Even then, we can fall at any age, but we've learned to walk.

So that's another thing. So if you want to, and you believe you want to commit yourself to Christ, I want you to do that. Any of you who are not sure of your life, I want you to do that this morning, right now, so that there'll never be a doubt in your life again that you have become a child of God.

And I want to say that now I'm clear of the blood of all men here. Christ died for all your sins, every sin, and you don't have to confess all your sins. It is impossible.

There are so many millions of them. You have to come like the prodigal son came to the father and said, Father, I have sinned. He didn't make a list of all his sins.

Don't let anybody tell you you have to make a list of all your sins before you're converted. Nobody can do it. I just came to Jesus and said, Lord, I'm a sinner.

I've hurt you in so many ways, but I want you to forgive me. I believe you died for all my sins, and I hate my sin. I believe you rose again.

You're living. Otherwise, I can't talk to you. Come into my heart and live in me.

And it happened. Then ask God to give you an assurance. So everyone who wants it, I'm not going to force you.

God loves a cheerful giver. I want you to make that decision today so that your life will turn around and you will really see a difference in the days to come. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

So now we're not going to rush through this. I want you to bow your heads, close your eyes and stop looking around. Be concerned about yourself alone.

Now, many of you are already sure that Christ has come into your heart. Fine. God bless you.

But there are a number of people here who have never done this, never asked Christ to come into your life, were never sure. And maybe what you heard today, you say, boy, what a high standard. I cannot reach it.

That's not my question. My question is, do you want to be like the Bible says? Do you want to love Jesus more than everyone and everything on earth? Do you want to give up every bad habit that God hates in your life? It may take you 10 years to give up some of those habits. Never mind.

Do you want to give it up today? You don't have to wait till you actually give it up. But you want to. It's all the Lord Christ.

That's repentance. I want to. My mind has turned around.

Do you feel bad about the way you've treated other people in an evil, selfish way? Do you want to? I'm not saying you'll be perfect tomorrow. Do you want to treat others the way you want to be treated yourself? Then I want to tell you in Jesus name, you have repented. You're ready to receive Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth through his Holy Spirit right now into your heart.

Open your heart and say, Lord Jesus, I don't understand everything. My mind is not so clever, but my heart is open, Lord. My heart is completely open for you.

I really want to give up every wrong way that hurts you, that you died for in my life. I believe you're the only one who died for the sins of the world, and I receive you right now. Lord Jesus, risen Lord, come into my heart through your spirit right now and make me a child of God.

Give me that assurance that the Holy Spirit will tell me in my heart, God is your father today. You can call him daddy. You can look up to heaven because you've got a daddy there now.

Some of you, your earthly fathers died. You have a father now. You have a daddy in heaven who loves you more than any earthly daddy.

Some of you don't have good fathers, but you've got a good father in heaven. Why will you wait and not yield? I pray that every single person who listens to this will be born again, become a child of God determined from the day onwards that by the grace of God, you will keep this want to every day. Perfection may take 50 years in your life.

Overcoming some habits may take a long time, but the want to will never go away. Say, Lord, this want to will never go away from my life. I want to love Jesus with all my heart more than everything and everyone on earth.

I want to give up every habit that hurts God in my life. I want to love others and treat them the way I want to be treated myself. I want to, Lord.

I really mean it. I believe even a prostitute or a drug addict or a murderer or a crook or a hypocrite or a thief can say that right now. That doesn't take time.

So don't look at how long will I take to get rid of this habit. That will come later. Right now, I'm only asking you, do you want to? Christ receives you if you want to.

Not only will He forgive every sin you committed in your life, His promise is, I will not remember all that you have done. What a wonderful promise. I will not expose to others all the evil you did in your past life.

Be merciful to other people also, just like I have been merciful to you. Don't be hard on others. I was not hard on you.

Take a little time to let this sink into your heart that something has happened in the hearts of some of you today, even little children here. You understood the message? Someone came into your heart. Christ, the Lord of Heaven.

Your life will never be the same. A baby doesn't become a man overnight. For a long time, he can't even speak or walk or talk or anything.

But he started the journey the day he was born. You've started a journey. You still don't know how to pray.

You still don't know how to walk or talk. It's like a baby, but you've been born. And it's just a matter of time before you learn how to talk and walk, as Jesus wants you to.

It'll happen. Believe Him. Heavenly Father, I think of many people sitting here.

I believe your Holy Spirit is working in their life right now. Names are written in heaven. Lives are being changed.

Thank you. Let them never doubt your Word. Let them never go by their feelings, but the sincerity with which they turn to you today.

Yes, Lord, please encourage everybody here. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Ask the Lord to give you an assurance in your heart based on His Word. One verse. Remember this one verse.

Doesn't matter if you don't remember the reference. John 6.37. Jesus says, If anyone comes to me, I will not reject him. That's the word that helped me 57 years ago.

I never doubted it. Anyone comes to me, I will not cast him out. I will not reject anyone.

I said, Lord, I've come to you. I believe that you have not cast me out. You say that to the Lord.

John 6.37. I believe you have not cast me out because I sincerely came to you today. I trust you. Believe me.

My dear young people, children, something will happen in your life from today onwards. Like they say, Heaven came down. What happened to you? God bless you all.

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