

(Christian Leadership) Secure in the Love of God

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon highlights the transformative power of understanding God's love as a Father in shaping Christian leadership and personal identity.

Duration: 1:02:35

Scripture: Matthew 6:4, John 7:4, Romans 3:23, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 4:29

Topics: "Gods Love", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the difference between the law and grace in the gospel. He uses a poem to illustrate that while the law commands us to run, it does not provide us with the means to do so. On the other hand, the gospel bids us to fly and gives us wings to do so. The preacher highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in lifting us higher and enabling us to fulfill God's plan for our lives. He also emphasizes the importance of knowing God as our Father and finding our security in that relationship. The sermon encourages young people to understand that God has a plan for their lives and that His plan is always better than any plan they could make for themselves. The preacher concludes by stating that knowing God as Father is the foundation for progress in the Christian life, victory, and building the body of Christ.

Transcript

In John's Gospel, chapter 1, here it says, one of the purposes with which Jesus came to earth, most Christians know only of the fact that He came to die for our sins. But in all the years before He died, when He was on earth, it says here, in John chapter 1, verse 18, no man has seen God at any time. The only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Before Jesus came to earth, people did not know God as the Father. You never see people in the Old Testament calling Him Father. He was a great and terrible God to be feared.

And the greatest revelation that Jesus gave to His disciples was that God was their Father. How He labored to make them understand this, to find their security in knowing God as the Father. And they didn't always respond the way He wanted to that revelation.

And I believe in our life too, this is the revelation He seeks to give us. I believe it's on this foundation alone that we can progress in the Christian life, that we can come to a life of victory, and that we can build the

body of Christ. I believe it is in this revelation of knowing God as Father that we find the answer to many, many of our problems, if not all of them.

Because when we don't know Him as Father, we have a caricature of what God is like. And the devil is always there, he's always trying to portray a wrong picture of God before us. I know the years in my life when I felt insecure, inferior, after I was born again.

And the thing that changed me from an insecure person who is always trying to create a good impression before people, before other believers, into one who was secure, was this one revelation that God loved me as much as He loved Jesus Christ. If you were to ask me what is the greatest truth I have discovered through forty years of being a born-again believer, and through forty years of studying this book, the Bible, it is this simple truth that God loves me as He loved Jesus. And that's, as far as I know, it's mentioned in only one verse in the whole Bible, and that's in John 17 and verse 23, where Jesus in His high priestly prayer says, I in them and Thou in me, and they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send me, and it's loved them even as Thou didst love me.

You know, this whole prayer is a prayer for unity. And when we look at Christendom today, we can see how that prayer of Jesus is apparently not being answered. We don't see Christendom united.

But here in John chapter 17 we see the burden of Jesus' heart, and it comes out of knowing that the Father loves us as He loved Jesus. Now, I find it almost impossible to be able to explain this, but I believe this is the greatest revelation that we need, because when I saw it, it changed my life completely. It delivered me from wanting to impress people.

It delivered me from competing with others. It took away jealousy. It took away trying to compare myself with others, and all the problems that so many Christians have, which bring disunity.

Just this truth that God loved me as He loved Jesus. And if that is true, I believe it's true, like it says here, that the world may know that You loved them even as You loved me. And from that I learned that the way God planned and cared for Jesus' life is the way He planned and cares for me.

And I think of the many times in the Gospel of Matthew where it says that this happened so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. He was born in Bethlehem so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which is written in Micah that He was to be born there. And then He grew up in Nazareth.

And we read in the last verse of Matthew chapter 2 that so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, that He shall be called a Nazarene. And then when He went to Galilee, it says in Matthew chapter 4 that that was so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, that the light should shine into that land. And right through, in different situations, you find there was a specific plan that God had prophesied through the prophets for the life of Jesus and everything right up to His dying on the cross, even when He hung on the cross and He said, I thirst.

It says in John 19, that was also so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. There was such a perfect planning in the life of Jesus. God had planned it so exactly for Him where He was to be born.

He couldn't be born anywhere. He had to be born in Bethlehem. And I believe He had to be born in a stable.

That was part of God's plan. He couldn't live anywhere. He had to live in Nazareth.

He couldn't take a holiday in Rome because that wasn't part of God's plan for Him. His life was so perfectly planned because the Father loved Him. And when I realized that the Father loved me as much as He loved Jesus, I believed that He planned my life too in exactly the same way.

And that took a lot of insecurity out of my life. When I was a young Christian, I used to look... I was a very shy, reserved, introverted type of person. I still am really.

But I used to look at these other people who were extroverts, who could slap people on the back and say, Hi, how are you? And make friends with people so easily. And I couldn't do that. I wished I could be like them, but I wasn't.

And when I realized that God made no mistake in making my temperament the way He made it, that it was He who determined the color of my skin. It was He who determined which country I was to be born in. He who determined every last detail of my life.

I wasn't born just anywhere accidentally. It was as exactly planned as Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. It was because He loved me as He loves Jesus.

And I realized that every little thing, it was He who gave me my natural abilities and everything, because He had a specific plan and purpose for my life. And I didn't have to envy anybody else. If I had become like somebody else, I would ruin the plan God had for my life, which could only be fulfilled through the particular gifts and natural gifts and temperament and personality that He had given me.

That brought rest into my life. It delivered me from envying other people. It delivered me from wanting to be like other people.

It delivered me from competition with other people. And it brought perfect rest. Just this truth that God loves me exactly as He loved Jesus.

And as He planned Jesus' life, He planned my life. I got converted when I was 19 and I was baptized when I was 21. And one of the first things that came home to me at that time was that God had a plan for my life.

And if I submitted little by little, just like the pillar of cloud, led the Israelites day by day, God didn't give them a map for the whole wilderness and saying, this is the way you got to go. I mean, that would be a more efficient way of doing it. But God doesn't do things in efficient ways as human beings think.

He's got, He's teaching us to live by faith and He doesn't give us a map of our whole future. He didn't give me a map of the whole future. We still don't know what lies ahead of us.

It's just like the Israelites went to the wilderness. But I realized one thing when I was a young man that if I submitted day by day to what God showed me and followed the leading of that pillar of cloud, I would finally fulfill God's plan without a doubt. And that helped me so much.

I'm glad I didn't discover that when I was 40 or 50. I'm glad I discovered that right at the beginning as a young man. That's why I have a great burden for young people.

I wish I could drill into the minds of all young people one simple truth, that God's got a plan for your life. He's made a plan for your life and you can never make a better plan than the one He's made for you. It's impossible.

And the devil's always trying to tell us that if you give your life to God completely, He'll mess it up and He'll do so many things and you won't be happy. Don't ask God as to what job you should do because He'll pick out the most difficult job in the world and tell you to do that. Don't ask God which girl you should marry.

He'll pick out the ugliest girl in the world and tell you to marry her. You know, this is the picture that the devil has painted of God in so many young people. Otherwise, why wouldn't every young person surrender everything to Jesus? Because they're afraid.

Why was that young person, that rich young ruler, reluctant to give all his money like Jesus told him to give it all away? Because he thought God was there to mess up his life. God was there to make him poor. And there are so many commandments in the Bible which Christians are reluctant to obey because they feel God has come to mess up their life.

God's come to spoil their fun. God's come to take away. They don't realize that if only they yielded, if only they surrendered, they could have the most fulfilling life that any human being could ever have.

I thank God I believed it when I was 21. Today, after nearly 40 years, I can testify that I could not have planned my life better than the way God planned it. But He never showed me what my 40 years of my life is going to be like.

He showed it day by day. And He'll show it to you day by day. You know, when Satan came to Eve, we see that he tempted her to eat of the fruit.

But back of it was this little thought that he put into Eve's mind. God doesn't really love you. Because if He loved you, He would allow you to eat of that fruit.

Why has He not given you that which is so attractive and which appeals to your senses? Because He doesn't really love you. You know, that's the way He comes to us even today. Why hasn't God answered that prayer of yours? Because He doesn't really love you.

Why hasn't He given you that other thing which you wanted so badly? Because He doesn't really love you. Why hasn't He made you like this or like that other person? Because He doesn't really love you. And it's only when Eve believed that lie first in her mind.

Yeah, it's possible. God doesn't really love me. It's only then that she sinned and took that fruit.

So her failure was not primarily a failure of of disobedience. It was primarily a failure of faith. Her failure was she did not believe that God loved her.

If she had believed that, can you think of what the result would have been? She would have told Satan, well yeah, it looks as though God doesn't love me. I don't know why He hasn't allowed me to eat of this lovely fruit. But Satan, there must be a very good reason which I don't understand.

God's wisdom is greater than mine. My mind is so small like a little cup I can't explain all that. But one thing I'm absolutely sure of, Satan, God loves me.

And if He's told me not to eat something, it must be for my very best even if I can't understand it. You know, that's the way to overcome temptation. There are so many things that God's told us not to do.

Can you say, when Satan tempts you so strongly, why don't you yield? Why don't you enjoy yourself and do that? Can you say to him, well, I don't know why God's forbidden it. It looks okay to me. But there must be some very good reason.

One thing I know, He loves me. And it is His love that's forbidden me from taking part of that. And in the same way when He tells us to do something which looks difficult, to say, well, it's God's love.

See, holiness is a word that frightens a lot of Christians. I don't know why. When I didn't understand it, I was frightened about myself to be holy all the time.

Boy, what a burden. And... I want to ask you, brothers. Do you get frightened by the word health? Healthy. 100% healthy. Healthy 365 days of the year. You're scared.

Oh, healthy. You're me. Why are we not scared of health? We know health is good for us.

What are we scared of? We're scared of sickness. How many of you want just a little bit of sickness? You know that holiness is health. That's all it is.

Why are we afraid of it? Because the devils fooled us for years. Holiness is an expression of God's love for us. If you can see it like that.

Think of my little child had leprosy. And I take him to a doctor. And I tell the doctor, well, don't heal him completely, just keep a little bit.

It'll keep him humble. There are people who say, you know, I need to sin once in a while, then only I'll be humble. Well, I tell the doctor, keep him a little leprosy there so that he remains humble, so he doesn't become proud because he's so healthy.

No father tells the doctor to do that. No, we want him to be completely free. And if he's got tuberculosis as well, we want him to be completely free of that as well.

I mean, if your child had tuberculosis, how free do you want him to be from tuberculosis? 90%? Would that make you happy? 99%? Or 100%? Now I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, how free do you want to be from sin? 90%? Are you happy? Maybe some of you got 65% and you're happy already. Would you be happy if your child was delivered 65% from tuberculosis? How are you happy when you're 65% free from sin? You say, well, it was better than it was before. Maybe it is.

But are you happy there? Holiness is health. Sin is sickness. And the devil's blinded the minds of believers to fear holiness and to get all types of explanations as to why sin is necessary to keep us humble and very stupid arguments like that.

When God calls us to be holy, it's the same desire that I have for my little children that they should be completely healthy. They should be free from all sickness. If they have a little fever, that concerns me.

I don't want them to have a fever. I don't want them to have a cold. If they start sneezing, I wonder if they're sick.

Aren't you like that? But God's like that too. That's the care God has for us. His love is so great that He wants us to be totally pure.

He wants us to be free from dirty thoughts. Not 65%. Not 90%.

100%. And if the doctor says, well, it's going to take time, I say, let it take time, but I want them to be free 100%. He wants us to be free from anger 100%.

Now that's not my word. Let me read it to you in Ephesians chapter 4. Talking about our speech. It says in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 28.

Let him who steals, steal no longer. Do we understand that? How free do you want to be from stealing? 80%? 90%? Or 100%? Would you be happy if you were just stealing 10% of the time? Would you have a good conscience? No. I don't think there is a single person sitting here who would have a good conscience if you were stealing even 5% of the time or 1% of the time.

Okay. Let's go to the next verse. Verse 29.

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth. What's the difference between that and the previous verse? Are you happy when your speech is 90% good? How is it we don't get convicted about a few words that are unkind that come out from our mouth as we get convicted if we stole just a little bit from someone? It's because the devil has made us selective in reading God's word. We take some things and say, yeah, that's important.

We go to the next verse and say, that's not important. Let's go further down. Verse 31.

Let all bitterness, all wrath, all anger, all clamor, all slander be put away from you. Well, if we put away all anger from our life, how much will be left? Are we scared of that? Let all leprosy, let all tuberculosis and let all AIDS and let all every other sickness be put away from us. Are we scared of that? That's what we want.

That's exactly what God wants for us. Holiness is an expression of God's love. Think how a father and mother will take a child to the hospital and sit with it and long for it to be perfectly healthy.

That's how God longs that all of us should be healthy, free from sin, free from sin in our look, in the way we look, the way we speak and every area of our life and personality. And the devil has succeeded in portraying holiness as a burden, as something which some strange fanatical people speak about. People are afraid of the word perfection.

I know it's true in my country. I have been criticized for 25 years by almost every single group of Christians for preaching one simple verse, let us press on to perfection. I say, well, it doesn't make a difference.

God's told me to preach it and I'm going to preach it till Jesus comes again. Let us press on to perfection in every area. I want my relationship with my wife to be better this year than it's ever been in the last 32 years.

Otherwise, I'm not pressing on to perfection. I want my speech to be kinder this year than it's ever been in all my life. That's pressing on to perfection.

I want to be more detached from the love of money this year than I've ever been in all my 40 years of my Christian life. Otherwise, I'm not pressing on to perfection. To press on to perfection is to go further than I've gone so far in every area of my life.

I don't reach the top of the mountain in one day. It's pressing on. It's pressing on to perfect health.

Think of the craze that there is for health in this country, United States particularly. See people jogging so that their cholesterol level goes down and they're careful with what they eat. Even in the tinned foods, it's written outside how much of this and how much of that so that you know what you're eating.

People are so careful. Why is it they're not so careful about sin? Which destroys. Why is it believers who should have light on this are not careful about sin? How is it a person can have a lust with his eyes and sleep peacefully that night? How is that possible? How is it a person can speak an angry word to his wife and not weep on his pillow that night? I can't understand it.

Can't understand it. Jesus said, Blessed are those who mourn. They shall be comforted.

When you learn to weep for sin, you'll get victory pretty soon. When was the last time your pillow got wet with your tears? Because you grieved God in some way during that day. We can argue about doctrines, but it's those who mourn who are going to be strengthened, who are going to be overcomers, who are going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who are going to experience perfect health in every area of their life.

I want to encourage you, my brothers, let your laughter be turned into mourning. There's a great need for mourning. The Apostle Paul said, I do my best, he said in Acts 24-16, to keep my conscience always clear before God and before men.

That was one of the great secrets of his life. It's not that he never made a mistake. He made lots of mistakes.

He never wanted to give people the impression that he was a man who never made mistakes. You know who wrote the book of Acts? Luke. Luke was Paul's closest co-worker.

And I can imagine when he wrote the book of Acts, he would have liked to leave out a lot of those mistakes that Paul made. And Paul must have said to him, make sure you write every one of those things down. Make sure you write there that I quarreled with Barnabas and we separated.

Make sure you write there that I went like a fool and shaved my head with the other Jews after becoming a Christian. Make sure you write there that I circumcised Timothy. And make sure you write there that I yelled at the high priest and called him a whitewashed wall.

That was Paul's humility. I cannot imagine Luke writing that on his own unless Paul encouraged him to do it. He was not a man who wanted to give people the impression that he never made a mistake.

A lot of preachers like that today. A lot of fathers who try to give that impression to the children. I've never wanted my children to feel that they had a perfect father.

That will only discourage them. I never wanted the people in my church to think that they have a perfect elder. I wanted my children to know that they have an honest father.

One who is honest to admit where he's flipped up and where he failed. I wanted the people in my church to know that they have an honest elder. One who is honest to acknowledge where he slipped up.

I've gone to brothers who are younger than my youngest son in our church and apologized to them. Say, I'm sorry brother. I was a little hard when I corrected you.

Forgive me. Yeah. We're not perfect.

Only God's perfect. He's the only one who never makes a mistake. Paul made mistakes, but he was honest.

He kept his conscience clear. And I believe that if God sees that there is an honesty in us to admit where we've come short, He will really lead us to far greater heights of holiness than we have ever experienced in our life. I've been amazed how the heights that God led me to.

I've been amazed at the revelation on His word that He's given me. I've been amazed how it's really true that He can keep us from falling. I thought of this verse, you know.

He's able to keep us from falling. How does He keep us from falling? If I stand, I can fall. If I sit, I can still fall.

There's only one place where I can never fall. And that's when I'm flat. And that's when I'm flat on the ground.

And if I keep my faith in the dust before God, it is impossible to fall. That's the secret. Keep your faith in the dust before God.

That's one of those great truths the Lord taught me in Christian. As long as you keep your mouth in the dust before me, you'll never fall. He gives grace to the humble.

And when we are secure in the love of God, we're not ashamed to admit that we slipped up there. We're not ashamed to apologize to younger people, to wives and children. Because we see, you know, that wasn't the way.

That wasn't the way that Jesus would behave. For many years, I tried to get a definition of sin from Scripture. And there are many definitions.

Sin is transgression of the law. To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, it's sin. But I finally hit upon what I felt was the clearest definition of sin.

And that was Romans 3.23. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And I realized there that sin is anything that comes short of the glory of God. If there's anything in my life that comes short of God's glory, that's sin.

And that glory of God was seen in Jesus. It says, we beheld his glory. The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And so anything that's below the life of Christ, the behavior of Christ, is sin. And I am thankful for this definition because it's helped me to see that nothing good dwells in my flesh. And once I've seen this definition of sin, my life has been one of continuous repentance.

Every day, I see things that the Lord points out to me which are not Christlike. And there's room for mourning, falling before God's face and say, Lord, be merciful to me of sin. And discovering new depths of sin which were not there so that I can be cleansed from them.

You know what you're missing, brother or sister? When you don't deal with what God shows you? When you call sin by some more decent name like a mistake or righteous indignation or something like that when actually it's just plain carnal anger. I call it by some other name. I call it a mistake or something.

God won't deliver me from it. But when I call sin, sin and say, Lord, that was an adulterous look. It wasn't just admiring the beauty of God's creation.

It was an adulterous look. Then God can deliver me. We got to be honest and say, Lord, this is what it is.

And when we acknowledge this is what it is, then God can deliver us from it. When we're honest, this is what it means to walk in the light. Why are we afraid of saying it? Because we're not secure in God's love.

Jesus said in John's Gospel chapter 14, before He went up to heaven, He said, I will not leave you as orphans. John 14, 18. It's a very significant word.

When I look at a lot of Christians, I see they behave exactly like orphans. I've met orphans in India. We have many orphanages in India.

Children who never knew in their whole life the love of a father or mother. Brought up in an institution as orphans. And I find this orphan syndrome, the characteristics of orphans, even when they're 60 years old, insecure, feeling threatened by wanting somebody's friendship exclusively for themselves, not wanting to share that friend with someone else.

The characteristics that I've seen in so many believers feeling threatened by others, competing with others, trying to show that they can pray better or sing better or preach better or do something else better. This is all the orphan syndrome. Competing with somebody else's ministry to try and show that what I'm accomplishing.

Writing reports in an impressive way to impress people that God's using me. It's all the orphan syndrome. Not content with the fact that the father knows.

Jesus said, your father who sees in secret will reward you openly. I was reading this morning in John chapter 7, something that came home to my heart strongly. In John chapter 7, verse 4, we read that the brothers of Jesus told him to go to Judea and then they said these words.

Just meditate on that for a moment. See the truth in it. No one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly.

No one does anything in secret when he wants to be known publicly. How does this apply to us? Why is it we don't do things in secret? Because we want to be known publicly. Why is it that our public life is much more than our secret life? Why is it the impression we give to other people about our prayer life is much more than what our prayer life actually is? No one does anything in secret who wants to be known publicly.

But if we don't want to be known publicly, we'll do a lot of things in secret. That's the thing. When I was a young Christian, I grew up in an assembly which emphasized having a quiet time.

It's a good habit. I would recommend it to everyone. But in this assembly we grew up in, we were taught to read the Bible on our knees.

And everybody would get up in the morning and kneel down and read the Bible on our knees and pray. We had fasting and prayer every Saturday, every week, and all night prayers and quiet times. Morning and at night, we had to again read our Bible on our knees.

Yeah, it was good. But in spite of all these hours spent on the knees, people were still sour, hard to get along with, critical, bitter, complaining, and no victory over anger and hardly victory over any sin. And this puzzled me.

I know times when I've spent 15 minutes with a man of God, and the influence of that has stayed with me for days. 15 minutes with a godly man can change the direction of one's life. Can you imagine what 15 minutes with God Himself will do? If 15 minutes with a godly man can do that, listening to a godly man for half an hour can do so much.

Can you imagine what listening to God Himself for half an hour will do? Then why is it lives were not being changed when they were all spending half an hour quiet time with God? The Lord showed me. These people are not spending time with me. They're spending time with a book.

Whether it's a chemistry book or a mathematics book or the Bible, it doesn't make a difference. They're not spending time with me. A lot of people who say they have a quiet time, not with God.

It's a... They're studying a book. Just like the scientist studies a science book. And he gets proficient in that particular field, you get proficient in the Bible.

Not necessary, but you get to know God there. To know God, you have to be humble. You have to have a sense of your own need.

The Bible says, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And when I saw this, I realized that I needed to get out of all these rituals.

I saw that what I needed was not a bunch of rules and regulations, because all these multitudes of rules and regulations didn't help me to know God and didn't help me to overcome sin. I saw there was a purpose in the law. See, something like this.

This is the illustration that came to my mind. Is it possible for me to take a pig through a long one-mile walk full of dirt and muck and to bring that pig clean out, clean the other end of that walk? Yes, it's possible. If I tie that pig with ten chains and every time it's attracted to some muck this way, I pull it, and every time it wants to jump into the dirty water there, I pull it, I can manage with struggle and effort to bring out that pig clean at the other end.

Those ten chains with the Ten Commandments. That's how God kept man clean under the law. When they were pulled this way, the law would pull them back.

When they were attracted this way, it pulled them back. And they were clean. Now, it's quite different to take a cat for a walk through that dirty thing for one mile.

It doesn't need a single chain. It comes out absolutely clean. And even if it accidentally falls into something on the way, it'll jump out immediately and without my telling it, it'll just lick itself clean before it proceeds.

And it doesn't lick itself clean only when other people are looking. That would be a pig masquerading as a cat. If it's a real cat, it makes no difference whether other people are looking or not.

It just defends that dirty water and licks itself clean. It can't proceed. I've seen cats, and it's the same, I suppose, in the United States as in America, as in India.

I can't see a speck of dust in them. They're still licking themselves and trying to keep themselves clean. I say, boy, what an example for me to cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

It doesn't need any chain. It doesn't need any rules and regulations. This is a mistake that churches have made through the years.

They want to keep the pigs clean. So we have rules and chains and of course they're clean. With multitude, some rules are written down.

Most rules are unwritten. It's just a general impression given in the church. We shouldn't do this.

We shouldn't have that. We didn't do this. And people come in and say, boy, what a clean church.

Yeah. But the nature hasn't changed at all. People are afraid to disobey because they may be thrown out.

They're afraid because they may not be accepted. If they do something, people may frown on them. And so that fear of being frowned on acts like a chain.

It pulls them back from something which they always want to do. Now, let's take a picture. Supposing we had a whole lot of pigs and cats in our room and we locked all the doors and kept them inside for one year.

They'd all be clean. Every one of them would be clean. And then if some preacher came along and opened the doors, they'd all go out and they'd come back.

That'd be quite a difference. The cats would be clean. The pigs would be dirty.

And you blame the preacher for opening the doors. No, no, no, no, no. They did not become pigs when the doors were open.

They were always pigs. This preacher made the dividing line clear. It's when the doors are open that you discover who are the pigs and who are the cats.

We're fooling ourselves that everybody's a cat by just keeping the doors locked. It's easy to deceive ourselves, lock every door and say we're all cats because we're all clean. Well, that's testing.

Let's open the doors and see. The cats will remain cats but the pigs will be revealed. This has an application.

God never intended man to be constantly kept under rules and regulations. Now I realize it's necessary for children. When we have children, they are under the law.

And we have to make rules and regulations for them because they don't have wisdom, they don't have discernment. And it's our responsibility to tell them you can't do this and you can't go here and you can't dress like that and you cannot have this and you cannot play this music and you cannot get this magazine and I'm sorry I will not let you go there. I will not let you spend your money on it.

That's right. But it was not God's will that we should be children forever. He wants us to be sons who can decide I don't want that.

I know this is what I long for my children in the years when I made so many restrictions on them. They couldn't do this, they couldn't go here, they couldn't do the other thing. But all the time my heart longed that one day when they grow up they'll see the wisdom of that and choose it for themselves.

Isn't that what we parents desire for our children? That's exactly what God desires for every one of us. He doesn't want us all our life to be tied with chains and be kept pure that way. That's why He abolished the law.

But He didn't abolish the law and give us nothing else instead. No, He gave us something better. Moses went up to the mountain and came down with ten commandments.

Jesus went up to heaven and gave us the Holy Spirit. And if we don't have the Holy Spirit, boy, you certainly need those chains, I'll tell you that. Sure.

You see the trouble with a lot of Christians today is they're trying to be free from the old covenant and they end up with no covenant. It doesn't mean that everybody who's chucked the law has got into the new covenant. No.

Most Christians are under no covenant. The people who are under the old covenant had a certain standard of morality and godliness. They're not... I can not think of a single Old Testament preacher who would sink so low as so many television evangelists today.

Under the old covenant. And these folks are preaching grace. That's not grace.

That's no covenant at all. I can't think of any Old Testament preacher who'd run after money like the preachers today. How is that? How did the old covenant lead people to such a high standard? It's a deception.

This is false grace that's going around the world today. True grace delivers a man. The law came by Moses.

Grace came by Jesus Christ. Now I ask a very simple question. Who was greater? Moses or Jesus? A child can understand that.

And if Moses could lift people this high, how high is Jesus going to lift them? Much more. How much more? As much more as Jesus is greater than Moses. That's the message of the gospel.

That's why Jesus said, well the Old Testament said, don't commit adultery. I say to you, don't even lust with your eyes. The Old Testament said, don't commit murder.

I say to you, don't even be angry with your brother. He didn't lower the standard. He certainly didn't.

It's like that little one verse of a poem that I heard many years ago, which brings out the difference between law and grace in the gospel. It goes like this, Run John, the law commands, but gives us neither feet nor hands. Better news the gospel brings, it bids us fly.

But gives us wings. That's the gospel. It bids us fly.

The law only told you to run. But it didn't give you feet or hands. How can you run? Isn't it better to be commanded to fly if the gospel gives us wings? This is what the Holy Spirit has come to do.

To lift us higher. And there we find security. We don't compare ourselves with others.

We don't compete with others. We don't look down on others. Because it's God's grace that made us what we are.

You know, if you can be proud of the holiness you have attained to, that's a pretty good indication that you produced it yourself. I'll give you an illustration. Supposing I brought here a wonderful cake, baked by some sisters, and I distributed it to you.

And you say, Boy, that's a fantastic cake. I'm not even tempted to be proud. I didn't bake it.

I just passed it around. But if I had made it, if I had baked it, and I heard all of you appreciated it, then I'd be tempted to be proud. You know, we're tempted to be proud of that which we manufactured ourselves.

And the holiness you manufactured yourself, is the one you're proud of. That's why when you feel a little proud when people say something good about your character, the sermon you manufactured yourself, you'll be proud of. But if God gave it to you, you'll say, I'm just distributing what God gave me.

This is the gospel. I cannot be proud. Because I recognize, what have you got that you did not receive? Tell me what it is you got which you didn't receive.

Not a single thing. You know, I have seen situations where a brother can come to a church and feel inferior. Because he's a sinner.

He can feel awkward because his children are wayward, and the church is preaching a high standard. I have four sons. They're all born again.

They're all following the Lord. But I don't deserve one bit of credit for that. I fall on my face and I say, Lord, it's all your mercy.

I dare not ever think that I did something. I baked this cake. I didn't.

You know how we can make people feel inferior? Because I have it so good in my life. Come and see how it is in my home. And that poor brother says, I can never make it.

I better go to some other church. We have failed. That's not the spirit of Jesus.

Jesus came to lift the fallen. And if I don't... I remember once, I'll give you an example. I don't have any daughters.

Once there was a need to give a word of correction to some of the young girls, the young teenage girls in our assembly. And as I was getting up to speak, the Lord said to me, Remember, they are your daughters. And it struck me like a revelation from heaven.

Those were my children. They were not somebody else's children. And so easy to preach at other people's children.

And then, when I got up, I spoke to them as if they were my own daughters. And I saw that this is how it should be in the church. When you see that brother's son going astray, hear the word of the Lord.

That's your son. And then you won't point a finger so easily. This is the body of Christ.

We say we are one family. But we behave as though... See what I did in my little corner with my family. Sorry, you didn't do it so good.

Why is this? We are not secure. In God's love. We want to show off.

We are not secure in the fact of God's love. We don't recognize that every single thing we have is what God has given me. There is nothing we can glory in.

This is what hinders the building of the body of Jesus Christ. This is where we have come short, brothers and sisters. We have come short.

There is phariseeism. There is a looking down upon others because they failed. One who recognizes that there is nothing good in his flesh can never point a finger at another.

It's impossible. Because he sees, Lord, there is nothing good in me. I think of that verse many times in Ephesians chapter 3 where Paul says in verse 8 To me, the very least of all the saints was this grace given.

Grace is always given to the one who recognizes that they are the least of all the saints. To me, the very least of all the saints was this grace given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ. If you were to catch Paul by surprise and cut open his heart to find out what he thought about himself you'd see, not when he is on his guard.

When we are on our guard we all say we are the least of all the saints. Not talking about that. But you catch a person off his guard and open his heart and see what's inside.

What would you see inside Paul's heart? A deep conviction that he was the least of all the believers in the world. Because he saw his own corruption more than anybody else. He saw that nothing good dwells in his flesh.

And I believe we need a revelation of that. I have no problem with that in my life from the time I found security in my heavenly father. I have no problem acknowledging where I made a mistake.

Where I slipped up. And I see that God has given me elders in the body of Christ to balance me because I am imbalanced by myself. I need them.

I am not in competition with them. I thank God for the brothers God has given me in my country who balanced out the imbalance there is in my life. The areas in my life where I cannot reflect the glory of Jesus adequately.

I have got brothers to cover me, to protect me. And together we can manifest the glory of Jesus. And I praise God for that.

I praise God for a wife who is different from me who can balance me out at home. And protect me from doing a lot of stupid things at home. Just like my fellow elders protect me from doing a lot of stupid things in the church.

Do you recognize your need of your brother? And your sister? Do you see that child who is going astray? That young boy or girl who is going astray as your son, as your daughter? When we experience the love of God Bible says the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit. The same love of the Father

which He showered upon us we begin to have towards other people. This is what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. May the Lord help us. Shall we bow before God? It's good for us to examine ourselves and ask ourselves whether we have found security in God's perfect love for us.

I want to say to each of you there is not a single person here whom God doesn't love. Despite your failures He loves you just as you are. He's not waiting for you to change before He loves you.

Exactly as you are right now with all the blunders and failures you've made in your life, He loves you just as you are. And He welcomes you. And once you have been welcomed like that don't ever forget it.

Remember to welcome your brother in the same way as God welcomed you. Heavenly Father, help us to honor you in our earthly life. Our life is so short.

Help us to be those who reflect the love of God in our relationships with one another. To think of those who are hurting, those who are suffering, those who made blunders and made a mess of their life, those who failed as parents. Lord, we would pray with compassion for them.

We're no better than anyone here. Lord, we pray. Comfort their hearts and give them an assurance that they'll find their children in your kingdom one day.

Meet with us, Lord, and build a body of Christ here. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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