

# Dangers That New Covenant Christians Face

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen addresses the dangers new covenant Christians face, emphasizing the importance of purity, humility, and a clear conscience in preparation for Christ's return.*

**Duration:** 1:19:22

**Scripture:** Romans 7:18, James 3:17, 1 John 3:2-3

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Discipleship"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and avoiding unrealistic standards, such as pretending to be more spiritual than one truly is or trying to love everyone equally. It encourages honesty, humility, and learning from Jesus as the ultimate example. The sermon also addresses the dangers of discouragement, partiality, and self-condemnation, urging listeners to trust in God's transformative power and to never give up on their journey towards becoming more like Christ.

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## Transcript

We were singing some songs about the coming of the Lord and how do we know that we really have this hope that we're looking forward to Christ's coming? For me there's only one proof and that's the proof the Apostle John said in 1 John chapter 3 in verse 2 and 3, which we've looked at many times, it's good for us to remind ourselves again. And this is how you know whether you really are looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ. All Christians say, we're looking forward to Christ's return, but it can be an intellectual thing.

I see the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the mind and the tree of life in the heart. If we live in the mind, we're going to miss out on what God has. We must develop the habit of living by the witness of the Holy Spirit in our heart.

You can understand so much of truth intellectually and go to hell. You can understand so much of truth, particularly many of you are clever, you live in this area, you came to this area because you're very educated, most of you. That's a danger, it's a handicap.

You're like a one-legged man running a race against two-legged people. It's a real handicap, because God has hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent. So you must concentrate if you really want to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Make sure your heart is more important to you than your head, the conscience, God's voice in your conscience is a million times more important than what you understand in your mind. All your understanding of truth will have no value at the judgment seat of Christ. Remember that.

1 John chapter 3 verse 2 says, in the middle of that verse, we know that when He appears we will be like Him and we shall see Him. Now many people think only of one part, we shall see Him and we shall go to a heaven where there's no sorrow and no sickness and no problems. But the most important thing about heaven is we will be like Jesus Christ.

Think of that. All your pride will be gone, all your bitterness and anger and unforgiving spirit and impatience and irritation will all be gone. You'll be like Jesus Christ.

But it says here, if you have this hope, really, here's the proof of it. Everyone, there's no exception, verse 3, who has this hope, the proof of it is right now, he purifies himself till he reaches the standard of Christ's purity. So he sees the purity of Christ as his goal and he knows that when Christ comes, I'll not only see Him, but I'll be like Him.

And so he purifies himself as Christ is pure. Otherwise we can sing lots of songs of, we're going to see the King, we're going to see the King, but you'll have a lot of disappointment when you see the King. One of the first poems that I read maybe 55 years ago when I was baptized was a poem that said, when I stand at the judgment seat of Christ and He shows me His plan for me, the plan for my life, the plan for my life as it should have been if He had had His way with me.

And I see there how I blocked Him here. I checked Him there. I would not yield my will.

Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes? And it goes on to say how I will stand there with regret over the way I lived. And the last verse says, Lord, I can't do anything about the past, but of the years that are left to me, I give them to Your hand. Take me, break me, mold me to the pattern You have planned.

I have sung that poem to myself for more than 50 years because to stand at the judgment seat of Christ is a tremendous reality to me. And it has guided my life through all these years, not just singing these songs. I also sing the songs about the coming of Christ.

But more than that, I think of this verse. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10, it says, We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone will be rewarded for his deeds according to what he has done, whether good or bad. And the next word says, that should bring a fear of the Lord in our lives, such a fear that we persuade people.

What do we persuade them? Think of the judgment seat of Christ. You're going to give an account of every single thing you've done. It's talking about believers, whether good or bad.

And so it's very important for us to keep that in mind always. And I never tire of saying that. I sometimes think of the judgment seat of Christ in my imagination that I stand before the hymn and I wanted to come before him and ensure that everything in my life, as far as I know, is clear.

Any unconfessed sin is confessed. Anybody I have to ask forgiveness from, I ask forgiveness from. Anybody I have to forgive.

I forgive any debt I owe. I want to return. I want to have a clear, absolutely 100% clear conscience before God and before men.

This is how we know we are ready for the coming of Christ. I mean, all of you sang the song just now. We're going to see the King.

I hope you are. But I'll tell you how you can be ready to see the King. By keeping your conscience absolutely clear.

Not by understanding in the mind. The conscience, absolutely clear before God and before men. Paul says that in Acts 24.

Some of these things we have heard, but we need to hear it a hundred times because I've discovered that so many people, despite all that they hear, the fear and reverence for God that keeps them from sinning still hasn't come. If you're sinning, you've got to ask yourself whether you really learned the fear of God or not. And if you keep on sinning lightly and you don't confess it immediately, I would ask you, do you really believe that you will give an account of the Day of Judgment for all that you do? Do you really believe it? I mean, we all slip up, but my point is, do you get up when you slip up? Do you confess it? Do you confess it to God? Do you confess it to men? Clear your conscience.

Then I believe that you really believe that you're going to meet the Lord face to face. Otherwise, it's just an empty theory. See what Paul says in Acts 24.

He says, I have a hope, verse 15, Acts 24, 15. I have a hope like all these other men, and that is the Jews who were accusing him. You know, Paul was standing at that moment in front of a judge, and the Jews were accusing him of going contrary to the Bible.

It's all these false, you know, people are not really Christians, accuse the true Christians, saying that they're not following the Bible. Actually, we're following the Bible more than all those others. The Jews were accusing Paul of not following the Bible, and he says, I have this same hope which these people claim that they have, that there will be one day two resurrections, a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked.

Now, I don't know whether all of you know that, that all those who die are not going to be raised up together. When Christ comes, it's going to be the resurrection of the righteous. It's going to be much later that there'll be a resurrection of the wicked when they'll be judged.

But the resurrection of the righteous are the people who have had this hope, and who cleanse themselves. And it says here, because I want to be in the resurrection of the righteous, what do I do? I don't just sit back and sing songs and believe these things. No, I do my best, verse 16.

This is the Apostle Paul speaking when he's 65 years old at the end of his life. He says, I do my best to always maintain a blameless conscience before God and before men. That is the only way, my dear brothers and sisters, I don't want any of your blood to be on my hands.

That is the only way you will be prepared, that you will be there in the resurrection of the righteous. I want to meet you in the resurrection of the righteous. I want to meet every one of you at the resurrection of the righteous, and I'll tell you the way you can get there.

Always keep your conscience blameless. Don't be satisfied with what people think of you as a good believer. Throw that in the trash can.

This person's opinion, that person's opinion, Zak Poonen's opinion, throw it in the trash can. It means nothing, because we see 10% of your life. I don't know 90% or 99% of your life.

How can my opinion be of any worth? What does the Holy Spirit say in your conscience? Right now as you sit here, can you say your conscience at this moment is not blaming you about one single thing, that you have to confess to God, or that you have to apologize or confess to man, not one person whom you have not forgiven? It's absolutely clear. I can say that. I seek to live like that every moment of my life.

I'll tell you why. I want to be in the resurrection of the righteous. I'm following Paul who said, I know there'll be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, and therefore I keep my conscience blameless before God and before men.

That is why I'm looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. It's not just a fact of history. He's going to come.

That's very, very important, dear brothers and sisters, because I find there's a lot of delusion and deception among Christendom. Jesus said that the way to life is very narrow, and very few find it. I remember the prayers we prayed in our churches in India.

I say, Lord, everybody wants to go to heaven, but there are very few who find the narrow way. Lead us to those few. Those are the only people we want to meet within our church.

There are many who go along the broad way that leads to destruction. I want to give them the gospel, but those are not the ones I want to fellowship with. If I go to the broad way, it is only to preach the gospel to them and to teach them to come to the narrow way.

In the church, there is a narrow way that we preach, and a narrow gate. If you want to know how narrow that gate is, it's not one-tenth of an inch. Jesus said it's the size of the eye of a needle.

He said it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And by rich, it's not just, we often think of money alone. There are going to be a lot of people who are very rich on earth who are going to be in heaven.

I'll tell you, like Abraham and Job and the billionaires of their time, but they were godly. And there are poor people like the beggar Lazarus who are also going to be there. So when it speaks about rich, it's speaking about rich in themselves who are proud, and you can be a beggar and be proud.

It's a pride that makes me feel I'm superior to others. That is what makes a person the type of false riches that will never allow him to go through the needle's eye. You know, there's a creature called the amoeba, which science tells us.

I've never seen it. You've got to see it under a microscope. It's so small that it can run in and out of a needle's eye without any problem.

Needle's eye is as wide as this room for that amoeba. You ask that amoeba, can you go through needle's eye? No problem. I can run in and out of it all the time.

Why? What is the difference between the camel and the amoeba? The amoeba is small. The camel is big. And there are a lot of things that we accomplish and that we have that can make us big in our own eyes.

Then we become like a camel. We're not going to be getting through into God's kingdom easily then. But if you're small, it's so easy.

You don't have complaints when you're small. In the early days when I was young, 30 years old, we had to travel to different places in India in the trains. And sometimes you don't get reservation in the trains and you get into the unreserved compartments in the trains.

If you've never been to India, you don't believe this, but it's true. All the seats are occupied, but you've got to travel. Remember, India's got 1,200 million people and increasing at the rate of one baby every one and a half seconds, which means about 40 babies born every minute.

So trains get crowded naturally. So I get into one of these trains, and this has happened to me a number of times, and there are no seats. So you sit on the floor.

And you sit on the floor in some corner for the entire trip, and at the next station, more people are piling in. And they're also crowding up for that floor space which you got. And I used to sit there and say, Lord, if I was like a little ant over here, this place would be spacious.

My problem is I'm so big as a human being. And I realized there that that's the problem, why we find it so difficult to fellowship with others. We're so big.

Somebody's crowding into my space, crowding into my space because I'm so big. But if I were small, there'd be plenty of room. That's the secret.

That's why Jesus was never offended. You know, in the Old Testament, when Moses was criticized by Miriam, Miriam criticized Moses saying, why did you marry that woman who is not a Jew? You know what she got? Leprosy. There were some young men who criticized Elisha, the prophet one, saying, you bald man.

They criticized him for his bald head, saying, you also go up like Elijah. And Elisha cursed them, just for something like that. And the bears came out of the woods and killed him.

Now, Elisha didn't call the bears. Remember that. It's God who sent the bears.

Elisha has no power to call bears. Some people say Elisha sent the bears. Moses didn't give Miriam leprosy.

God gave the leprosy. What I'm saying is God backed up his servants like that in the Old Covenant. Now you come to the New Testament and you see Jesus.

And they didn't just criticize him. They called him Prince of Devils. What did they get? Leprosy? No.

They got forgiveness. That's the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Whenever you wish something evil for somebody who's done some harm to you, you're following in the footsteps of Old Covenant people.

Have you seen this verse in Hebrews in Chapter 12? Hebrews Chapter 12 compares the Old Covenant with the New Covenant. And, you know, it says in Chapter 11, but all these wonderful Old Covenant people who had faith. But then at the end it says, the last verse, you must never forget the last verse of Hebrews 11.

Whenever you read Hebrews 11, don't forget the last verse. As you read through Hebrews 11, always remember the last verse. God has provided something better.

You read about the faith of Abraham, the faith of Isaac, the faith of Joshua who pulled down the walls of Jericho, always remember God has provided us something better. And what is that something better? The faith of Jesus. Actually, Chapter 12 verses 1 to 4 should be the last verses of Hebrews 11.

In the Hebrews 11 is the chapter of faith, but unfortunately these people who divided the Bible, divided it at 1140, it should have been, Chapter 12 should have started with verse 5. Because the last four verses are the most important. We don't follow the faith of these other men, pulling down walls of Jericho and splitting Red Sea. We have something better, and that better thing is that we follow Jesus, who denied Himself, verse 2, and took up the cross, despised the shame, He didn't pull down any walls of Jericho, He didn't split any Red Sea, but He's sitting at the right hand of the throne of God, which even all those fellows who pulled down walls of Jericho and all never got to.

Who are you following? So that's the point, comparing the old with the new covenant. And then another example of old and new covenant, he goes on in Chapter 12 to say in verse 24, We have come to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and one difference in the new covenant is that His blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel. The blood of Abel symbolizes the old covenant, the blood of Jesus symbolizes the new covenant.

If you remember in Genesis Chapter 4, when Cain killed Abel and shed his blood on the ground, God told Abel, The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. You know that blood cries out when you shed somebody's blood? God hears a voice from there. It says there that He heard a voice.

That's what God Himself said to Cain. The voice of your brother's blood, you read in Genesis 4, is crying out to me. What is He crying out for? Vengeance.

God, judge this man who killed me. That's old covenant. And then you come to the new covenant, where Jesus' blood shed on the ground, and that was crying out, Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. All of us, when we are hurt by others, Cain hurt Abel, the Pharisees hurt Jesus, they're the ones who crucified Him. And all of us, when we are hurt by others, you could be hurt by your husband, you could be hurt by your wife, you could be hurt by your boss, you could be hurt by your relatives, you could be hurt by... The world is full of people who hurt us.

And I want to say, symbolically speaking, that blood that's spilt in the ground cries out one of these two things. Lord, judge them. Punish them.

Teach them a lesson for harming me, a child of God. And you're following the blood of Abel. But if the cry that comes out from your heart is, Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. You've been so gracious to me that you've opened my eyes to see the wonderful truths of eternity and the spirit world, and these guys are so blind, they don't even know.

Your husband could be blind, your wife could be blind, your neighbors could be blind.

Don't judge them. That is how we are going to be prepared for the coming of Christ. I want to prepare all of you for the coming of Christ, but this is how you're going to be prepared.

Take it seriously. Take everything we say in the church, we take seriously. And we want to avoid anything that will, you know, even slightly damage our conscience.

So I was thinking today, and even the past days, about what are some of the dangers of churches that preach the new covenant? Because we have a number of churches like that in India and some other parts of the world. We know what the dangers are in other churches. It's very easy to see the faults in other people, right? You all agree? Much easier to see faults in others than in ourselves.

Easier to see the fault in your wife than in yourself, right? I think all husbands are honest, we'll agree. It's easier to see the fault in your husband than in yourself. All honest wives will agree.

Human nature is like that. It's much easier to see the fault in somebody else than to see it in ourselves. And for us as a new covenant church, it's much easier to see the faults of the Roman Catholics, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Pentecostals, Charismatics.

Do you have any difficulty in seeing the faults there? Some wrong doctrine, they preach infant baptism, they have crazy manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and they talk about healing when people are not really being healed. It's very easy to see them. So if you concentrate on the faults of another person, that's one way the devil will ensure that you'll never progress yourself.

One of the easiest ways for the devil to stop you from making spiritual progress is to focus, show you, take a microscope and show you the faults of people who are in your circle or in other churches. So though we stand against a lot of wrong doctrines, and we have to warn people, Jesus warned the people about the Pharisees. He said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.

And Jesus warned his disciples about the Pharisees. And I have no hesitation in warning people about other wrong teachings of other churches. But there's a difference between warning people of the teachings of the Jesus and becoming proud that I'm not like that.

So I believe that is one of the greatest dangers that new covenant churches face, of spiritual pride. Are these words familiar? I thank you God that I'm not like other men. Have you read that somewhere in the Bible? Do you remember who said it? A Pharisee.

And he was looking at one particular person, and we can look at some particular people who don't have the light that we have. He said, God, I thank you. We don't say it like that, but we can think like that.

And the danger of that is that pride immediately, God's grace departs from us. You lose it. You know, it's like these rockets that travel in space, and they've sent rockets now that are beyond the pull of Earth's gravity.

There's a certain number of miles beyond that the Earth cannot pull anything. So if you get to that point, a spaceship or something, you just keep going around and around the Earth with a little bit of pull of Earth's gravity, and then you go beyond that. Earth can't touch it.

You just move full speed towards the moon or Mars or anywhere. It's amazing. So there's a sphere like that for us spiritually, where we can experience God's grace and such freedom that we move like a rocket without being dragged down all the time by the power of sin.

You know, gravity is a tremendous picture of the power of sin. I find it's one of the clearest pictures of the power of sin because it operates the same all over the world. There's no place in the world where you go where you won't be tempted.

Everywhere it's the same. In each country they think the temptation is worse, in their country it's not. So you can be tempted with sin in Afghanistan just as much as in America, even if you don't get pornography there.

It's not a question of... Sins are of many different types. The pull of gravity is true all over the world, and the pull of sin is exactly like that because it is not around you. It's within you.

So it doesn't make a difference where you go. It pulls you, pulls you. There can be circumstances around that aggravate them, but this pull is there.

And so think of pride and humility like that. Humility, God gives grace to the humble. That's like you moved out of the pull of gravity, and God's grace is there to make you go like a rocket.

But the moment you become proud of something, it's like coming within that sphere of Earth's gravity. Earth's pull is there and you're going to go down. You're going to go down.

So that's why we've got to be very careful that we don't come into that sphere of pride. And it's a very subtle thing. You come into that sphere, you don't have to think about it.

God's grace departs because it's a law. You see, it's not somebody checking up. Did that spacecraft come within the Earth's pull or not? No, no, no.

It's there all the time. Nobody has to check up anything. The pull of Earth is there all the time in this sphere, and anything that comes within that sphere gets pulled down.

So it's the same way with pride. Pride is like a big circle. Anything that comes in there, God's grace departs immediately.

Gone. And if you can move out of that circle and live out of that circle all the time in humility, God's grace is always there. Think of that rocket.

It just stays outside the pull of the Earth and the Earth can't touch it. It just moves. And as long as it has power, it can move endlessly.

I mean, think of space rockets that are going to the farthest planets in the solar system. It's unbelievable. Why? Because there's nothing to hold it back.

Nothing to hold it back. I mean, 50 years ago, nobody ever believed such a thing could happen. I mean, if you could travel 200 miles an hour, that'd be great.

But it's not like that today. Think of the tremendous progress that's just because people have learned to overcome this fear of gravity. And if you can learn to always steer away from pride of any sort, you'll learn

the secret of fantastic spiritual progress, just like the rocket going to the farthest planets in the solar system.

Today, if you tell a person that it is possible to overcome anger 100%, they won't believe it. They wouldn't believe it 50 years ago if you said that man can reach Uranus or Jupiter. Nobody would believe it.

But there are space rockets going there today. And why is it people didn't believe it? It's impossible. I mean, we've seen how fast cars can go.

What do you mean reach Mars or Moon or something like that? So I see that it's exactly the same, I find, with many, many Christians. They don't see the sphere in which the grace of God stops operating, and the pool of sin starts, and it is pride. And that can happen.

There can be, in the world, people are proud of their wealth and their position and their accomplishments and abilities and many things like that. The same thing can happen to a new covenant church, that we're a little proud that we're better than others and forgetting that it's the grace of God that makes us different. And the only solution for it, as I see it, is to prevent us from falling.

You know, it says Jesus can keep us from falling. There's a word like that in Jude, verse 24. Jesus can keep us from falling.

If you stand, you can fall. If I sit on a chair, I can fall. The only place you can't fall is if you're flat on your face on the ground.

Then you can't fall. So if you live flat on your face before the Lord Jesus all the time, all the time, as a worshipper of Him, taken up with Him more than with your beauty and yourself or no time to compare yourself with others and certainly no time to accuse others because you're flat on your face before Jesus, just like John was. It says in the Revelation, chapter 1, that when I saw the glory of the Lord, I fell on my face.

It says about Abraham, and God called him, he fell on his face. That's the way these people worshipped, you know. And I see that picture.

Sometimes I lie flat on my bed like that before God and say, Lord, this is where I want to be. This physical position that helps me to recognize spiritually where I should be always with my face buried in the ground and don't even have anything to lift up my head. I'm a worshipper.

Like that, we sing in that song, Father of Jesus, love's reward, what rapture it will be, prostrate before Thy throne to lie and gaze and gaze on Thee. I have no time to gaze on myself and the beauty the Lord has given me in heaven. I have no time to look at others and see whether I'm more beautiful than them.

No time, I'm gazing on Jesus. We can be like that on this earth. We can get acclimatized to heaven on earth.

It takes time, but if you work on it, it's like people who haven't learned English properly. Little by little by little by little. I know people who have come to our church in Bangalore who didn't know a word of English, and in a few years they were speaking English beautifully.

You can learn it. You can learn how to be on your face all the time if you are eager about it. You've got to be eager to learn something to get it.

And you say, Lord, teach me to be a worshiper. How these people fell on their face. John was 95 years old, the holiest man on earth.

When he saw Jesus, he was flat on his face. So, that day you can never be proud. You've gone beyond the pull of gravity.

And the grace of God will be, and your progress will be fantastic. While on earth that car on the fast, even a fast plane on earth is traveling just 600 or 700 miles an hour, that rocket is going thousands and thousands of miles in that same period of time. How is that? How is it that some believers make such tremendous progress in the same period of time where other believers are crawling like snails? Why is that? You look back over your past life.

How many years have you been a believer? When were you born again? How many years since you heard these truths? How much progress has there been in your life? Think of other people who came to the Lord after you. How did they make more progress? I've seen this happen in many new covenant churches. The last is first, and the first is last.

Not all, but many, just like Jesus said. He didn't say all who are last will be first, but he said many who are last become first. And I've seen that happen, that people who come in much later are gripped by the truth that they progress beyond some who have been there right from the beginning because they are sluggish.

So they become proud that they think we are sort of senior people here. We've known these truths for so many years. They crawl like snails compared to others who say, we're not senior, we just came in the other day and we don't know so much.

And they remain humble. It's very important. There's a law of God that He resists the proud and He gives grace to the humble.

So that's the number one danger I find, and that's the problem with the Pharisees. You know, the Pharisees was a group of people who started about 300 years before Christ. And I think the word Pharisees means sort of separated, and the reason why, 300 years before, sometime around that time, you read the book of Malachi, you'll see the condition of the Jews, 300 years before Christ, or 350 years or something like that before Christ, and you read in the book of Malachi, the Jews had backslidden so much.

Instead of giving good sheep, they were giving rotten sheep as sacrifices, they were giving blind oxen and animals that were just about to die, they were giving as sacrifices to God. They had become so corrupt. They loved themselves, but they wanted to be religious.

And here was a group called the Pharisees, and they were very spiritual. They were the most wholehearted spiritual group that got fed up with the corruption. They were like today's New Covenant churches, fed up with the corruption in the Jewish system around them, and exactly like Malachi said, we're going to be separate.

They were a small group, wholehearted, pure, radical. But give them 300 years, and they declined. They came under the pull of gravity, pride.

We are better than others. We're the ones God is blessing. We've got light on these things other people don't have.

And by the time we come to the time of Jesus, where have they sunk? They haven't just sunk to the level of the earth, they've gone to the pit of hell. Imagine crucifying the Son of God, a group that started out to preserve the purity of God's word, sinking to the level of killing the Son of God. That can happen.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear to any one of us. What was it that made it happen to them? Pride. Let us learn from the lessons of history.

The other danger that we can all face is hypocrisy, or the word hypocrite means actor. It's a Greek word, by the way. There are some Greek words and Hebrew words in the Bible, which I wish they were translated into English.

Imagine if you had a Bible in Greek. I wouldn't understand a thing. The Old Testament in Hebrew, I can't understand a thing.

Thank God it's been translated into English. Why didn't they translate words like baptism, immersion? That's a Greek word. If you had translated immersion, there'd be no infant baptism anywhere in the world.

But those translators in the 17th century, 1611, did not translate it because they were afraid that they would disturb the church traditions, because they were already practicing infant baptism, and King James who ordered that would cut off their heads if they disturbed church traditions. That's why those people didn't translate that word as immersion. And some Hebrew words like Amen.

You know what Amen means? Prayer is over, open your eyes. No, that's not the meaning of Amen. Amen means it will be so.

It's a tremendous word. It's an expression of faith. Lord, I prayed for all these things.

It will be so, because I prayed in Jesus' name. At least in future, remember that. Instead of saying Amen, you can say it will be so also.

It's just the same thing. But that's what it means. I wish some of these words were translated.

The spirit within us cries out, Abba. That's a Hebrew word. Why didn't they translate it? Daddy.

Doesn't it make a difference if you call your father daddy or call him father? I think it does. I don't know if any of your children call you father. They call you dad.

And the Holy Spirit comes within us and says dad. These are some of the words I wish they were translated. Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Yah is short for Yehovah.

Or Hosanna. Do you know what that means? We sing it in some of our songs. Save us now.

It's a wonderful prayer. Hosanna, son of David. Save us now.

Save me from sin right now. I want to say Hosanna all the time. Not for the reason why it's in the songs.

But I want to experience it in my life all the time. Save me now, Lord. He's not son of David to me.

He's the son of God. So things like this, you know. Hypocrite.

Actor. Beware of hypocrisy. Beware of acting.

Beware of pretending to be more spiritual than you really are. Beware of pretending to be holy. Beware of pretending to be fervent when you pray.

Loud. When you're not fervent in your daily life. There's a lot of pretense in the Pharisees.

And Jesus, there's a whole chapter on the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Take time to read it. Where he says your outer life is so clean.

And your inner life is full of muck. He compared them to graves. Look at that beautiful tombstone made of marble.

Wow. And underneath is full of dead man's bones. He says that's how your inner life is.

And the world is full of people who want to make a good impression on others in every church. And don't think we can escape it just because we belong to a new covenant church. No.

Human nature, until you get rid of the flesh, which we've all inherited from Adam, there is a tremendous temptation to create a good impression on others. If you fight it, you can overcome it. And if you fight it constantly, you can come to the place where you're not bothered about the impression you make on others.

And you only want to please God. But that takes a long time. It took many years for me.

I'll tell you that. But I'd never get there if I didn't fight it. Fight it.

Fight it. Lord, I'm sorry. I'm seeking honor there.

I'm seeking honor there. When was the last time you went before Jesus and said, Lord Jesus, I'm sorry. I was seeking honor in the church when I said this or when I did this or when I prayed like this.

It wasn't really... I spend my life judging myself on anything I do, which... Lord, show me. Is there anything that's brought me back into the power of gravity there? It's pulling me down. I don't want to be there.

I want to be up in space where the grace of God is there. Is there anything I did or said that brought me into that sphere of pride where gravity or the power of sin begins to pull me down? I don't want to be there ever in my life. And the Lord will show you.

If you're serious about it, He'll show you. If you just make it a casual prayer, He'll never show you. The Lord is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

If you diligently seek the Lord for light on yourself, you think God won't show it to you? Of course He will. God has got such a passionate desire to make you like Jesus Christ. That's the thing that encourages me.

If I have a passionate desire to become like Jesus, and I believe I have, God's desire to make me like Jesus is a million times more than that. That's what encourages me. Lord, You have a tremendous desire to make me like Jesus that I never come into this pool of gravity sphere where pride pulls me down.

You have a tremendous desire to keep me out of it all the time, to keep me in humility no matter what I accomplish or no matter how spiritual I become, You can keep me there in humility. So that grace keeps

on increasing. You know, I like that phrase in John's Gospel, chapter 1, where, I don't know whether you've noticed this verse, John 1, verse 16, From Christ's fullness, John 1, verse 16, we receive, and this is the phrase, grace upon grace.

And I read it like this, grace upon grace upon grace upon grace upon grace dot dot dot dot dot. That's how I read that verse. It never ends.

Think of this rocket, and space is so vast. Think if there was a rocket that had enough fuel or, I think it operates by the rays of the sun beyond a certain point, but whatever it is, if it had enough ability to move, the universe is so vast that that rocket could go on endlessly. Not only the solar system, it can go beyond the solar system to the stars, and to things that are many light years away, endless.

There's no limit to where grace can take you. That's my point. It's grace upon grace upon grace upon grace.

Think of the universe. There's no end to it. And then you compare that with the miserable way so many believers are living within being pulled down by this law of sin every now and then, and how it has been with many of you also perhaps.

I want to tell you the good news is you can get out of that sphere. You can get out of it if you're wholehearted and you're determined to be like Jesus Christ. And you're determined to yield every area of your life to the Holy Spirit and willing to sacrifice anything to get this life.

That's got to be there. You know how Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a man who found a piece of ground which nobody wanted because it was full of briars and thorns and rough rocks and who wants to build a house here, nobody bought it, but somehow he discovered that there was a treasure hidden by some ancient king underground there. I don't know how he discovered it.

Maybe he got some secret manuscript or something. And he bought that land which nobody wanted. But it was expensive.

He had to pay... It says he sold all that he had to buy it. But look what he got in turn. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like that.

There's such a tremendous wealth there which most people don't realize. We found some manuscript in the Bible which tells us about that treasure. And so are you willing to sell all that you have to get it? Those are the people who go beyond the pull of gravity.

Lord, I am willing to pay any price for that. I want it. Then we'll have the reality.

Otherwise what will happen is we will be actors. And see, in a worldly church, a lot of churches are worldly, you don't have to act. Why do you have to act? Everybody's worldly.

I'm also worldly. I'm worldly outside. I'm worldly inside.

There's no acting. The acting comes where you're in a church which emphasizes godliness, freedom from worldliness, freedom from the love of money, and I want to pretend I'm free from the love of money, freedom from pornography, I want to pretend I'm free from pornography, and freedom from other things, and I want to give that impression and opinion to others. I'm also free.

I'm a member of a new covenant church where we teach that sin will not have dominion over us because we are under grace, and I'm one of them. And it may not be true in your life. That is acting.

Now, as I said, that danger does not face those other churches we criticize because they don't make any bones of the fact, well, we're worldly. Yeah, it's impossible for anybody to even attempt to be like Jesus. Don't even try it.

When I was preaching some years ago in one church where I said that Paul said about Timothy, all seek their own except Timothy. He does not seek his own, and I spoke on the subject of not seeking our own, and love does not seek its own. 1 Corinthians 13, and Jesus didn't seek his own, and we're to follow and walk as Jesus walked, and somebody came up to me afterwards and said, you know, Zag, isn't there anybody in the world who doesn't seek his own? Everybody seeks their own.

Okay. Everybody will live pulled by the law of gravity. That's what they said up to about 100 years ago.

But they've been proven wrong. There are rockets that have gone beyond the power of gravity. There are human beings that have got into the place of space.

Well, the gravity doesn't pull them. They float around inside the spaceship. Have you seen those pictures? You think anybody would believe such pictures 100 years ago? So is it possible to live the type of life the Bible says, I don't have to pretend.

I don't have to pretend that I'm always rejoicing. I can actually rejoice always in the Lord. So here is the second danger, and we have to be ruthless.

Lord, I never want to give an impression to people that's not true in my life. I'm not saying we have to get up and confess our sins. And, you know, in an artificial way, say, brothers, these are the sins I fell into last week, so that you all don't have high thoughts about me.

That is stupidity. We have to confess our sins only to God, not to man. What I'm saying is, if I really don't want to give people a wrong impression about my spirituality, I want to be really honest, walk in the light, I don't have to confess sins to man.

Confess sins only to God. But I can come to the place where I speak in a way which is just the level of my life. That's what I like about children, you know.

Children are always so honest. If I ask a little boy, what class are you in? He'd say fourth grade. He won't say tenth grade when he's in the fourth.

It's only believers who pretend that they're in tenth grade when they're in the fourth grade. I've never in my life heard a little boy tell me he's in tenth grade when he's in the fourth grade. Have you? I've seen lots of believers who pretend they're in tenth grade when they're in the fourth grade, when they're in the kindergarten.

It's true. Acting. I've been into homes where I love asking little children in the homes, you know, where there are two children in a home, do you fight with each other? And I have never till today seen a dishonest kid.

They always, I've seen dishonest adults, but all those children say, yes, uncle, we fight with each other. I don't stop there. I say, do you ask forgiveness from each other? What do you fight? Yes.

I say, there's great hope for you. You'll really turn out well. Don't lose that honesty.

Because as you grow up, you'll be tempted to say, no, we don't fight with each other. We love one another. When you don't.

Isn't that how a lot of husbands and wives behave? Isn't that how they behave? Not like children who are honest. I'm not saying we should confess our sin in public. Don't misunderstand me.

But that is an innocence that we lose. It's an honesty that we lose as we grow up. And we've got to battle that and recover it again.

When Jesus said, if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you've got to be like a little child. And there's one thing a little child doesn't have, pretense. You look at a baby in a cradle.

It has zero pretense. It's not pretending to be spiritual or holy or wholehearted or godly or anything or handsome or clever or nothing. If you want to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus said you must be like little children.

So that's the other danger we face, a pretense. New covenant churches, the dangers we face. Another thing I want to mention is, you know, when we preach holiness, we can try to reach some unrealistic standards, which we can never attain to, till Christ comes again, and then get condemned because I don't reach there.

We must root ourselves in Scripture. For example, to think that I will never sin from now on till the end of my life. It's an unrealistic standard because find the balance in Scripture.

See 1 John chapter 2 and verse 1. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you don't sin. Definitely, that is the standard. That is New Covenant church standard.

I'm telling you these things so you don't sin. Any type of sin. Anger, bitterness, unforgiving spirit, complaining, grumbling, jealousy, any type of sin.

I'm writing to you that you don't sin. But, little children, some of us may sin. All of us, if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Why put that, but if anyone sins? Because that is a possibility till the end of our life. To learn to walk in victory over sin is like a child learning to walk. When we are born, none of us knew how to walk from day one.

It took us one, one and a half years before we learned to walk. That's a picture of overcoming sin. But even then, we are not steady on our feet.

But then the time comes when we are really strong on our feet and we can run without falling. But, is there anyone here who can say, I think I'm among the oldest here, 77, I can't say I will never fall. I can trip on a stone and fall today.

So that's the balance. I've learned to walk. I'm not like a six month old child not learning how to walk.

I know how to walk. I've understood victory, but I can step up and fall, but if I fall, I won't even lie down there for one second. I get up, like I heard a brother say, you shouldn't get up, you must bounce up.

You know, like a ball. How long does a ball stay on the ground when it hits the ground? I like that expression. When I fall, I bounce up.

If you don't bounce up, you'll be discouraged. Lie down there and say, oh, I preached such high standards, but it was bad. That is another danger.

Because you put some unrealistic standard before yourself that I will never see. That can happen. You know, we can sometimes go beyond Scripture.

There's an expression of that in 2 John. I don't know if you noticed it. 2 John, verse 9. Verse 9. 2 John.

There's only one chapter there, verse 9. If anyone goes too far, and does not stay within the boundaries of the teaching of Christ, have you ever understood what it refers to? That is going too far, he won't have God with him. I like that. Let me paraphrase it.

If you go beyond the boundaries of the teaching of Christ, and go outside that circle, you won't be having God with you there. You'll be yourself. And the devil, if he can't hold you back, he'll push you too far.

To hold you back is to say, tell you, oh well, grumbling, complaining, that's not serious, that's keeping you back. Going too far is going to some unrealistic standard, saying like, I will never sin again for the rest of my life. What happens after that is, you know that there are different movements in history that have preached holiness.

One of the great movements that preached holiness was John Wesley's Methodist Church, the great emphasis on holiness. But some people proclaimed a holiness there, where they said, the Holy Spirit burns up the flesh inside me, and I'm entirely sanctified. And then what happened when they sinned after that? The actors would pretend that they had not sinned.

What about the honest people? There were some honest people. They said, what to do now? Because I was sanctified last week, and now I'm doing this stupid thing. So they had to find another name.

They called it a mistake. It was not a sin. I've overcome all sin, but I made a mistake.

But the problem there is, the blood of Christ does not cleanse mistakes. You have to live with it for the rest of your life. If you confess it as a sin, it's cleansed.

But if it's a mistake, you've got to live with it, and probably you'll be lost. You see how people were very clever. They preached holiness, and they realized what they preached was an unrealistic standard, and they were not honest enough to say, that was my mistake.

There was, I don't know whether you know about the Seventh-day Adventist group that was founded by a man called William Miller in the 19th century. And I don't remember the exact dates, but he said something like, Christ is going to come in 1844 or some year there, back there. And he didn't come, so he gave another date.

I don't know whether it was 1841 and 44 or something like that. He gave another date after some calculations, and Christ still didn't come. The guy was honest.

He said, I'm sorry folks, I made a mistake. There are people who said that in the 20th century too, 1964 and 1994 and different type of things. Okay.

But there was another lady there in the Seventh-day Adventist system who, she's almost considered the leader of the Seventh-day Adventist now. And she said, no, no, no. Christ has come.

Where is he? He said, well, he came from the most holy place to the holy place. But he didn't come to the earth, which is the outer court. You know, the tabernacle, there were three parts.

So, that is a sort of a deception. There's a book they published called The Great Controversy. And if you're a Seventh-day Adventist, you've got to believe it.

That Christ already came from one part of heaven to another or something like that. You see, it's so difficult for people to say, listen, I made a mistake. I'm sorry.

My calculation was wrong. I sinned. It's very difficult.

There are some words that find it very difficult to come up from our throat, sort of get stuck. Try saying to your wife or your husband, I'm sorry. That was my mistake completely.

Please forgive me. You'll find it gets stuck in your throat somewhere. Why is that? But you can go to God and confess the most terrible things you've committed within one second.

Now, who's holier? Your husband or your wife or God? Now, you should be more scared to go to God and tell him your sin. To a human being, what's the problem in saying, you're a sinner, I'm a sinner, and I'm sorry. I'll tell you why.

We are fooling ourselves that we are confessing to God. Absolutely fooling ourselves. If you really feared God, you would fear every human being much less than that.

And if you could confess a sin to God, you'd be able to confess a sin to a man no problem at all. I mean, what's the problem in confessing a sin to an ant? Hey, I'm sorry, I stamped on you just now. What's an ant? I mean, God is so great, if I can go and confess to him my sin, what's the problem in telling somebody, I'm sorry, I hurt you, that was my fault 100% the way I spoke to you or something.

Why is it that we find it so difficult to confess to one another where we hurt, I'm not saying your private sins, I'm talking about where you hurt somebody. I'll tell you the reason, my dear brothers and sisters, do you know how I discovered this? Shall I tell you the great secret how I discovered this? Because I have the same flesh as you. And I discovered it in my own life.

That I was fooling myself, that I was confessing to God. If I really wanted to confess to God, I would be, no problem, confessing to man. Man is nothing, man is a dust to the ground.

Almighty God, if I can confess to him, why can't I say to somebody, I'm sorry, I hurt you. So don't live by unrealistic standards. Because what will happen is, gradually you lose, you'll come back into the power of gravity.

You lose your humility. God's grace will depart from you and you'll end up, and this has actually happened. I've heard of people who preach holiness and have been entirely sanctified and finally fall into adultery.

Adultery, which I know a lot of heathen people who never committed adultery. And this so-called Christian who is entirely sanctified falls into adultery. Why is that? Why is it you hear of pastors falling into adultery and stealing money? It's because of unrealistic standards.

Stick to the word of God, don't go beyond scripture. You know, for example, I've got to say, the Bible says I must love my neighbor as myself. Okay.

Who's my neighbor? Every human being in the world is my neighbor. Try loving everybody in the world just like yourself and be honest about it. You'll become a nervous wreck.

I'll tell you that. All the children in the church are my children. So I'm going to love all of them just like I love my children.

Try doing it. First you'll get bankrupt. It's impossible.

Be realistic. God has put you in small families so that each person can handle only so many. Don't become unrealistic by mathematically quoting scripture.

That's the way I can express it. It's a mathematical explanation of everybody's my neighbor, all the children are my children. Well, what about all the homeless people? Aren't they your neighbors too? Why are you letting them sleep outside in the streets? If you love your neighbors as yourself, why don't you bring them into your home, give them a bed? My dear brothers and sisters, it's one of the problems of those who pursue New Covenant and they're not realistic.

It can apply in many, many areas. When I go to scripture mathematically, use your common sense, allow the Holy Spirit and say, How is it when Jesus healed blind Bartimaeus? Did he set up a blind people's home for all the people? Did he set up lepers' homes for all the lepers? Did Jesus love the world enough to go to Africa and China and preach to all those people there who never heard? No. You could even question Jesus whether he did everything.

Jesus was realistic. He knew the Father had committed to him a certain task as a man on earth, and he did that and he went back to heaven. I want to say, my brothers and sisters, we are human beings.

There's a limit to what we can do. There's a boundary to our abilities. And I have to be honest and say, I'm sorry, I can't love all the children in the church just like I love my own children.

I want to be honest. I do care more for my own children than for that brother's children. If my child is seriously sick, I'll rush him to the hospital and spend all that I have to treat him.

But if that brother's child is sick, I'm not going to rush him to the hospital and spend all that I have for his child. I'll be honest. I don't want to be unrealistically super spiritual.

I'm just giving you some examples. There could be a hundred other examples where I'm unrealistic. It comes because I'm not honest with myself.

God loves honest people. Honesty is the thing that will save you from many calamities. Honesty and humility are like twins.

You cannot have one without the other. Honesty and humility will save you. It will keep you from coming into this space where you're pulled down by gravity, where you can move like a rocket constantly.

Another mention, we've got three, four hours more, right? Another area is partiality. I'm amazed to see the amount of partiality there is among even elders and people who've been in church for a long time. It's a battle to be free from partiality.

James 3, the last verse says, the wisdom from above is totally free from partiality. That means, it's not that I, we need to understand this properly also. We can be unrealistic here too.

Partiality means, I favor this guy because he's a friend of mine. If he commits the same wrong as that person, I won't, as an elder, I won't discipline him, but I'll discipline that person. That's partiality.

But here is an unrealistic view of partiality, where if I'm impartial, I'm going to have equal fellowship with everybody in the church. Then you'll be a hypocrite if you say that. It's not possible.

I have publicly said in my own church, I have much closer fellowship with a few brothers than with all the others in this church. I've said that in my own church. And there are some homes I visit much, much more than other homes.

I don't visit all the homes equally. I'm not, in your eyes, humanly speaking, impartial. It's not a human impartiality that I have.

I follow Jesus, who had many concentric circles. One was a circle of a multitude. He loved them, fed them loaves and fishes and healed them.

He really loved them. But inside that was another circle of 70 disciples. I read in Luke chapter 10, it's a much smaller, 70 is a small number compared to the multitude.

It's a smaller circle. And those people he sent out with a ministry in Luke chapter 10. And inside that circle was another small group of 11, smaller than the 70.

And inside that 11, there's another small group of three. Was Jesus partial? He can look like that. Why is he always hanging around with Peter, James, and John? What about the rest of us? You know, Andrew and Philip and all can say, well, this guy's partial.

He's always hanging around. When he goes to pray for Jairus' daughter to be raised from the dead, he drives all of us out and keeps Peter, James, and John there. Okay, Andrew, Philip, you go out now.

I'm just King Peter, James, and John. Partiality! You know, our human understanding. So foolish.

The things of God are foolishness to the natural mind. Have you read that verse? 1 Corinthians 2. The things of God are foolishness to the natural mind. A spiritual man, it says, cannot be discerned by others.

Only a spiritual man can discern a spiritual man. And I can understand Jesus fully. I have also small groups around me, concentric circles, less and less fellowship as you go to the outer circle, more and more fellowship as I have people in the inner circle.

So don't feel condemned if you find yourself drawn to more, to some people and not to everybody equally. Don't be unrealistic. Sometimes we can have this mathematical understanding of New Covenant.

I must be equal with everybody. It doesn't work. Look at Jesus.

I always say Jesus is my dictionary. When I can't understand something, I look at Jesus. So whenever you're trying to formulate some new revelation that you got, some new revelation you got and you are itching to share it on Sunday morning in NCCF, before you do that, go to the dictionary.

Look at Jesus and say, Is that how he did it? Or am I preaching some unrealistic standard which 3-4 years later when I become a little more mature, I'll have to withdraw that statement and say, I'm sorry, what I said 3-4 years ago was wrong. We don't want to be like that, you know. If every year you get up and say what I said last year was wrong, and you keep on saying that, after some time nobody will believe you.

What he's saying right now, he may say next year he was wrong. But you'll never be wrong if you follow the Bible which says, Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Not looking into the Bible and analyzing it mathematically.

That's not the author and finisher of my faith. My father, my dictionary is Jesus Christ. And there are many things in the Bible I can't understand, and if I analyze it mathematically, I'll go wrong.

But if I look at Jesus and look at the dictionary, I get it right. Finally, when you hear these things, the other danger we can face is to get discouraged. Oh no, I'm nowhere.

I thought I'd come at least up to 3rd or 4th grade, and today I discover I'm in the kindergarten. Don't get discouraged. Never, never get discouraged.

I tell you, after I was born again, for 16 years of my life, I was a frequent slave to discouragement. Because I wanted to be something and I didn't get there and I got discouraged. And the discouragement made me fall even further.

Discouragement is a master weapon of Satan. So when you hear something fantastic, say, Lord, it may take years to get there, but I'm not going to be discouraged. Learn from a child.

How many times that 10-month-old child falls, gets up, falls, gets up in one single day. Learn from that. Never gives up.

That child is, as it were saying, one day I'm going to walk. And it walks, because it doesn't give up. And I'll tell you that.

Learn from that child. Never give up. Never get discouraged.

I will get there. If God has promised it, it will happen to me. If it says no sin will have dominion over me, I'm going to get there.

He who has the hope of Christ coming purifies himself as he is pure. I don't get there overnight. I like a 5-year-old telling me, I say, what are you going to study? He says, I'm going to get a PhD.

5 years old. I really appreciate that. And you see that kid 20 years later, didn't I tell you 20 years ago I'd get a PhD? Here I got it now.

He didn't get it in one day, but he had an ambition. Do you have an ambition to be like Jesus? To please God and not please men? Wonderful thing. And in connection with discouragement, never condemn yourself.

You see, the reason I don't condemn myself is, I believe in Romans 7-18, in my flesh that dwells, nothing good. I realize that. I'm battling every day with the flesh in which dwells nothing good, and little by little I'm overcoming it.

So I will not condemn myself. If I slip up, I get up. I will not get discouraged.

I will not condemn myself. I picture my heart before I was converted, like a big black circle. That's my heart.

Flesh, in which dwells no good, completely covered my heart. And one day Christ came into my heart. It was like a little white circle that came into the middle of this big black circle.

And as I battle temptation and overcome, that white circle becomes a little bigger. And then I battle another temptation. It may take me a whole year to overcome something.

It becomes a little bigger. Then I battle another temptation. I battle gossiping.

Or I battle anger. Or I battle dirty thoughts. I battle love of money.

I battle complaining, grumbling. Little by little this circle is getting bigger and bigger and bigger. Praise the Lord.

That's how he who has this hope purifies himself, as Christ is pure. And I want to say to you, finally, there is hope for every single one of you sitting here. I don't know you.

But because you've come here to hear the Word of God, I want to say to you, in Jesus' name, there is hope for every one of you. There's not one of you who need to look at your life and say, boy, I'll never get there. I want to say to you, in Jesus' name, you'll get there.

Just trust the Lord. He sent the Holy Spirit to do that job in your life. Okay.

Thank you for listening. Let's pray. As we bow before God, I want you to reach out in faith.

That's the opposite of discouragement. And say, Lord, I believe you love me. There's no doubt about that.

You love me enough to die for me on the cross. And my love for you is so faint compared to that. But, Lord, I see that you can pull me out of this law of sin and death that pulls me down all the time.

Take me into that outer space of your grace where I keep moving forward little by little by little. Help me, Lord, I pray. I want to trust you.

You will do it for me, though I'm the weakest person sitting here, perhaps. And perhaps the most sinful. Lord, I know you can do it for me.

Because you came not for the righteous, but you came to call sinners to repentance. And I'm one of them, Lord. There's a lot of areas in my life I need to keep on repenting.

On Christ-like areas, I want to become more like you. That's my passion. Pray that prayer today and keep praying it.

And I tell you, you'll see amazing things happening in your life. And the result will be such a blessing to your children as well. Thank you, Father, for hearing us.

We believe you will do this for each of us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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