

Entering the Full New Covenant

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the critical role of repentance in entering the New Covenant and living a life that reflects Christ's teachings and character.

Duration: 1:15:06

Scripture: John 6:38, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 8:10, Hebrews 13:9

Topics: "New Covenant", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the progression in the new covenant relationship with God. It starts with the forgiveness of sins and justification, then moves to knowing God as a loving Father, and finally to having God's law written in our hearts to love Him and others. The goal is to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit in loving unconditionally and living out God's will.

Transcript

I want to share with you the commission the Lord has given me. Ezekiel chapter 3, Ezekiel 3 and verse 17. Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman.

In those days Ezekiel was to the house of Israel, today it is to the church. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me. And when I say to the wicked, you shall surely die, and you do not warn him, or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way, that he may live.

That wicked man will die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered yourself. And then if it's a righteous man, and he turns away from his righteousness, this is one who's saved once, who commits iniquity, I place an obstacle before him, he'll die.

And since you didn't warn him, he will die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered. All that he did will not be remembered. But his blood I will require at your hand, because you didn't warn him.

But if you warned the righteous man, and in response to that, the righteous man turns from his sin and does not sin, he shall live, because he took warning, and you also have delivered yourself. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind, and that is the commission the Lord has given me for many years. So I want to share what the Lord has laid on my heart, because I'm concerned that a number of people sitting

here are not really born again.

You've come here because your family members have come here, or your parents came here, and it's a nice church to go to, you don't have to pay any money here, no offerings, there are good people, and if you're in problems, there are people to help you. All these are the wrong reasons to become a part of this church. But like we read in that passage, I can't change you.

I can only warn you, so that your blood is not on my hands. And I want to speak the truth so clearly that in the day when we stand before Jesus Christ, in the day of judgment, as we will all stand, and you will see me, you will not be able to say to me, Brother Zach, you did not warn me. You did not tell me the truth.

You will not be able to say that. So I want to share the truth with you. Do you know that the first word that God spoke in the New Testament was repent? That's how the New Testament begins, with the message of John the Baptist.

And that is to show us that that is the first message with which we enter the New Covenant. The Old Testament books were related to the Old Covenant. Nobody came into the New Covenant until the day of Pentecost.

And John the Baptist was sent to prepare or pave the way for that day. And the way he paved the way was preaching repentance. What he said, we read in Luke chapter 3, he was quoting from Isaiah when people asked him who he was, he said, I'm just a voice in the wilderness.

And in Luke chapter 3 he says, Verse 4, as it is written in the words of Isaiah the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord. And I believe this is a word that we need to hear as we approach the second coming of Christ as well. Make yourself ready.

Make the way of the Lord ready. Make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled up.

Every mountain shall be brought low. Those things that are hidden in deep valleys are to be cleansed out and raised up to level ground. All the pride represented by mountains is to be brought low.

And the crooked things in your life that are still there, which you know are not straight, which are crooked, the Lord tells you to make them straight. And the rough areas in your life, and you know what those rough areas are, it's usually in your speech, rough areas, you've got to make them smooth. And then all flesh will see the salvation of God.

And that is a spirit that we need to have all the time. Because when you come to the last word of Jesus to the church, there are many people who say, the last word of Jesus to the church was, go into all the world and preach the gospel and make disciples, and teach them all that I taught you. And there are others who say, no, no, no, no, that's not the last word.

The last word was, wait until you're filled with the Holy Spirit, and you shall have power from heaven. I say, no, neither of those are the last words of Jesus to his church. The last words of Jesus to his church are found in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3, repent.

That's how the New Testament begins, and that's how the New Testament ends. In Revelation chapter 2, he says to the elder, even elders have to repent. There's no favoritism with God.

I'll tell you something, God doesn't favor a man because he's an elder. He doesn't favor me. If I don't live, and I mean this when I say this, if I don't live in daily repentance, daily repentance, what I'm saying is, I have already become like Jesus Christ.

That's what everybody who's saying, who does not live in a daily repentance, or he's not walking in the light. That means he's not getting any light on any new unchrist-like area in his life. Because if I see an unchrist-like area in my life today, I'd like to repent immediately.

And if I walk in the light, I'm making progress towards closer to God, I'm definitely going to see something unchrist-like. Maybe it's something I've seen 10 times before, but which I haven't taken seriously. But the Lord points it out to me again, so that I can repent.

I can testify before God, my life is one of daily repentance, which is a testimony to one thing that I have, two things really, one that I have not yet become like Christ, and secondly that I am passionate about becoming like Christ. So any of you sitting here, if you will acknowledge that you have not yet become like Jesus Christ, and secondly that you are passionate about becoming like Jesus Christ, and not just sitting in a church and enjoying, listening to the message, your life will also be one of daily repentance. Not once in a while repentance, daily repentance.

So what John the Baptist said, repent for the kingdom of heaven is near, Jesus preached repent for the kingdom of heaven is near, that kingdom of heaven came on the day of Pentecost. That means heaven's rule, the life of heaven, has now to come into my life, and if it hasn't fully come into my life, then I have to listen to John the Baptist saying repent. Get into full possession of the kingdom of heaven.

The other thing that Jesus spoke, which are his last words, were be an overcomer. Repent and be an overcomer. Five churches and five elders, needed to repent of something specific.

Those were mostly obvious areas, which were very visible. There were inner areas in their lives, which all seven would need to repent. All seven elders in seven churches.

But here the Lord was speaking more about these external things, where they had come short. But to all seven he says, be an overcomer. And when you come to the end of Revelation, it says in Revelation 21, and verse 7, he who overcomes, shall inherit these things.

And that's referring to the holy city in verse 2. It's the one who overcomes, who will inherit this. God is not going to give everything to everyone. But the one who overcomes, will inherit these things, and he will be my son.

I will be his God. When you read that verse, my brother, sister, do you find a passion in you to be that? Lord, I want to inherit those things. I mean, in the world there are a lot of people, who want to inherit earthly property, and many things from their parents.

And some of you who did not get much of an inheritance, may say, oh, I wish my parents had more to give me. I'll tell you, all those things will disappear. Here is the inheritance that lasts forever.

He will inherit these things. An eternal wealth, an eternal inheritance, if you overcome. And that's a daily thing.

Every day of our earthly life, we find something that we face, that we have to overcome. There is a verse that Jesus said, in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter 6. It's good that you turn to these verses in your Bible, and if you have not brought a Bible with you, ask yourself why you did not bring a Bible. You don't want to know what God's word is? But if you have a Bible, turn to Matthew 6, verse 34.

Jesus said, the last part, each day has got enough trouble of its own. Every single day has got some trouble. Jesus said that.

For that day. Don't worry about the next day, he says. Tomorrow's trouble will come tomorrow.

Don't worry about it. But each day has got a certain amount of trouble, which has been allotted for that day for you and me. And the purpose of that is that we might overcome, so that one day we inherit everything in heaven, and God will be my Father, and I'll be his Son for all eternity.

I'm looking forward to that. I hope you are. So, here's some of the evidences of repentance.

We read just one verse in 2 Corinthians 7. In 2 Corinthians 7, Paul is writing to this church in Corinth as a church, because there was a lot of sin in that church. And he rebuked them very strongly about their sin. And after some time, maybe a year or so later, he writes 2 Corinthians, and in 1 Corinthians he rebuked them.

And they had taken it seriously. And they had really repented. They had paid attention to him.

And he says, Now I rejoice. 2 Corinthians 7 verse 9. I rejoice that you were made sorrowful through my letter. And see what it produced.

Verse 10. A sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret. That means a repentance that you'll never feel sorry about.

There is a repentance which is shallow, which one day you will discover was not good enough. But there's a repentance which you'll never feel sorrowful about. I'm thankful that my repentance was thorough.

And you were made sorrowful according to the will of God so that you might not suffer loss. So in repentance, if you really got a repentance from the Holy Spirit, it will make you sorrowful about the things you did. Or the one thing you did or said.

Or your attitude. If that sorrow is not there in your life, you have to assume you have not really repented. You just said, you know, like some people say, I'm sorry.

Many, many people who tell someone, I'm sorry, there's no sorrow in their words. It's just a decent, civilized thing to say when you hurt somebody. You accidentally stamped on his leg or something like that.

I'm sorry. You know, I've said that husbands and wives must say they're sorry when they hurt each other with words. But you can say that because you heard me say it.

There may be no sorrow in it. There may be no sorrow for the way you spoke. It's good you said sorry, but there was no repentance there.

You may get a few marks with your wife, but you get zero before God. Because that repentance was not accompanied with sorrow. It's very, very important.

The sorrow which is according to the will of God, verse 10, produces a repentance that leads to salvation. There is a repentance that leads to salvation from that sin. And there's a repentance that does not lead to salvation from sin.

In other words, if you're keeping on getting angry, your repentance has not brought any salvation to you from that sin. You just said, I'm sorry. And you do the same thing tomorrow.

And you'll do the same thing 10 years from now. Because there was no sorrow in it. There was no sorrow according to the will of God.

But if it is a sorrow according to the will of God, it will produce a repentance that leads to salvation, means deliverance from that sin which you're repenting of. You find that? Is it pornography you're repenting of? You can say, oh Lord, I'm sorry. I looked at those pictures.

And you'll look at it again tomorrow or next week. It's not a sorrow according to the will of God. It's a meaningless repetition.

And I'll tell you something. It's an insult to God to go like that to Him and say something that you don't really mean. Would you go to a king on earth and say something you don't mean? I fear that so many believers, many sitting here, have become so familiar with God that you don't respect Him anymore.

You just go and say something to Him which you don't really mean. And you say, oh, I'm sorry about that, Lord. Really? Is there a sorrow there according to the will of God for what you did? And do you really feel that that sin was what nailed Jesus to the cross? And which made Him forsaken by His Father? Your pornography, your anger, your bitterness, your words or attitudes.

That, if you see that, it will bring a sorrow that is according to God's will. And the proof of it will be, not that you'll be delivered overnight, but progressively you'll be delivered. Little by little by little.

It's like a sick person. He's getting better and better and better. Every day in the hospital, he's still in the hospital, but he's getting better every day.

And the doctors can make out, hey, there's an improvement in this guy compared to yesterday. And next week, wow, there's a real improvement compared to last week. You find that in your life? Whatever sin you're enslaved to, whatever sin is the thing which you keep falling into, falling into, falling into, OK, you're in a hospital, we're all in a hospital, but can the doctor say there's an improvement in your condition? It's getting a little better.

It's getting a little better. Your thought life is getting a little purer because you're mourning over everything that defiles. Now, even though dreams are not conscious sin, you don't have to repent over your dreams because you didn't consciously see those pictures in your dreams, but you have to see them as an indication of a certain thought pattern that you have had which produces those dreams.

So even though it's not conscious sin, you have to have a sorrow in your heart, Lord, why am I getting those type of dreams? Why am I getting those filthy dreams? Still, after so many years of sitting in CFC and listening to the message, I'm still getting all that filthy stuff? Or why am I getting all those scary dreams as if the devil is running after me after all that I hear in CFC? Something is wrong with me! And what is that? I'm not taking the word of God seriously. There is not a sorrow in me according to the will of God, that's it. I'm being casual about saying I'm sorry to God or saying I'm sorry to man.

My dear brothers and sisters, please take this seriously. If you take every word that you hear from me seriously, I can guarantee you'll get a hundred percent in the final examination, in the Day of Judgment. No doubt.

Because, you know, like the teachers say, everything that will come in the examination will be from this book, physics book or chemistry book. This is the portion for the examination. Nothing outside this physics book will come in your physics question paper.

I want to say, nothing outside the Bible, God will ask you in the Day of Judgment. That's the reason why I study the Bible personally. I want to get a hundred percent in the final day.

Many of you studied very hard for your earthly examinations. You studied the subject that was coming and the book that was covering the portion for that subject and you really took it seriously. Why don't you do that for this more important final examination? Other people may think you're a wonderful brother or sister.

It means zero before God. There are a lot of people around the world who praise me. I don't even waste my time thinking about it.

Because I say they don't even know 10% of my life. You who have known me more than many other people in the world, how much do you know of my life? Some of you have known me for 30-40 years. Do you know how I speak to my wife at home? Tell me honestly, you don't.

Do you know how I handle my finances? You who have known me 30-40 years, you don't. Do you know whether I'm thinking about money all the time? You don't. What do you know about me? 5%.

And you think I'm a great guy. You think that means anything to me? Someone who does not know 95% of my life thinks I'm a great guy. You've got to be crazy to be excited about that.

Some brother, maybe some elder brother told you you're a great guy and you keep meditating on that forever. Don't be foolish. Wake up and say, Lord, what do you think about me? It's the only thing that matters.

What do you think about me? I mean, that elder brother may have said something to encourage you. That's all. I try to encourage people all the time.

I've gone sometimes to people and said, you know, you've got the best wife in CFC. Then I go to somebody else and I say, you've got the best wife in CFC. What I mean is, you've got the best wife that you deserve.

And that's right. And he got the best wife he deserved and somebody else got the best wife he deserved. I can say that to everybody.

If you're half-hearted and you've got a half-hearted wife, that's the best wife you deserve. You don't deserve anybody better than that because you're half-hearted yourself. But if you're serious, you can help your partner to be serious too.

It's a tremendous thing how we can influence others. Like one candle that's lit can light up so many other candles. And I want to encourage all of you, my brothers and sisters in this church, to be like that.

Be a candle that can light many other candles with the light of the life of God that comes through you. Paul goes on to say, this true repentance, verse 11, what earnestness, verse 11, this very thing, this godly sorrow has produced in you. What vindication of yourselves what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong in everything you've demonstrated that now you're innocent.

Is your repentance like this? It produces a godly sorrow, setting right things in your own life. Indignation means a tremendous hatred for that thing that you did or said. And what fear, what a reverential fear of God, what longing to be free from this one, what a zeal to avoid the things and areas that lead you into such temptation.

And what an avenging of wrong, what setting right, seriously setting right the things that you did wrong. If your repentance is not like this, I have to tell you the truth that your repentance is not according to the will of God. And I'm very concerned about brothers and sisters in our midst who can have a shallow repentance and just say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

And okay, maybe the elders also tell you, okay, we accept you as a committed member. I'll tell you my conviction. Praise God for all the ways in which elders and deacons try to evaluate you to see whether you're a committed member, you deserve to be a committed member of this church, and whether you deserve to be baptized.

But I still want to say the best and most spiritual among them can still be deceived. I can be deceived. I have baptized people in the old days when we were meeting in our house who are not following the Lord today.

They're lost. But at that time, I don't know, I felt they were genuinely saved. But they're on their way to hell today.

They can't stand before the Lord and say, Brother Zach baptized me. And the Lord will say, so what? You fooled him. Like I say, you know, I can lift my checkpost, that bar and say, okay, go through.

But there's another checkpost further up where God is there. He'll send you back. You can't go through.

So don't be excited that some elder lifted the bar and said, okay, you can go through. You can be a committed member. Your name is in the list.

It's good. We have to do that because we want to distinguish between those who want to be a part of the family. And one part of that family is, one part of being part of the family is that you accept the elders in the church here and obey the word of God which says, submit to your elders.

We want to know who are the ones who have chosen to be a part of the family and who have decided just to be visitors. We just want to know that distinction because we have a responsibility for those who are our children. We don't have a responsibility for the children on the streets.

We care for them. We may give some occasional food packets to the children on the streets. But we treat visitors here like the children on the streets.

We have no responsibility for them. We love them. We don't hate them.

We give them occasional food packet or something. But our responsibility is for those who say, we want to be committed here. We want to be part of the family.

We want to submit to the elders of the church. That's the reason. But that doesn't mean that we are right in the way we have assessed you.

So it's very important. Let every man examine himself, the Bible says, and I would encourage you to examine yourself, judge yourself, if you want to be a part of the household of God. 1 Peter 4 verse 17 is a verse that I often quote and all of you must know it and remember it.

1 Peter 4 verse 17 says, The time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God or the family of God. The time has come. And I really believe that.

The time has come. For self-judgment to begin, not outside there with the worldly people, but with the family of God. And if it begins with us first, so it has to begin with us first, before we judge others.

One mark of being part of God's family is that we judge ourselves first. If you are not a person who is judging yourself first, according to this verse, you're not part of God's household. You're not part of God's family, whatever else you may think you are.

You have to judge yourself first. If you're the type of person who judges other people first and not yourself first, I want to tell you the truth, my dear friend. You're not part of God's household.

I don't care how long you've sat here. Maybe once upon a time you were and you've drifted away. You know you can be part of God's family once and then fall away? Sure.

That happens. So, the mark of a person who is part of God's household or God's family is that they judge themselves first. I'm not speaking what I've not done and what I'm not doing.

I really seek to judge myself every day. I meant what I've often said, that the happiest people in the world are those who judge themselves always and never judge others. Be in that crowd.

I can honestly say before God that I'm very happy I'm very happy 24 hours of every day. I can't think of sadness in my life. Sorrow, yes, you know, if something sad happens to a loved one or something like that, we have sorrow.

Sure, Jesus had it. He wept at Lazarus' tomb, but there was an inward joy in his relationship with the Father perpetually. Because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, God the Father anointed him with the oil of gladness above everybody else.

And I want to say to you, it's the same law for us, that if you love righteousness and hate sin, you'll be anointed with gladness 24 hours a day. And you'll be able to obey the command which says, Rejoice in all ways. You'll be able to experience the kingdom of God, which is righteousness with joy in the Holy Spirit all the time.

Once we've come through repentance, we enter into what we've often taught in this church, the new covenant. And in the new covenant, there are three standards that we can live at. God wants us to live at the highest standard.

And I want to show them to you in Hebrews 8. In Hebrews 8, this is the great passage in the New Testament which speaks about the new covenant which we often speak about in CFC. So, Hebrews 8, the passage is from verse 6 to 13, where it says that Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, and he's the mediator of a better covenant, better than what God made with Israel through Moses, because the

promises are better. How are they better? Because Israel was only promised earthly wealth.

We are promised spiritual riches. They were promised physical healing. We are promised spiritual deliverance from sin.

In that way, it's better. They were promised many earthly children. We are promised spiritual children, if we are faithful to God.

So, these were basically the three things God promised Israel. Plenty of money, earthly wealth, physical health, and many children. Apply them all spiritually, and you enter the new covenant where plenty of spiritual wealth, spiritual healing from all sin, and that God uses you to bring others into his kingdom who are your spiritual children.

We should not be satisfied with anything less than these three. I've met many married couples who long to have children. They pray, they go for treatment in hospitals, and spend lakhs of rupees, millions of rupees.

I wish there were a longing like that among believers, to have spiritual children. Do you have a longing like that? Like the longing that childless mothers have, childless women have, wives. Lord, I want a child, I want a child, at least one.

And in the Old Testament, they wanted more. Remember Jacob had 12. Is there a longing in your heart? Is there a longing in your heart for spiritual wealth more than your God longing for total healing from all sin? Is there a longing for spiritual children? These are the new covenant equivalent of the old covenant promises.

And what I've mentioned, you can take time to read in Deuteronomy 28, these three things. Plenty of wealth, physical health, plenty of children. That's what we translate into the new covenant.

That is why it says we have better promises, better because that was only material, and the material will all perish one day. You can lose your wealth. You can lose your health.

And you can lose your children. But this is eternal. The wealth we get from God is eternal.

The deliverance from sin is eternal. And the children that the Lord uses us to bring into his kingdom are going to be with us for eternity in heaven. It's tremendous joy to be able to see people who we brought to Christ through our life or witness, or, you know, who maybe you just invited them to CFC.

And as a result, they got converted. Maybe you didn't actually bring them to Christ, but you were one link. You were the first link.

That person in your office, you asked him, why don't you come to our Sunday service? And if you had not said that, that person would never have come. That person may never have come into God's kingdom. So you're a very important part in that link.

See, there's nobody, I'm convinced about one thing, there's nobody who can say, I brought so-and-so to Christ. I never say that. If through my ministry somebody came to Christ, I always say I was the last link in that chain.

There were probably 50 other links before me some way back in the beginning. Somebody gave them a tract or somebody else witnessed to them. And finally, I happened to be the last link.

I can't take the credit for it. There are 50 people along the line who deserve that credit. And so, you don't have to be the last link in the chain to bring a person to Christ.

I'm happy to be just one link in the chain. I don't always want to be the last link in the chain. I say just I want to sow a seed.

Maybe 10 years later the guy will come to Christ and I was one link in the chain. You know, that's what it is. If people can just look at your life, in your office, or your uprightness, or something, that can be a link in the chain that finally leads them to Christ.

So, you must have a longing, Lord, my life must draw other people to you. So these are the better promises. Now we move on from there.

Verse 7. Hebrews 8, 7. That first covenant was faulty. Do you know that it's the Bible that says the old covenant that God gave through Moses was faulty. There was a fault in it.

It was incomplete. Not fault in the sense that God made a mistake. No.

It was faulty in the sense that it could not accomplish what God wanted to accomplish in man. And the reason was the fault was not with God. The fault was not with man.

The fault was it was not yet time for Jesus Christ to come and die in order to cleanse man's heart from sin so that the new covenant could be established and fulfilled. So in that way the old covenant was faulty in the sense that until Christ came and died and man's heart was clean, the Holy Spirit could not come in. Why could not the Holy Spirit come inside anybody's heart in Old Testament times? I think many of them were more sincere than most of us.

Do you think all of us are more wholehearted than John the Baptist? I hope you're not so crazy to think like that. When I look at John the Baptist, I say, wow. I say, Lord, where am I? The way he... I recently again, I've been many times challenged by John the Baptist.

He's been one of my great heroes. But recently again, I was challenged by him and I was reading, there's someone coming after me. I'm not even worthy to untie his laces.

I said, Lord, what a man. I'm not even worthy to untie the... I mean, they didn't have laces. Those were the things that tied their sandals.

I'm not unworthy to open his sandal thongs. I said, Lord, do I have that attitude towards Jesus? Some of us act towards Jesus as if he's an old buddy of ours that we can slap him on the back and say hi. Unfortunately, that's the type of shallowness in today's Western Christianity that produces all these shallow songs.

It's because they don't know the reverential fear of God. They don't know what John the Baptist had that attitude. I'm not even worthy to open his shoelaces.

Lord, you're so great that I'm not worthy to remove the thongs from your sandals. And so he said, I've got to decrease. Even where I am, I'm not even worthy to open his shoelaces, but I want to decrease even from there.

He must increase. That's a godly man with a tremendous passion that Christ must increase and we must decrease. We're not interested in CFC's name, not at all.

That must decrease. I pray that. We must decrease.

Christ must increase. You know, when I've heard of people who, there are thousands and thousands of people from many denominations who now listen to our messages on YouTube, read our books, and preach them as their own messages. Fine.

I say, Lord, I'm delighted that they're doing it. They don't have to quote me because I have to decrease. They don't have to quote, this is from Jack Moonen.

No, I want to decrease. I said that to the Lord long ago. I say, I don't want anybody to know about me.

They must know Jesus. Do you have a passion that people know less and less about you? And that Christ might increase? It'll change your whole life, I tell you. If you have that simple attitude that John the Baptist had, he must increase and I must decrease.

You want to be more popular and more well-known in CFC? Or in whatever circle you're known. Let Jesus be known more. Let Jesus be honored.

It doesn't matter what people think about me. Forget about me altogether. Don't even mention my name.

It's fine. That is how that man John the Baptist was. And I say, what heights he could rise to under the old covenant.

And that was a faulty covenant. And here we are saying, we're in the new covenant. The Holy Spirit has come.

There are a lot of people who say, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. There's no evidence of it in their life. But they imagine you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

Boy, you should be way above John the Baptist then in your attitude towards Jesus Christ. That covenant was faulty. I feel that we have lowered the standard so much in Christendom around the world that it's like these corporation schools, you know.

Why don't you send your children to the corporation schools? Because, you know, they learn nothing there. They go through the ritual. They learn all the subjects, physics, chemistry, maths and history and all.

They learn nothing. Because the teachers are not serious. And that level of education, you know, is nowhere compared to the top schools and colleges that we want to send our children to.

It's like that. I see a lot of Christianity just like these third-rate corporation schools. Exactly.

The teachers are like that. The teachers in the corporation school just want their monthly salary and then they go home. They're not worried whether the students learn anything.

And that's a sad state of Christendom. And it's a terrible thing if you sit in a good school and you're like a corporation school student. That means your life is no better than the life of someone who's in a church where they do not hear about the New Covenant.

That's terrible. There's no excuse for a student studying in a top school and getting the type of education and results that one of those corporation school children get. No, there's no excuse if you're sitting here and listening to the wonderful truths that you hear Sunday after Sunday after Sunday and the stirring messages and even the songs that lift us up to the Lord and the examples of godly men and women.

You see all that and it does not raise you way above the level of other Christians who don't hear these things. If your home life is still like everybody else's, all the yelling and quarreling and fighting, and if your attitude to money is the same covetous old wretched attitude that every other Christian has, what's the point? You might as well go to a corporation school. You might as well go and sit in some dead church.

It doesn't seem to benefit you that you're in a church that's preaching the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was faulty. That's why God established a second.

The second is way above the first. And if you want to know how much above, this is the answer. Who was the mediator of the Old Covenant? Moses.

Who is the mediator, verse 6, of the New Covenant? Jesus. How much higher is Jesus than Moses? That is how much better the New Covenant is from the Old Covenant. That is how much higher I can go compared to John the Baptist.

How much better of a life can I live than John the Baptist? As much better as Jesus is above Moses. Do you believe that? I believe it. I mean, that's the potential.

And if I'm serious, I can get there. And I want to tell you in Jesus' name, if any of you are serious, you can get there. I'm not talking about ministry.

We evaluate people by ministry. Wow, what a prophet he was. Ministry is different.

Ministry is not the test of a man's spiritual level. In the Old Testament, there was a prophet called Balaam, who prophesied about the coming of Jesus Christ. You know that? But he's in hell today.

He drifted. He went after money. So ministry proves nothing.

It's life that matters. I'm not talking about ministry. None of us can have a ministry like John the Baptist.

We can't even have a ministry like each other. But life. I'm talking about a life that we can come to as much a higher life than John the Baptist as Jesus is above Moses.

An inner life. John the Baptist could not have an inner life. Externally, he was fine.

But he was defeated in his inner life. I know that because he was under the Old Covenant. Nobody could get victory in the Old Covenant.

The sad thing is that many Christians who call themselves New Testament Christians, even pastors and Christian leaders, fall into adultery. What's that? Or run after women who are not their wives. Can you imagine any Old Testament prophet doing that? Moses or John the Baptist? You see what a pathetic level Christianity has come to.

We say, oh, that's okay. He's forgiven. And David committed adultery and became king again.

This pastor can come back. I say, rubbish. I don't believe it.

I would never allow an elder brother in CFC, if he fell into adultery, ever to come back. He can sit in the back row if he repents. He'll never be an elder again.

Not in a CFC church. But in other churches, they become pastors again. Just sit around quietly for six months and come back.

You see, this is an indication of the level of Christianity. It's like the corporation schools. Be thankful if you're hearing about the new covenant.

So in this new covenant, which is so much superior to the old, as I said, there are three stages. But let me show you one more verse before I proceed. Verse 13.

When he says a new covenant, he has made the first obsolete. That's like saying up to 1947, India was under the British rule, and those days it was King George VI who was the ruler of India. I remember those days because I was in Delhi those days before independence.

King George VI was my head of government. But a day came when he was no longer my head. Now I don't want to go back to that.

Nobody in India wants to go back to the British rule. This is obsolete. The old covenant is obsolete.

Everything written in the old covenant is over. Now it is not a question of plenty of money and plenty of healing and plenty of children. No.

Now it is a new covenant. The first is obsolete. That's finished.

God's canceled it. You can't go back to that. That was a law which God's canceled.

Now you don't pay 10% to God like income tax. The tithe, by the way, was income tax. The right word for it is income tax.

People call it the tithe. I call it income tax. That means they earned something in terms of grain and cattle.

The more you earned, your 10%, you had to give to God. You had to give more. It's like in income tax.

The more you earn, the more you give. And God was the head of the government, and the government workers were the Levites, and they had to pay income tax to support the government workers. It was an entirely old covenant.

But I say in the new covenant, God is not head of government. He's a father. How many of you pay income tax to your father? If you're still thinking of income tax, God is not your father.

That's why we never talk about tithing in this church. But that doesn't mean you're not interested in the work of your father. A son or a daughter would be very happy to care for the father's work and business and are responsible.

I mean, if you're an irresponsible son or daughter, you couldn't care less. God has got responsible children and irresponsible children, and all of God's work is supported by responsible children. The other irresponsible children just enjoy the benefit of the responsible children taking care of God's ministry.

It's like in every home. Supposing a home has got five or six children, and the father is retired, there's no income there, and they're living together, and all the children are working, two or three pitch in and put in all their money to run the home, and the other three lazy children just, they earn money, but they won't put in anything. They just enjoy the benefit of it.

They are three responsible children and three irresponsible ones in that home. God has got responsible children and irresponsible children in His home. But a good father doesn't compel anyone.

He doesn't want anything. If a son is reluctant to give him anything, his dad says, hey, I don't want anything from you. That's what God says.

God loves a cheerful giver. The old covenant attitude of pay your income tax, otherwise the income tax authorities will come after you. That's how it was in the old covenant.

If you didn't pay your tax, a curse will come upon you. But it's not like that when God is a father. So these are areas which are all abolished.

Now in this new covenant, I told you there are three standards. Like in school, you have ten standards. Here are three.

The first is verse 12. This is the lowest level. This is where we enter in after we have repented, after all that I've told you so far.

The first level of this Christian life is where you recognize that God is merciful to your iniquities, and He doesn't remember your sin anymore. That's the lowest level at which we can live the Christian life. I thank God that God has been merciful to all my sins.

I've committed so many sins. They're all cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ. And not only that, wonder of wonders, He says He won't even remember them anymore.

Great. You've entered the school. But you can drop out of the school also.

But right now you're there. If you have repented, you're there. How do we drop out of school? We drop out of school when we stop repenting.

Very simple way to find out. The day you stop repenting, you have stopped going to school. Now if you stop going to school one or two days, it's okay.

But if you continuously live like that, you're no longer a part of the school. Because you're not attending. So when repentance goes away from your life, you can be sure that you're on your way out of the school.

That is how there have been people who are in CFC, who are no longer here. And I don't think they're even in God's kingdom. You can leave CFC and join another church and still be in God's kingdom if you're repenting.

But if you leave and you stop repenting, then you're no longer in God's kingdom. And if you sit here and not repenting, you're not in God's kingdom. So that's the way we drop out of school when we stop repenting, like I told you just now.

But otherwise, if you're repenting, God is merciful to all our iniquities. There is no forgiveness without repentance. We teach that very clearly.

Repentance and faith that Christ died for your sins and His blood was shed for you. He's merciful to all our iniquities and this wonderful thing that no Old Testament person could experience. In the Old Testament, the experience was like this.

We read in chapter 10, verse 3. There is a reminder of those sins year after year after year after year. You're reminded. You're reminded of your sins.

And if you're keeping reminded of sins, you're under the Old Covenant. But in the New Covenant, God says, I will not remember your sins anymore. It's finished.

There's no reminder of sins that you did 10 years ago or yesterday, if you have really repented. Like I said, what repentance is, and believed in the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing you. So that's the lowest level.

And it's pathetic if you live there forever. How many of you parents sent your children to first standard and happy that they passed first standard and took them out of school? Saying, my son can now read and write. He can add and subtract.

That's all I want him to know. If your attitude to Christianity is, my sins are all forgiven and I'm on my way to heaven. You're like those first standard dropouts who finished first standard and say that's all you want.

We're not like that in worldly things. I don't think of a single parent who sent, there are parents who don't send their children to school at all, like in the slums. But if you're one of those educated parents who send your child to school, I cannot imagine that you'll be happy with your child just passing out of first standard.

No. But this is only the first standard. My sins are forgiven.

God doesn't remember my sins anymore. I'm so excited that God looks at my past and he considers as if I'd obeyed him all my life. I was listening to a message of Sandeep, my son Sandeep's in his church there.

And he said something about justification, which is a little better than the way I put it. He said to be justified means, God looks at me as if I've obeyed every commandment all my life. I said, hey, that's a better way, man, than the way I put it.

I used to put it as, I've never sinned all my life. That's a negative way. And he put it the positive way, which is I've obeyed all my life.

I said, yeah, that's what justification really means, that I have obeyed all my life. That's the meaning I will not remember, that I'm justified in Christ. But that's just the beginning.

Then we go to the second standard in this new covenant, and that is in verse 11, where he says, basically, that all shall know me personally. You don't need a prophet, like in the Old Testament, to come and say, this is what the Lord is like. You will know him personally, that is, you will know him as your father.

They shall not teach one another, saying, know the Lord, now he's your father. All shall know me. And in the new covenant, we know him as father.

Jesus came to reveal the father. So that's the next level, the second standard. There are only three standards in the kingdom of God.

The second standard is to know the father, to find a security in him, to call God father, daddy, Abba, Abba father. That's the second level, and many who come to the first level haven't come to this security, that God is my dad. He cares for me.

He knows the hairs of my head are numbered. There are many things, I'll tell you, even in my life, there are many prayers, I won't say God has not answered them. God has answered them, but his answer is no.

Or his answer is wait. Every prayer of yours, if your conscience is clear, every prayer of yours will be answered. But it's like the traffic signal.

Red, orange, or yellow, green. Red, yellow, green. Red means God says no.

But he's answered it. Don't say he didn't answer it. The answer was no.

Sometimes people say God didn't answer my prayer. That's not right. If my little son comes and asks me something, I say no, you can't have it.

You can't go and tell mommy that dad didn't listen to me. Of course I did listen to him, but I said no. So don't ever say God didn't answer your prayer.

Say God answered and said no. Or it can be a yellow light, where God says, my son, my daughter, wait. You're not yet ready to get the answer to that.

You need to learn something during this process when your prayer is not answered. And you're struggling and going through this difficulty which I'm not yet resolving for you, because you've got to learn something through it. You've got to wait.

That's the yellow light. And exactly like in the traffic light, you wait. You don't rush when the yellow light is there.

You wait until it becomes green. So that's the third thing God does. He says, yes, you can have that.

So the three answers to prayer. No, wait, yes. So, when we know God is a father, it doesn't mean we get the answer to every prayer.

A good father also has got these three lights. He tells his son, no, you can't have that. Or he says, son, you've got to wait.

You're not ready to have that yet. You're not ready to ride a bicycle to school. You've got to wait.

You can do it one day, but not yet. Or sometimes the father says, sure, you can have that right now. So to know God is a father is a wonderful thing.

And every one of you who has repented, you've come through to first standard, where you know your sins are forgiven, you're justified in the blood of Christ, you must get promoted to the second standard where you know God as a father. Personally, we're not where somebody else like it says has to teach you, hey, you know God is your father. You know him yourself.

You know how parents are so happy when their little child begins to say dada or something. I mean, he doesn't mean anything, but dad says, yeah, he's calling me dad. He's so excited about it.

God's excited when you call him father. He wants you to know him not as distant almighty God, but as your personal father, your dad. You can be intimate with him.

You can tell him. Think of earthly fathers. Some of you have had, and some of you in CFC have had the blessing of having really good fathers.

Really good fathers who really loved you, cared for you, played with you, and were like a friend to you. I'm delighted when I hear of children who tell me that my dad was like my friend. And that's why I grew up so secure.

Many dads are not friends. They're sort of distant lords. But some of you have had the good fortune of having a dad who was a friend.

God is like that. God's the best father in the world. And more than any earthly father can be friendly with his children, God is a friend to us.

I'm very thankful for that. You know how fathers will play with their children, get intimate to them. That's how God wants to be with us.

And there are people whose sins are forgiven, who know their sins are forgiven on their way to heaven, but who don't know God as their father. They haven't come to second standard. And any of you who are like that, I want you to get promoted.

I want you to ask the Holy Spirit to show you, read the Scriptures. If you don't read the Scriptures, I mean if you don't study the class books, you're not going to get promoted to second standard. Read the Bible and say, Lord, I want to see God as my father from now on.

I don't want to sit in first standard forever, saying my sins are all forgiven, I'm on my way to heaven. I want to get promoted to second standard. I want to know God as my father.

All of you who are in first standard, get promoted. It's easy. Read the Scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you.

So that's the second stage where anxiety gradually disappears from our life. Worry about what will happen to me, what will happen in the future. The hairs on my head are numbered.

I'm more valuable than the birds of the air. It's wonderful to live like this. Then you know you're in second standard.

But that also is not the highest. The highest is third standard where we go to verse 10. I will make this covenant with them that I will put my laws, the middle of verse 10, into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts.

So what is it? I will put my law into their mind which means I will give them a desire to do my will and not their own will. Has that happened in your life? Where you have a desire now to do God's will and not your own will? Then God has done that first part of putting His law into your mind. You delight to do the will of God and not your own will.

Wonderful! That's how we follow Jesus who said in John 6.38, I've come from heaven not to do my own will but the will of my Father. And you happen to have that desire too. You're different from all the other people in the world.

All the other people in the world, they delight to do their own will. They delight to respond to other people in the way that they feel they should. They don't want to do God's will.

So, that's the first step. He puts a desire, a delight in my mind to do God's will. But then He doesn't stop there because many people who delight to do God's will still don't do it.

Because they don't have the ability. But He says, next I'll put it into your heart. Put it into your heart means I'll give you the strength, the grace to do it.

So God works in us to will and to do. Like it says in Philippians 2.13. To will and to do of His perfect will. That's what happens in the heart.

Like it says in Hebrews 13. You know this verse? Hebrews 13 and verse 9. In the middle of that verse it says, Hebrews 13.9. It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace. See, you know where grace comes? In your heart.

So, in the mind He first writes God's, His law that I want to do it. And then He puts it in my heart and gives me the grace to do it. So I mustn't stop with that God has made it in my mind.

You know, like in chemistry you have theory and practical. So, if you do the theory and you don't know how it works in practical, in an engineering college or something, you need to know if you're doing automobile engineering. It's not enough just to study the theory of it.

You need to actually fix the car. So, there's the knowing and then doing. Desiring God's will and doing God's will is God writing His law in my mind and my heart.

So, now the question is what is God's law? It's basically very simple. Jesus, somebody asked Him and He said it's very simple. It's like the two arms of the cross.

Love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind or love Jesus more than father, mother, brother, sisters, property, everything. That's the conditions of discipleship and there's no cross without a horizontal arm. The horizontal arm is love others as I have loved you.

So, this is God's law that if God has written His law in my mind, I will have a tremendous desire to love Jesus. A desire to love Jesus more than I love my parents, more than I love my property, more than I love my house or car or my job or my ambitions or my plans. Jesus is supreme and not just that desire.

He writes that into my heart as well that I actually love Jesus more than this. That means if a decision comes, I have to choose what Jesus says and my parents say, I'll follow Jesus. Or it's a choice between Jesus and my job, I choose Jesus.

That because of my stand for Christ, I lose my job, fine. I lose my job. I'm willing to do it.

Jesus is first. He actually brings us into situations where we actually experience that Christ is first. I'm so excited.

I had numerous examples of that when I was working in the Navy, where I was willing to sacrifice my job and promotion and everything to put Christ first. I hope you have such exciting experiences in your life because that's how God will decide whether you are fit to be led further in His ministry. And to put Him first above everything in life, property, people, everything that nobody's opinion means more to you than God's.

Always it's Lord, what do you think of me? Not what people think of me. And the second part of that law is that God's love is shed abroad in our hearts where we love other people. That's the law which He writes into my mind and my heart.

He writes into my mind a tremendous desire. Listen to this. God will put into my mind a tremendous desire to love unlovely people in the church.

Not to agree with them, but I'll be able to love them. One part of loving them is telling them the truth. You'll tell them the truth.

Love doesn't mean you just cover up their faults. Love loves the truth but you don't have the spirit of the accuser, you have the spirit of a helper. The devil comes and points out your sin with the spirit of an accuser.

The Holy Spirit comes and points out your sin with the spirit of a helper. Both are pointing out your sin. But one is coming to accuse you, the other is coming to help you.

And when we love people, we will love with the Holy Spirit's attitude. So, God is the one. You know, there are some people you say, well, I don't know how in the world I can love that person because he's so repulsive.

I agree. I think it must have been very difficult for Jesus to love all repulsive people like you and me and everybody else in the world. But he still loved us.

That was the love of God. And that's the law he's going to put into my mind. I'm going to have a tremendous desire to love people.

And, not just a desire, not that I want to love, God will give me grace in my heart to love that person. You know, I was, I've often said this to different people, that one of the most difficult relationships in the world in families is mother-in-law, daughter-in-law. The world, I mean, the world makes jokes of it.

Mother-in-law, daughter-in-law. And they ask people, do you love your mother-in-law? Then you must be a really good person. And I say, in the new covenant, you can have such a love for your mother-in-law.

You know that? It's one way you married women can test your, whether you entered in or not. How much do you love your mother-in-law? And how much do you men love your father-in-law? Especially when he gives you a lot of advice that you don't want. And, you love him, you don't have to do what he says, but love him.

My father-in-law gave me lots of advice. I never argued with him. I never did any of it.

But I never argued with him. Because I went home and my wife and I said, my father gave a lot of advice to my wife as well. And she never once argued with my dad.

She just listened. But we went and did what we wanted to do. After some time they gave up.

This is a hopeless case. These folks won't listen to us. You know, that is the peaceful way of, without quarreling, without fighting, man shall leave his father and mother and a wife must forget her father's house and cleave unto one another.

And we decided to cleave unto one another. But that relationship, I say the new covenant changes every relationship. That what the world calls impossible, is possible.

So if you still have this mother-in-law, daughter-in-law attitude which is in the world, let me encourage you to be promoted to the third standard. I wonder whether you even go to the second standard. Take it seriously.

Don't live in that level where you can't love somebody. You know how sometimes people can go around that and say, I love that person but I don't like him. Uh-huh.

Supposing God said, I love you but I don't like you. Would you be happy with that? If Jesus came to you and said, I really love you but I just don't like you. If you say to someone, I don't like you.

Try telling your wife that, I love you darling but I don't like you. And see what she thinks. You can't say to a person, I love you but I don't like you.

I don't like what you do. That God tells us many times. I just don't like what you're doing.

I tell you, God loves us in a way he likes us. It's very difficult sometimes to love certain people. I don't like many things that people do.

But I say, Lord give me your love for them. Otherwise, I will say, you have not yet written your law in my heart. Let me humble myself and say, I have not passed third standard yet.

I think I'm in CFC, I'm in the height of spirituality and here I am, unable to love somebody. Maybe you're past second standard. You know God is your father.

I want to encourage you to get 100% in third standard as well. This is the full new covenant and God will do it. You cannot love certain people.

I cannot. But I say, Lord, can you? You can. Write it in my heart.

That's what I do. I say, Lord, the Holy Spirit has to put that love in my heart. Sometimes we are struggling.

That's under law. To live under the law, I've got to struggle to love that person. Okay, you've struggled enough.

You've toiled all night and caught no fish. Why not listen to Jesus now and let him write his law. This is the new covenant.

I believe that sometimes we haven't understood this fully in CFC. It is Jesus who is our sanctifier. We say, Jesus is my sanctifier, but then we try to sanctify ourselves.

You cannot. Particularly in the matter of loving others, you discover that you cannot. Let's learn to ask Jesus to put that desire to love that person, that unlovely person in my mind and then to give me the ability

to love that person as well.

The new covenant is wonderful and God says he'll do it, but he wants us to open ourselves to him. This is what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the fullness of the Spirit that we preach in CFC.

It may also include speaking in tongues and the gift of preaching and healing and all that, but that's ministry. But this is the primary aspect of the fullness of the Holy Spirit where we differ from the Pentecostals who emphasize the external gifts. So let's pray.

Heavenly Father, help us to move on from where we are right now to take seriously everything we have heard. Meditate on it and enter into this life to really experience, Father, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/GZk5EXg1ssM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/entering-the-full-new-covenant/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net