

For Children ■ True Repentance and Forgiveness

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the universal message throughout the Bible to turn away from sin, highlighting the innate conscience in humans that distinguishes them from animals. It stresses the importance of repentance, which involves a complete turning away from sin towards God, and the significance of forgiveness in receiving God's forgiveness. The speaker underscores the critical nature of forgiving others, as failure to do so may hinder one's own forgiveness and eternal salvation.

Scripture: Matthew 5:24, Matthew 6:14, Zechariah 2:8, James 2:9, Isaiah 1:18

Topics: "Repentance", "Forgiveness"

Description

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Transcript

If you look at the whole Bible, there is one message that is there from beginning to end, from God to man, and that is turn away from your sin, from what you know to be wrong. Even you children have a conscience. You know that no animal has that.

A dog, for example, does not know what is right and wrong. You can train it, but it does not know instinctively that something it does is wrong. No animal has it.

But in the case of man, you don't have to train. Even in the jungles where nobody's read the Bible and nobody's gone to preach, even the people in the jungle, they know when they did something wrong. And that's why even in the jungles and all, they make idols or sometimes they build temples and idols on top of a hill because they think that is how God is somewhere there.

They go to the highest mountain. Who taught them that? And even the most uneducated people have a sense of God and they kneel down or pray, but you'll never find a dog or a cat kneeling down. It has no sense of God.

You know, that makes a tremendous difference. That's what made you different from animals. And the one thing that God says throughout the scripture is turn from sin.

It doesn't even matter if you don't know all the stories in the Bible, but to turn from, and when you say, what is sin? Start with, like in a kindergarten, they say, start with ABC, learn to spell BAT is bat. Start with the ordinary things. Start with whatever your conscience tells you is wrong.

So, you don't have to go by what you hear in the preachers and say, I can't remember all that. It doesn't matter. You have a preacher living inside your heart.

Everybody, even those who never go to any church, they've got a preacher living inside the heart called the conscience that tells them this is wrong. Turn away. And this word that we often hear in church, in this church anyway, repent.

Repent means turn around, change your mind. That's what it means. Change your mind about something, about sin.

It's all repentance means, and turn away from it. It's like in the military, there's a command called about turn. You're facing this way, and when the command comes, about turn, they're facing the other way, and their back is here.

That is the best definition I have found about repentance. When we are born into the world, we are all facing sin. That's why even your children, you shout, and you quarrel, and you fight, and you disobey your parents.

I was like that too. We're all like that when we are born. That's this nature we got from Adam, and so we are facing sin, and I mean, because all of you come to this church, you hear about God, but out in the jungles where they never hear about, they're only thinking about sin, and to repent means you to turn around and face God, and when you face God, your back must be to sin.

Now, if you say you're facing God and sin, there's something wrong with your repentance. In the military, when they say about turn, they don't turn 90 degrees. They turn completely around, and that is the reason why you see in the world today different levels of Christians.

Some are very godly, very humble, very righteous. They'll never do anything wrong. They'll never cheat the government even a one dollar in taxes.

They will immediately apologize if they hurt somebody. Some very godly people like that. You know who they are? They are the people who heard about turn and turned completely around.

Then there are others who hear the same message, and they say, oh, well, that's not serious, and they turn part of the way. They're not bad people. They come to church every Sunday, but they're not.

There are certain things they say, well, that's not so serious, and they don't turn away from it. They've got one eye on God, but one eye on something in the world, and older people, it may be money. It may be something which, for example, a simple thing like the Bible says that God will not hear you if you've got sin in your heart, and here's an example of that.

Jesus said, when you come to pray, Matthew 5 24, and while you're about to pray, you remember, let's apply it to your life. You got angry with your brother and shouted at him and hurt him or did something

wrong to your sister or disobeyed your parents somewhere, and you're praying Lord Jesus at the end of the day. You know what Jesus says? Stop praying.

Who in the world will tell you to stop praying? Jesus. That's what he said. You're coming to present your offering, Matthew 5 23, and then you remember you hurt somebody, your brother or someone.

Stop praying. That's the meaning of verse 24. Leave your offering.

Your offering is your prayer. Leave it there because God's not going to listen to your prayer. Why is he not going to listen? Because you hurt your dad and mom.

You did something wrong. Go to your brother. Be reconciled.

That means come back into fellowship with him. How do you do that? By saying, I am sorry for what I did. I'm sorry for the way I spoke to you.

You think that's easy? Even grown up people find it very difficult. Those words don't come out of the mouth. We're stuck somewhere.

Maybe even you don't even hear your parents say that to each other. It's pathetic. Really pathetic that grown up people haven't learned the ABC.

Can you imagine a 50 year old man does not know how to spell bat or cat? He's uneducated. I tell you, even though so many people go to church, they're uneducated in the fundamental thing, which is go and say I'm sorry. That is ABC.

They don't know how to spell CAT cat. I put them in the same category. They want their children to do it, but the grownups don't do it.

Jesus said, first do that and then come and pray. God will listen to you. Now do you understand why so many of your prayers just never go beyond the roof? I'll tell you my opinion.

I've been a Christian for 62 years. I've seen Christians in many countries, many, many countries. I am convinced that most of them, they pray, but most of their prayers are forget about not being answered.

They're not even heard by God because they have not asked forgiveness from someone. There's one hole in the vessel. If you have a vessel with one hole, that's enough to drain out all the water in it.

You don't need 25 holes, one hole, either that or the other way around. One is they haven't asked forgiveness from someone. Jesus said that.

First go and ask forgiveness from your brother, then come and pray. Otherwise, don't pray. Who said that? Jesus.

Don't pray. Obey that command from today onwards. From today onwards, listen to Jesus saying don't pray if you have hurt somebody and you have not asked that person's forgiveness, because it's a waste of time.

You think God is listening? He's not listening. Second thing, I want to only tell you two things, and that is in the next chapter, Matthew 6, 14. If you forgive others, this is the opposite.

The first case, you hurt somebody and you have to ask his forgiveness. Now, it's the other way around where somebody hurt you. You say, that's not my fault.

That's right. It is his fault. He was bad.

He was evil. Correct. But have you forgiven him? What do you say? Can you think of right now of older people, children? Can you think right now, just stop for a moment and think, is there somebody who did some harm to you? Maybe yesterday? Maybe last year? Maybe in school? Last week? Somebody did some harm to you or spoke some evil story about you, and you still got it in your mind.

That guy, I hope something bad happens to him. You'll be like the devil if you continue like that. I tell you in Jesus' name, gradually you will become like the devil if you keep thinking like that.

Give it up. It's poison. When you know it's poison, throw it out.

Jesus said, forgive him. Can you tell me, okay, a lot of people have done bad things to you. There are people who murdered others.

That's a very bad sin. And so many other sins that men and women commit with each other. Terrible, terrible things.

But can you tell me, think, which is the worst sin that anybody in this world ever did? I'll tell you. It is killing Jesus on the cross. That was the worst sin that any person could ever do to another person.

I mean, even if he was just a good upright man who never sinned, to kill him would have been bad. But when he's the son of God, when he's almighty God himself, who came down to save people from the sin to kill him, that's the worst sin anybody can ever commit against another. And you know what Jesus said when he hung there? Father, what's it? Forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.

How can you not know when you're killing somebody that you don't know what they're doing? They don't know who they are killing. I mean, if they knew that was God almighty, they wouldn't dare touch him. That's the meaning of they don't know what they're doing.

And if you're a child of God, and somebody hurts you, he doesn't know what he's doing. He's touching the apple of God's eye. I'll tell you, I believe I am the apple of God's eye.

And you are too if you're a child of God. I read that in the book of Zechariah chapter two. Sometimes you take Zechariah chapter two and see that phrase.

Anyone who touches you, God says is touching the apple of my eye. You know, the apple of your eye is the center of your eye. It's the most painful part of your body.

Anywhere else you touch, you don't feel pain. But you touch the center of your eye. Immediately, just touch it.

Painful. And God says, you know, my children, you're like that. You're the apple of my eye.

If anybody touches you, they're hurting me. And the Bible says in James chapter two, that all human beings have been made in the image of God, even the ones who have fallen into sin. They're not following Jesus.

But they were originally made in the image of God. And so it says, be careful how you speak to them, how you treat them. So if somebody is not forgiving you, sorry, somebody hurt you rather, you must forgive them.

Because here it says in Matthew 6:14, if you forgive, your father will forgive you. If you don't forgive, you will not be forgiven by God. Now let me tell you one more thing that may surprise you.

I believe with all my heart that there are many people who call themselves Christians, who go to church every Sunday, who are going to spend eternity burning in hell, because they haven't forgiven somebody. Just that one reason. They didn't kill anyone.

They didn't steal any money. They went to church regularly. They read that Bible.

They gave money to the poor. They paid their taxes. And they brought up their children well.

But somebody they did not forgive. Well, you may say, Uncle Zach, you mean God is so strict? See, I don't know. You remember, Uncle Santosh said, this is an examination.

Our life is an examination in which if you get one problem wrong, it's just as bad as getting all the problems wrong. You remember that he said in an earlier message? So it's like that. It's not a question of how, what I think.

Do you believe these words, Matthew 6:15? If you, and by the way, he was not talking to the Pharisees here. Matthew 5 we read he was speaking to his disciples. These were people who had given up their jobs as fishermen to come and follow Jesus.

And he does Peter. Peter, I know you've given up your job to serve me and Andrew and John. I know you've given up your fishing job.

And Matthew, I know you gave up your well-paying job as a tax collector and you come to follow me. But I want to tell you people, in spite of all that you've done, if you don't forgive someone, your Heavenly Father will not forgive you. Is he your Heavenly Father? Yes.

I taught you folks to pray our Father who art in heaven. Matthew, Philip, Peter, you remember what I taught you to pray for your Father who art in heaven? He is your Father, but your Father will not forgive you. You'll be in the same category as those other people who don't even know anything about God or Jesus Christ, just because of one reason.

You did many other good things, but there was somebody you did not forgive. Matthew 6:15. Remember this verse, it'll save your life. It'll save your life.

I'll tell you, it's a lifesaver. You know, when you're drowning, they throw you a life buoy, hang on to it. Here's the life buoy you hang on to.

If you don't want to drown, forgive, forgive, forgive. And I don't know why, but during the last six months or so, God has been impressing upon me tremendously. Keep on preaching this message everywhere.

This is what I preach now. When I preach sometimes on Zoom to 2,000, 3,000 people in South India, I tell them, forgive everyone, forgive everyone. Now, I know that when God lays a burden on my heart, there must be a reason.

I believe we are coming pretty quickly to the end of this world that you just heard about. And that's why God is proclaiming the message. Be ready, my people.

Forgive others. Ask forgiveness. Walk.

Even if you don't become a preacher and you don't go to church every day, forgive others. Walk in humility. God bless you all.

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