

Freedom From The Love Of Money To Love God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing others through God's eyes, viewing those who have wronged us as spiritually in need rather than harboring hatred. It contrasts the old covenant focus on material wealth and comfort with the new covenant focus on being saved from sin. The speaker highlights the need to seek God's kingdom first, which leads to the provision of essential needs like food, clothing, shelter, and education, while warning against serving both God and money.

Scripture: Luke 16:13, Matthew 6:33, Psalms 37:25, 1 Timothy 6:17, Matthew 1:21

Topics: "Seeing Others Through God's Eyes", "Prioritizing God's Kingdom"

Description

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Transcript

Just another little thing in relation to what I've said in the last session. Whenever I meet someone who's or encounter someone or someone writes to me who's done a lot of evil to me or tried to harm me in many ways and that's I've had people like that like you have had. The Lord tells me that person has got spiritual leprosy.

So, look at him like you look at a leper. Nose is all eaten up and fingers all eaten up and patches and sores and blisters all over his face and would you ever hate a leper? You saw a leper like that outside on the street begging or something. Would you hate him? Would you detest him? Would you curse him? No.

Every leper and I've seen many of them in India, I feel sorry for the poor man and the Lord said feel sorry for this man in exactly the same way. So, when the Lord's opened my eyes to see that you know the spiritual reality of this good-looking rich person is actually a leper spiritually. You can't hate him and that's why we need to ask God to open our eyes to see people as God sees them.

How does God see that person? That's the way I have to see them. Then you feel sorry for them like we heard because of where he's headed. Okay, as I said all these short sessions that we've had so far are like starters.

They're not full messages. You've got to take them and meditate on them and ask God to show you, perhaps spend a whole hour meditating on each of these after you listen to them so that God can show you further along each of these characteristics. So, now the, is it the 12th, I think, difference that I want to highlight is the different attitude we have towards money and material things.

The world of difference between an old covenant Christian and a new covenant Christian in our attitude to money and earthly things. If that does not change, we can sit in the best church in the world, understand all the truths of the new covenant and still be a hundred percent, not ninety percent, a hundred percent old covenant Christian. In the old covenant, it is a fact that they loved money and comfort and earthly things.

They all did. I mean, there were these rare prophets like Elijah and Elisha who sort of lived with a new covenant attitude even then, but the average person in the Old Testament was a lover of money and lover of earthly comfort. And in fact, the old covenant gospel was like that.

If you turn to Deuteronomy 28, which is the classic chapter on what I call the health and wealth old covenant gospel, it is a gospel, good news for the old covenant people, but not new covenant. See, Deuteronomy 28 is the old covenant gospel. Gospel means good news, the good news to Israel, not to the church.

The good news to the church is something else. And a lot of people who are preaching this health and wealth gospel today are actually preaching the message, the old covenant message given to the Israelites. They are making people like the Israelites of the old covenant.

And, you know, it says here, the only difference is here, Moses said to them through the Holy Spirit that if you obey the Lord in everything, He'll give you health and wealth. But today, people make it much cheaper than that. You don't have to obey.

Just believe. Just believe in your head and you get it. And what is that? All these blessings, verse 2, will overtake you.

You'll be blessed in the city, you'll be blessed in the country. Doesn't it sound so much like the health and wealth gospel you hear today? You'll be blessed, the offspring, this is the only thing they don't preach, that you'll have many children. That is not preached today.

That is part of the old covenant gospel. You'll be blessed with your offspring, verse 4, your basket and your bowl, verse 5, which means your business. You'll be blessed when you come in and you'll be blessed when you go out.

And the Lord will defeat your enemies and His blessing will be upon your business. We're saved. We can read it like that today.

And everything you put your hand to, you'll really be blessed. And all the people of the earth will look at you and see what a rich person you are, in verse 10, and they'll bless the Lord. And the Lord will make you, listen to this, verse 11, the Lord will make you abound in prosperity and in the offspring of your children and your cattle.

And the Lord will open for you the good storehouse of the heavens and give you rain and you'll be financially and economically blessed. Now, if you don't obey, then the first 14 verses of the gospel, and then after that, the remaining sort of 54 verses are bad news. If you don't obey, then you will get sickness, verse 21.

If you don't obey, it says you'll have, verse 21, sickness and you'll have fever and consumption and you will suffer and the Lord will smite you, verse 27, with the boils of Egypt and tumours and itch and madness and blindness and et cetera, et cetera. It's all sickness and poverty and you will have to run for your life. And verse 27, you'll become a horror, the proverb, and you sow a lot of things and you will not get a good crop.

The locusts will eat it. Your business will fail and you'll have olive trees, but they won't produce fruit, et cetera, et cetera. It goes on like that.

It's exactly like you hear the health, wealth gospel being preached today. And people, because all these preachers know that today's Christians are completely ignorant of the Bible, they don't realize that what this guy is preaching is Deuteronomy 28, what Jesus, what Moses preached to the Jews. It's got nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the new covenant, it's very different, very, very different. Jesus said in, let me take this verse in Luke chapter 16. In the new covenant, it is being saved from sin.

First of all, let me take the first promise in the new covenant. As soon as you come to the New Testament, Matthew 1.21, it says there, you shall call his name Jesus. Why should he be called Jesus? Many people use in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus.

They don't know what it's referring to. We rebuke you in the name of Jesus. They tell the demon, I pray in the name of Jesus.

What does that name Jesus mean? It says here, you should call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins, not forgive their sins, which is one thing, save them from their sins completely. There's a lot of difference between being saved and being forgiven. So I ask Christians, have you been saved from your sin? Why do you call Jesus savior? What has he saved you from? Has he saved you from your anger? Has he saved you from murmuring? Has he saved you from complaining? Has he saved you from fighting with your wife? Always the answer is no, no, no, no.

Has he saved you from bitterness? Has he saved you from the love of money? No. Then what has he done for you? I do these things and he forgives me. Ah, then I say, don't call him savior because he saved you from nothing.

Call him forgiver. Jesus my forgiver. It's completely wrong to say he's your savior.

You say, but he's going to save me from that. That's in the future. What's he saved you from now? He shall save his people from their sins.

It's in the first page of the new Testament. And most Christians don't even know it. They still think his name is Jesus means he's forgiven.

Please forgive us. But that's not what it says. He will save you from your sins.

That's the meaning of the name of Jesus. Very, very important. And he's our savior.

No, he didn't say he will save you from poverty. He himself was poor. He didn't say he'll save you from sickness.

Isaiah 53 says, Jesus was acquainted with sickness. Do you know that Jesus was also sick? Which proves that sickness has got nothing to do with sin. Why was he sick? Because he had to experience what we experienced.

Otherwise, how will he be a high priest who can sympathize with our weakness if he was never sick even once in his life? That's why Isaiah 53, read verses 3 and 4. He was acquainted with sickness. You see that in the margin of your Bible. So, but he never sinned at any time.

He didn't come to save us from sickness. He didn't come to save us from poverty. He came to save us from sin.

But in the old covenant, he came to save them from sickness and poverty. So, which gospel I say is being preached today and which gospel are people believing? A new covenant person is not primarily seeking to be saved from poverty or from sickness. He's seeking to be saved from sin.

Now, you're going to ask yourself, if you're more interested in being saved from poverty than from sin, whether you know it or not, you're an old covenant Christian. If you're more interested in being healed of your sickness than being saved from sin, you're an old covenant Christian. You say, you mean to say we must enjoy our sickness and poverty? No, no, no, no.

I'm not saying you must enjoy. I'll tell you this. Every time I'm sick, I pray, Jesus, you will heal me.

Every time, even if it's a small fever or a cough or anything more serious, I pray you will heal me. And the Lord has kept me in remarkable health in the last 60 years that I've been a believer. But that's God's grace.

Now, I'm not saying if somebody's sick, he's not a believer. Paul was sick with such a severe sickness, he called it a thorn in the flesh. You know what it is to have a thorn in the flesh that you can't pull out, constantly irritating you? I don't know what that sickness was, but it was a terrible thing.

And it says he prayed three times, Lord, get rid of it, which teaches us we must pray when we are sick. But the Lord said, I will not heal you, I'll give you grace. Because this sickness is designed to keep you humble.

Paul, you've had so many experiences with God that you're in danger of becoming puffed up. You've written scripture, you've planted churches, you're in danger of getting puffed up, I have to give you a sickness. And he said, okay, Lord, because the Lord said, my grace is enough for you to overcome this limitation of your sickness.

Then he said, I rejoice in this weakness or limitation. And that's what he could tell Timothy, read in 1 Timothy 5, verse 21 onwards, that Timothy had frequent stomach problems. And I'm sure Paul would have laid hands on him many times and he was not healed.

But he experienced grace. So this is what I pray when it comes to sickness, Lord, you either heal me or give me grace. Whatever you think is better for me.

I don't decide that. I want healing. But if you think grace is better than healing, then I don't mind keeping that sickness.

If I have grace, that's a better thing. But I believe we must, every time we are sick, we must pray for healing. And I don't believe that we should pray for poverty.

That's rubbish. I believe that God wants, doesn't want Jesus, God did not allow Jesus to be a homeless person standing on the street with a board saying, please help me. Ridiculous.

Can you imagine a child of God being like that? So don't think the poverty of Jesus was such that, I believe Jesus would eat three meals a day without a problem. But he never went around begging for food. He never asked anybody for money.

His heavenly father provided him all his needs. And how was that? In the new covenant, the way God provides our need, whether it's food, clothing, shelter, anything, is like it's mentioned in Matthew 6, 33. In the new covenant, seek God's kingdom first and his righteousness.

Then all these things will be added to you according to your need. That means, what do we need on earth? Food, clothing, housing. And if you want those, you need a job.

So in other words, God will give you a job, food, clothing, shelter, and you also need to educate your children. Why is that? Because they need food, clothing, and shelter when they grow up and they can't get that unless they get a job. So food, clothing, housing, and education of children.

These are the four things promised here. And they will be given to me. Food, clothing, housing, and educating children if I seek God's kingdom first.

And I can tell you, I've proved that in the last 52 years of my life since I quit my job. All those things God has provided. Not my begging.

I've never asked anybody for money in my life. But I find that if I seek God's kingdom first, he does it. And here's a doubt people have.

What is God's kingdom? It's not missionary work. It's not going out to the jungles of Africa to preach the gospel. Compare scripture with scripture.

Romans 14, 17. What is it that I have to seek first? The kingdom of God. In order to have all these four things I mentioned to you added to me.

The kingdom of God is defined very clearly here. It is not eating and drinking, but it is righteousness, peace, and joy, not period, in the Holy Spirit. That means a righteousness produced in me by the Holy Spirit.

A peace in my heart produced by the Holy Spirit. A joy in my heart produced by the Holy Spirit. Let me seek for that first.

That means I say, Lord, I don't have enough righteousness in my life. There's a lot of unrighteousness in me. I want righteousness.

Lord, I don't have enough peace in my life. I'm too worried and anxious about 101 things. I want peace in my life.

Lord, I don't have enough joy in my life. I murmur. I complain about so many things.

I want joy in my life. Seek these three. That is seeking the kingdom of God first.

And what will you get? You'll not only get these three. You'll get food for your family. You'll get a house for your family to live in.

You'll get clothes for your family to wear. And you'll get education for all your children in a world where education can be very expensive. That's okay.

Not for your children. If you seek righteousness, peace and joy, it's a promise of God. And if it doesn't work, it'll be the first time in 2000 years that it didn't work for anybody.

There are lots of people like me who can testify that we sought God's kingdom first and all these other things were added without our pursuing after them. And it's a wonderful thing if at the end of your life, if God, if some way people could look into every detail of your life and they could say, boy, this is a man who spent his entire life seeking righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And look at the result at the end of it.

God added everything else to him. That should be the testimony of every single person here. That you didn't go running after money, you didn't go running after health, but God added it all.

Because you spent your life pursuing God's kingdom. Then you are a testimony to be a New Testament Christian, a New Covenant Christian. Otherwise, you can sit in the best church in the world.

And in your heart, you may be a lover of money. Luke 16 and verse 13, it says, very important verse, Luke 16, 13. You cannot serve two masters and immediately you think it's God and the devil.

No, the alternate master to God in this world is not Satan. That would be easy to think like that. But nobody would think of serving God and Satan.

But there are multitudes of people in the world who serve God and money or think they can serve God and money. The two masters, verse 13, are God and wealth. What does it mean to serve wealth? What does it mean to serve God? How do I know whether I'm serving God or serving wealth? It's not earning wealth.

You can earn a lot of wealth. God can bless you in amazing ways. In fact, do you know that the end of Paul's life, if you read my book, God's Word Done in God's Way in one chapter on financial matters, I've explained that how towards the end of Paul's life, he got such a huge inheritance from his father when he was in jail, sent to him through his sister's son, that a king, a governor, wanted a bribe from Paul.

Can you imagine trying to get a bribe from a full-time worker, a preacher? He must have known this guy had come to a lot of money and he went and stayed for two years in Rome, which is the capital city in the world, in his own rented house. You read in Acts 28. Can you imagine renting a house in New York or London or something and going and living there for two years without asking anybody for money? That is Paul the apostle.

Where did he get such a lot of money from? To an inheritance. God took care of him because until then he was earning his living by stitching tents, but I think the devil said, wait till this guy is old and he can't stitch tents. Let's see how he's going to survive then.

He's boasting that he won't look to anybody for help and God provided for him in an amazing way when he was old. You can't outdo God, I tell you that. You honor him, he'll honor you till the last day of your life on earth.

And if you live seeking to serve him, he will take care of you and he will take care of your children, but you cannot serve God and wealth. So, how to find out? For example, if somebody says, Zak is serving A or two people sitting here and they say, how to find out if Zak is serving A or B? Okay, just tell both of them to call me. A says, Zak, come here.

B says, Zak, come here. Immediately you know who I'm obeying. So, God says, come here.

Money says, come here. You know immediately whom you're obeying. Others may not know.

You may put a spiritual whitewash on that reason why you're going somewhere or doing something. It's all nonsense. God knows, the devil knows and you know that that's not the reason why you're going there.

You're going not pulled by God but pulled by money. Well, that's your choice, but you cannot serve God and money, that I'll tell you. And if you have made such a mistake in the past, what can you do? You can't go back and rectify what you did, but you can say, Lord, I acknowledge my mistake.

Please forgive me. The prodigal son went after money. What could he do? He couldn't rewrite his old life, but he said, I've sinned, father.

Please forgive me. Father forgave him and accepted him. You can be forgiven.

Okay, I have a lot more to say on that, but if you go to the YouTube, there are lots of messages of mine on the love of money. Please listen to them. One last verse, Psalm 37.

Psalm 37 and verse 25. David wrote most of his psalms when he was a young person below the age of 30, when he was wandering from cave to cave or looking after sheep. But this is one psalm that he wrote when he was 70 years old towards the end of his life.

And he says in verse 25, I have been young and now I am old. Yet I've never seen a righteous man forsaken or his children seen, children, grandchildren begging for bread. I paraphrase that like this.

If you're righteous, your children will never be begging for bread. In other words, they'll have a job. They won't have to go looking for a job.

They'll get it. Your grandchildren will get jobs. They will not go begging for bread.

They may not become millionaires, but their needs will be met because you are a righteous person. That is a new covenant promise. In other words, in the new covenant, a person is not living for money.

God may bless him amazingly with a lot or a little. That's God's choice. In fact, we read there were rich believers in the early church.

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6, 17 to Timothy, please tell all the rich believers in the church to be generous and not to depend on their money. So there are rich believers in the church. And then there are poor.

James speaks about some poor people like that. They were rich and poor in the church. You read in James chapter 2. And the poor but also taught to trust God.

And you can be sure that if you're righteous, however poor you may be, your children will not look for a job. Your grandchildren will not look for a job. What more do you want? It's a wonderful thing to be a new covenant Christian and to have this testimony at the end of your life, that I spent my life seeking righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and all the other things were added to me.

Amen.

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