

# (God and Man) Three Tenses of Salvation

by Zac Poonen

---

*Zac Poonen's sermon explores the deeper meaning of salvation, emphasizing the importance of being saved from sin and cultivating a true relationship with Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:08:38

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:9, Genesis 2:17, Proverbs 30:8, Romans 6:14, Romans 13:11, Hebrews 8:10, 2 Peter 3:9

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Living"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the influence of Satan in various aspects of the world, including entertainment, music, medicine, and education. He urges listeners not to be deceived by the devil and to stand as a light in this world. The speaker also highlights the importance of having knowledge of good and evil and making choices based on that knowledge. He encourages believers to be long-suffering with others, just as God is long-suffering with us. The sermon concludes with a prayer for radical change and a plea for individuals to live their lives seriously for God.

---

## Transcript

I want to turn to Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 8, that it's this well-known verse, Ephesians 2 and verse 8. That by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one should boast. And we want to talk about that word saved, because that's the word found in the first promise in the New Testament, that you call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

And generally speaking, most believers, when they ask somebody, are you saved? They only mean, are you saved from hell? And it may interest you to know that in the whole Bible, there is not a single verse about being saved from hell. Not one verse. You look for it, you won't find it.

Because the Bible doesn't speak about being saved from hell. It speaks about being saved from sin. It speaks about being saved from the judgment of God.

So, the concept of being saved from hell is a very selfish concept. And if your salvation was in order to be saved from hell and go to heaven, then I'm not surprised that your spiritual life is so pathetically poor and shallow and empty. All people who want to be saved from hell and go to heaven, I don't believe they'll ever become spiritual in their whole life, because they're seeking for salvation the Bible doesn't speak about.

But, if you are interested in being saved from sin, boy, there is nothing that will stop you from growing spiritually. We can say that among Christians, there are people who want to be saved from hell and there are people who want to be saved from sin. The people who want to be saved from hell are millions.

Everybody in the world wants to be saved from hell. But the people who want to be saved from sin are very, very few. So, this morning, I want to speak to those who want to be saved from sin.

I do not want to speak to those who want to be saved from hell. I really have no message for you, because the Bible has no message for you. It's quite likely that the number of people sitting here are only interested in being saved from hell.

I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I don't have a message for you this morning. I want to speak to those who are serious about their Christian life. For many years, in the beginning, when we started, I used to think, we've got to build a church where everybody is a disciple of Jesus Christ.

That's the vision with which we started 28 years ago. Everybody is going to love Jesus supremely, more than father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, job, their own life, more than money, property, everything. And a church where every person is fervent in their devotion to Jesus, wholehearted in their desire to be free from every sin that pulls them down, eager with all their heart to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And people for whom leading others to Christ and building the church would be the most important thing of all. But over the years, as time has gone on, I have discovered that is impossible. So I've given up on it, I'll tell you that.

We start with great ideas. I mean, it's possible if you limit yourself to 12 people like Jesus did. If you go beyond that number, it's almost impossible.

And I think that's why Jesus limited himself to 12 people. In his entire life, he could gather only 11. And in his last prayer in John chapter 17, even though he spoke to thousands and many hundreds believed in him, ultimately in John 17, he says, I pray for these 11, that they might be one.

That's interesting because the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15, there were 500 believers who saw Jesus after his resurrection. And he never prayed for those 500. I wonder why.

He never prayed for 500 people who believed in him. He prayed for 11, that they may be kept from the world, that they may be one. Because he knew that these 500 had many other ambitions in life as well.

In that 500, there is 11. And I believe it's like that in a church also. You can have a church of 500 believers, and in the midst of that, there'll be 11.

If you get 11, you're as good as Jesus. But it'd be difficult to find 11 sometimes. But those are the ones through whom God accomplishes his purposes.

God does not accomplish his purposes with the 500. He accomplishes his purposes with 11. In the Old Testament, there was a tabernacle, which you read in Exodus, how God told Moses to build this tabernacle.

And the tabernacle had three parts. One was this huge compound called the outer court. And there were hundreds of people there.

We got to see the whole tabernacle as a picture of the visible church. And in the visible church, there is an outer court where people are taken up with forgiveness of sins. It's about all they want.

They keep on sinning as believers. They don't take sin seriously. And they keep on offering sacrifices on the altar.

They ask Jesus to forgive them. And if they are like that for 10, 20 years, they'll probably be like that for 100 years. They never take sin seriously.

They're always in the outer court. They're glad to come along to the meetings and praise the Lord and probably make more noise than everybody else in the meeting. But they're not serious about sin.

They're only interested in going to heaven when they die. And they keep on sinning and they keep on asking the Lord to forgive them. They're in the outer court.

And then there's a smaller compartment there under the tent called the holy place. That was a small place, about 15 feet by 45 feet, 15 by 30. And there you have fewer people.

Not so many like in the outer court. These are people who are baptized in the Holy Spirit and who are eager to serve the Lord. Now a lot of people think baptism in the Holy Spirit is the ultimate in the Christian experience.

It isn't. It's the beginning. They're eager to serve the Lord.

There are the priests over there doing various things. And that's another group of Christians who are very eager to serve and do something. And they find their satisfaction in more than escaping hell, but doing some service for the church.

They are very eager to help at conference times or any type of practical work. They're always there. It's good.

But there's another much smaller part of that tabernacle called the most holy place where people are not taken up with forgiveness of sins or going to hell or even serving him. In that most holy place dwells God himself. And in the Old Testament, nobody could go into this most holy place because there was a thick curtain called the veil.

When Jesus died, that veil was rent, teaching that we could go into this most holy place and live there always. The thing which everybody in the Old Testament longed for, but could not achieve. Jesus told his disciples, many prophets and holy men longed to experience what you can experience now, but they couldn't.

And here in the most holy place, there's no activity. Some Christians would be absolutely bored if there's no activity. That's why they never get into the most holy place.

And some Christians would be absolutely bored if they don't have other Christians around them. There are no other people there. It's only God.

This is the fullness of salvation. Those who have gone through the veil and found their all in Jesus Christ. Now I realize that in every church there will only be a few.

I want to say to those who are serious here about their Christianity, long to be among that few. That's been my own longing for more than 40 years and I'd say I'm not disappointed today. Salvation from hell has never interested me in all my life.

I never gave my life to Jesus to be saved from hell. I gave my life to Jesus because he gave his life for me. Not because I wanted to escape hell.

In fact, I told the Lord, Lord, if you're in hell, I'd be happy to be in hell also. I want to be where you are. I don't care whether it's heaven or hell.

I want to be where you are. Heaven doesn't interest me. Jesus interests me.

And even on earth, the many blessings we get from the gospel don't interest me. Jesus interests me. And if you're like that, I believe you can get the maximum benefit out of your one earthly life.

And I long that in our church here there will be raised up a few. I don't ever expect it will be more than 10%. 10% itself will be a large number.

I don't expect it will be more than 10%, but I pray that there will be a 10% in our midst who are fervently devoted to Jesus Christ, for whom Jesus is the only passion in life. And I want to speak to such people. You know, we think that worship is what we do here on Sunday morning.

It's not. What we do here on Sunday morning is thanksgiving and praise. Worship is altogether different.

We are thanking God. We are praising him. Worship, the highest form of worship is total silence, where a man is taken up with God.

Like it says in the Bible, the Lord is in his holy temple, let all flesh keep silent before him. Many Christians just don't know this, because they are not interested in worship. They are only interested in noise.

It's good. I believe in making noise. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

Clap your hands. Holy people, lift up your hands. And I would certainly be as loud as anybody else in praising God and thanking him.

But I want to say that there is something more than that, and that is worship. People in the outer court can be thankful. You know, God healed me.

God gave me a job. God gave me a house. God blessed me.

God blessed my children. This is thanksgiving. People move into the holy place and they praise.

You move into the most holy place, you worship, because there is only God there. You are taken up with Jesus himself. This is the fullness of salvation.

So when it says, by grace are you saved through faith, it's not just talking about being saved from hell. Salvation has got three tenses, past, present and future. I just want to show you these verses in Romans, which speaks about all three tenses of salvation.

When we are justified by the blood of Christ, we are saved from the wrath of God through him. When the blood of Christ has not only cleansed me, but like it says here, declared me righteous. To be justified

means to be declared righteous.

There is no defect in me. I am righteous. The blood of Jesus has not only cleansed me, but declared me righteous in God's eyes.

Then I am saved from the wrath of God, from God's severe penalty and punishment on sin. One of the things that we learn on Calvary's cross is that God cannot tolerate sin, even if it is found on somebody he loves very much. Now a lot of us have probably believed the devil's lie, that if you are a child of God, God will overlook sin in your life because you are his child.

I want to say to you, that's a lie of the devil. Jesus was the son of God, much better than you and me. And yet, when sin was found upon Jesus on the cross, not his own sin, our sin, but it was sin, sin was found on Jesus on the cross, God the Father turned his face away from him and forsook him.

Do you think it's going to be any different with us? Not at all. If sin is found in me, I am not better than Jesus. I believe God will forsake me.

You may not believe that, and perhaps that's why you take sin so lightly. I don't take sin lightly, because I've seen the seriousness of sin on Calvary's cross. Many of us haven't, and that's why we live in the outer court forever and ever and ever and ever.

Never progress, even after many years. One of the first things you need to pray is, Lord, help me to see how serious sin is. We rejoice in so many other blessings.

There are many other blessings that come as a by-product of being saved from sin. Material blessings. We say that we don't believe the prosperity gospel, the health and wealth gospel that is being preached by many people.

I don't believe it, because I don't believe that prosperity is the mark of God's blessing. Yet I know there are people sitting in this church who believe that their prosperity proves that God has blessed them. That's a devil's lie.

If prosperity is the mark of God's blessing, the businessmen in India are the people whom God has blessed the most, and the film stars, not you. You don't even have one percent of their wealth. Prosperity is not the mark of God's blessing.

The richest people in the world are not believers. They are godless unbelievers. Health is also not the mark of God's blessing, though some people think it is.

The healthiest people in the world are not believers. The longest living people in the world are not believers. You look in the Guinness Book of Records, they are not believers who are the longest, oldest man and oldest woman.

They are heathen. How is it that we can imagine that prosperity is the mark of God's blessing? There are people who have come into our church and have been blessed, become prosperous and fallen away and have left the church. They would never have left the church if they had been poor.

Forget those who have left. Let's think of those who are still here. Maybe God has blessed you and prospered you in your life, and you think that is God's blessing.

Consider, what has it done to your children? It has brought television, your wealth. You could not afford these things when you were poor. Now that you are rich, you can have television, VCRs, you can go to the video shops, you got plenty of money to hire videotapes.

Has it made your children more spiritual? Has it made them love Jesus more? No. They are watching movies today. What has your prosperity brought to you? A distance from God.

Your family has gone further away from God because of your prosperity. Is that a blessing? Far from it. It is a curse.

Recognize it. Because you say, God has blessed me. You have been deceived.

He hasn't blessed you. If your children became more Christ-like, that would have been a blessing. Not if they become rich.

One of the things he prayed was, in the Old Testament, this is the only thing you could pray. Middle of verse 8. Lord, don't give me poverty and don't give me riches. Just give me what is enough for me.

Just enough to satisfy my needs. Because if I grow rich, I will become content without God. If I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

In the Old Testament, they did not have the power of the Holy Spirit. They did not have Christ dwelling within. Jesus Christ never needed to pray a prayer like this.

Jesus Christ never needed to pray, Father, don't make me too rich because then I may forget you. Or don't make me too poor because I may steal. I can't imagine Jesus stealing when he is poor or forgetting the Father when he is rich.

No. That is an old covenant prayer. A new covenant, Paul says in Philippians 4. Philippians 4, he says, verse 12.

I know how to get along in poverty. I also know how to live in prosperity. He says, it makes no difference to me whether I am poor or rich.

They are unimportant. His spirituality, Paul's spirituality did not depend on whether he is poor or rich. It is like whether he wore a white shirt or a blue shirt.

You know that whether you wear a white shirt or a blue shirt does not make a difference to your spirituality. Exactly like that. Poverty and riches did not make any difference to Paul because it did not matter whether it was a white shirt or a blue shirt.

Because he says, in every circumstance I have learnt how to be filled, how to go hungry, to have an abundance and suffer need. But before you jump into that verse, let me tell you this. I think more than 95% of Christians in the world live in the old covenant.

So you better go back to Proverbs chapter 30. Don't jump to this prayer. 95% of Christians live in the old covenant proved by the fact that they are defeated by sin.

When you are defeated by sin, that is the clearest proof you are under the old covenant, you are under law. Because Romans 6.14 says, sin shall not rule over you when you are under grace. When you are

freed from law and come under grace, sin will not rule over you.

Sin rules over you because you are under the old covenant. And when you are in the old covenant, that means sin is ruling your life, you must pray the prayer of Proverbs 30. Lord, don't make me too rich and don't make me too poor.

Just give me enough for my needs. Otherwise, I and my children will forget all about you. We won't have time to read the Bible.

We'll be watching television. And we won't think about serving you. We'll be thinking of making more money.

Then you must pray, Lord, make me poor. It's easier to be closer to the Lord when you are poor than when you are rich. There are very, very few people like the Apostle Paul that I have met in my life who know how to handle riches.

Some people don't get corrupt by riches. They become proud. Riches have the tendency to make people very independent.

They don't need others. It's very difficult to fellowship with such people. I found that, even believers.

Because they are so independent, because they got so much money, they don't need anybody. They don't need anybody's help. They earn so much.

They can live without you. And the Bible says, even the head, 1 Corinthians 12, Jesus does not say to the feet, I don't need you. But many rich believers act as though they don't need anybody.

I'm okay, I'm independent. I'm not financially dependent on anyone. I feel sorry for such people.

They got a cancer. And what to do? You don't get angry with people who got cancer. You feel sorry for them.

So I only feel sorry for such people. And it's very difficult to fellowship with such people. They must pray, Lord, make me poor.

Because my riches have made me drift away from you. How many rich people are there who drifted away from God because of their riches? Whose children have drifted away from God because of their riches? Who will have the boldness to pray, Lord, make us poor once again? Because I remember, Lord, how it was in our home in those days when we were poor and we loved you. And we had more time for you.

We talked about you because we didn't have videotapes to watch. Your word was more important those days. But those days are gone, Lord, make us poor once again.

I want to tell you, don't let the devil deceive you. This whole world is under the control of one person, Satan. The entire entertainment world is governed by Satan.

The music world is governed by Satan. The medical world is governed by Satan. Everything, the education system is governed by Satan.

And we live in this world because Jesus prayed that we should not be taken out of this world. In this world we are to stand as a light. But if the light becomes darkness, like the world around it, then what use is that

claiming to be a light? And that's why we need to be saved, not only from the wrath of God, like we read in Romans 5. Let's turn back there.

Romans chapter 5, it says, we are saved, first of all, this is past tense, from the wrath of God, verse 9, through Christ. I'm not saved from hell. I'm saved from the judgment that should have come upon me because of my sin, because of the millions of sins I did in my life, for which God has to punish me by forsaking me for all eternity.

He has saved me from that, not by any works that I did. I could never do any works to earn that salvation. That's why once in John chapter 6, when the people asked Jesus, what shall we do that we might do the works of God? Jesus said, this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.

Do you know, how many of you know this, that the greatest work you can ever do for God is to believe in Jesus Christ? That humbles all the proud people. Proud people like to do so many things for God. But Jesus said, the greatest work you can do for God is to believe in Jesus Christ.

Believe in Him. That equalizes us. Now I want to say to you, begin there.

Begin by saying, the greatest work I can ever do is to believe in Jesus Christ. That will humble us. And then we read about salvation in the present tense.

This is salvation in the past, verse 9. Verse 10, again we find the word saved. But this time the word saved is not referring to our past life. It's talking about our present life.

If while we were enemies, that is past, we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, now much more, much more than that salvation from wrath, having been reconciled, that means now we are children of God, we shall be saved, not by His death, but by His life. We were saved by His death when He died on the cross. That is from the wrath of God, from the punishment of sin.

Now we have to be saved from the power of sin. Past tense salvation is from the punishment for sin. We are saved by His death.

Present tense salvation is from the power of sin. How shall we be saved? Very important verse. We are not saved by obeying His commandments.

We are not saved by trying to keep the exhortations in the church. Last Sunday we spoke about being merciful and long-suffering to others. Are you going to be saved by being long-suffering to others? No.

It says here we will be saved by His life. There is only one way to be saved permanently, and that is when the life of Jesus comes within me through the Holy Spirit, lifting me up and freeing me from the law of sin that keeps on pulling me down. You can grit your teeth and say, I will never look at pornography again.

I will never lust after a woman again. I am never going to run after money again. It will last only a few days.

Many of you who don't have any fellowship with other believers in CFC, you can grit your teeth and say, from now on I am going to have fellowship. It won't work. In a hundred years it won't work.

It's by His life. Salvation from the present power of sin by His life. That is what He communicates to me.

When the Bible says in the New Covenant, I will put my law in your mind and write them in your heart, what He means is, in simple words, that He will give me the life of Jesus. I am not supposed to live by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but by the tree of life. The tree of knowledge of good and evil will always bring death.

And very often we can sit in a Sunday morning meeting and what we hear, we can hear it as a knowledge of good and evil. Let's take last Sunday for example. What did you hear last Sunday? If you remember, God is very long-suffering with us.

So we must be long-suffering with other people. You got a law, right? Knowledge of good. What is the knowledge of good you got last Sunday? Since God is long-suffering with us, we must be long-suffering with other people.

Go ahead, try it. I can tell you now itself, guaranteed failure. You can listen to God's word and receive it as a law, as a knowledge of good and evil.

This is bad, this is good. Okay, maybe you heard something this morning. Knowledge of evil.

Watching all these filthy movies is evil. You got another law. Please stop doing it.

Are you going to be spiritual? No. I know unconverted people who have thrown the television out of their homes who are not spiritual. No, we are not saved by any law.

We are not saved by avoiding evil and doing good. It will just make you a religious Pharisee. And such so-called good people, let me give you my testimony, such good people in CFC are the most difficult people I have found to fellowship with in all these 28 years.

They are arrogant Pharisees and they don't even know it. But it's been very easy to fellowship with those who have taken up with the life of Jesus. Romans 8.2 says, the law of the spirit.

There was a law of Moses in the Old Testament, which is the law of commandments. Thou shalt, thou shalt not, thou shalt, thou shalt not. Jesus replaced all of that with what is called in Romans 8.2, the law of the Holy Spirit.

Do you know what the law of the Holy Spirit is? It says in the same verse, Romans 8.2, the law of the spirit, which is life in Christ Jesus. It's a life, not a law. Like I have used the illustration before, you can train a pig to be clean with laws, with whips and chains, but you don't have to train a cat to be clean, because it's got a life, which loves cleanliness.

You see the difference between training a pig and holding it back with chains and whips, keeping it clean, and a cat, which has got a life. A lot of Christian, a lot of the holiness that many Christians have, it's like the training of a dog. You know, you get a new pup, it messes up your house, does all types of stupid things, climbs on your sofa.

But you watch that pup after five years of a good training, it is such an obedient dog. It never messes up the room inside, it will not eat what it's told not to eat, it will eat what it's told to eat. You think its life has changed? No.

It's been trained. It's been trained by being given bones and meat when it obeys, by being given a whack when it disobeys. And it's trained and it knows, if I disobey, I'll get something which will pain me.

If I obey, I'll get something which I like. And that is so drilled into its system. If I obey, I'll get something good.

If I disobey, I'll get a whack. So I better obey. Do you know that 90% of Christians, their holiness is based on that.

It's the training of a dog. It's not the life of Jesus. It's not like the cat, which is pure and clean, because it's life.

It's got nothing to do with getting rewards or any such thing. Now I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, do you feel that you are better than Christians and other groups because of certain good things in your life? You ask yourself, is it like the training of the dog? And to me the test is this, how passionate is your devotion to Jesus Christ, to the person of Jesus Christ? Very important question. Second question, how interested are you in the testimony of other believers in CFC? The more interested you are in the testimony of other believers in CFC, the more you will live under the old covenant.

Definite. We have to be free from men. We love one another, we care for one another, but we don't live before man's face.

All those who live seeking the approval of men are doomed to live all their life under the old covenant. Jesus' life, we are saved by his life. And this is a free gift.

We are saved by faith. Lord, I want your life within me. I don't want to just keep laws and be trained like a dog that I never do anything wrong and I get a good testimony as a dog who is now obedient.

And you can get a good testimony in the church as a believer who is very obedient and all that, saying the right things, doing the right things. What does it matter? If one day when Jesus comes you discover that you never got anything of his life, but you just did all the right things and got a good testimony in the church, you will be terribly disappointed. You will be terribly disappointed.

So I want to encourage you to seek for the life of Jesus, to be conformed to his likeness more and more. And that is why through the years I have said, there is only one mark of God's blessing and that is that he gives you light on yourself where you are unlike Christ day by day and where you repent and where the Holy Spirit is able to make you more Christ-like in your life. That is what I have found through the years and so my life has been one of repentance almost every day of my life.

Because I find something un-Christ-like. I am not worried about good and evil and what is right and what is wrong. I am thinking of the life of Jesus.

That is the only thing we must be taken up with, the life of Jesus. That life was the light of all men. The Bible says that in John 1.4, in him was life and that life was the light of men.

And when I am taken up with that life I get light on myself where I am unlike him. I see the things in my life that he would never do. I see the words that he would never say.

I see the attitudes that he would never have. And I repent in dust and ashes and ask the Holy Spirit to make me like him because I cannot make myself like him. I can make a good imitation of him.

But how many of you are so foolish to think that you can manufacture the life of Jesus Christ. You think you can do that? I mean you can manufacture a good life. Can you manufacture the life of Jesus Christ?

Impossible.

Even Mary didn't do that. The angel said the Holy Spirit will come upon you and produce that in you. That is what the angel has to say to us also.

The Holy Spirit has to come upon us and produce in us the life of Jesus. That is how we are saved from the power of sin. Notice what it says.

We are saved from the power of sin by his life. In the past we were saved from wrath. Now we are saved by his life.

And what are we saved from? Let's get an understanding of sin. I am not talking about being saved from the things listed in the Ten Commandments. You don't need the life of Jesus to be saved from those things.

There are many upright people in the world who are not Christians who keep most of the Ten Commandments, at least nine of them. They don't commit adultery, they don't kill, they don't steal, they don't do things which are listed, they don't worship idols. I am not talking about those things.

I am talking about being saved from sin at its root. Jesus came to save us from sin. When it says we are saved by his life, I am not saved from adultery by the life of Jesus.

I am saved from adultery by the law. The law of Moses was good enough for that. But Jesus' life saves me from a whole lot of things the law could not save me from.

If your life is keeping the Ten Commandments, you are still an old covenant Christian. Because a lot of people in the Old Testament kept those Ten Commandments. But the life of Jesus saves me from the root of sin which is selfishness.

You know what the root of sin is? Selfishness. Where you think of yourself and that is what determines your decisions. A man whose decisions are determined by self is a selfish man.

And he may call himself a Christian, he may call himself a speaker in tongues or whatever he likes, but he is a selfish person. He hasn't been saved by the life of Jesus. When you look at the life of Jesus, there was no selfishness in him at all.

He was never thinking of himself. He was always thinking of his father. How will this affect my father? How will this affect my father's glory? As the father told me to do it.

He would never do anything till the father told him to do it. He was so totally free from this self-centered, selfish life. That is the life of Jesus.

Jesus came to save us from this Adamic selfishness and self-centeredness. So if you evaluate your life by things like, how nice do I feel on Sunday morning when I praise the Lord and worship the Lord along with all the others. I tick mark.

I feel very fine. Have I stopped seeing filthy movies? Yes, ticked. Have I stopped losing my temper at home? Yes, ticked.

That's okay. And number of things like this we can say, well, I am upright in my work. I don't cheat anybody.

I am free from debt. I have returned everything I have wrongfully taken. I have apologized to those whom I have hurt.

You can do all these things and yet be the most selfish person sitting here. But the root is still there. You have chopped off these little fruits, so you have got to give testimony before people that you are a godly person.

You are just deceiving people because deep down selfishness motivates your life. Your decisions are based not on the glory of God, but your own selfish desires. And you can fool everybody sitting in the church meeting that you are a very holy person.

You are not. That's why Jesus said, if you want to be my disciple, first of all cut off this human attachment you have towards your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters. And through 28 years I have discovered that we always got to come back to that first commandment.

That's why we spoke about it in the conference also recently, to that first condition of discipleship. I have seen that very often when there is no spiritual progress in a person, failures in that first condition of discipleship, there are very few who radically obey that condition. And those who have taken it seriously, it goes very well with them.

I would encourage all of you to obey that condition of discipleship, to hate your father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, children and your own life. It means you have hit at the root of selfishness. Selfishness makes me care for me and my own.

I always want to protect me and my own. I say leave it to God to protect them. You seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Otherwise you will destroy your family like many others have destroyed their family when they have selfishly tried to protect them, preserve them, enrich them, etc. Leave that to God. Seek His kingdom first.

Salvation is to be saved by His life in our present tense, is to be saved from a life where selfishness determines my decisions, to where God's glory determines my decisions. You know we make many decisions during the week. How to spend our money, where to go for a holiday, what to do in a particular situation.

Something happens in our place of work and we have to take a decision. And the children of Adam, entire race of Adam takes their decisions based on how will this benefit me or how will this benefit my family, how will this help me, how will it promote my cause. Okay.

Now just because we put a Christian whitewash on this selfish life and talk about Jesus and being filled with the spirit and clapping hands and praising the Lord and all that, it doesn't make that selfish life any better. It's just got a Christian whitewash on it. Some other person has got a Hindu whitewash on it.

Some other person has got a Muslim whitewash on it. We are different. We have got a Christian whitewash on.

On what? On the same old selfish self-seeking life that that man has in another religion and that man has in another religion. And I can fool myself to think I am more spiritual than these people because the colour of my whitewash is little different from theirs. Colour of the whitewash.

Is that all there is in our Christianity? My brothers and sisters, as I told you, I am not talking to everybody. I am only talking to 10% this morning. The rest of you, I don't know what you are interested in but those who are serious about making something with their Christian life who feel that I have wasted so many years of my life but I want to do something with the years that are left and those of you who are young are really fortunate because you have got your whole life ahead of you.

Determine from the beginning that you will allow the life of Jesus to save you from this selfish self-centred way where you promote yourself and talk about yourself. There are some people like that. You spend half an hour talking to them, they are only talking about themselves.

And they never change. They are not evil people. They don't go around committing adultery and sinning and all that.

But they are always the same. You see them 5 years later and they are the same. The same good selfish people.

25 years later they are the same good selfish people. We can say that they have not tasted one bit of the life of Jesus. They have taken up with this deception in the Christian world of prosperity and activity and this that and the other and never learnt to worship God.

And never come into the most holy place where self is dethroned. See you can have self in the centre of your life, in the throne of your life and still be in the outer court, in the holy place. But when you come to the most holy place, there is only one throne and only God sits there.

That's what Jesus meant when he said we got to take up the cross everyday. Self must be dethroned. But today's Christianity has got another cross, this golden type you hang on your neck.

That's easy. Not the ugly cross on which Jesus was crucified, where self is slain. So to be saved by his life is only for those who are sick and tired of their old life and want to get rid of it.

When do you throw away your scooter? When you repaired it and you say it's about time I get rid of this, I need another one. When do you get rid of your old life? Adamic life. When you are sick and tired of it.

Gone. No matter how many exhortations I get, I am still back to the same old thing. Something is wrong.

It has to be thrown out. I have to get a brand new life. Like getting a brand new scooter.

It's not a question of patching it up here and fixing the engine there and doing something with the bore here. No, it's not that. It's throwing the whole thing away.

Saved by his life. Lord, I want your life. I want to say one more thing in connection with that.

Holiness has been one of the things counterfeited the most in the history of the human race. More than dollars and rupees being counterfeited, holiness has been counterfeited. I will just tell you that.

Holiness has been counterfeited maximum in this world. Particularly among Christians. And particularly among those Christians who preach holiness.

A holiness that does not deliver us from selfishness is not holiness. It's a deception. Whatever victory you may have over anger and being upright with money matters and all that.

You can even support missionary work and not be holy. Because holiness is deliverance from selfishness. Selfishness and spiritual pride are the two things that will remain clinging to us till the end of our life.

And if you are honest, you will admit it. You know how easy it is for us to do one little thing for God and become proud of it. That's how weak we are.

Somebody says a good thing to you, it's puffed you up immediately. These are two things. And pride comes out of this selfish life.

My self is on the throne and I like to hear people saying good things about me. It's part of selfishness, spiritual pride. And I get offended when somebody corrects me or does something which I don't like to me.

These are all marks that self is on the throne. Do you get offended when you are corrected? Do you get elated when somebody flatters you? Oh brother, self is on the throne in your life. Don't have any doubt about it.

You don't have to go for a second opinion or a second check-up or anything. No, no, no, no. First check-up itself has solved it.

If you are elated by people praising you and you are offended when people correct you, self is on the throne. Take as many scans as you like, you will find self is on the throne. Let Jesus come in.

That is why your life has been so shallow for so many years. I am speaking to the 10%. We want to be serious about following Jesus.

And the other mark of a false holiness. Please listen to this. It's very difficult for people to fellowship with you.

I am not telling you how you think you like to fellowship with everybody. That's a deception. If people find it difficult to fellowship with you, something is wrong with your brand of holiness.

It is a counterfeit. I will tell you that. In the Old Testament, they didn't have this holiness that we are talking about.

It was alright for Elijah to be all alone. He was a lonely man. There was nobody he could fellowship with.

John the Baptist, the greatest man born of women, up to Jesus' time, he was a lonely man. He couldn't fellowship with anybody. But let nobody here imagine that you are another Elijah or John the Baptist.

Don't have such conceited opinions about yourself. That was Old Covenant. As soon as you come to the pages of the New Covenant, you see Jesus never sent out his disciples one by one, but always two by two.

Fellowship, which is impossible under the Old Covenant, is now possible. And the life of Jesus always brings fellowship with another person who has got the life of Jesus. Where you can't have fellowship, you

can be pretty sure that whatever else you've got is a lot of garbage.

If you cannot fellowship with a godly person, whatever you've got is garbage. It is garbage. The sooner you acknowledge it, the better.

If you can't fellowship with a third-rate, carnal, worldly person, that's okay. Jesus couldn't fellowship with such people also. Jesus didn't have much fellowship with Judas Iscariot.

Probably zero. He was a clever man. He understood all the doctrines.

He could probably explain it better than anybody else. But his fellowship with Jesus was zero. Imagine that you can be like that.

That you can understand all the doctrines and explain it better than anybody else. And your fellowship with Jesus and people who are like Jesus is zero. God has provided that to save us from deceiving ourselves.

If you fellowship more with carnal people, for example, you find it very easy to mingle with unconverted relatives. You are probably not even converted. Where is your longing? Test your spiritual growth by how much you can fellowship with really godly people.

Jesus also, the degree of fellowship with everybody is not equal. He fellowshiped with Peter, James and John more than he did with others. So fellowship is another test of counterfeit holiness.

A holiness which does not bring increasing fellowship with others is not holiness. Now I am not talking about friendship. Friendship is a lower level.

Friendship I can have with everybody. I don't have any enemies. But fellowship is a much higher thing.

Jesus was a friend of sinners. He had friendship with sinners. But fellowship? Very few.

A lot of things that Christians call fellowship is actually only friendship. You know like in a club they come together and have a wonderful time together, talking together and doing a lot of things together. It is friendship.

It is not fellowship. Fellowship is a deep thing that is centered around the life of Jesus Christ. Where we come together to talk about the life of Jesus, to be drawn together through our common devotion to Jesus Christ.

How much do you have of that with other people in CFC? How much do you have of that with the elders in CFC? Little? Let that be your scan report this morning. Lastly, Romans 13. We read about salvation in the future tense.

Romans 13. We have seen about salvation in the past tense, from the punishment of sin. In the present tense, from the power of sin.

And finally, in the future tense, Romans 13.11, from the very presence of sin. From the punishment, the power and the presence of sin. Romans 13.11, knowing the time, it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep.

Because our salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. This is speaking about a salvation that is future. That is, it has come nearer now, much nearer now than when we first believed.

This is also called salvation. And that is salvation from the very presence of sin. Not salvation from hell.

The thing I hate should be sin. And when I think of the coming of Jesus, the thing that should excite me the most, I say, Lord, what a day that will be! That I will be free from these wretched sins that I battled and battled and battled. I will be finished with them.

Is that what you are looking forward to in the coming of Christ? Or are you looking forward to heaven and it will wipe away your tears and maybe you will take vengeance on your enemies and teach those fellows a lesson on your behalf or something like that? Are these the stupid things you are waiting for? Or are you waiting for the fact that, Lord, these wretched sins that I battled, battled, battled. Oh, I praise you, I will be free from them forever. I will be like you.

I will be saved from the presence of sin itself. It is a salvation. Those are the people for whom heaven will be a wonderful place.

Who are looking forward to the day when Christ will come back. And, Lord, I will be like you. I don't care whether the streets of heaven are gold or made of tar.

It makes no difference to me. I would be quite happy if I go to heaven and find its mud roads there. No problem.

If I am saved from sin, that is enough. And if the gates are not gates of pearl but made of rotten old wood or something, it makes no difference to me. Because I won't have time to look at them.

I won't have time to look at them. We will be looking at Jesus. There is a song, which I haven't sung for a long time, called The Sands of Time are Sinking.

I want you to turn to that moment, number 559. The Sands of Time are Sinking. It is talking about the coming of the Lord.

It was written by a great saint of God in Scotland called Samuel Rutherford, a man who was deeply in love with Jesus. He talks about heaven as Emmanuel's land. He talks about, in verse 3, how God guided him with mercy and with judgment in his life.

And then, listen to verse 5. The bride does not look at her garment but at her dear bridegroom's face. I mean, if she is in love with her bridegroom, but if it is an arranged marriage, she may be wondering whether the folds of her dress are all in order. But in a love marriage, I am talking about a love marriage.

My marriage to Jesus Christ was not an arranged marriage. It was a love marriage, just by the way. I hope yours is also.

The bride does not look at her garment. It doesn't make a difference whether it is all falling down straight or not. She is looking at her bridegroom.

At last, I am married to him. I will not gaze at glory that God puts upon me, but on my King of Grace. I will not look at the crown he gives, but I look at the hand that gives it.

The land is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. This song, anybody can sing it, but for a man to write it, he must have been a disciple. And for a person to sing it in that same spirit as the man who wrote it, he got to be a disciple.

Let's sing this. Do you know this? Ok, I will lead it then. The days are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks.

The summer morn I've sighed for, the fair sweet morn awakes. Dark, dark hath been the midnight, but day's spring is at hand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. O Christ, he is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love.

The streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above. There to an ocean's fullness his mercy doth expand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. With mercy and with judgment my web of time he wove, and I the dews of sorrow were lusted by his love.

I'll bless the hand that guided, I'll bless the heart that planned, when thrown where glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. O I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved's mine. He brings up all my sinner into his house of wine.

I stand upon his merit, I know no other stand, not in where glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. The bride I's not her garment, her dear bridegroom stays. I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace.

Not at the crown he gave it, but on his pierced hand. The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. I've wrestled on towards heaven in storm and wind and tide, now like a weary traveler that leaneth on his guide.

Amid the shades of evening, while saints life's lingering sand, I'll hail the glory dawning in Emmanuel's land. And we shall be in that land for all eternity. And we shall look back in that day on the life we lived on earth, and evaluate what we lived it for, how we lived it, whether we responded to the many exhortations God gave us, to seek his kingdom first, and to seek for his life, and to be free from a life of legalism, and living under the law, and self-righteousness, and selfishness, and spiritual pride, and arrogance, and to humble oneself, acknowledge one's need, and seek for fellowship.

That our life can count for God before we leave this earth. We can do something for him who did so much for us. Think of it, my brother, sister, all that Jesus did for you, and he says to you, this have I done for you, what have you done for me? What are you doing for me? I pray that at least in 10% of people here, there will be such a radical change this morning.

Heaven will be delighted if it sees even 10% of those bowed before God this morning, deciding to take their life seriously, to live for God, be saved from sin. Heavenly Father, you know all hearts, nothing is hidden before you, everything is naked and open to you. Help us, Lord, to get light on ourselves, and to be saved.

Give us grace, each one, in Jesus' name. Amen. [www.cfcindia.com](http://www.cfcindia.com) [www.cfcindia.com](http://www.cfcindia.com) [www.cfclit.net](http://www.cfclit.net)  
[www.cfcindia.com](http://www.cfcindia.com)

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7236.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/god-and-man-three-tenses-of-salvation/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**