

# God Can Restore To Us All That We Have Lost

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving encouragement from others to avoid being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. It draws parallels from Old Testament stories like David's battle in 1 Samuel 30 to illustrate how God prepares His servants through challenging circumstances. The message highlights the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, submit to God's training in difficult situations, and trust in God's promise to restore what was lost. It also discusses the recovery of lost truths in the church and the significance of living an overcoming life in Christ.*

**Duration:** 26:50

**Scripture:** Hebrews 3:13, Luke 11:21, Joel 2:25, Hebrews 8:10, Philippians 2:13

**Topics:** "Encouragement in Trials", "Restoration through Faith"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I'd like to turn to Hebrews in chapter 3, a verse that I have believed in very strongly and which all of us need to think about, Hebrews chapter 3, because it speaks about how we can avoid being hardened. Hebrews 3 and verse 13. Encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

It says that if I can receive encouragement from others, it'll protect me from being hardened. And there's a tremendous temptation in the world to be hardened. It's because some things can happen to us that can make us bitter or unforgiving, or some circumstances that bring doubt and fear into our minds, and all those things can harden us.

And the way to overcome is by allowing ourselves to be encouraged by some other brother or sister. In other words, if I'm open to hear what others are saying, whether it's in a meeting like this, or in personal conversation, or in an email, or anything, and not to think that I've come to the place where I'm beyond falling, or beyond the need of encouragement. If we are humble, we will always admit that we need

encouragement, not because we're discouraged, but because we're encouraged to go higher than we are right now.

In the Old Testament, we read about many stories about battles, and those are all pictures of the battle we have with Satan and our flesh. And I was reading one of them the last couple of days, which I saw something good in it that encouraged me. That's in 1 Samuel, in chapter 30.

Even though we live in the New Covenant, yet God has given us a Bible, of which three-quarters of which is Old Testament. And all those stories inspired by the Holy Spirit must have some purpose in God writing it and giving it to us. Otherwise, He'd have just given us the New Testament.

The truths that we believe that have changed our lives are in the New Testament. But yet I found sometimes in the Old Testament pictures of what we experience in the New Testament that really encourage us, and here's one of them. And this is a story of David, who, one of his many battles, it's interesting how these great men in the Old Testament—think of Joseph or Moses or David or Daniel, all these people—every one of them, God had to take them through some very difficult circumstances in order to make them the men that they became.

And God wanted Joseph, for example, to be the second ruler in Egypt. His training for that was not in some college or anything like that. It was through being falsely accused of adultery and being locked up in a jail for 10 or 12 years, with no hope of escape.

And then he's trained. Now, that's not the way we would normally train someone who's got to be a ruler. I mean, today's kings and rulers are not trained that way by their parents.

But God is such a loving Father that He allows His children to go through some very, very tough situations to prepare them for the ministry He has for them. So, in our younger days itself, it's good to recognize that. And so, if any of you are going through some tough situation, remember that it is with a purpose.

These Old Testament examples can encourage you. It's the same with Moses. Moses also, as we have often said, I don't know what all he went through in those 40 years in the wilderness, having to live with his father-in-law and look after sheep all the time.

It must have been a very humiliating, breaking process. And if he had rebelled in that time and questioned God, he'd never have become the man he became. The same with David.

He was anointed by Samuel to be the king, and you would think that he goes straight away to the throne, especially after he goes almost the next week and kills Goliath. What more? And yet God had, I think, a period of 10 to 13 years after he killed Goliath and was anointed before he actually became king. There's a lot of emphasis in the world on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Very important. I don't believe that I could live the life or have the ministry I have if I did not experience being filled with the Holy Spirit. I would encourage every one of you to be absolutely sure of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Don't just take it for granted. Just like you were sure of your salvation, seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit every single day and ask God to give you an assurance. But even with that, think of David as anointed to the Holy Spirit, but he still needed to go through the grind of trial, misunderstanding, and sometimes almost killed.

And it's only then that he came into a ministry. Now, when we think of Jesus coming into a ministry at the age of 30, his 30 years of almost entirely hidden from the age of 12 to the age of 30. We don't know exactly what he went through.

But if those Old Testament examples are any pattern, we can be pretty sure that those 18 years that Jesus spent in Nazareth, there must have been some very, very traumatic experiences that he went through in his family or with his relatives. I don't know what. But he could not have had the ministry he had if he did not go through that same process that every one of God's servants went through in the Old Testament.

So you need to ask yourself whether God did arrange such circumstances for you and whether you rebelled against any of that, maybe with your unconverted relatives or in your place of work, or there are many circumstances are different, but the principle is the same. God has cannot fulfill a ministry even after anointing you unless you are willing to submit to the different circumstances he goes through. I remember when I quit my job in the Navy and I was already gifted to preach, I thought I'd go straight into the ministry and be accepted.

But God allowed me to face many years of jealousy from people who are older than me, who were jealous of my ministry and suppressed me constantly. And the Lord just told me in those days, I'm thankful that I listened to God. He told me never to rebel against them, to submit to authority that misunderstood me.

To submit to authority that misunderstands you, it's not easy. You like to stand up and defend yourself, and the Lord said, keep your mouth shut, let them misunderstand you. That's part of your education.

And I believe that that's one of the things that Jesus must have gone through. He didn't have physical attacks from people, but I'm sure he must have gone through a lot of misunderstanding and false accusation. These are all part of the education he got that prepared him for the ministry, and there are many other ways like that which God takes us through.

And in the midst of it, when we belong to a church like this, we must always be humble enough to receive encouragement from any brother or sister who, maybe half our age or much younger, who has something to say. So when you have different brothers, get up here and share the word. Do you listen carefully to the younger brothers, or do you feel it's only the old, mature saints who can give me anything? Well, if you're like that, I want to tell you, your spiritual growth will be hindered.

I have decided that I believe God can speak to me through anyone, through young brothers, people who stumble in their language. I was listening this morning to the meeting in RLCF in Colorado, and I was blessed listening to young brothers. Some of them are not very mature, but I got something in my heart from them.

What did we read in the beginning? Encourage one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is a very deceitful thing, and if you find your heart is hard, you know, it's not soft and gentle towards people who make mistakes. You're hard on people, or a hardness that prevents you from being sensitive to hear God's voice.

Perhaps the reason is that you don't allow yourself to be encouraged by someone who's younger than you, or maybe half your age. Be open to encouragement. So coming back to David, it says here that he had just won a battle, and when he came back from there, he found that 1 Samuel chapter 30 and verse 1,

some enemies had come and raided his camp and taken away all the wives captive, and took away all their belongings and went away, and David came back, and the city had been burnt with fire, verse 3. The wives and sons and daughters had been taken captive.

Now remember, this is the training that God gave David to become the most well-known king of Israel, and David and his people lifted up their voices and wept, and it says here that people were wanting to stone him, verse 6. They're wanting to stone him for saying, you're the cause of all this. We've lost our wives, we've lost our children, and it says in the last part of verse 6, but David, in one translation, it says he encouraged himself in the Lord, strengthened himself. Here was a situation where there was nobody to encourage him.

They were all accusing him, blaming him. Have you ever faced a situation like that somewhere, place of work or somewhere? He encouraged himself and strengthened himself in the Lord, and he said, well, God must be having a solution to this problem. It looks as if everything is lost.

If the enemy is strong, our wives are lost, our property is lost. It looks as if there's no hope, and when you come to a situation like that, encourage yourself in the Lord and seek what is God's will, and David sought the Lord, it says in verse 8. Shall I go after this enemy? Will I win the battle? And the Lord said, go. And David went after the enemy, and on the way he found somebody to help him, to guide him to where the enemy was.

It's amazing how God arranges all this, and we will also find situations where God will not forsake us, even when it looks as if you've lost everything. God will do something to encourage us. And finally, we read that he met the enemy and slaughtered them in verse 17, and the phrase that comes to my mind after that is a phrase that's repeated.

David, verse 18, recovered everything that had been lost, verse 18, and again it's repeated. David recovered everything, captured all the sheep in verse 20, verse 19. He brought it all back, and that's the first thing that comes to my mind.

God will not allow us to lose anything spiritually if we keep our attitude right towards him. He will allow us to recover. Have you lost something spiritually in your life, maybe through your own blunder or carelessness or backsliding? Here is the word of the Lord.

As David recovered all, you can recover everything that is lost. We all have regret over times in our life where we were careless or didn't take something seriously. And we feel we have lost something.

Here is a promise that you can recover all that's lost. I thank God for it. We've all gone through such phases, and we must believe that God will enable us to recover everything.

I don't know what it is. Maybe with your children, you feel that something was lost, failures and blunders you made in bringing up your children or your relationship with your wife or husband. Take this word.

As David recovered all, you can also recover all. When Jesus defeated Satan, he recovered everything. Turn to this passage in Luke chapter 11.

In Luke's gospel chapter 11, we read in verse 21, he's talking about, you know, casting out demons in verse 20. When a strong man, that's the devil, Luke 11 21, when a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, that's the devil, his positions are undisturbed. In other words, the devil has robbed you of

something that you should have had.

Maybe some years of your life was lost to the devil because of your carelessness or backsliding or some relationships or something. There are people who lost their relationship with their children through their own blunders or foolish strictness or something like that. What have you lost? A relationship with your children or your wife or husband or some situation? A strong man has taken it from you.

But it says in verse 22, someone stronger than him, that's Jesus, attacks him, overpowers him, and takes back all that he stole from you. All his armor, which he had relied on, and distributes his plunder. In other words, he gives us back what the devil stole.

That's what we see from that Old Testament story of David having recovered all that was lost. There are promises like that in the Old Testament. One of the words that's encouraged me in my younger days when I did not understand all this fully was a little expression in the book of Joel in chapter 2. I trust all of you know where Joel is, and I hope you've read his book.

Have you all read Joel? You're going to meet him in heaven, and he'll ask you whether you read his book. And you say, where was that? You say, I wrote only three pages and you couldn't read it? Joel chapter 2, it's one of the minor prophets. In Joel chapter 2, it says here about the Lord restoring to us what was taken away.

Verse 25, I will make up to you, take this as a personal promise. I will restore to you or make up to you for all the years, he uses different locusts, that these locusts have eaten away from your life. The great army which I send among you, I will restore to you the years that were eaten away.

I remember in times when I slipped up and failed, these words are a tremendous encouragement to me. Lord, what shall I do about years that were wasted? I will restore to you the years that you wasted in your life that have been eaten up. We never get a promise from God if we don't claim it.

There's one other thing I want to say, just like David recovered and all, as we saw that Jesus also recovered everything that the devil's taken away. One of the functions of CFC from the time it has started is to recover truth that the devil has robbed from the church of Jesus Christ through the centuries. The truth that the apostles had way back in the beginning, right at the beginning, soon after the day of Pentecost, it did not last for long because by the time you come to Revelation chapter 2 and 3, which is just about 60 years after the day of Pentecost, a lot of the churches have lost what God gave them.

So what the apostles had was lost by the end of the first century. And then from then onwards, all types of other practices came in, infant baptism, priest craft, and human rulers with titles, and salaried preachers, and all this. The apostles were not like that.

All this came in through the years and then corruption and sexual scandals in the church and all types of things through the centuries. And then little by little in the last 400 years or so, God began to recover this truth. I thought of that in relation to that expression, David recovered all, Jesus recovered all.

And through the last few centuries, the Lord has been seeking to recover back fully to the church all the truth that the apostles had. See, way back in the time of the apostles, there was no such thing as a church having a pastor. Take a simple thing like that.

A pastor in a church was absolutely unheard of. Priests and bishops and all, unheard of. Where did all this come in Christendom? It was lost.

And most of Christendom still hasn't recovered it. But Jesus has recovered all. In small groups here and there, the entire truth of the New Testament has been recovered, particularly the truths of the new covenant, that God will write his laws in our mind, giving us a desire to do his will, and in our heart, giving us the strength to do his will.

How many people believe that? I hope everyone here believes that. It's a truth that was lost for years. It's described in Hebrews 8, verse 10 to 12.

The desire to do God's will and the ability to do God's will, it has been recovered for the church. That's your birthright. If you have a desire to do the will of God, don't be conceited to think that you produced it.

You did not. God worked in you. There are millions of people who have no desire to do God's will.

If you have a desire to do God's will, don't think that's because you're a little better than others. Humble yourself and say, Lord, you gave me that desire. Philippians 2, verse 13 and 14 says, God works in you to desire his will.

But sometimes we can think, I have a desire to do God's will. What is it that makes you different from that other brother who's not so serious about following the Lord? It's only because God worked in you. And if you humble yourself, God will do something more in you.

And that is give you the ability to fulfill all of his will. God's will is a huge area, total likeness to Christ. And if we humble ourselves and say, Lord, you're the one who produced the desire in me.

You've recovered everything from Satan. Everything that Adam lost and that the apostles lost have been recovered. And I praise God, as I've seen through the years, so many brothers and sisters in India and other countries, some of them not even literate, who understand the truth of the Bible better than Bible school professors of how Jesus has recovered all the truth that the apostles had taught and which was lost through the centuries.

That we can live an overcoming life, that as husband and wife, we can live in peace and happiness every single day of the year. That's a truth that is lost. I mean, you read a lot of battles between Old Testament saints and their wives.

Moses was fighting with his wife. David was fighting with his wife. And many of the Old Testament saints never had a good family life, but it's not meant to be like that today.

We're meant to have a life where Christ is always in our home and where a husband and wife can talk to each other in the same way they would talk if Jesus were physically present there. My dear brothers and sisters, don't lower the standard. Ask yourself, if Jesus were physically present in your home, how would you talk to your husband or wife? Is he present in your home or not? You say you're a Christian.

It doesn't matter how your partner is. It's got nothing to do with your partner. Your partner may be unconverted, wild, angry.

And if Jesus is there and he or she is wild or angry, how will you respond if Jesus is there? You would always respond graciously. Jesus has recovered everything for us. The devil need have no power over us.

Be encouraged. Don't be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. May God help us.

Amen.

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