

God Chose Us To Make Us Look At People And Things From His Viewpoint

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, recognizing God's sovereign choice in selecting individuals, the need to see others and circumstances through God's eyes, and the significance of discernment in relationships. It encourages a deep understanding of God's ways, the impact of pride and humility, and the call to imitate Christ in all aspects of life.

Scripture: John 15:16, Jeremiah 3:14, Isaiah 55:8, Proverbs 14:12, James 4:6, 1 Samuel 16:7, John 2:23

Topics: "Humility", "Discernment in Relationships"

Description

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Transcript

Well, I want to say that I'm really blessed and encouraged when I hear all these testimonies. I long to listen more to the testimonies of different brothers and sisters, for many years it's been like that, than even messages. We've all heard so many messages and well, we can look at different truths from different angles that different preachers bring.

But a testimony is unique because it's a person talking about his own or her own experience with God and how it's been a tremendous challenge to me. Whenever I hear, not only here, but through the years, whenever I've had the opportunity to listen to a person's testimony, I've always looked forward to it. So I would encourage all of you to please listen carefully.

These are your brothers and sisters. And just like you would be excited if you heard your own son or daughter telling how they found Jesus, or they still want to follow. I would encourage all of you to listen carefully to each brother or sister.

It's what I do, to hear how the Lord dealt with them. And that can be a challenge to us. And when we think of how God chose us, it's a real miracle.

It's not because we were special in any way. I believe very much in the sovereignty of God, that God sovereignly chooses. And it's not I who chose him, but he chose me.

Jesus said that once, you did not choose me, John 15. I chose you. I want all of you, my brothers and sisters, to remember that always.

It will humble you like anything. I keep remembering that, that verse in John 15, you did not choose me, but I chose you. If you're not familiar with that verse, please turn with me for a moment to that verse.

John 15, verse 16, you did not choose me. How many of you believe that? You really believe deep down in your heart, you did not choose the Lord, but he chose you. I know that has humbled me tremendously.

And if he's given you some ability, whether it is to testify or preach or teach or evangelize or or whatever God gives, I was the one who appointed you. That John 15, 16, that you should go and bear fruit, that your fruit should remain. Even if some blessing comes out of your life to one person, fruit that remains.

Don't ever think that you did it. I appointed you to bring that fruit and that fruit should remain and didn't fall away. And when you get an answer from the Lord, remember also what it says in the rest of that verse.

So that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he gives it to you. It's all from him. He's choosing me, he's giving you, choosing you or me, giving us a ministry and getting the Father to answer our prayers.

If we can be gripped by this verse, we can make a lot of difference in our life because God gives his grace to the humble. And if there's anything that hinders progress in our life, it is the lack of humility. And if there's anything that prevents us from coming to a 100% victorious life in our conscious life, 100% victory in our conscious life, that must be your goal.

Not one giant that I see in the land of Canaan must remain alive. There may be a thousand giants in the land of Canaan I've not yet seen, unconscious part of me, areas where I'm not like Christ. I'm not worried about those giants I've not seen in my life, but the giants I've seen in the land of Canaan.

The Lord said from Dan to Beersheba, this land belongs to me. And that's what the Lord says to us from head to foot, your body belongs to me. There are giants ruling there that should not rule.

God will never ask me why I didn't kill the giants I never saw. I can say it to the Lord face to face, Lord, I never saw them. But what about the ones you see? Is anger something that you see? Is dirty thought something that you see? Those are not giants that are unseen.

It's only grace, the lack of grace that prevents us from overcoming them. Face up to it. Lord, here is an area I'm defeated in.

Here is why I still get angry with my wife or husband. It's because I do not getting grace. And that means I'm not humble.

Let me face up to it. Even if everyone in NCCF thinks you're humble, you're not. Lord, it's what you think about me that matters.

Sin will not rule over you if you're under grace. And God gives his grace to the humble. You know, I have, you know how I speak, all of you have heard me many times.

And I'll tell you, there are times in my life when I say, Oh, Lord, do I speak so strong? I sometimes feel like that. And then one of the passages of scripture that really comforts me is 2 Corinthians 7. That's, I feel Paul also felt like that. You know, when he spoke to the Galatians, you foolish Galatians, who has bimged you? And some strong words that he spoke to the Corinthians, you're fleshly, you're carnal.

You're babies. He writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians about his first letter, where he spoke some strong words. 2 Corinthians chapter 7. He realized that his strong preaching caused some disturbance to some Corinthians and sorrow.

And he says in 2 Corinthians 7 verse 8, I caused you sorrow by my letter. I apply that to myself. I cause sorrow to people by the strong way I preach.

I do not regret it. This is the Holy Spirit inspired words from Paul. Even though I did regret it.

See, this is how we are human and a human part of us, we say, Lord, why in the world did I speak like that? But then the Holy Spirit says it's needed. I don't regret it because I see that that message, even though it caused you sorrow, it was only for a little while. I rejoice in the fruit that came from that.

That that sorrow that came in you brought you to the point of repentance. That was Paul's goal. He was passionate that these Corinthians should become more like Christ, be freed from the full of the world and become devoted to Christ so that, not that so that Paul can rejoice that he produced such a wonderful church.

No. So that those Corinthians, when they stand in the final day before the Lord, will have no regret. That was Paul's passion.

That's my desire too. I can say before God, my desire is, I've often said that in Bangalore, in our church, I said, I don't care how many of you get offended with my preaching. My desire is that when you stand before Christ, there'll be nothing that he like to point out in your life that you did not judge yourself.

I want to do my best to help you get there. It's like these call in India. We have some coaching colleges that prepare people for tough medical entrance tests and engineering college entrance tests, and they say, come and study with us for one year.

We guarantee you'll get admission. We guarantee you'll get qualifying marks in the entrance test. It's something like that.

Our churches must be like that, that we say, you come and listen to everything we say here. It may be tough. Some of those other colleges let people play the fool.

We don't allow people to play the fool in this college because we are coaching people for something important. And we are coaching people for the final test that will come at the judgment seat of Christ, that there'll be nothing like Paul could say in 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 4 and 6. I am, verse 4, I'm conscious of nothing against myself. Dear brothers and sisters, you should be able to say that every single day of your life.

That's my goal. 1 Corinthians 4, verse 4, I'm always conscious of nothing against myself. I live every day, every day, morning till night, conscious of nothing against myself.

You say that's impossible. Well, how did Paul achieve it? How did the Holy Spirit inspire Paul to write that? It was the truth. Don't accept any standard less than that, dear brothers and sisters.

Everything that's happening around the world, including this COVID pandemic and everything is pointing to the soon coming of Jesus Christ. And we must be ready. We need humility.

So Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7, even though I felt I hurt you, yet it brought you to repentance, a repentance according to the will of God. 2 Corinthians 7, 11, you produced a godly sorrow in yourself and what a longing you had to set everything right. As I said, we did not choose him, but he chose us.

And that's one of those things that always keeps me humble before God. I did not choose you. Think of your families.

Some of you have said you came out of a non-Christian family. Why did he choose you? We have hundreds and hundreds of people from non-Christian families in our churches in India. And I talked to them.

They're the only one sometimes. The entire family is non-Christian. Why this one particular person? Was there something special in him? Was he more humble? No, God chose him.

And I think of this verse in Jeremiah chapter 3. I think of that in relation to myself as well. Jeremiah 3 verse 14 and the middle of that verse, Jeremiah 3, 14. I am a master to you, the Lord says, and I will take one from a city and two from a family or two from a city and one from a family.

And I'll bring you to the true church, Zion. Not to Babylon. There are hundreds of false churches in the world today.

And the Lord says, I'll bring you to the true new covenant church. One and two. Don't ever think you found it.

God brought you. God brought me. I have no doubt in my mind about it.

It constantly humbles me. I did not choose him. He chose me.

I did not find Zion, the new covenant church. He brought me there. One from a family and the others are not there.

That's true of many of you. It's true of many of us. Many of our relatives are in denominational churches that don't have a clue about the new covenant.

Why did he choose you? Why did he choose me? I can answer that in three words. I don't know. It's his sovereign choice.

Nothing else. And his ways are not my ways. That's the other passage I love.

Isaiah 55 verse 8 and 9. I've often thought about this. God says, my thoughts are not your thoughts. Nor are your ways my ways.

And how much different is my way of thinking just very slightly different from God's way? No. As the heaven is higher than the earth, so my ways are completely different from yours. My thoughts are completely different from yours.

It's not just one or two degrees away from the true direction. No. It's a difference between heaven and earth.

180 degrees away, we could say in today's language, from God's ways. That's my way. Because of the flesh of Adam that we still carry around.

Lord, I don't want that to influence me anyway. Let me always recognize God's ways are not my way. You know, it says in Proverbs chapter 14.

From my youngest Christian days, from the times I was a young Christian, these are some of the precious verses that have come to me, which I'm quoting to you today. Proverbs 14, 12. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is death.

I've often said that to myself. This looks right to me. Lord, have mercy on me.

I could be 180 degrees different from the way you want me to go. There's a way that seems right, but it's wrong. How will I be protected in such a world? God has made the world like that.

When I think of all the ways so many people around me have gone astray, I've heard the testimonies of so many Christians have gone astray. Christian preachers have fallen into adultery and all types of things. How did that happen? Pride.

So we pride. So we must pursue humility. And humility is not something that I can decide myself.

Jesus said, learn from me for I'm humble. Matthew 11, 29. There is only one person on earth from whom we can learn humility, and that's Jesus.

And from those like Paul who have followed Jesus in that way, where he could say, imitate me like I imitate Christ. But there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is always death. And by the way, in case you read through Proverbs 14 quickly and you missed that verse, God repeats it in chapter 16, verse 25.

I like that. Sometimes when you miss a verse, God says, okay, you missed it when you read 14. You read through it too quickly.

I've got to tell you again, chapter 16, verse 25. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. I find that in James 4 also.

You come to James 4, 7. God gives his grace to the humble, but he resists the proud. But if you read through that chapter too quickly, by the time you get to 1 Peter 5, he repeats it again. God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

He doesn't want you to miss it. That's why two, three pages later when you're reading through the Bible, he'll give it to you again. I thank God for that, that when I missed it the first time, he'll repeat it to me.

And I also want to say that this is something that affects the way we look at other people, the way, God's way, not only way for my life, how to find God's will in my life. God's ways are not my ways. There is a way in which we look at others, unbelievers, unbelievers, believers in other denominations and believers in our own church.

We have, we form certain opinions based on our preferences. We like certain people in certain ways. And, you know, in the world, they look for not only position, they look at a person and are attracted by his beauty or his handsomeness or her beauty.

And that can affect all of us. We can be attracted by a person's features, particularly the opposite sex. Well, I'll tell you the verse that's helped me in this area.

And I would encourage all of you to take it also. 1 Samuel and chapter 16 and verse 7. In the middle of that verse, it says 1 Samuel 16, verse 7. God does not see people the way we see them. We want to be like God.

We want to be like Jesus. But Jesus did not look at people the way we look at people. He never cared for physical beauty.

He never cared for intelligence. He never cared for wealth. He never cared for a pleasing personality.

He never even cared whether a person was divorced five times, like the woman in Samaria. He didn't go by doctrinal positions. God does not see as man sees.

And I say, Lord, I want to see as you see. I want to look at people the way you look at them. I want to look at circumstances the way you look at them.

It'll change my whole way of life. It'll make me make tremendous progress in my life to become like Christ. If I can see people the way God sees them, if I can see circumstances and situations, the pandemic, and everything the way God sees it.

How does God see a man? Man looks at the outward appearance. The Lord looks at the heart. It's one of the prayers I've been praying for myself.

Lord, help me. Help me. Please help me.

That I learn to look at people and the world itself, not with physical eyes, but the way you look at them, the way you look at people especially. When I look at a person, well, I see his face to recognize who he is, but I don't want to judge by the pleasing personality he has, the nice way of speaking, the handsome face he has, or the pretty face that girl has. No, I want to see his heart.

And what if his heart is wicked? God doesn't hate wicked people. He loves them too. But particularly as an elder, I find it's very, very important for me to be able to see beyond the face.

Sometimes you can see certain things inside the heart through the face. The Proverbs 6 about proud eyes. The Bible speaks in 2 Peter 2 about eyes full of adultery.

Adultery is in the heart, but it comes out through the eyes. Pride is in the heart, but Proverbs 6 says it comes out through the eyes, haughty eyes. So some of it is visible, but it must be our great desire to look at people the way God looks at them.

Isn't that a good thing to have? We won't hate anyone, because God never hates anybody. But we'll be able to help people a lot more with more compassion if we look at them as God sees them. Good prayer to pray, Lord help me to see people as you see them.

And so that I can love them as you love them. And I won't be fooled by people. One last verse, John's Gospel, Chapter 2. There were many people, many, many, I don't know how many, probably hundreds, John 2, 23 middle, who believed in Jesus, seeing the miracles that he did.

But Jesus did not commit himself to them. They committed themselves to Jesus, but Jesus did not commit himself to them because he did not see as man sees. He knew all men.

He did not need anyone to testify this brother is a good brother, that sister is a good sister. No, for he knew what was in man. I want to be like Jesus.

And the more, if you have more responsibility, you will need this much more than others. Now, don't mistake your human shrewdness for divine revelation. So be very careful here.

The way to this is through humility. Lord, help me to see people. If you hate somebody, you can be pretty sure you're not looking at that person the way God looks at them, because God does not hate anyone.

If you exalt yourself over someone, you know, that's not the way Jesus looked at people because Jesus never exalted himself over people. He washed people's feet. So you need to understand this carefully.

The discernment does not exalt you. It'll make you more loving and more humble, but he knew what was in man. So in all these things, in our way of life and fellowship with others, let us earnestly pray that we shall have the discernment of the spirit to recognize, first of all, that we were not chosen because of anything in us, but God chose us.

And that's why we responded. And therefore we look at other people also as with hope for everyone. The other day we heard about hope, something which is not spoken of much.

Hope, we have hope for everyone. Yeah, I sometimes feel I speak in a disjointed way, the way Paul wrote some of his letters. I hope it helps you.

God bless you.

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