

God Gives Revelation Only To The Humble

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the difference between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant, emphasizing the need for a revelation of God's truths rather than mere intellectual understanding. It highlights the importance of humility, using the example of a child's humility and dependence as a key to receiving revelation from God. The speaker discusses the significance of following Jesus' example in the New Covenant, where actions precede teachings, contrasting it with the Old Covenant's focus on commandments and exhortations.

Scripture: Matthew 11:25, Luke 18:4, John 15:5, Hebrews 11:40, Proverbs 4:18

Topics: "New Covenant vs Old Covenant", "Humility in Receiving Revelation"

Description

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Transcript

You know that my favorite topic is the difference between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant, and it means so much to me because it was a revelation God gave me. I never read it anywhere. I read books on the New Covenant by Andrew Murray and David Wilkerson, but I never saw it because it wasn't there, and I read it even after I saw it, and I found you can't get it.

You can read that. You can take those books and read it. You won't get it.

Then I came to see, like Peter, the Lord told Peter when he saw Christ as the Son of the Living God, he said, flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, my Father in heaven, and I've seen through the years in different CFC churches that there are many brothers who feel they've understood the New Covenant, but they haven't because it has not become a revelation. When we are clever, we can grasp certain things like mathematics and chemistry, and those things are fine. We can solve those problems, but truths of God can only be understood by revelation, and there's only one type of person to whom God gives revelation.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 11. Revelation, by the way, is a New Testament word. You don't find it in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the word is knowledge, understanding. You look at the book of Proverbs, you read about knowledge and understanding. Revelation is a New Testament word.

In Matthew 11, it says in verse 25, that time Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have given revelation to babies. I remember reading that when I was trying to study the Bible, and I said, Lord, it looks as if I've missed it because I was born intelligent.

I didn't make myself intelligent. Intelligence is something you're born with. Einstein was born intelligent.

He didn't make himself. When all of us are born with a certain level of intelligence, I was born intelligent. I can't take any credit for it.

I said, Lord, how will I ever get understanding of your word now? Is it only babies who understand? The Lord really opened my eyes to see something, that the main thing about a baby, you remember Jesus said that in Luke, Matthew 18. If you humble yourself as a baby, those who, 18.4, whoever then humbles himself as a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The main thing in a child is humility.

You don't see it, but it's a humility which, I've very often looked at a child in a cradle and that child is not having high thoughts about itself. It's not thinking how pretty I am and how much people admire me. And it's not buffed up if somebody says you're very beautiful.

It's completely unaffected by the praise of people who come and admire it and say all types of things. Completely unaffected. That's humility.

Completely unaffected by anything people say to appreciate or praise. And now we're thankful for what they say, but it doesn't make me think that I'm any better than I am. That's a baby.

And it's so helpless. That's the other part of its humility that it doesn't mind acknowledging that I can't do anything. I need my mom and dad to do every single thing for me.

That's pretty humiliating. When people get older, they feel a bit humiliated that they're dependent on others for this thing and that thing and the other thing. And that's because they are older people, but a child never feels humiliated or humble that mommy and daddy have got to do everything for me.

Feed me, clothe me, take me to the restroom and everything. And the child never feels humiliated by it. That's humility.

It takes a long while to get there. But I saw that, so we can read this like this, that God reveals his truths to the humble. So the wise and intelligent people in the world are invariably proud.

It's very rare to find an intelligent person who is genuinely humble. It has to be a wholehearted Christian. An intelligent person who's become a wholehearted Christian will be humble.

All the others, every single person I've met in my life is proud. And even a lot of Christians who are intelligent are pretty proud of the fact that they can understand it better and they can explain it better and they know better and they're smarter than that other guy down there. I've seen that in India, different believers, even in CFC churches.

It's very, very difficult to not compare ourselves with others, sometimes unconsciously. So it's a battle. And that's why we get so little revelation.

But if you fight that battle and determined to go down, revelation will come. And that's how we really understand the new covenant. And what's the difference between knowledge and revelation? Knowledge is something we can be proud of, revelation you can never be proud of.

It'll humble you. That's a big difference. Knowledge makes you proud, revelation humbles you.

And the other thing is, knowledge is something we can explain to others and we love to explain it to others and we're happy when people got my explanation. But revelation is something you say, well, I can't explain it. I can share what I see in the word of God.

God's got to give you revelation. He gives it to you. If you're humble, you'll get it.

If you're not humble, you can sit and listen to it for ages and you can keep on listening to the tapes, you won't get it. It's not by constant listening. It's not by using our brain.

It's by humility. It's got to do with the heart more than the mind. And then he goes on to say in verse 29, if you want to learn humility, learn it from me.

There are two people you can learn humility from, from a child and from Jesus. So it means that Jesus' attitude on earth was like that of a child. And I saw in my life how this is how I'm supposed to live.

It's a very helpless way of living. You know, Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing. In John 15 verse five, that means nothing of eternal value.

John 15 five. Apart from me, there are a million things you can do because you're smart, you're clever, you're capable, you're qualified, you've got degrees and you've got all types of things, but you will never be able to do one single thing that lasts for eternity. Not one single thing that lasts for eternity through your life.

If it is not in helpless dependence on Jesus Christ in prayer and seeking for His power. Let me tell you that clearly. It has come to me more clearly only after many years.

I wish somebody had taught me this when I was a young man. I never had a spiritual father, as I've often said. I had to struggle and find these things out myself, but I'm glad I found it.

That nothing I do without helpless dependence on the Lord is ever going to last in eternity. It will impress a lot of undiscerning people, and most Christians are undiscerning, so they'll be very impressed by what I've done, but God's not impressed. He says, anything that you have done apart from Christ is zero.

That's the meaning of John 15. Apart from me, you can do nothing, and what you think you have done is zero. You know that perhaps some of you have heard the well-known saying of C.T. Studd.

C.T. Studd was a great missionary, an English missionary. He went to Africa, and very sacrificial life, very godly man, who lived years and years and years in a little hut in the Congo, and brought thousands to Christ, to places where there were no Christians. He used to call his hut Buckingham Palace, because he was a king there.

The king was living there, he said, and brought thousands of people to Christ, but there's one statement of his he made, which is very well known. Only one life, it will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last.

I believed that for many years, and I still respect C.T. Studd. As I often say, we are standing on the shoulders of others, and that's why we see further ahead. So I think, I'm not a better missionary than C.T. Studd.

He lived a million times more sacrificial life than I've lived, brought more people to Christ than I have, but in this area, I have seen something which he did not see. So I changed it. I said, only one life, it will soon be passed.

Only what Christ does through me will last. There are many people in the world doing many things for Christ. It won't last.

What is done for Christ will last? No. The world is full of people, Babylonian Christians doing things for Christ. Only what's done for Christ.

They think they're doing something, it will last. It will not. Only what Christ does through me will last.

And I see that like the branch in the tree. It's like the tree, you know, you use the example of the branch in the tree right there. If you abide in me, the branch bears fruit.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. That branch, even it's been in the tree for 50 years, the moment it's cut off, it's dead. 50 years of experience of producing apples, no use.

It cannot produce a single apple when it's cut off. Apart from me, you can do nothing. And I believe this is one of the greatest lessons that we have to learn in the Christian life.

And if you have learned it, you've learned one of the greatest lessons. And it is such people who can be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. A lot of people are seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but that's mostly to do miracles or to preach like somebody or do some spectacular thing for God.

No, the Holy Spirit will come to teach me that I can't do anything, but dependent upon him. And then I look at the life of Jesus, you know, we've always said that Jesus is our example. One of the great differences between old covenant and new covenant is this, that in the old covenant, they had exhortations, commandments, encouragements, but one thing they did not have was an example.

There's not a single person in the Old Testament who could say, follow me. They could say, listen to this. This is the word of God.

And this is what almost all preachers and pastors say today. This is God's word. Listen to it.

You hardly ever find a preacher or a pastor today to say, follow me, follow my example. Have the same attitude to sin that I have. Have the same attitude to God that I have.

Have the same attitude to money that I have. Come and see my accounts and see how I handle money. Check if I paid all my taxes.

Have the same attitude to money that I have. Bring up your children the way I brought up my children. Look at my example and follow me.

The very, very few people in the world that I have met who can say that. And yet that is supposed to be the primary thing that we are supposed to say as new covenant Christians. Otherwise we are like old covenant people.

This is what the Lord has said. Come and hear what the Lord has said. This, this, this, this, this, this, this.

Moses did that. Elijah did that. But Jesus said, follow me.

It says he first did and then taught. Acts chapter one, verse one. I never forget.

I remember when I saw this for the first time, Acts one, verse one. Luke wrote the book of Acts and he says to Theophilus, my first composition, which is the gospel of Luke. Luke gives a title to that.

The gospel of Luke. The title Luke himself gives it is all that Jesus began to do and teach. That's the title of the gospel of Luke.

What he first did and then taught. You read, for example, in Luke chapter two, how he submitted to Mary, obeyed him. He did.

In everything he did, then taught. He did and taught. In the old covenant, it was not like that.

In the old covenant, Moses went up into the mountain and heard and came back and spoke whatever he heard. He didn't have to do it. Samuel, when he was a little boy, he'd say, speak Lord, your servant is listening.

He would hear and go and tell people this is what God has said. It was entirely hear me and go and tell people what you heard from me. You hear something in the church and it changes your life.

Praise the Lord. Go and tell others. But if you haven't done it, you're not following Jesus.

You have to do and then teach to follow Jesus. I'm not supposed to teach in the new covenant what I've not done or at least what I'm not attempting to do. I can't speak about do not be anxious.

If I'm a tense, anxious person all the time, at least if I'm trying to climb that mountain of being anxious for nothing, I can say I haven't reached the top, brothers and sisters, but I'm following. I'm going up the way to be completely free from anxiety or rejoice in the Lord always. Wonderful verse.

But I can never talk about it if I'm not climbing that mountain where I've completely finished with grumbling and complaining about anything in my home. But I never complained to my wife about anything in my life. Never murmur about anything.

I'm climbing that mountain. It hasn't become perfect. Then you can speak about rejoice always.

If you're not gloomy, if your wife can testify, your husband can testify. I never see my partner in a bad mood anytime. Now that doesn't happen overnight, but if you follow Jesus, you can come to the place, my brother, sister, where you will never be in a bad mood because Jesus was never in a bad mood.

Now that is the goal we have. I'm saying in all these things, don't get disturbed if you haven't reached the top of the mountain. You can start climbing and saying like Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

Jesus has reached the top of the mountain. He's perfect. Paul hadn't reached Jesus.

He said very clearly, I'm not yet perfect, but I'm pressing on. And that's what all of us say. We're not even a God as far as Paul, but we're trying to follow another fellow who said, follow me.

You know, by the way, there are only two people in the Bible who ever said, follow me, Jesus and Paul. Jesus said, follow me. And Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

And we should be able to say, follow me as I'm following Christ too. I'm following Paul as well. It's a good example for us to follow.

So in Romans, I'm sorry, Hebrews 11, you see this wonderful verse, which I've often quoted, Hebrews 11, this fantastic chapter, which describes things like Red Sea being split open and the walls of Jericho being pulled down and lions mouths being shut and people being raised from the dead, all types of amazing things. And at the end of this fantastic chapter, a woman like Sarah giving birth at the age of 90. And at the end of all this, it says, Hebrews 11:40, this is the best part of that chapter.

God has provided something better than all of this for us. What can be better than stopping the sun like Joshua, splitting the Red Sea like Moses, something better. Here it is.

Let us run the race chapter 12, verse one and two, looking unto Jesus. This is better than splitting the Red Sea. To walk in Jesus' footsteps, denying ourselves every day, taking up the cross, dying to ourselves and looking at Jesus' example and saying, Lord, I want to follow you is a far better thing, according to Hebrews 11:40, than stopping the sun, pulling down the walls of Jericho, splitting the Red Sea.

How many Christians have understood that? Far better than casting out demons and doing all types of miracles, raising the dead. The better thing is that I can deny myself and take up the cross and follow Jesus. I tell you, there are very, very few Christians who understood that.

If they had the choice between raising the dead and denying themselves, they would definitely choose raising the dead, but not me. I've seen the better thing, and that's what's changed my life. It's completely transformed my life, and I know that in eternity, I will not regret the way I've chosen.

Many people who raise the dead and cast out demons may go to hell. Jesus said that. They'll say, I did miracles in your name, and Jesus said, I never knew you.

I never knew you because they never understood the way he went. Proverbs 4 and verse 18, the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, like the sunrise. It becomes brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter until the full day.

We're supposed to become like the sun rising, more and more and more and more like Jesus every day, and those who live closest to us should be able to see that, a freedom from complaining, a joy in the Lord where no temptation can make us fall. In the beginning, many temptations make us fall, but it becomes less and less and less and less and less. Now, don't let anything I say discourage you.

Remember what Paul said, I'm not perfect, but I'm pressing on, so I'm not asking us to be perfect. None of us are. I'm far from it, and I'm conscious of it, but we must be on this path of humility, of looking at Jesus,

and when we read the Bible to say, Lord, help me to see you better today, to wake up in the morning, and not just to say like Samuel speak, Lord, your servant is listening, but like David said, one thing I have desired of the Lord, Psalm 27, 4, that I may see the beauty of the Lord today and worship Him.

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