

God Is a Holy God

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes that God is both perfectly good and holy, and that true holiness cannot be attained through human effort but is a gift from God received by faith and repentance.

Duration: 51:46

Scripture: Habakkuk 1:13, Romans 11:22

Topics: "Holiness Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the motives behind our actions. He highlights that even acts of fasting, prayer, and helping the poor can be seen as worthless in God's eyes if they lack genuine love. The speaker refers to 1 Corinthians 13 to illustrate this point. He also draws attention to the severity of God, citing an example from Deuteronomy where rebellious children were stoned to death. However, he balances this severity with the kindness of God, exemplified in Genesis where God promises that the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. The speaker encourages listeners to carefully consider both the kindness and severity of God throughout their lives.

Transcript

We were considering how God is a good God, and there's such a great need for the people in our land and in the world to know that, because every other religion proclaims God as one who is almost all the time angry with his people, and somehow or the other man has to do something to appease and please this angry God. Every religion teaches that. That's why people go on sacrifices, that's why people give money, that's why people roll on the ground and do all types of things to somehow please this angry God.

And in the midst of all this falsehood, we are called to proclaim the good news that God is not angry with man. God is good and everything he does, even if he can't explain it, comes from a heart of goodness, of perfect goodness. We have to confess there are things we cannot explain, for example a lot of suffering, a lot of innocent suffering, a lot of helpless babies that suffer, children who suffer because of the sins of their parents.

We can't explain all that, but that's because our minds are small. The moment you begin to use reason, you will drift away from knowing this truth, that God is a good God. It is better to humble ourselves and say, well my reason can't understand that, but I still believe one thing that is eternally true.

God is a perfectly good God, he is perfectly loving, every single thing that he does originates from a heart of love. And I believe when our minds are clarified and we see as God sees, we will discover that even hell is an expression of the love of God. It is difficult for us to understand that, isn't it? That hell can be an expression of God's love.

But if I were to use a little illustration, can you imagine what a city would be like if there were no police, no jails, no law and order? Any loving administrator of that city would first set up a prison for criminals. That would be an example. One day we will see very clearly, what we cannot understand now fully, that even hell is an expression of God's love.

There is nothing that God does which is not done in perfect love. I thank God for that understanding I have, which has solved many problems in my life and which has answered many difficult questions, in the sense that once I believe this established fact, I don't need to have an explanation. Now I believe that another very, very important truth that we need to proclaim, and which is also not sufficiently understood, is the fact that as much as God is a good God, He is a perfectly holy God.

And it is because people don't understand the perfection of His holiness, just like they don't understand the perfection of His goodness, that they think that by somehow doing a lot of good works, they can please Him. Every religion in the world teaches that, that if you do a sufficient number of good works, you will be taken into God's kingdom. And the way to atone for your past sins is by doing a lot of good works.

And that arises from an ignorance of the perfect holiness of God. The perfect holiness of God is so great, that any amount of good works will never atone for even one sin. That any amount of good works will never take you into His presence, because His holiness is absolute.

And it's so great that the Bible says that our best deeds are like filthy rags. Isaiah 64 6, our righteousness is like filthy rags. Now most of us can agree that our sins are like filthy rags.

We have no difficulty believing that. Yeah, we acknowledge readily that we have sinned and our sins are like filthy rags. But think of the best deed that you can ever do.

Say you spend four hours in fasting and prayer. Do you believe that's a filthy rag? It's very difficult to understand that. Or you sacrifice yourself and help the poor.

Do you think that can be like a filthy rag? In 1 Corinthians 13 it says you can give all your goods to the poor and yet lack love. You read that verse? Is it possible for a man to give his entire wealth, his entire wealth to poor people and lack love? Everybody will think that that man is a loving man and yet in God's eyes he may lack love and he's disqualified and he's a zero. You see, with God it is not what we do that matters as much as why we do it.

A man can give all his wealth not because he loves the poor but because he wants honor for himself. A man can fast and pray or preach not because he wants to glorify God but because he wants something for himself. And so we see that holiness is not in these external actions primarily.

God's holiness is not in anything he does. When we think of holiness we think of actions, we think of prayer, we think of Bible reading, we think of avoiding certain sins. But God's holiness is intrinsic, it is within, it is something which is what he is even if he does nothing.

And that is the holiness which he calls us to, which we can never attain. And among Christians, even among those who feel and know that our righteousness are like filthy rags and we cannot be accepted and therefore we come and accept freely the forgiveness that God offers us in Christ, there is still the feeling that after we have accepted the Lord, after we are born again, that we can now perfect ourselves in our own strength. The Galatians made that mistake when Paul wrote to them saying, are you so foolish, he says in Galatians 3, having begun in the spirit, are you going to now become perfect in the flesh? In other words, when you began your Christian life, it was the Holy Spirit who gave you a new birth, you didn't produce that yourself.

And are you thinking that the beginning was by the Spirit and the rest of your Christian life is not going to be by the Spirit? He says you are a fool. But that's the mistake a lot of Christians make. And that again is because they feel, they haven't understood God's perfect holiness.

Once we even get a little glimpse of God's perfect holiness, we will see that we can never attain to it even with a lifetime of effort. Supposing you deny yourself, take up the cross, read the word of God every day, discipline yourself, keep your conscience clear and pray and seek fellowship and live what you think is a good life. You think that will make you attain to God's nature? Impossible.

Man cannot manufacture God's holiness. This is a very important truth for us to understand because a lot of Christians have that idea that I have somehow got to become pure and holy and they try and try and try and try and never seem to attain it and they keep trying some people foolishly for 50 years. Well, I would have told them right at the beginning, you'll never attain it brother, forget it.

But how long are you going to take to realize that you cannot attain it? It is God who makes us holy. 1 Thessalonians 5.23 says, may the God of peace himself sanctify you, make you holy as much as the forgiveness of my sins is a free gift of God. Holiness is also a free gift of God because I can never manufacture holiness as much as I cannot attain to the forgiveness of sins.

It has to be a free gift. But then you say, why isn't every believer holy? For the same reason that every sinner is not converted. You all know very well that forgiveness of sins, justification is a free gift.

Is there anybody here who believes that forgiveness of sins was a result of some work that you did? Not at all. It's a free gift, 100% free. And yet why is it that more than 90% of people in the world don't have it? Because even though it's free, it requires that they turn and receive by faith.

Turn from sin towards God and receive by faith. Something like, if there's a man standing here behind me offering me a free gift, say a Bible, however much he offers it to me, I can never receive it until I turn around. That's the first thing.

I turn around and second I stretch out my hand and take it. Only two things I have to do. It's absolutely free.

But I cannot say that my turning around was a work I did or my stretching out my hands was a work I did. None of us would be so foolish. But as long as I keep my back to him, I can never receive it.

As long as I don't stretch out my hand, I can't receive it. This turning around is repentance. The stretching out the hand and taking is faith.

That's all there is. But the gift is free. Forgiveness or holiness.

And so that's the reason why just like 90% of sinners or more than 90% perhaps are not converted, 90% of believers never come to a holy life. They're always struggling. And God waits for them to see and realize you can never make it.

I believe that was one purpose of the law. God gave the law to Israel for 1500 years to teach them one thing. One thing in 1500 years, you will never make it.

You can try all your life, you will not make it. And even though God taught that lesson to Israel for 1500 years, there are Christians who still today feel, well, somehow I'll do it a little better than the Israelites. But what will be the result of your efforts? Like the disciples who toiled all night and caught nothing, you will toil maybe for one year, maybe 10 years, maybe 20 years, that varies depending on how long you take to realize this truth.

But finally at the end of it, you'll get nothing. And then you'll come to the Lord and the Lord will say, what you sought all night and didn't get, I will give to you in a moment. And he filled their boat with fish.

This is God's way. Because if you toiled all night and brought a load of fish to the shore, you would glory in it. You would compare your catch with the catch of the next fisherman and say, I'm holier than you.

That's exactly what happens to Christians who accomplish a certain holiness through their own effort. They are invariably proud of their purity, like the Pharisees. They look down on adulterous women, they look down on ordinary sinners.

But a person who has received a free gift like those disciples got on that morning when Jesus filled their boat with fish and they dragged such a catch as they had never had in their whole life, they couldn't lift up their shoulders and stretch out their chest and say, see what I got. No, there would be a very humble attitude as they saw that fantastic catch of fish. See, I had nothing to do with this.

It was all of God's grace. And that's the mark of a genuinely holy man. Please remember this, my dear brothers and sisters.

A genuinely holy man is primarily, primarily a very humble man, because he knows that there is nothing, nothing that he has, which was not given freely. He didn't catch it. It was not the result of his toiling all night.

That is the message we have to proclaim. Because a lot of heathen and a lot of Christians have a wrong concept of holiness. It's not automatic, just like forgiveness of sins is not automatic.

I want to repeat that. If forgiveness of sins were automatic, everybody in the world would be saved. If holiness were automatic, every believer would be holy.

But we know it's not true. It requires a response from man, because God did not make man like the planets. And so we see that holiness can come only when man exercises his will to choose what God gives.

Like I said, I have to turn around and receive what is being offered to me freely. But the principle of holy living is exactly the same as the principle of receiving forgiveness of sins. The Bible says, as you have received Christ, so walk in him.

How did I receive Christ? By simple repentance and faith. I walk every day in the same way. There is a lot that we have to do.

If we stand still in the light, we would never get any more light on our life. The Bible never speaks about standing still in the light. It speaks about walking in the light.

Walking means, for example, if I am walking from here to Cochin, each step I take takes me nearer to Cochin. That's the meaning of walking. And if I'm walking in the light, each step I take takes me closer to God, who is light.

And the result of that will be that I get more light on myself. And the clearest proof that you are walking in the light is this. Please listen carefully.

That you are getting light on sins in your life, which you never thought were sins, once upon a time. You begin to get light on things like being inconsiderate to the feelings of another person, or on talking too much, dominating a conversation, things like this which most people don't even consider as sin. You get light on little things, little things which don't disturb other people.

You go to a house and you see a postcard lying there and you pick up and read it. The spirit says, you shouldn't read that. It's not addressed to you.

You know, this is holiness, where the Holy Spirit, if you walk in the light, shows you things which other people are not disturbed by, which you yourself, one year ago, did peacefully, freely, without any twinges of conscience. But now your conscience disturbs you. It proves that you are walking in the light.

And so, it's very important for us, if we are to live for the Lord and serve Him, to understand something of God's perfect, intense holiness. And that's something that we see in Scripture right from the beginning. The Bible says in Romans chapter 11, let me read you this verse.

Romans 11 it says, verse 22, Behold then the kindness and the severity of God. Behold means look carefully. We looked a little bit yesterday evening at the kindness and the goodness of God.

But it's not enough. It's not something we just look at for one evening or for one hour and finish with. You need to look at it carefully all through life.

But there's another thing you need to look at very carefully, all through life. In fact, there are only two things it says here. Look carefully at the kindness of God and look carefully at the severity of God.

Both of these we see very clearly throughout Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, you will see the kindness of God. You see the severity of God.

For example, in Genesis 3, you read about the fact that Adam and Eve sinned and immediately you see, not God coming and saying to them. What is the first thing He tells them after they make their excuses? He doesn't say, well, you people are doomed to hell. He doesn't even tell them, the ground is cursed for your sake before He has told them something else.

He does tell them, the ground is cursed and sorrow you'll bring forth and all that. But before that, He says something else. He says, the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head.

After telling them that and telling the serpent that, then He tells them, of course, you have to be punished. In sorrow you'll bring forth children and the ground is cursed for your sake. But see the kindness first.

Human beings are not like that. We tend to be severe first. And if at all kind, maybe sometimes later, but not God.

He manifested His kindness to Adam and Eve first by telling them, yeah, you've sinned, but I've already made a solution for it. This hasn't caught me by surprise. I've already made provision for it.

But then He deals in severity. And when you come to the end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation, you see the tremendous goodness of God to sinners redeemed by the blood of Jesus and how they can spend eternity in heaven. But then you also see in Revelation the severity of God on sinners who refused to listen to His word.

And so towards the end of the Bible, it says, he who wants to be filthy, let him be filthy. Have you ever thought that there is an exhortation in Scripture to be filthy? And he who wants to be unrighteous in Revelation 22, he wants to be unrighteous, let him be unrighteous. You know why it says that? Be unrighteous.

Why does it say be filthy, be unrighteous? The reason is, if you have come, by the way, that is in Revelation 22, 11, let him continue to be filthy, let him continue to do wrong. The reason is, if you have read this book completely and you come to the last paragraph almost of this book and you still want to do wrong, then God says, go ahead and do wrong. You still want to be filthy, even after coming to the end of this book, the Lord says, then go ahead and be filthy, there is no hope for you.

That's the meaning of that exhortation. Because this entire book reveals God is a God who hates wrong, who hates filthiness, who hates sin, who is severe against sin. And if you read all that and it still doesn't disturb you, then there's not much hope left for such a person and the Lord says, go ahead and do wrong then, go ahead and be filthy.

So we can see that this book is meant to teach us that God is severe and strict with sin. And we see that in Genesis 3 as well. When Adam and Eve sinned, God did not give them a second opportunity to stay in Eden.

He told them, in the day you eat, you will surely die. And they died. God didn't say, okay, well, I'll give you another chance.

I'll let you live. Why didn't he do that? Because he's not only kind, he's not only good, he's holy. And his absolute holiness demands that he keep his word and demands that wherever sin comes, until an atonement is made for that sin, however much he may love Adam and Eve, his connection with them is broken.

There is a verse in the book of Habakkuk, in the Old Testament, which reads like this, Habakkuk and chapter 1 and verse 13. O Lord, your eyes are too pure to look upon evil. Your eyes are too pure to look at evil.

Even if he loved Adam and Eve intensely as he did, because of sin, one sin, not two sins, not 25, I wish we would see this. I believe if we really see it, it will revolutionize our life and our service. If you could see, my dear young people, that one sin, not two, one sin was enough to separate God from Adam and Eve, whom

he loved intensely.

And one sin is enough for God to turn his favor and his face away from you, even though he may love you intensely. Many of us think, oh, well, that's just one sin. It's just one thing.

That's because we haven't read Genesis 3 carefully. We have beheld the kindness of God, but we have not beheld his severity. And I find that is the reason why multitudes of Christians, Christian workers, tend to take sin very lightly.

It is with great grief, I say, that it is rare to find in India Christian workers who take sin seriously, every sin, little ones, big ones. And that's the reason why God's work through them is limited. They can do so many things that impress people statistically, but in terms of quality of the work it's pathetically shallow, impure, far below God's standards, because the worker himself, the preacher himself, has not understood God's holiness.

He's not understood how God looks at sin. He's not understood that one sin was enough to turn his face away from Adam and Eve, and even though he loved them, he wanted to help them. He did everything he could for them.

He made coats with skins of animals, took away their fig leaves. He did all that. And God is very good when it comes to clothing us and feeding us and giving us material things.

And I believe that God blesses people materially even when they are disobedient. Do you believe that God blesses materially those who live in sin, with whom God is angry? I believe that, because God is a good God. As far as material things go, look at the world and you find that He has blessed people materially who live in sin.

Look at believers who live in sin. They don't seem to suffer. They are blessed materially, but not spiritually.

There's no grace upon their life, there's no anointing upon their words. And I tell you honestly, I would rather have grace upon my life and anointing upon my words, even if the price is poverty, suffering, ridicule, misunderstanding, living in a little shack, eating one meal a day, anything, any sacrifice materially is worth it, if I can have grace upon my life and an anointing upon my ministry. But for that, you have to take sin seriously.

And I hope that our land will see another generation in the coming days of young men and women who have understood something of the perfect holiness of God and who decide to live with an extremely sensitive conscience, listening to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit when He says, don't go that way, take this way. You will never regret at the end of your life if you have lived like that. I can't say that I have lived like that perfectly in the last 40 years.

I feel ashamed of the times when I have not lived. But I can say that to a great extent I have sought, especially in the last 15-20 years, to live like that, and they have been the best years of my life. And it has made the Christian life so real.

It has made my joy in the Lord perpetual, because joy is the result of holiness, as much as depression and gloom are the result of sin. There is no gloom or depression in heaven, because there is no sin in heaven. And I don't want you to believe just what I say, I'll give you a verse for it.

If you ever find that I say something which doesn't have scriptural support, maybe I forgot to mention it, please come and ask me after the meeting. I'll give you scriptural support for it. Hebrews 1.9. It says, God anointed Jesus with the oil of gladness, joy, because He loved righteousness more than others, and He hated sin more than others.

That's the reason, mentioned in Hebrews 1.9. And that teaches me that if I go that way, that Jesus went, of hating sin and loving righteousness, and it's not a question of what other people think about me, it's a question of what God thinks in my inner being, whether He sees that I'm extremely sensitive to hate sin and to love righteousness, the reward He will give, He will anoint me with the same oil of gladness that Jesus had. Not in the same measure, because He loved righteousness and hated sin more than me, but the same oil. And as I learn to love righteousness and hate sin more, that oil of gladness will only increase in my life.

Don't seek for happiness in the Christian life first. Seek for holiness. I'm sorry to say that a lot of people who sing choruses and clap their hands and appear very joyful in a charismatic type of praise and worship meeting, do not experience the anointing oil of gladness perpetually.

And the reason is, they are seeking happiness more than holiness. If you seek holiness, happiness will follow automatically. When Jesus said, Blessed are the pure in heart, the word blessed actually means happy.

Happy. This is the secret of happiness. Be pure in heart.

Such people will be happy. But it's not the other way around. It's not that if you're happy, you'll be holy.

No. A lot of happy people are not holy. They're only superficially happy.

Real deep joy is a result of seeing God's holiness and living in the light of that. Another clear proof of God's holiness, one I told you was in the Garden of Eden. Now I could give you a number of examples under the law.

I don't have time to point out all that to you. But there is an instance in Exodus where a man, after God had given the command to keep the Sabbath day holy, a man went out to gather sticks. That was just to light a fire.

He didn't harm anybody. He didn't hurt a single soul. Maybe he loved his neighbor as himself.

But he went out to gather sticks on the Sabbath day when God said, You mustn't do any work. And they came to Moses and said, What should we do with this man? And Moses said, Wait, let me find out from God. And God said, Kill him.

Amazing. Do you behold the severity of God? There's another verse in Deuteronomy which says, If you have a rebellious son who just will not listen to his parents, the parents must bring him out to the elders of the Israel and at the gates of the city and stone him to death. Well, after two or three boys were killed like that, I can imagine that all the other Israeli boys and girls started behaving themselves at home.

Today, because we don't have such punishments, we have so many rebellious boys and girls in our homes. I'm not saying that we should start those punishments again, but I'm just trying to say, Behold the severity of God. Look at it carefully.

We haven't understood it. We take sin so lightly. When there's rebellion in a home, a little child rebellious, the parents take it so lightly.

If you're a darling, you shouldn't behave like that. That's not the time to tell him that. That's the time to say, You're rebellious.

You need to be taught a lesson. It's because we haven't understood God's holiness. Look at Calvary.

Why did the father forsake Jesus? It was the only time that the father ever forsook Jesus. There was a time when Jesus told his disciples before he went to the cross, You will all leave me tonight, because the word has to be fulfilled. I will smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

And it was true that all left him. But he said, I'm not alone. The father is with me.

And the father was with him all through that night in Gethsemane, in the trial, in Annas and Caiaphas' court, in Pilate's court, all the way along that way of the cross. Even on Calvary's hill, when he was being nailed, the father was with him. When he hung on the cross, the father was with him.

For three hours when he hung on the cross, the father was with him. But then, for those last three hours, even the father forsook him. That's when everything became dark, like night.

That's when he cried out, because it's something he had never experienced for thirty three and a half years. He had never experienced for eternity. It was a new experience to be forsaken by the father.

You and I have lost the fellowship with the father so often that sometimes we don't even realize it when we lose it. But for Jesus, it was like life itself going out. For him, life was not in money, not in comfort, not even in ministry, like it is for many people today.

For him, life was only one thing, fellowship with his father. If that was gone, everything was gone. He could never find happiness in anything else.

And that is what he struggled in Gethsemane and saying, father, do I have to lose fellowship with you? That was the cup he had to drink. Isn't there another way? I mean, I'm willing to go through any torture, I'm willing to go through any suffering, but one thing, this fellowship with you, which I've had from all eternity, do I have to lose even that? And it dawned on him, he could avoid it if he wanted. But a world would never be saved.

And I see his love for me in Gethsemane, long before I see it on Calvary. I see him in Gethsemane, choosing to give up that which was his most valuable possession. We think of his giving up the comfort of heaven and coming to earth.

He would have lived a million years in Nazareth for our sake. That was nothing compared to this, which was his most prized treasure, which he gave up. To be a servant, to wash people's feet, we think these are great things.

Yes, they are great. But the greatest manifestation of his love was when he said, father, to save him, that's me, and you, to save her, I'm willing to give up even this. And he gave it up for three hours, and at that moment he couldn't take it.

And he said, my God, it's the only time in his life where he addressed his father as God. He never addressed him as God. He taught us to address him as father.

And he always addressed him as father, but in that moment he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But yet not in a spirit of rebellion. There are some people who say, oh God, why have you forsaken me? He didn't say, oh God. He said, my God.

He said, even though you have forsaken me, you are still my God. Till the very end you will be my God. That will never change.

But I can't understand why you have forsaken me. It was not a cry of rebellion. It was a cry of a lack of understanding because of the weakness of the flesh at that moment.

When you turn to Psalm 22, you read there that cry of the cross, prophetically mentioned by David. My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? Psalm 22.1. Oh my God, I cry by day. Verse 2. Thou dost not answer.

And by night. Those are the three hours that he went through on the cross of night. And I have no rest.

And here is the answer. The answer is in verse 3. Yet thou art holy. That's why he was forsaken.

Because at that moment, he was taking upon himself the guilt of the entire human race. And even if that guilt had been only one sin, supposing there was only one man who had sinned and he had committed only one sin and all the others were holy, Jesus would have come and died for that one sin. That is the punishment for one sin or millions and millions of sins.

But there we see that even Jesus, whom the Father loved from all eternity, even Jesus, the Father forsook him and turned away. He was of purer eyes, like we read in Habakkuk, than to look at sin. And there the sin of the world was upon Jesus on Calvary.

And it didn't matter to the Father that it was not his sin. It was other people's sin. God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.

Because that is the only way we could become the righteousness of God in him. And even though the Father knew this is not his sin, this is the sin of other people, his eyes are so pure, he couldn't look and he was forsaken. The punishment for sin is not physical death.

Everybody dies physically. The punishment for sin is spiritual death. In other words, hell.

What is hell? Hell is not just a lake of fire. It is a place where there is no presence of God. In this world there is a presence of God, which blesses even unbelievers.

But in hell we can say that is the one truly God-forsaken place in the universe. Hell is not a geographical location. It is to be forsaken by God primarily.

That is hell. And that's why Jesus experienced hell for three hours on the cross. Because that's the punishment for sin.

The hell that you and I are supposed to go to, he suffered for three hours. And that's why he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That was hell. And he experienced it because God, who is a holy

God, could not look upon any sin.

And that proves to us that if God could not look upon sin when it was found in his own son, his firstborn, his only begotten, how can he look at you and me if there is the slightest trace of sin in our life? Do you think he can? He cannot. And there we see the foolishness of thinking that if I'm a little better than other believers in my church, God is pleased with me. Rubbish! Garbage! He cannot look at you if there is the slightest, slightest trace of sin, consciously or unconsciously in your life.

How then can God look at us? That's why he has to clothe us with the righteousness of Christ. Otherwise we could never stand in his presence. It's not enough to be forgiven.

Let's say I accept Christ today and my entire past life is forgiven. Every single sin of thought, word, deed, attitude, motive is blotted out and I'm completely forgiven. You think that qualifies me to stand before God? No, because there is still a lot of sin in my life.

I've been a believer forty years now, there is still sin in my life. Unconscious, most of it unconscious, but I still can't stand before God. And that's why today I need to have the righteousness of Christ clothing me as much as I needed it the day I was born again, forty years ago.

That's why justification is so important. Not just forgiveness, but that Christ has clothed me with his righteousness and then I stand in Christ. And when I stand in Christ before the Father, I am accepted in Christ.

That is why we are told every time we pray, to pray in the name of Jesus. Not, well Lord, I served you now for so many years, can't you do this for me? No, but in the merit and the righteousness of Jesus, like we sing in that song, I stand complete in him. He is all my righteousness.

I stand complete, perfect in him, accepted, because God is a holy God. There is no other way I could be accepted when I was converted. There's no other way I'll be accepted when I finish my earthly course and get to the gates of heaven.

Even if I've lived a perfect life, faithful from the day I was converted and served God sacrificially for fifty, sixty, seventy years, when I stand before the Lord, I have to say, I am a condemned sinner, but Jesus died for me. That qualifies me for God's presence. Nothing else.

Not my faithful service, not my years of walking in obedience. Once we understand the holiness of God, these things will be clear. God cannot look at sin.

But this also teaches us another thing, and that is that even though I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ, if God sees inwardly that my attitude towards sin is one like, well, if I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ, it doesn't matter how I live, then God sees that I'm not really repentant. You know what repentance means? Turning around to God away from sin. And it's possible for a believer who has turned around away from sin to God, once he realizes the goodness of God and once he's realized he's clothed with the righteousness of Christ, after a while, particularly when he sees that when he does a few things wrong, God doesn't punish him immediately, then he begins to take those sins lightly.

Have you found that in your life? That certain things like lusting with your eyes and telling a small lie, or getting angry and not apologizing after one has fallen in that area, were sins that you took very seriously when you were first converted some years ago. But now you have begun to take some of them lightly. I

want to say, you're going in a dangerous direction.

You should be more sensitive today than you were when you were first converted. Why is it you have begun to take these things lightly? The answer is in Ecclesiastes chapter 8 and verse 11. It says, because punishment against a sin is not executed immediately by God, therefore the sons of men give themselves to sin.

In other words, the reason why you're sinning is because God doesn't punish you immediately. Supposing every time you lusted with your eyes, you became a little blind, and the next time you lusted with your eyes, a little more blind, and the next time you lusted with your eyes a little more blind, I tell you, you'll get victory over lusting with the eyes within two or three days. What you haven't got in 20 years.

If every time you got angry or told a lie, your tongue got a little paralyzed, and the next time you told a lie, you found a little more of your tongue gets paralyzed, you'll finish with telling lies and anger within a day. You know, people say, brother, my father had a bad temper and I've inherited it. What to do? I'm still struggling with it after 10 years.

It's all rubbish. If your tongue started getting paralyzed, you'd finish with it in one day. It's because you don't take sin seriously, because the punishment does not come immediately.

Every time you have a bitterness against someone, if you suddenly get chest pain and your ECG shows changes in the rhythm of your heart, I tell you, you'd get rid of bitterness very quickly. But because your ECG is normal, even though you got bitterness and everything is okay, you continue. Judgment doesn't come immediately.

I tell you, if judgment came immediately upon every sin, the world would be full of holy people. Christianity would be full of holy people. But that is where God tests us.

Will you fear me and live a holy life even when I don't punish you immediately? It doesn't mean the punishment won't come. One day at the judgment seat of God, we'll have to give an account for every outburst of temper, every time we lusted with our eyes, every lie we spoke, every bitterness, every jealousy. Nothing has escaped God's notice.

We'll have to give an account for it one day. The man who fears God and knows God's holiness lives today in the light of that day. People seek to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

They think it is a baptism in a noisy spirit. Is it called noisy spirit or holy spirit? Excitable spirit or holy spirit? I'm not against noise. I'm not against emotion.

But never forget that God has given that name, Holy Spirit. If it is a baptism in the Holy Spirit, it should make us holy. It did that for me.

The Holy Spirit gave me many other things, but it was holiness. So my brothers and sisters, do you know what Christendom needs to see in India? Do you know what our land needs to see? People who have seen the holiness of God and live in the light of it. Let's pray.

God has spoken to your heart and I believe he has. I want to invite you to respond to the word of God that you have heard. Open your being and say, Lord, give me a new vision of your holiness like Isaiah saw of the seraphim covering their faces and covering their feet and saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

Heavenly Father, we pray you will give us such a vision that will change our lives. We ask in Jesus name.

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