

God Is Light and God Is Love

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living in God's presence, having an intimate relationship with Jesus, and treating God's Word with respect.

Duration: 55:05

Scripture: Genesis 3:11, Genesis 3:15, Psalm 90:17, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 7:21-23, Romans 11:22, James 1:22, 1 John 1:5, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "Gods Character", "Holiness And Love"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the dual nature of God, focusing on His perfect holiness and His perfect love. It delves into the need for believers to have a balanced view of God's character, recognizing His kindness and severity. The message highlights the significance of knowing God personally, seeking to be saved from un-Christlike attitudes and behaviors, and allowing the beauty of the Lord to shine through our lives by aligning with His character.

Transcript

I'd like you to turn with me to Psalm 90. It's the only psalm that Moses wrote, and there's a beautiful verse here which was Moses' prayer for himself, but a prayer that we could all pray for ourselves, not just this weekend, but all through our lives. Psalm 90 and verse 17.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. That word is translated favor in some translations, but beauty in the King James and the Amplified Bible. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

And it's so much more meaningful for us today as Christians than it was for Moses, because for him it was only external. When he went before God, we read that his face began to shine. That is only a picture of how it would be for us in the New Covenant, that the glory of the Lord would shine from within.

But every time he went into the presence of the Lord, his face would shine and he'd come forth and the children of Israel would see his face shining. And it says in Exodus 34 that Moses himself was not aware of it. And that is the best way for the beauty of the Lord to shine through us, that we ourselves are not aware of it.

I think we can get conceited and proud and fall if we ourselves are aware of it. But our prayer must be that the beauty of the Lord will be upon us, that others will see it. And the mark that others see it is that they'll be drawn to Jesus and not to us.

The great tragedy today in Christendom is that many people are drawn to preachers and not to Jesus. Now there's nothing wrong in being drawn to hear a preacher. People traveled from all over into the wilderness of Judea to hear John the Baptist.

They wouldn't go there to hear anybody else. But when God finds a man like John with his message, he can draw people from all over to come and listen to him. But John did not draw people to himself, even though crowds came to listen to him.

His whole attitude was, I want to decrease, Christ might increase. And that's why the Lord was with him till the end of his ministry. And that's how it should be when we pray that the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

It should be something that will draw many people. They may come to listen to you, but they'll be drawn to Christ. The great tragedy, as I said today, is that people go and listen to so many preachers and their lives are not drawn to Christ.

Their home lives are not changed. They're impressed and moved by the so-called healing meetings and the music and everything else and the powerful preaching. But they go home and they still shout at their wives.

They still love money. Their lives are not more effective for the Lord. They're still shy to witness for Christ.

The mighty power of the Holy Spirit is not upon them. What's the use going and listening to preachers then? Such a preacher has only drawn, impressed you with his message. The whole purpose of the ministry of the Word of God is that Christ might be formed in us.

And so make this your prayer that the beauty of the Lord your God will be upon you. Make that your prayer all your life that the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. In 2nd Corinthians, in chapter 3, Paul quotes this example from the Old Testament of Moses.

And he says how 2nd Corinthians chapter 3, Moses would have a veil upon his face. Earlier on he's talking about the glory of Christ to be seen in us. But he says it's different from Moses.

And Moses had to put a veil over his face. Now if you read in the Old Testament in Exodus 34, the reason why Moses put a veil over his face was because the Israelites were scared to look at him. And they would turn away.

And so he put a veil when he was speaking to them. And when he went before the Lord on the top of the mountain, he'd take it off. And he came down from the mountain, he put a veil so that the Israelites would not be scared.

But there's another reason which is not mentioned in the Old Testament. This is one of the blessings of comparing the Old Testament with the New Testament. Here it says, one reason why Moses put a veil over his face was so that the Israelites would not see this glory fading away.

Because it wasn't there constantly, you know. He would come down from the mountain and it was bright shining. But the more he stayed down in the plain, he was not in God's presence, it would fade away.

And so he put this veil over his face so that people wouldn't see, according to this verse, the glory was fading away. Then he had to go back up to the mountain and it would shine again. And he'd come back

and put the veil and again cover himself so that people don't see the glory that's fading away.

That was how it was in the Old Covenant. It was not a glory that would remain and certainly not a glory that would increase. It was a glory that's fading away.

And when we have to hide our life from others because the glory we pretend to have when we meet them with them in the church meetings is not there at home and it's fading away, that is a proof that your life is still under the Old Covenant. You may sit in a church that calls itself a New Covenant Church. You may sit listening to New Covenant Truths and you can imagine all these wonderful things about the New Covenant.

But the test is this. If the glory is fading away, you're back where Moses was. You're not living in the presence of God.

So keep that in mind. And he says that's how it was in the Old Covenant, verse 14. But in Christ, that veil is removed.

We don't live with that veil anymore. Why? Because the Holy Spirit comes and changes us, it says in verse 18, to an increasing glory. From glory to glory to glory to glory.

Whereas the Old Testament, it was a decreasing glory because the Spirit of God was not within. It's very important to understand this. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

And it's not something that's got to remain at that same level. If you're really living in the presence of God, and the wonderful blessing of the New Covenant is that we can live in God's presence 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Not that we feel it.

It's got nothing to do with feeling. A lot of Christians live by feelings. Feelings are deceptive.

A lot of people live in their mind. Try to imagine, oh Jesus is here, Jesus is here. I tried doing that and didn't succeed.

It's in the Spirit. A Christian life is a life in the Spirit which is much deeper than mind or emotions. And I don't have to constantly remind myself I'm in the presence of Jesus.

If my conscience is clear, I'm quick to acknowledge sin, quick to ask forgiveness every time I slip up, quick to apologize to somebody whom I hurt, not even waiting five seconds. There are very few Christians like that. If you fall on the road, you get up immediately.

But when we fall in the Christian life, most Christians, I'd say 99% of believers, they do not immediately confess their sin to God, and the glory begins to fade away. So if that's how you are, you're the cause of the glory fading away. And much more difficult, they don't go and apologize to the person whom they hurt, and the glory fades away.

So let me tell you a very simple step. It's not the complete answer, but it's a first step to ensure the glory doesn't fade away. Anytime you slip up, even in your thoughts, for example, you suddenly had a dirty thought, go and mourn before God.

I remember as young Christians when we grow, we are struggling with dirty thoughts. Go mourn before God every single time. If it happens 20 times a day, go 20 times a day and mourn before God, and say,

Lord, I'm sorry, it shouldn't have happened.

Nobody knew it, nobody saw inward, and God sees that you really want his glory inside, and he'll give you your heart's desire. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart, because the desire of your heart will be him, because you're delighting in him. And immediately, go and ask forgiveness from the person you hurt.

And if you examine your life, you'll find you're not so quick to do that. You think about it, particularly if you hurt your wife or husband, how quickly do you go and apologize? That, to me, is an indication of how desperate you are to live in fellowship with God, to live before his face, all the time. So let's not listen to theories.

Let's make this intensely practical. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Do you want it to be like Moses, where you have to cover yourself because you're afraid people will see that the glory is fading away when you're not in their presence, when you're by yourself somewhere in your office, or when everybody else is having road rage, and the glory of the Lord is fading away in your life, too? Something is wrong then.

That's not the way we are supposed to live, and that's what we need to repent of. I find that a lot of Christians who heard this message again and again and they seem to be content with their defeated lives. They're content with the glory fading away, and they keep coming back to another conference to get a, you know, hear a pep talk and get a shot in the arm, and again, for some time they say, okay, I'm going to take it seriously, but it seems to fade away before the next conference comes.

It's not supposed to be like that. By the time we come to the next conference, the glory must be greater. And if that's not being like that in your life, I want to encourage you to make that your passion from today onwards.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. So one of the beautiful things about God's work is beauty comes through balance, and I want to, our subject for this conference is the balance of truth. And I want to think of the human body, for example.

God created this human body, and there's a beauty in it. Think of a beautiful body or a beautiful face. A beautiful body may say a muscular body or a beautiful face.

Think how ugly that same beautiful face would be if one eye was three times the size of the other, or one ear was one tenth the size of the other one. Immediately the beauty disappears. That same beautiful face becomes ugly in a moment.

Beauty is because there's a balance. Both ears are the same size, both eyes are the same size. The left half of the body is exactly similar to the right.

That's what I mean by balance. And there's a beauty comes because of that balance. And there's ugliness when there is imbalance.

You wouldn't want one hand of yours to be half the size of the other. You wouldn't be able to do a lot of work with that. Or one leg was even six inches shorter than the other.

You'd be limping, limping all along. That's not a beautiful walk. So beauty comes through balance.

So when we say, let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, what does it mean to be Christ-like? It means to be balanced in our life. So that's what we want to think of during these days. And there is this balance in Scripture.

So first of all, let me point you to John chapter 17 and verse 2, 3. John 17 verse 3. For many years after I was born again, I used to go to an assembly where they studied the scriptures in depth. It was a brethren assembly. I thank God for the emphasis they had on the Word of God.

And it taught me to study the Word of God. But it's all very academic, you know, just like people go to college to study chemistry or physics. We study the Bible like that.

And studying chemistry and physics won't change your life. And studying this Bible didn't change my life either very much, except that I felt I was born again. But I never knew what eternal life was.

For 16 years after I was born again, if you had asked me, what's eternal life? My answer would have been, I live forever. I'm going to live in heaven. And yet I was reading the Bible.

It's amazing how you can read something and be completely blind. How many of you can give a correct answer if some nominal Christian asks you, what is eternal life that you talk about? How can I have it? I didn't know how to have it. I didn't know what it was.

I thought it was living forever. But I discovered later that people who go to hell live forever too. Did you know that? Have they also got eternal life? Now listen to John 17, verse 3, to Jesus' definition of eternal life.

This is eternal life. It's not length of life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. Never forget that.

It's very important. You have as much eternal life as you know God and Jesus Christ. Know God and Jesus Christ.

And I want to tell you, this word know is a very, very intimate word. You can know two plus two is four. It helps you in calculation and things like that.

But that's not the type of knowledge spoken of here. You can know verses in the Bible. You can memorize verses and say, I know verses in the Bible, or I know the doctrines in the Bible.

That's another type of knowledge. But the knowledge spoken of here is very different. You know, the Bible speaks about our relationship with Jesus Christ as a wife to the husband.

Romans 7, verse 4 says, we are married to Christ in our spirit. Even though we are the bride, and our physical marriage to Christ is only going to be when Christ returns. In our spirit, we are already married to Him.

Romans 7, verse 4 says that. In 1 Corinthians 6, he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. So, it's the marriage relationship that's being spoken of here.

And if you go back to the Old Testament, you read that God said that a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. That's what made them married. They became one physically.

And that is described in the Old Testament as knowing. Adam knew his wife, and they had a son. And you read that more than once in the Old Testament.

That is the meaning of the word know. In our case, it's not physical. We are joined to the Lord in our spirit, and it must be as intimate in our spirit as a husband and wife are in the flesh.

If you don't know the Lord like that, you don't really have the eternal life that Jesus spoke about. See, this is the great tragedy today. People are told, okay, just ask Jesus to come into your heart.

Okay, do you say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart? Did you say that? Okay, you've got eternal life. But the guy goes and lives just like he lived before. Maybe he gives up a few bad habits on the outside, like smoking and drinking, but does he know the Lord? No.

He doesn't know the Lord. He knows a formula, and he can quote verses. And if he was brought up in a decent, upright way, he lives a pretty clean life compared to the godless people outside.

But knowledge of the Lord is very limited. If you were married 10 years ago, and you don't know your husband any better today than 10 years ago, what does it indicate? That you never lived with him. It's not the number of years you live, you're married, that matters.

You can live with, you can be married 25 years, and you may not know your husband, because you've never lived with him. Or if you lived with him, you're always fighting with him. You never got to know him.

That is exactly how many people say, I was born again 25 years ago. But how much do you know the Lord? Very little. I'm telling you exactly what I've experienced with so many so-called believers.

And I don't want it to happen to all of you. Don't come to a conference spending all that money and effort and time, and don't go away without being gripped by the importance of knowing the Lord. Eternal life is to know God personally, and to know Jesus Christ personally, like an intimate friend, or more than a friend, as your divine husband.

This is what has changed my life. This is what has made the Bible an exciting book, and like a love letter from my bridegroom to me. It's what makes everything challenging in the Christian life, and it's knowing Jesus, knowing Jesus.

That's why the Christian life is exciting, because it's more and more knowing Jesus. You know that Paul told Timothy in one, Timothy in chapter 6, I'm trying to correct the wrong understanding of eternal life that many of you may have. Well, I don't know where you got it from, but that's what most of Christendom preachers, just receive Christ and you've got eternal life.

But how would you understand this verse? Now remember, when Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 6, Timothy is already probably 45 years old. He's walked with God for 25 years. He got to know Paul when he was around 20 years old, and he's walked with the mightiest apostle on earth for 25 years.

And then Paul writes to him in 1 Timothy 6 and verse 12, fight the good fight of forth, and take hold of eternal life. Do you write that to someone who's been born again for 25 years, and who's walked with God, and served Him, and been anointed with the Holy Spirit, and probably done miracles, and brought established churches. Do you tell him, take hold of eternal life? How do you understand that verse? Any of you who have read the New Testament even once, and I trust most of you have read the New Testament

at least once, you've come across that verse.

You have, take hold of eternal life. It's there in your Bible. And if you've read 1 Timothy more than once, you've read it twice, three times, you've read this phrase, take hold of eternal life.

What does it mean? And you say you don't know. What does that indicate? Let me say it without discouraging you. It shows a very irresponsible attitude towards the Word of God.

And no wonder God says, if you're going to treat my word like that, go your way. I couldn't care less for you. You treat God's Word like that? You read something, you don't know what it means, and you couldn't care less.

You don't even want to go and ask somebody what it means. Say, oh, it's alright. Go to the next verse.

If it was a legal document, if it was a legal document concerning purchase of a property, boy, you wouldn't read a sentence like that. You would go to a lawyer. Say, can you explain what this sentence means? Does it put any obligation on me financially? Will I get stuck somewhere later on? And read it again and again.

Take it to another lawyer, because it involves money. That's why we are very careful with legal documents. But when it comes to the Bible, ah, well, it doesn't matter.

I never want to treat God's Word like that. I'm willing to treat a legal document like that even if I lose money, but I don't want to treat God's Word like that. And I believe the reason why many, many people are ignorant of the Scriptures.

We live in a generation of people who are thoroughly ignorant of the Bible. They know the facts of the Bible, but they're ignorant of the important truths in the Bible because when they come to some difficult passage, they don't stop and say, Lord, what does that mean? They don't go to somebody who knows the Word and say, can you, brother, can you please explain this to me? What does this mean? Like you'd go to a lawyer with a legal document. It shows how it's almost as though we are telling God, I really couldn't care less about whether I understand your Word or not.

I just want to go to heaven when I die. And we think, we are new covenant Christians. We are better than all those other people in the denominations who just say they are born again.

How are you better? You don't know what some passages in Scripture says. You're no better than them really except that you know a few more doctrines. We need to be ashamed of ourselves.

We need to repent. I really believe that. You know the main message of the Lord to the churches in Revelation was repent, repent, repent.

The New Testament age started with Peter preaching in Acts chapter 2 to a crowd of unbelievers, repent. And the New Testament ends in the book of Revelation with the Lord telling the churches to repent. And I believe that's the time we are in.

Believers sitting in churches are the first people who need to repent before we tell the world to repent. We need to repent about our irresponsible attitude towards God's Word. Take hold of eternal life.

What Paul was saying was if eternal life is knowing the Lord, what Paul is telling Timothy, you may have walked with God for 25 years Timothy, but you've got to know the Lord more. There must be a passion in your heart to know the Lord more because it's only if you know the Lord more that the beauty of the Lord will be upon us. Don't compare yourself with those other third-rate believers and say you're better than them and always say like the Pharisee, Lord I thank you then I'm not like other believers.

I'm a New Covenant Christian. You can just be a Pharisee. There are a lot of Pharisees among people who preach about the New Covenant.

It's very sad but it is true. I've seen that in some of our own churches in India and I've had to tell them, I say you guys are a bunch of Pharisees. You're glorying that you know doctrinally more than those other people in some other church but the beauty of the Lord your God is not upon you.

What's the use of it? Just knowing more doctrine? So make this your prayer. If you really know the New Covenant, the veil will not, you won't have to hide a glory that's fading away. You'll take away the veil and people will see the glory will increase.

Paul told Timothy this also in 1 Timothy chapter 4. In 1 Timothy and chapter 4 he says to him, you must, 1 Timothy 4 16, you must pay close attention to yourself and to your doctrine. Don't think doctrine is unimportant. It's one of the areas where we need a balance in our life.

Life and doctrine, which is more important? Both equally. You want your left leg to be shorter than your right leg? No. I want both of them to be equally important, equally long.

Pay attention to your, pay close attention to your life and to your teaching or your doctrine and persevere in both of them. Let both your legs grow together like the legs of a baby grow equal in length all the time. You never find a baby, unless it's sick, with one leg longer than the other.

They both grow together. Grow in your life and your doctrine equally. In other words, if you're going to a church where there's fantastic teaching of the new covenant and God's word, your one leg is growing.

Make sure your other leg is also growing along with that at the same pace, so that your knowledge leg is not so huge and your life leg is about one-third of the size of that. This is the condition of many Christians. That's why their walk is so unstable.

Paul says to Timothy, there must be a balance in your life, the balance that makes your life beautiful, that the more you understand the truth of God, your life keeps pace with that. Pay close attention to it and make sure that one doesn't go ahead of the other and persevere in it, because if you do this, listen, here's a promise, if you do what I tell you, you will ensure salvation, first of all, for yourself. Now how do you understand that phrase? If somebody wrote to you, brother, you need to make sure of your salvation.

You say, oh, I made sure of that thirty years ago. Really? What's Paul telling Timothy here? You will ensure salvation for yourself and for those who hear you, or the literal translation of the Greek, it says, in my margin is, you will save yourself and you will save others. Have you ever thought of an exhortation to save yourself? We say we're already saved, but Paul tells Timothy, twenty-five years after he was born again, do this if you want to save yourself and if you want to save others.

You can't save others before you save yourself. What would your response be if Paul had written that letter to you? Put your name there and say, I want you to save yourself. What does it mean? You know,

there are so many verses like this, which I'm sorry to say, many Christians, you ask them what does it mean and they say, well, I'm not a teacher, I'm not supposed to know it.

But you don't need to be a teacher, you just need to go and say, Lord, am I supposed to understand your word or not? And if you didn't understand it, were you, did you have the eagerness to go to somebody and ask it, ask the person? Or you're too lazy to find out? I remember when I was in the military and I was on a ship and the captain on the ship asked me some question and I said, I don't know, sir. He said, never say I don't know, say I'll find out, sir. I learned something that day.

I must never say I don't know, if it's something related to my work on that ship and for me today in relation to the Bible as a Christian. And I'll find out, sir. I want to give that advice to you.

When you come to some passage of Scripture, don't say I don't know the meaning. And maybe you said it right up until today, but you're going to stop saying it from today. You're going to say, I'll find out.

I'm going to find out. The next time you meet me, I'll tell you the answer. Right now I don't know.

I remember as a young Christian and I was witnessing to a fellow non-christian naval officer and he asked me a question. He was a Muslim and he said, was Jonah alive or dead in the Whales Valley? I said he was alive. So he said, didn't Jesus say, as Jonah was in the Whales Valley, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth.

So was Jesus alive or dead in the grave? I was foxed. If I had to be consistent, I'd say, yeah, he was like Jonah. And that's exactly what they say.

They say Jesus never died on the cross. He swooned. And they went and they put him in the grave and he, the cool air of the tomb, made him refreshed.

They deny the resurrection and they base it on that. And that was 56 years ago. But I thank God for one thing that that man did for me.

He made me so ashamed of my ignorance of scripture. I was born again, baptized, seeking to be a witnessing Christian, but I didn't know the answer to something this non- Do you know the answer if somebody asked you that question? Was Jonah alive or dead in the Whales Valley? Was Jesus alive or dead in the tomb? I didn't know the answer. I went to my room, ashamed of myself, and I knelt down before God.

And I said, Lord, I'm sorry. I'm a very poor witness for you. I didn't take it lightly.

I said, Lord, it'll never happen again. If there's an answer in scripture for anything. I was just 22 years old.

If there's an answer in scripture for something, I'm going to find out. And I'm going to devote myself to know, know you through the word and know the answer to what your word says so that I can be an effective witness and not be put to shame by people who question me like that. Today I know the answer.

Jesus was not talking about the tomb in which he was. He was talking about the center of the earth, where paradise was in those days and where he went with a thief when he died on the cross. He went to paradise, which is in the center of the earth.

And that's what Jesus said, as Jonah was alive in the whale's belly, his son of man would be in the heart of the earth. And he was alive there. His body, his dead body was in the tomb.

Anyway, that's besides the point. Pay close attention to yourself when you will save yourself. What is the meaning of save yourself? You know, there are three types of salvation, three tenses, past, present, future.

Past tense is being saved from the penalty of sin, the punishment for sin. I've already been saved from that, from the wrath of God. But then the second present tense salvation is to be saved from the power of sin.

And we're not all saved from that fully yet. Every time you slip and fall in thought, word, deed, attitude or motive, you're not reflecting Christ. And that shows in that area, you're not saved.

Whether it be discouragement or criticism or gossip or backbiting or grumbling or complaining or just being generally miserable or being in a bad mood someday, that you need to be saved. You need to be saved from ever being in a bad mood. How many of you have thought of that? Jesus was never in a bad mood.

This is the thing that challenged me. I said, Lord, there was never a time when you were in a bad mood. You could catch him morning, noon or night in the middle of the night, wake him up.

He'd never be in a bad mood. I said, Lord, I want to be like that. I want to be like that, that no human being will ever see me in a bad mood, no matter what happens.

If things have gone right with me or wrong with me in my affairs or in my finances or my physical body sickness, I will not be in a bad mood because I've got the Holy Spirit within me. I'm not having a veil to cover up those bad moods I have occasionally and come before the church and act smiling. Then I'm in the old covenant.

I haven't come into the new covenant fully. I've understood the theory of it. But you know there's hope for everyone if he will first of all be honest and acknowledge his need and say, Lord, I repent and I want this.

If you want it desperately, delight yourself in the Lord. He will give you the desires of your heart. But you'd have to desire it passionately.

He's not a rewarder of everybody. Hebrews 11, 6 says He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. And He does not reward those who do not diligently seek Him.

Those who just come to church to sing songs and listen to the messages and go home and not diligently seeking the Lord seven days a week, He is not going to reward them. Jeremiah 29, 11 says, You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. Does that mean that if you seek Him half-heartedly, you will find Him also? No, you will not.

And I'm absolutely convinced there are many people sitting in our CFC churches who have not found Him. Ah, they know Him in a general sense. It's like, as I said, being married for 25 years but you don't know what your husband is like.

Because you're not living with him every day. You're not passionately seeking to know Him and understand Him better and better and better. It's not a question of sitting with the Bible.

I don't sit with the Bible 24 hours. No. God teaches us in life, in your office, on the road, in your factory, wherever you work, you work in a hospital, wherever you are, in your daily life, He wants you to know Him, to be saved, to be saved from all that we have inherited from Adam.

That's the salvation He's speaking of here. Not salvation from the wrath of God, that's past. Salvation from the power of sin, when one day, future, we'll be saved from the presence of sin.

But right now, we are in the process of being saved from the power of sin, from everything that we inherited from Adam. That is how the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us. See, the beauty is not upon us because we've got so much of this life of Adam that's coming in and bringing those ugly spots and decreasing the glory so that we're going to put a veil so people don't see how we live at home or we don't want them to know how we are handling our finances.

Some area of our life, if there's any area of your life you want to put a veil over it and cover it, you're a hypocrite. I'll say that straight. And hypocrisy is what Jesus condemned more than murder, more than adultery.

Find me a verse in the Gospels where Jesus condemned murderers or thieves or adulterers. I'll show you so many verses where he condemned hypocrites, people who pretended to be something but were not really like that in private. You know it's the worst thing Why is there no commandment in the Old Testament saying you shall not be a hypocrite? There was no 11th commandment saying you shall not be a hypocrite because it is impossible in the Old Covenant to have this way your glory increased.

You always had to have a veil to cover up your life because nobody could have this new covenant experience of the glory getting brighter and brighter and brighter. So this is what to be saved ourselves is and he says if you save yourself, verse 16, you will ensure salvation for those who hear you. Now this is not how people are taught today to preach the Word of God.

Paul was telling Timothy how to preach God's Word, how to share God's Word as a witness and even if you're not a preacher standing up in a pulpit every Sunday, we still have the opportunity to share God's Word with others. You sisters, you may never stand in a pulpit in your whole life, but don't you meet with other ladies, friends? What an opportunity to share God's Word with them. Don't you meet with people who are enslaved to sin? Even if it's other sisters in your church who are depressed, weighed down with the problems with their children.

If you save yourself, you can save them. That's what it says here. Lord, I want to be saved myself because every other person is facing the same type of problem that I'm facing.

If I save myself, I can save them and for that I must first pay attention to myself and to my doctrine and persevere in it. If I do it, I can save myself and as a result save others. I wish every one of you here would be gripped by this.

Lord, I want to be saved from everything un-Christlike in my life. That's the same as saying, let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Any imbalance in my life, the first imbalance is between my external testimony and my inner life.

That's why the Pharisees had a tremendous imbalance there. That external life was so beautiful. Inwardly, Jesus said, you're like garbage inside and we got to eliminate that.

We don't have to pretend that we are perfect. To be free from hypocrisy does not mean that you're free from all sin. It just means you're not pretending.

Do you know a prostitute can be 100% free from hypocrisy? If she says, I'm a prostitute. I live in sin every day. She's not a hypocrite.

She's not acting. The word hypocrite is actually a Greek word. And the word in the Greek meant actor, an actor.

And I wish it were translated like that. It would come home more to us than this religious word hypocrite because we all like to say we're not hypocrites. But are you acting? You see, in those days, all the actors in the theaters were, the Greek word was hypocrite.

I mean, if you, 2,000 years ago, if you lived in Greece and said, where are all the hypocrites? They'd say in the theater. Today, if you ask where are all the hypocrites? They'd say in the church. That actors, people are acting in one way.

Acting that they're so excited with the Lord when they sing. They're not like that in their homes. This is acting.

This is the veil covering us where we think it is the beauty of the Lord our God. No, it isn't. It's just some makeup we put on our face to make us look Christ-like in church.

And then we go away, the makeup goes away, and we're just ourselves at home. This is the lives of most Christians. And if we don't repent of it, if we don't weep and cry out to the Lord to deliver us from it, it will be like that.

Just think of some of you. I want you to be honest with yourself. I don't know most of you, so I can speak straight.

Ask yourself, do you find, and many of you have come here for more than one conference, heard lots and lots of New Covenant messages. Can you say that there's been a distinct progress in freedom from un-Christ-like attitudes and thoughts and words and moods? I'm not talking about perfection. I'm asking you, have you moved at least from the first grade to the second grade? And if you've been here four years, have you moved up to the fifth grade? That's how it is with our children.

If you ask a child, what grade are you in, son? He says, I'm in the first grade. You ask him four years later, which grade are you in? He won't say first grade. He'll say, I'm in the fifth now.

But what about us? We expect that child to have moved up four grades in four years. What about ourselves? If we are not taking this seriously, would you take it seriously? Would you take it seriously if your child is always in first grade year after year after year after year? Boy, it would really make you weep. Don't you think we should do a little weeping for ourselves? If you persevere in these things, you will save yourself from everything un-Christ-like.

So coming back to John 17, eternal life, which Paul told Timothy to take a hold of, is to know God. So what do we need to know about God? If you turn with me to John's epistle, you see there, first epistle of John, there are two statements he makes about God, what God is in John's epistle. The first is in 1 John 1 5, God is light and light speaks of perfect purity, holiness, without a trace of sin, no part dark.

That's the first thing we need to know about God. He says that's the first thing you need to know. This is the message we heard from him when John 15 announced to you.

God is light, there's no darkness at all. That means he cannot tolerate one single sin. Is this the God you know? The God who the Bible proclaims is one who cannot tolerate one single sin.

He turned Adam and Eve out of the garden for one single sin. If you can take one single sin in your life lightly and say, oh that's not serious, you don't know God as you should. You say you accepted Christ 30 years ago but you don't seem to know him at all.

This is the first message. God is light and there is no darkness in him. When you understand that, you'll see why he was so severe with punishing people in the Old Testament.

Why he proclaimed that if a woman commits adultery she must be stoned to death. It's a very serious thing for a girl to fool around and have sex before she gets married. If you're in Israel, they'd stone you to death.

That's how serious God was about adultery. That which so many people just take so lightly now. So-called Christians.

I find nations that have had the Bible for hundreds of years, like this country and other countries. They seem to have drifted away in this matter of virginity of their daughters. More than non-Christian nations like India.

The average girl in a Hindu village in India will almost certainly be a virgin on the time of her marriage. Is that true? In so-called Christian countries who are reading the Bible? Why? Why are the heathen going ahead of us in moral purity? Yeah. We haven't heard the first message.

God does not tolerate sin at all. God is light. But that by itself would terrify us.

If there was not one more statement and that is in 1 John and chapter 4. In 1 John 4 and verse 8. God is love. These are the two statements of God that you find. And we have to be gripped by both of them equally.

That's the balance. Not one year bigger than the other. Not one eye bigger than the other.

Equally. God is perfect light. He's perfect love.

That's why we don't get discouraged. What do I see on Calvary's cross? I see perfect holiness. Perfect love.

Most people say see only perfect love on Calvary. God so loved the world that He gave His Son. Oh Jesus loved me so much.

God loved me so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross. It's true. God is love.

I see that written in bold letters on Calvary's cross. But I see something else written on Calvary's cross too. God is light.

There's no darkness in Him. He cannot tolerate one sin. And even if that sin was on His own Son.

Not His own sin. My sin. When Jesus was hanging there, not with His own sin.

There was no sin in Him. But when He took mine and if there was only one sin in my life, God would have turned away from His face. And He did.

He forsook Him. And for three hours Jesus experienced hell on the cross. What do I learn from there? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I see God is a holy God who cannot tolerate sin.

Even if it is on His own Son. Even if it's not His own sin. This is the God we worship.

To know God like this. Have you ever seen Calvary as a place where God's holiness is demonstrated? Or only as a place where God's love is demonstrated? I want to encourage you my brothers. I'm not speaking strongly to hurt any of you.

I wish all of you would be gripped. Because I'm tremendously burdened. See the Old Testament prophets had a burden.

You read that many times in Isaiah. The burden of the Lord. The burden of the Lord.

Nah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Malachi. They spoke about the burden of the Lord. And when you really seek to serve God the way you should, you have a burden.

And my burden is that you will see God as perfectly holy and perfectly loving. And not have one ear bigger than the other. Or one eye bigger than the other.

That's ugly. It's ugly. If you think a little bit of God's holiness and a great amount of God's love.

That's like having one eye small and another eye so big. You look hideous. You don't realize it.

We need to be balanced. There's a balance in truth that makes the beauty of the Lord to be upon us. One more verse before we close.

Since our time is up for today. Romans and chapter 11. In Romans chapter 11 we read here.

Behold. And I want to share something with you. Whenever you hear the word behold.

It means look carefully. It is the old English language of saying behold. In Isaiah you read behold my servant.

Behold the man. Referring to Jesus. Look carefully.

Okay. Romans 11 and verse 22. Behold.

Look carefully at the kindness of God and the severity of God. What should we look carefully at? Only His kindness? No. You'll be thoroughly imbalanced and you'll go astray.

Like the railway train needs two tracks to go on. If it wants to move. If it wants to go straight.

However good one track is. It's not enough. And you can't have one track smaller or shorter or thinner than the other.

They got to be exactly equal. That's why the train runs full speed. So look carefully at the kindness and the severity of God.

And we have enough Old Testament examples to see the kindness and the severity of God. Number one example. In Genesis chapter 3. I want to show you the kindness and the severity of God in the very first chapter where man sinned.

Notice this first of all. And it's a great lesson for us. God comes to Adam after he and his wife have eaten of the forbidden tree.

And asks him one question. Have you eaten? Verse 11. Genesis 3.11. Of the tree I commanded you not to eat.

And Adam like all human beings tries to put the blame on somebody else. My wife gave me Lord and it's basically her fault and I ate it. And see this.

See the kindness of God here. You know if I were there what I would have said? I said stop blaming your wife. Take the blame yourself.

I say Lord I want to learn from you. He doesn't yell at Adam. Oh.

Okay. Your wife gave it. I'll ask your wife.

And says woman what have you done? She said the serpent gave it to me. He doesn't yell at her. There's something for us to learn here.

The kindness of God. He goes to the serpent and curses the serpent. First.

And gives a positive message to Adam and Eve before he punishes them. He says a day is coming when the seed of the woman. Verse 15.

Will crush the devil under his feet. And having delivered that message of salvation coming for your sin Adam and Eve. Then he sends them out of the garden.

Isn't that wonderful? They've caused a problem and he doesn't come and say why in the world did you do this? No. He said let's fix the problem. Then I'll deal with you.

Is that the way you deal with your children? When they messed up something? It's not the way the average parents. Why in the world? Didn't I tell you a thousand times not to do it? Maybe you told her two or three times. That's how we speak.

That's not how God speaks. You know. You did.

You messed up the whole thing. Okay let's fix it. Then I can talk to them.

You know that's not the way you should have done it. You could have done it a little better way. This is God as a father.

He doesn't give us a firing. He doesn't yell at us. He solves the problem and then teaches us not to do it again.

But look at his severity. He turned Adam and Eve out of the garden. Get out of here.

You can't be here anymore. There you see the kindness and the severity of God right in Genesis 3. We had to pray Lord let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Lord I want to be a father like that.

I want to be a mother like that. You see something there for you to be a father and mother to your children? This is the book that you should be studying. This is the book where you come and you must ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see these things.

Not just read it like a story. Don't read the Bible like a newspaper. Don't read it like a storybook.

The purpose of God's Word is to show us the glory of Jesus. The glory of God manifested in Christ so that we can be like him. So that we can know him.

Now you understand why when people in the last day come to Jesus and said Lord we did miracles in your name. We preached in your name. He says get away from me.

I never knew you. You never had a knowledge of me. You just went to church and sang hymns and even preached perhaps.

You became a missionary. I never knew you. This is going to be a great tragedy in the day of judgment.

There are people who did miracles in Jesus name when Jesus said I never knew you. Which shows me that to know him is more important than doing miracles. More important than preaching.

So make this your prayer this weekend. Lord let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Open my eyes to see it this weekend.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we don't want to just have nice thoughts. We want the Holy Spirit to move in our hearts and really bring us to that life where we never have to put a veil over our faces.

Bring us to that glorious life that you died and rose again and sent the Holy Spirit so that we might have. Pray that for every one of us here. In Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Dm8yU6rY8LQ.mp4>

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