

Gods Standard for Us Today is Far Higher Than Under the Old Covenant

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, highlighting the fading glory of the Old Covenant compared to the increasing glory of the New Covenant. It challenges believers to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, relying on the Holy Spirit to transform their lives from glory to glory. The speaker urges honesty, repentance, and a deep commitment to following Jesus, exemplifying the need to let God's word become flesh in our daily lives.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:7, Matthew 6:14, Luke 17:3, John 14:31, Philippians 2:12

Topics: "Old Covenant vs New Covenant", "Transformation through the Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, highlighting the fading glory of the Old Covenant compared to the increasing glory of the New Covenant. It challenges believers to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, relying on the Holy Spirit to transform their lives from glory to glory. The speaker urges honesty, repentance, and a deep commitment to following Jesus, exemplifying the need to let God's word become flesh in our daily lives.

Transcript

I'm going to turn to 2nd Corinthians in chapter 3 and this is one of those chapters that speaks about the difference between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant, not all the differences but just tries to show that the New Covenant is far superior to the Old Covenant. Now, you know that in CFC we speak a lot about the New Covenant but like everything else, it's very easy for that to become something we speak about without experiencing. There are a lot of churches where people many years ago came out of the dead denominations preaching the new birth and that first generation proclaimed the new birth.

You know, Brethren Assemblies, Pentecostal Assemblies when they started out. But today when you go to some of those assemblies, the people there are not even born again. They still preach the new birth but many of them are not really born again.

It's become a language. Now, we've been going 47 years as a CFC worldwide and a little less in other places like you but the great danger is of our mouthing certain words without it becoming a reality in our life and we can think that we are experiencing it because we understand it. There's a lot of difference between understanding and experience.

We must never rest satisfied with understanding. That is Old Covenant. We can say the Old Covenant was the word, God's word.

It was very clearly written on a rock, rocks and which Moses brought down. But when Jesus came down, when Moses came down from the mountain, he brought the written word. But when Jesus came down, we read the word became flesh, John chapter 1 verse 14.

So, if any word that I understand in my head clearly, I mean clear enough to be able to explain it. If it does not become flesh in me, I have to say to myself, I'm still under the Old Covenant. However well I may speak about the truths that I understand, sin will not have dominion over me, over you, Romans 6.14. Truth, but if it is only in the head and it's not reality in my daily life, if it's not a reality that my wife can testify to, that your husband can testify to, then we have to humble ourselves before God and say, it's like the Old Covenant.

It's like the Old Covenant. It's the true word. There's nothing in the Old Testament that is not true.

The problem was it never became flesh in the lives of those people. And these things are written for our instruction. I've often wondered why three quarters of the Bible is the Old Testament.

I mean, if everything that we needed to know was only in the New Testament, why in the world is three quarters of the Bible, 39 out of 66 books are Old Testament. And pages wise, three quarters of the Bible is Old Testament. We have to learn something from there.

The people who proclaimed the greatest truths did not often live them. They could not. I mean, there are many examples of that.

For example, in the New Testament, just one example. Two of the greatest men in the Old Testament were Moses and Samuel. And Ezekiel, for example, the Lord says, even if Moses and Samuel stood here, I would not listen to them.

So he thinks Moses and Samuel is too great. God himself tells Ezekiel, Moses and Samuel were some of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament. Outstanding men who prophesied to God's people what they said and thought was accurate.

And God bore witness to both of them. But their children were wayward. We don't know anything about Moses' children.

All we know is we see him fighting with his wife in Exodus 4 and read it sometime. It's because Moses had not even obeyed the elementary truths of circumcising the child. And I have a feeling that Moses probably wanted it, but his wife did not want it.

So he said, for the sake of peace at home, he listened to his wife. And finally, when God said, I'm going to kill you, you read that in Exodus 4, I don't want to go there now. And then his wife realized she was not a Jew, you know.

She's not a descendant of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. So then she realizes because our child is not circumcised. God's going to kill my husband.

So under that pressure, she circumcised the child and threw the skin at the feet of Moses saying, you're a husband of blood. They never had a good family relationship. And the same with Samuel.

He had two sons whom he foolishly appointed as judges after him. He was not able to discern the spirituality of his own two sons. It's very sad.

And so the sons went astray. They were taking bribes. Can you imagine that? Children of Samuel taking bribes.

And Samuel went along merrily traveling here and there, reaching till the people came to Samuel and said, we are fed up of your sons. Now you see, such a man, if Moses and Samuel were here today, they would not qualify to be an elder even in a CFC church. Can you believe that? Can you believe that Moses and Samuel were not qualified to be elders in a CFC church? Because their children were wayward.

And there you see the height of the New Testament standard. It says very clearly in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus chapter 1, the quality of life expected in an elder's home, the way he's brought up his children. Because what it says in 1 Timothy 3 is, if you can't bring up two children at home, how in the world are you going to take care of hundreds of people in the church? You're not fit to be an elder.

That's what you have to say to Moses. That's what you've got to say to Samuel. So the New Covenant, so I'm just trying to point out, but they were great prophets of the Old Covenant.

What they taught was 100% truth. And we read in Numbers 12, Moses was the humblest man on the face of the earth. Yeah.

Great man of God, but Old Covenant, great men of the Old Covenant. And we can look and learn a lot of things from them because they have many qualities which even today people don't have. But the New Covenant is superior.

And if it's only in a doctrine that we talk about being different and it's not in our life, then we are not at the level of the word made flesh. Every word that we proclaim must have become flesh in us. Otherwise, let me wait and not proclaim it.

Or let me say, this hasn't become reality in me yet, but I'm striving to get there. That's honesty. See, Jesus came with grace and truth.

And I've discovered in the New Covenant, truth is a very, very important area of our life. That means total, ruthless honesty. Total honesty.

No pretense. Very, very important. And particularly in this area, that I don't proclaim something which is not true in my life.

Or if it's not true, at least I must be pursuing it, climbing towards it, and acknowledging I've not got there yet. You can speak about being free from anxiety, definitely. Because it's in God's word.

But if you haven't got there, you've got to say, I haven't reached the top of the mountain there, but I'm climbing. And I hope you're climbing. In other words, you should be a little better today than you were five years ago in the area of anxiety.

Otherwise, you're not climbing. If you're on the same level as you were five years ago, then you can't say you've made any progress. I'm not saying you should compare yourself with what you were yesterday or last month.

Compare yourself with what you were, say, five years ago. There should be some progress. If we don't evaluate ourselves constantly, there's no such thing as evaluating yourself in the Old Covenant.

In fact, if you read the Old Covenant, some of those great men, they ascended to great heights. Tremendous examples, and then sank down. You take a person like Gideon.

Gideon is one of the first people in the Old Testament about whom it is written, The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. One of the first people in the Old Testament. You read that.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him. He asked God for a sign, and he went out, and God chose him to lead 300 people to defeat thousands of Midianites. And he came back, and he didn't want to promote his children or any such thing.

Unlike Samuel, he was better than him. But he said, OK, I want you guys to give me all your earrings and all the gold you have. And what did he do with that gold? You read in the Book of Judges sometime.

I hope you guys read the Old Testament, because it's written for our instruction. With that gold, he made an idol. This man, the mighty man of God who defeated the Midianites, went and made an idol.

And the Israelites went after that. There are so many stories like that. Look at the great man, David.

I'm just trying to show you where old covenant people lived, and it's very easy. If we don't make the word flesh in our life, we can end up like that. Let me show you in 1 Kings.

We know that David is called a man after God's own heart. Even in Acts of the Apostles, Acts 13, David is called a man after God's own heart. And certainly, he had great faith to kill Goliath.

He started out so well. Outstanding man. Knew the word of God.

Look at some of the Psalms he's written. Amazing. And he wrote many of them before he was 30 years old.

Many of us are older than 30. Can you imagine writing scripture before you're 30 years old? What a devotion he had to the Lord. He would write in Psalm 27, There's only one thing I've desired from the Lord, that I may sit in His presence all the days of my life to behold His beauty.

Psalm 27. He says, verse 4, that's the only thing he wanted. What a man he was when he started out.

And he would not kill Saul, even when he had the opportunity. Saul was trying to kill him, but he would not kill him. He said, no, I will not touch him.

He's God's anointed. What a respect and fear he had for God's word. I tell you, when you read the examples of these men, I say, many of us come short.

We're not like that. He was an outstanding man. And you read, let me show you an example of how he treated one of his enemies.

You read in 2 Samuel. And there was a time when Absalom, his son, chased him out of Jerusalem. And when he was running away from Jerusalem, this is described in 2 Samuel and chapter 15 and 16.

And when it comes to chapter 16, 2 Samuel, there was a descendant of Saul who was disturbed that David had replaced Saul as king. You read in verse 5. Somebody from the family, 2 Samuel 16, 5. Someone from the family of Saul came and threw stones and cursed, verse 5 and 6 of 2 Samuel 16, at David, because David was now being chased out of the throne by his king. I mean, he wouldn't have dared to do that if David was sitting on the throne.

But he saw David being chased out by his son. And he said, he says to him, get out, get out, verse 7, you worthless fellow. Can you imagine what a bitterness he had held in his heart against David for so long? And he kept it inside.

But now he's being chased out by his son. And he says, yeah, you deserve it. And when Abishai, 2 Samuel 16, 9, told David, let me go and cut off his head right now.

Abishai was David's general. King said, not at all. See what he says in verse 10.

It's a lesson we can learn. If the Lord has, I would say, allowed him to curse David, who am I to say, why are you cursing me? He had such an understanding of the sovereignty of God over people's speech. Then he said, that man cannot curse me unless God has allowed it.

I mean, he expresses as if the Lord told him. The Lord doesn't tell. The language in the old covenant is not always accurate.

What he means is the Lord has allowed him to curse me. And I'm not going to fight with him. And so he said, let him go.

And later on, when he comes back, after Absalom was killed, you read further down in one of the later chapters, that Shimei comes to him and says, oh, please forgive me. And say, I'm very sorry, because now he sees 2 Samuel in chapter 19. David was restored as king.

Then Shimei knew that David has come back as king. Now what's going to happen to me? I'm the one who cursed him. So 2 Samuel 19, Shimei, verse 16, runs up to him.

And he comes to meet him. And he says to him in verse 19, Shimei, the guy who cursed the king, oh, please don't consider me guilty. I'm sorry that I cursed you.

I know I sinned, verse 20. And Abishai again, Shimei should be put to death for cursing the Lord's anointed like he did. Again, David says in verse 22, what have I got to do with you? No, he's not my enemy.

I don't want anybody to be put to death today. And the king said to Shimei, you shall not die. Man after God's own heart.

Now, years later, the time, 2 Samuel 1, Kings chapter 2, the time drew near for David to die. And he calls Solomon and gave him his last charge. This is some very, very important things he has to commit to Solomon before Solomon takes over the throne.

He says, I want to tell you some very important things, Solomon, and see how well it starts. Keep the charge of the Lord. 1 Kings chapter 2, verse 2 and 3. I'm going away now.

Be strong. Show yourself as a man. Verse 3. Keep the charge of the Lord.

1 Kings chapter 2, verse 3. Walk in his ways of the Lord. Keep his commandments and his ordinances, his testimonies according to the law of Moses. Then you will succeed in all that you do.

And wherever you turn, then the Lord can fulfill his promise, which he spoke concerning me, that if my sons walk in my ways, they shall not lack a man to be in the throne of Israel. Wonderful. Up to that point.

And now you see what he says. You know, Joab. Joab was actually David's nephew.

His sister Zeruah's son was the general of his army. But, I mean, he was very loyal to David. And in loyalty to David, he killed some of David's enemies, like the two commanders, Abner and Amasa, who had come to fight against David.

I mean, as a bodyguard of David, he killed him. But David said, no, he shed the blood of war at a time of peace. And he put the blood of war on his belt about his waist.

So don't let, verse 6, last part, don't let his gray hair go down to hell in peace. This is a guy who was defending David when he killed those people. Don't let his gray hair go down in peace.

What sort of a leader was David? Killing the guy who defended him? From people who tried to kill David? Then he says, there's one more man I want to talk to you about. That is, verse 8, Shimei. Remember, that's the guy we just talked about.

Who had cursed David. Come and ask God's forgiveness. And both times, David said, forgiven, forgiven.

And, but he's kept it in his heart all these years. I don't know how many years after Shimei cursed him. This is this incident where he dies.

But he's kept it in his heart. That guy. I can never forgive him.

This is old covenant, brothers. Old covenant of a man who started off as God's own heart. As man after God's own heart.

And he says, you remember, he cursed me. Of course, Solomon was not there to hear what David had told him. That I have forgiven you.

And told him to go. He said, yeah, I told him. Verse 8, 1 Kings chapter 2, verse 8. When he came down to me at the Jordan, the last part of verse 8. I swore to him by the Lord.

I will not put him to death. And I will keep my word. Because I swore it to the Lord.

I will not kill him. Ah, but Solomon. It is not you who made that promise.

So you can do what you like, right? You're a wise man. Don't let his gray hair go down to Sheol without blood. Let him go down to Sheol with blood.

To hell. You see how the man after God's own heart ended his life? Let me ask you. Do you think he had forgiven Shimei? He said he had.

Twice. He said he wouldn't kill him. But he said, Solomon, you didn't make that promise.

You go and kill him. I won't kill him. According to the letter of the law, you know, how people sometimes argue.

Yeah, I said I won't do it, but you do it. Those are his last words. You know, people talk about the last words of a person before he dies.

Here are his last words. Don't let that man escape. Kill him.

Next sentence. First time David died. Can that happen to a man after God's own heart? The Bible says if you don't forgive others, Jesus said you will not be forgiven.

Very clear. In Matthew chapter 6. It's one of the things he said in the middle of Matthew 6, 14, 15. If you do not forgive others, your father will not forgive your transgressions.

Clear. Heaven and earth will pass away. The words of Jesus will not pass away.

Now my question is, was David forgiven? Do you think he had forgiven Shimei? Not at all. It's pretty clear. Was he forgiven himself? Is the word of Jesus fulfilled there or not? Did Jesus speak? When he was on earth, he called himself the son of who? Son of David.

We would think he should be ashamed to be known as the son of a man who took revenge on his deathbed. It's amazing. Jesus called himself the son of David.

And do you believe David is in heaven? I'm not God. I'm not here to judge. But I say, I believe he is.

Because I can't imagine that there are so many references to David in the New Testament. No, even in the book of Revelation. He's called Judah.

Jesus is called in Revelation 5. The root of David has come to open the seven seals. David comes in the book of Revelation. So what is the answer? The answer is this.

He was under the old covenant. A lot of things were permitted under the old covenant. Divorce was permitted under the old covenant.

So he was forgiven. Because it was a new covenant condition in Matthew 6. If you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven. Today, if someone dies like that today, a so-called believer, who had given his life to Christ, may be filled with the spirit and speaking in tongues and serving the Lord full time and man after God's own heart.

But he can't forgive someone. He just keeps it in his heart even in his deathbed. He can't forgive.

You ask me? I have no doubt that such a man will go to hell. Even if he was filled with the spirit. Even if he served the Lord for 50 years like David.

I'm just trying to show you the tremendous difference in standard in the new covenant from the old covenant. New covenant is very clear. Matthew 6, 14.

If your heavenly father will forgive you, only if you forgive others. That's why he taught us daily to pray. Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven others.

Why do I say daily? Because he taught us to pray and that prayer for our daily bread. Not weekly bread. Give us this day our daily bread.

Which means even though we don't repeat that daily prayer. This must be the spirit of our prayer every day. The spirit of my prayer every day must be.

Lord I depend on you my food. And next thing is forgive me my sins. Just like I have forgiven others.

And then Jesus amplified that saying. You know what that means? That means if you don't forgive others God will not forgive you. Because you're praying forgive me exactly like I have forgiven that guy there.

But you haven't forgiven that guy there. Then God won't forgive you. You're asking God to forgive you the same way you've forgiven that person.

I believe heaven and earth will pass away. That word will not pass away. You know a lot of people talk about the new covenant.

But I've seen even in CFC churches. People have not seen the seriousness and the importance of the new covenant. The word has to become flesh.

And when it does not become flesh we must repent. The old covenant they would repent in dust and ashes. We don't know how to put dust in ashes.

But we must cry out to God. Weep on our pillow at night. Do any of you weep on your pillow at night? Have you ever done it? I've done it numerous times.

In my younger days when I wanted to overcome and I was defeated. Defeated during the day and slipped up. Usually my thoughts of anger or something.

Night is the time to think about all that. And say Lord I'm so sorry. I dishonored you today.

You know the Bible says blessed are those who mourn. Matthew 5.4 Who weep they'll be strengthened. The word comfort in the New Testament always means strength.

Why don't you get strength to overcome some sin in your life? I'll tell you. You don't weep. You sin and you take it lightly.

I'm sorry Lord please forgive me. Will you do it tomorrow? Yeah I may do it tomorrow. But I'll go to the Lord and he'll forgive me.

I doubt if you ever in your life come to a life of victory. You miss out on something so important. An inheritance God laid out for you.

When a father writes a will. Supposing your father was a very wealthy man. And he wrote down all the details of his wealth and put your name in that will.

I know how people in the world would be. They would be very eager to find out which bank is that other money in. My father distributed his money in so many banks.

I must locate all those banks and get all that money. I don't want one cent of it to go to somebody else. I don't want some bank to cheat me of one cent of what my father worked so hard.

And gave it to me in his will. Well I'll tell you what our Heavenly Father has written for us in our will. No sin will rule over you.

And if you don't experience that. You should be seeking. Why is it? Why is it Lord? This is my inheritance.

This is new covenant. And yet in your testament we see some outstanding examples. David was a man who saw somebody's pretty wife.

Not only lusted after her. Committed adultery with her. Killed her husband.

Married him. Married the woman. And one year later when the child is born.

He is still not convicted. Till Nathan the prophet comes and says you are the man. Then he writes Psalm 51.

And I believe he really repented. But he still couldn't get over his unforgiving attitude. There are many things we see in these men who they were old covenants.

There are areas in their life that we can follow. Outstanding examples in certain areas. But not in every area.

Like I don't know what type of relationship Moses had with his wife. All I read is he fought with her somewhere. And what type of relationship Samuel had with his wife.

And how he allowed his sons to take bribes and he didn't even know it. Can you imagine an elder brother, his sons taking bribes and he doesn't even know it. Or his sons misbehaving somewhere and he doesn't even know it.

That's how it was with some of these men in the old testament. But it's not permitted in the new covenant. The standard is so much higher.

Like heaven above the earth. And that's not an exaggeration. You know how much higher the heaven is above the earth.

The people of Israel were promised an earthly kingdom. In the land of Canaan. And God gave it to them.

To us God has promised the kingdom of heaven. So the difference between the new covenant and the old covenant must be the difference between heaven and earth. They were an earthly people.

We are heavenly people. So we have to behave like that. They fought for earthly wealth.

Got excited when they got a lot of earthly wealth. We fight for heavenly wealth. Heavenly wealth is the nature of Christ.

We have to fight to get more and more of it in our lives. Our enemies are in our flesh. You know many of the Psalms that you read.

It's amazing. Lord don't spare my enemies and smash the heads of their children with rocks. Have you read Psalms like that? How do you interpret it when you read those Psalms in the new covenant? This is how I interpret it.

Lord those wretched lusts in my flesh. And the small little ones that come out of those little children of those lusts. I want to smash their head with rocks.

I don't want any trace of those lusts in any part of my life. That's how I read those Psalms. I don't have any earthly enemies.

They may consider me their enemy. But I have no enemies. And if they consider me my enemy, my duty is to love them.

My duty is to forgive every person who has ever hurt me at any time in my life. And I can stand before God today and say that is true. You think in 82 years people haven't hurt me? The number of people who have hurt me from my stand for Christ.

Every one of them. I can stand before Almighty God my Father and say Lord you know I have forgiven every single one of them. I do not wish evil for any of them.

Those of them who are alive if I see them today, I will be very friendly with them. I cannot have fellowship with them. Oh no, no, no, no, no.

There is a difference between forgiveness and fellowship. I have to forgive everyone. Everyone.

Believers, unbelievers who have hurt me without an exception. But when it comes to fellowship, I don't try to be more spiritual than Jesus. I obey what the Bible says in Luke 17.

The New Testament is very realistic. Luke 17 verse 3. Be on your guard if your brother, now he is not talking about an unbeliever. If an unbeliever sins, just forgive him.

Say hi and bye. But if your brother sins, rebuke him. Now you may not feel free to rebuke him because he is not willing to receive it.

Then forget it. Don't say anything. But don't forgive him until he repents.

Have you read that? The same Jesus who said forgive those who have hurt you says here if it is your brother, don't forgive him until he repents. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day he comes to you and says I repent, forgive him seven times. Because here is the question of fellowship.

If he is not your brother, forgive him. If you don't forgive him, God won't forgive you. But here is the question of fellowship.

There can be no fellowship without repentance. So you have a heart of forgiveness even to this person, he is a brother, but he is speaking about fellowship. And I'll tell you why I say that.

Because in Matthew 18, when you compare scripture with scripture, he tells you how to deal with a brother who sins. This is written in a small way in Luke 17. It's amplified in Matthew 18.

When you compare scripture with scripture, you get the truth. Matthew 18, 15. Same words as in Luke 17.

What is it we read in Luke 17? If your brother sins, Luke 17, 3. If your brother sins. Think of those four words in Luke 17, 3. If your brother sins, if he repents, forgive him. Now Matthew 18 is the same thing.

Verse 15. If your brother sins. It's amplified here.

Tell him. There it says rebuke him. Here it says go and show him his fault in private.

Don't publicize it. Go and talk to him in private. He's not talking about strangers.

If it is, Jesus was crucified not by his brothers. He was crucified by strangers. As soon as he was crucified, he said, Father, forgive them.

And that's exactly what we must do. When somebody crucifies us or hurts us or does wrong to us. Whoever it is, Father, forgive them.

Immediately. There should be no delay. We follow Jesus' example.

And that is the worst crime ever committed on the earth. The crucifixion of Jesus. Any sin that anybody commits against you is 1% of the crucifixion of Jesus.

You've got to forgive him immediately. But if it's a brother, tell him what you did was wrong. Because his fellowship with God is broken.

It's like your hand being fractured. He's a part of your body. What do you do if your right hand is fractured? If it's somebody else's hand, you can forget it.

But this is your hand. He's part of your body. Your brother.

He has sinned. Your right hand is fractured. What do you do? You've got to ignore it.

Go and fix it. Go to a doctor. Put a splint.

That's what he says here. Go and speak to him. Fix the problem.

And when it's fixed, the hand is working okay. You're one your brother. But if he doesn't listen to you, then what? His hand, which has got a will of its own, refuses to put a splint on it or get it fixed.

Then take one or two with you and say, hey, we've got to get this fixed, man. You're a part of the body. And explain to him that what was done was wrong.

And if he still doesn't listen, verse 17, he still doesn't want to get fixed, then tell it to the whole church. Tell it to the whole body. This hand of mine refuses to get fixed.

It's broken, the bone. He's become useless now. Treat him like he doesn't even listen to the church.

Treat him like a heathen. Treat him like an unbeliever. If you come to a point in your relationship with a person who's a believer, you cannot forgive him.

He's not repented. You get two or three people to speak to him, he still does not repent. You tell it to the larger body of the church, he still does not repent.

As far as you're concerned, he's an unbeliever. I have nothing more to do with him. This is new covenant.

I've seen very, very few people who understand everything in the new covenant. You only have some word like, oh, just love everybody. I'd like to see one of these people who talk about always love

everybody build a real church.

Never. You know who builds churches? People like Paul, who when he found that in the church in Corinth, there was a man who was committing sexual sin with his stepmother. He said in 1 Corinthians 5 about this man, I'm surprised that you guys have not kicked him out of the church.

And you're proud and you're not mourning over the sin that is in your midst. 1 Corinthians 5 verse 2. This terrible thing that is there. And he says, and this is Paul, says, I was not there with you all, but in my spirit, I have already judged him.

Paul, are you supposed to judge people? Yes. Because God used me to plant that church in Corinth. God used me to appoint the elders in that church.

So other people may not have any right to do anything there, but I do. I have a right to judge them, just like a father has to judge between his children when there's a fight between them. That's not the place to use the word judge not.

He says, I judged him. And so in the spirit, verse 4, and power of the Lord Jesus. And I have decided, verse 5, listen to this, to hand him over to Satan.

Not that he should be lost eternally. No. Hand him over to Satan so that he'll get some sickness in his body.

Some serious sickness in his body that will make him repent so that he will repent and be saved. His ultimate goal is that I should be saved. This broken hand of mine must be fixed.

He's a part of the body. But it's not guaranteed that the guy doesn't repent. Paul wants him to be saved, but he's very strict.

You know, there are just examples I'm trying to show you how the new covenant is such a high standard. And we must not take it lightly. When we say we are a new covenant church, the standards of holiness that God expects of us.

And when people don't maintain those standards of holiness, we've got to treat them exactly like the Bible says. But if it is not someone, not a part of our body, I don't care what he does. He comes and crucifies me.

I forgive him. Father, forgive him. Whatever he does must be forgiven immediately.

And then I pray, Father, forgive me as I've forgiven him. I want you to see the difference between someone who is a part of your local church, part of your body, and someone who is not. There's a lot of difference.

And if you compare scripture with scripture, you see that. See, it's only when we treat the church like this, like part of our body, that the rest of that verse in Matthew 18 is fulfilled. Where two or three come together in my name.

I am there in the midst, the Lord says. The church that's following this type of standard, the Lord says, I am in your midst. And whatever you ask, verse 19, Matthew 18, 19, I could be answered.

And you can bind satanic forces on the earth. Cast them out. Oh, I want to see churches like that, where Satan has got no power.

You want to see churches like that, where even two or three, particularly those in leadership, have got such authority. Because they obey scripture exactly. There's no wishy-washy type of human love.

Just strong, divine love that stands for the truth. You know, like if Peter comes to Jesus and says, I don't want, don't go to the cross. Jesus says, get behind me, Satan.

You know that Jesus used the word, get behind me, Satan, only twice in the Gospels. One was when he spoke to Satan himself in the third temptation in the wilderness. And Satan asked him to worship and he said, get behind me, Satan.

And the second time he used it was when he spoke to Peter. Amazing. Did you notice that? He spoke to Peter with the same word he spoke to the devil.

Because he said, Peter, that's the voice of Satan coming through you, telling me not to go to Calvary. Definitely the devil didn't want Jesus to go to Calvary, because that is the end of Satan's kingdom. All humanity would be forgiven if they repented.

Satan didn't want that. Peter didn't know that. He was ignorant.

The Lord wanted him to know, the voice that tells me to avoid the cross is the voice of the devil. And I want to apply that today, my dear brothers and sisters. When you hear a voice, listen carefully, in your spirit, that tells you, don't go to the cross.

Don't die to yourself. That is the devil. Stand up for your rights against your wife or your husband or that person or the other person.

Don't die to yourself. Don't do that. You should say the same thing.

I don't care who says that word. Get behind me, Satan. You may not use that word, but in your spirit, that's the voice of Satan.

Nothing to do with, I'm going to die to myself. What was Jesus saying? He was just saying to Peter in Matthew 16, 21, I have to go to the cross and die, but I'll be raised up. And Peter said, no, no, no, no.

Today, the Lord says, you have to go to the cross and die, and the Father will raise you up. And another voice says, no, don't die. Stand up for your rights.

Okay? You turn around to that voice and say, get away, Satan. That's the Satan trying to tempt you. I'm going to die.

It says Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to the cross. That's why the Father loved him. The Father loved him because he was willing to pay the ultimate price in obedience to the Father.

I want you to see in Matthew 14. Sorry, John 14. Worse than John 14.

See, when we don't read scripture carefully, our understanding is very often from what we have heard from other Christians. And most Christians I've met in my life, I'd say 99% of Christians have not studied the Bible thoroughly. Even those who have gone to Bible schools.

The only 1% of Christians I've met in my life who have really studied the scriptures. If you ask people, why did Jesus go to the cross? Most people's answer is, because he loved me. I say, that's the second reason.

What is the first reason? I say, because he loved his Father. John 14, verse 31. John 14, 31.

So that the world may know that I love the Father, I'm going to do exactly what the Father commanded me. Let's get up and go from here. You know where they went from there? To Gethsemane and to Calvary.

Why did he do it? So that the world may know that I love the Father, I will do exactly as the Father commanded me. Go to the cross. Today the Father tells me, go to the cross.

Jesus tells me, go to the cross. I want to prove to the world. The world that doesn't believe, to the ungodly Christian world that doesn't believe.

Taking up the cross, the importance of taking up the cross. Hardly any church preaches it nowadays. So I love the Father, I love my Savior Jesus.

And I will do exactly as he commanded me. Even if the vast majority of Christians don't believe in it. The vast majority of Christians don't believe in that you need to take up the cross to follow Jesus.

They think they can follow Jesus without taking up the cross. That is impossible. He has said, if you want to come after me, deny yourself, take up the cross and then follow me.

You can't jump to the third statement, follow me, without denying yourself and taking up the cross. That's the way Jesus said. So these are some examples I'm trying to show you of how the new covenant is so much greater.

Let's turn back to 2 Corinthians 3, where we started. We started in this chapter, 2 Corinthians 3. And now we can understand what he says here. That the old covenant was a ministry of depth, verse 7. 2 Corinthians 3, verse 7. A ministry of spiritual depth in letters engraved on stones.

But there was a glory there. There was a glory on Moses' face. It was a ministry of depth means it asked you to do something you could never do.

Yeah. Paul struggles with saying, I tried my best to obey that commandment. It says, I must not lust.

Romans 7, you read Romans 7. I just couldn't keep it. It was a ministry of depth. But there was a glory.

But it was a glory, verse 7, which was fading away. The glory in the face of Jesus, face of Moses, was a glory that faded away. That's how it was with David.

What a mighty man of God when he killed Goliath. And all those years when he wrote the Psalms and chased by Saul. But that glory faded away by the time he died.

He was having bitterness against Shania. He wanted him killed. It was a glory that faded away.

Moses, the great man of God, obeyed God in everything. But towards the end of his life, the glory faded away so that God said, I punish you. You will not enter the land of Canaan.

I know you've been waiting 40 years to enter the land of Canaan. But Moses, you will not enter. What a punishment.

I tell you, God's a very strict father. You could have thought, this man has faithfully led my people for 40 years. He has only one desire, to enter the land of Canaan.

Let me just go in, let him go in and then kill him. No. The strictness of God.

Moses, sorry. I'm sure he pleaded, oh God, please. I've been waiting for this for 40 years.

And why did I slip up? Because these people are hankering for water and water and water. In my anger, I accidentally hit the rock instead of speaking to him. And the Lord says no.

If it was one of those other people who did it, I could have forgiven. But you, Moses, you knew me face to face. I won't even allow you to slip up once.

I told you to speak to the rock, but you hit the rock. That's serious. You will not enter Canaan.

And no matter how much you plead with me, you will not enter Canaan. It's like a very strict father telling his son, you will not go to that picnic. No.

No matter how much you cry, this is how God was. But there was a glory in his face. It was a glory that's fading away.

I've seen people today, outstanding Christians when they first come to the Lord, first two or three years, zealous, wholehearted. You see them 10, 15 years later. It's gone.

By the time they get married, the glory started fading away. Some people, wonderful marriages. They are married, so excited.

Glory is there. You go and see that marriage three, four years later. It's fading away.

That is old covenant. If you find in your life, my brother, sister, that from the day you're converted to today, the glory has been slowly fading away. You are under the old covenant.

In the new covenant, which is very different. Why did Moses put a veil on his face? Because he didn't want people to see the glory that is fading away. There were two reasons.

One, he didn't want people to see the great shining face. But here it says another reason was so that people don't see that that glory was fading away. It says in verse 13, 2 Corinthians 3, 13.

We are not like Moses. See verse 13. Who used to put a veil on his face for what reason? So that the people would not see that that glory is gradually fading.

It's getting less and less and less and less. He didn't want people to see that. You know how when we have come to a tremendous experience in our life and people have come to see what wonderful men and women of God we are and then we find we have slipped up from there.

After the wonderful testimonies we have given in the church, we have slipped up and then we put a veil over. We don't want people to see that part of our married life. We don't want people to see some area of our life because there is a glory that was there.

It's gone now. It's fading, fading away. That's not the solution, brother, sister.

Come to God in honesty and say, Lord, I'm sorry I slipped up. I don't want to pretend before people. I don't want to be a hypocrite.

Turn to the Lord. It says here in 2 Corinthians 3, 15. We are not to be like Moses putting a veil over our hearts.

No. We turn to the Lord and the veil is taken away. I've got nothing to hide.

Come and see my private life. Come and see how I live at home. Scrutinize my accounts, my financial matters.

Look into every area of my life. I don't want a veil over any part of my life. I don't want to hide anything.

That's new covenant. Are you there? And when we turn to the Lord, it says there's no veil on our face. What happens? It's not a glory fading away like old covenant, but it says in verse 18, 2 Corinthians 3, 18.

It's the opposite. As we look at the Lord, the glory increases and increases and increases and increases from one degree of glory to another. This is the new covenant life where there's a greater glory of Christ in my life today than there was a year ago.

Much more than there was five years ago and much less than what it will be next year. From glory to glory, it says in verse 18. There's no fading.

My dear brothers and sisters, I'm not saying this to condemn anyone. I'm saying it to challenge. The Bible says the word of prophecy is to challenge people, to exhort them, challenge them, and to comfort them.

The times of ignorance God overlooks. Okay, maybe you are ignorant of all this. God forgives you, but don't stay there.

Press on and say, Lord, I want to possess the whole land of Canaan. I don't want to have just one mighty victory like Gideon, you know, spirit-filled. Many in the heights are defeated and then backslide like Gideon did.

I don't want to be like David, killing Goliath and doing mighty works, writing scripture in the Psalms, and then towards the end of my life, the glory is faded away where I'm bitter against somebody, can't forgive somebody. No. I don't want to be like Moses.

I don't want to be like Samuel towards the end of his life, appointing his sons who take bribes to replace him. What is the solution? I'll tell you. I'll close with one verse.

Please remember it all your life. Philippians chapter 2. Small verse. Paul says, my dearly beloved.

How he expresses himself. I want to say that. My beloved brothers and sisters.

Philippians 2 verse 12. My beloved brothers and sisters. As you have always obeyed me.

Not only when I'm there, but when I'm not there. Whether people are watching you or not watching you. I have one exhortation for you.

Work out your salvation. With fear and trembling. And you don't have to do it alone.

God, the Holy Spirit is at work inside you. To make you live according to what will please him. Good pleasure means what pleases the father.

What you have to work out. Verse 13. What God works in.

Let God work in you. And you work it out. That's new covenant life.

In the old covenant, they did not have God working inside them. The Holy Spirit was outside. He was outside Gideon.

He was outside David. He was outside Moses. He was even outside John the Baptist.

That's why towards the end of John the Baptist's life, he loses faith in Jesus. He loses faith in Jesus. He had seen the Holy Spirit come on him and the voice from heaven.

He heard all that. But because Jesus did not deliver him from prison. Just because Jesus didn't deliver him from prison.

He has a complaint. He sends his disciples saying to Jesus with a message. Are you really the Messiah? Or are we here to wait for someone else? Did I make a mistake there? Was it imagination that voice I heard from heaven? This is John the Baptist.

The glory was fading. This is how it was the greatest people in the Old Testament. But not with Paul.

See how he ends his life in 2nd Timothy 4.7. He says, I finished my course. I've kept the faith. I fought a good fight.

2nd Timothy 4.7. There's a laid up for me a crown of righteous now. Dear brothers and sisters, let us end like that. But it's not going to happen overnight.

He said, Lord, I'm determined to go this way. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Work in me.

Work in me. To will and to do your good pleasure. And I will work it out with the power of the Holy Spirit.

With fear and trembling. Let us pray. Heavenly Father.

Help us to remember what we have heard. Write it not only in our minds, but in our hearts. And as your Holy Spirit wrote.

As you wrote with your finger. On those rocks in Moses time. Write it with your finger in our hearts and minds today.

So that we shall have strength. To not just know your will, but to do it. Yes, Father.

That we shall finish our earthly days with glory. That the word we hear becomes flesh in us. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/o3QHNVCEvfg.mp4>

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/gods-standard-for-us-today-is-far-higher-than-under-the-old-covenant/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net