

God's Two Fold Provision

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes God's dual provision of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit to address both our past sins and our ongoing sinful nature.

Duration: 25:38

Scripture: John 1:17, Acts 2:37, Romans 3:24, Romans 5:1, Romans 5:9, Romans 6:14, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 8:12

Topics: "Original Sin", "Gods Grace"

Description

This sermon delves into the principles taught in the early chapters of the Bible regarding God's purpose for humanity and the appropriate response to Him. It emphasizes the origin of sin, the forgiveness of sins through Christ's death, and the importance of not just cleansing our hearts but filling them with God's purpose. The sermon highlights the twofold problem faced by individuals - the guilt of past sins and the inherited sinful nature - and how God's grace provides a complete solution by offering forgiveness and power through the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

We've been looking at the principles that are taught in the early chapters of the Bible concerning God's purpose for man and how God wants man to respond to him. We saw how sin originated. We saw the basis on which God forgives us our sin.

That is through the death of Christ on the cross our guilt is removed. But unfortunately for many Christians that is all that they know that their guilt has been taken away by Christ's death on the cross. Removal of guilt is like the cleaning of a cup.

Now in your dining table when you clean a cup and put it there it's not meant to be a decoration. You clean the cup in order to fill it with something to drink. So why does God cleanse our heart? It's not just to keep it clean.

No, our heart is like a vessel that needs to be filled or like a channel through which when it is clean God can pass on the water of life to other people. So that is why God's provision for our salvation not only deals with the guilt of our past but also the future. There's grace sufficient for our need in the past and there's grace sufficient for us to be able to bless other people in the future as well.

See our problem is basically twofold. One, we have this guilt of many years and years in which we have lived in sin. And then even if God forgives us we have another problem of a nature that we have inherited from our parents all the way from Adam which is keeping on producing sin.

How to deal with that if the good news of Christ the gospel only deals with problem number one and does not deal with problem number two? It's not really good news at all. It would be partial good news but it's not fully good news. Think for example if I've heard the story that in a certain lunatic asylum when they want to find out if a person has come to his senses they give him a very simple test.

They send him into a room with a bucket and a mop and in that room the tap is open and the water is flowing in the room and they ask him to mop the room and make it dry. Now if he starts using the mop to wipe the floor dry without closing the tap then they know he has not come to his senses yet because a man who's got some sense will close the tap and then mop the floor otherwise he'll never never finish because the more he mops the floor the more water is flowing from the tap. Now this is the experience of many Christians.

They sin they ask Christ to cleanse them from their sin but sin is continuously flowing then they sin some more. This tap is constantly putting out sin and they're they are in an endless job of trying to mop it all up confessing it asking the lord to forgive them cleanse them again more sin then asking the lord to cleanse them forgive them again more sin this is endless this is not good news at all really it is in a sense bad news but God has not given us only this one part of the good news. This second part of the good news is what the devil has hidden from the minds of many Christians.

The bible says we have forgiveness of sins through the riches of his grace. That's the first thing that the grace of God does for us in Ephesians and chapter one we read in verse seven we have forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of God's grace but there's something more that the grace of God does for us in Romans 6 and verse 14 it says now that you have come under grace sin which ruled your life till now will not rule your life anymore. So my second problem is also dealt with by the grace of God.

Now in the old testament when people did not have grace they could not experience this until Christ came. We read in John 1 17 Moses only brought the law but Jesus Christ came with grace grace is God's supernatural power that deals with this guilt of our past and enables us to overcome this sinful nature that we are all born with. So this is God's double provision for our double problem.

What does he expect from us? Receive. I told you that when someone gives us a gift like I said in my last study that if your father gave you a check to pay your fine in the court if you don't receive it you're not going to be free. You have to receive it.

God gives us something we have to receive it. He gives us forgiveness we say thank you Lord and we take it. He gives us power.

Forgiveness and power are the two gifts that God gives us. On the day of Pentecost when Peter was preaching the first gospel sermon he preached about Christ lifted up Christ and a lot of people were convicted. We read in Acts chapter 2 and verse 37 the people were convicted in their heart and they said to Peter and the others brethren what shall we do and Peter said repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and you will receive two gifts forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

One is pardon and the other is power. We need both if you have to live the Christian life the way God wants us to live it. Not just pardon not just power you can't get power before you're pardoned.

Pardon and power. So let's just think of that for a moment. When I come to Christ and I acknowledge my sin that's all God asks me to do.

Acknowledge your sin. Only acknowledge your sin. That's all.

You can't do anything about it. Christ has already paid for it but when I acknowledge my sin you know God not only cleanses me there's something wonderful in the way God deals with our past. There is a word in the New Testament called justification.

A lot of Christians haven't understood the meaning of that. When God when the Bible says in Romans in chapter 3 that God justifies us. Romans in chapter 3 we read like this.

We are justified verse 24 as a gift by his grace. So the grace of God forgives us. We saw that in Ephesians 1 and we are justified by his grace.

Now justification is more than forgiveness. See forgiveness means I'm a criminal I've done a lot of wrong things and God in his great mercy looks at me and says you've done all these wrong things but I forgive you. That itself is wonderful.

I mean I'm extremely happy that I'm forgiven though I've got to hang my head in shame because I'm a forgiven criminal. But justification is even more than that. That when God forgives me he looks at me and says I have blotted out your past.

Hebrews 8 verse 12. I will not remember your sins anymore. You're all gone and now I'm going to look at you from now on as though you had never committed a sin in your whole life.

Think of that. Think of almighty God the pure holy God in whose presence angels tremble and they're afraid that he can look at me and look at me as though I've never committed a sin in my whole life. That's absolutely exciting that I can stand before a holy God just as if I'd never sinned in my whole life.

Can you imagine if you had actually never sinned in your whole life? How you would feel? Wouldn't you have a tremendous boldness to stand before God? Wouldn't you have a tremendous boldness to confront satan and say satan you can't touch me I've never sinned in my whole life. There is no sin. There's no spot in me.

It would give us tremendous boldness. We feel so inferior and insecure and weak because of the memory of sin in the past. All of us feel insecure and weak and guilty because of the memory of many things that we have done in the past which we know are wrong.

It robs us of our boldness when we even try to share the gospel with others until we know the truth of being justified freely by his grace. Romans 3 24 which means God looks at me as though I had never sinned in my life. Romans 5 9 says it's because I'm justified by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The blood that Jesus shed on the cross is a complete atonement to God for all my sin. So if I were to use a picture language that blood cleanses out my entire past life so thoroughly that when I look back there's nothing there. It's a pure life.

So justification means God says this guy is not a criminal. He's a righteous man. Forgiveness means this guy's a criminal but I've forgiven him.

Now which would you prefer to be known as a criminal but you've been forgiven or to be known as a righteous man who's not a criminal at all. You know we'd all prefer that but that is what justification does. Forgiveness let me repeat means God looks at me and says you're a criminal but you're forgiven completely.

Justification means God declares me righteous and say this person is not any criminal. He's a righteous man. Boy think of the difference that makes in my attitude that almighty God now doesn't call me a forgiven criminal.

He calls me a righteous man and says this person has never sinned in his whole life. That is the mighty power of the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing my past. There's no virtue in saying oh Lord but I'm such a sinner.

You know to say to keep saying that you're a sinner when God has blotted it all out through the blood of Christ is to insult God. That's not humility. That's unbelief.

When God says something if I say the same thing as God says well that's faith but if I don't say the same thing that God says and I say what I feel guilty about that's unbelief. It's not humility. When God declares you righteous to say oh no I'm such an unrighteous person that's not humility.

That's insulting God and I'm not going to do it personally. I'm just going to accept the fact that God has declared me to be righteous. He's dealt with my past completely so thoroughly that he's not only forgiven me he's justified.

Now if you believe that you accept these truths mentioned in Romans 3 24 and Romans 5 9 you will feel so confident when you stand before your father. You won't always feel oh God looks at me as though he's angry with me. I'm never good enough for him and he won't accept me as I am and the result is you don't accept other people as they are also.

Many husbands find fault with their wives. Many wives find fault with their husbands. It's all because listen to this they have not understood what it means to be justified freely.

When God declares me as though I've never sinned in my life it becomes very easy for me to look at other people and be merciful to them for all their faults. The lack of mercy that's found in many a Christian is because they themselves have not understood what it is to be justified freely by God's grace. If you don't believe it start trusting God for these promises.

Take by faith what God is offering as a gift justified as a gift but it'll never be yours. Romans 3 24 till you receive it we are justified by faith. Romans 5 1 by grace in Romans 3 24 through faith Romans 5 1 through the blood of Christ.

So what God gives by grace I need to take by faith and say yeah I'm declared righteous. I'm stand before God as if I've never sinned in my life and I can face the devil and say hey you got no power over me. God looks at me as one who's never sinned my whole life.

God delights in me. That is the tremendous power of the blood of Christ having taken care of my past. I need to emphasize this and emphasize this because this is the problem with so many believers.

They never seem to get rid of the guilt of the past and the devil keeps on harassing them because they don't understand justification and if you don't understand justification if it's not a clearly laid foundation in your life and you start trying to build your Christian life I tell you your house is going to shake and one day it'll collapse. I know nobody taught me this clearly when I got converted. I wish somebody had taught me.

The result was my Christian life was shaky till I went to God's word and found these things out for myself that God has declared me righteous and I am free from the guilt of the past and I don't have to remember anything any of the thousands of things I did wrong in my past life and you don't have to either. There I laid a foundation and when that foundation was laid you know just like in a building we start building after we have laid the foundation. We don't build before the foundation is complete and if you've not got the foundation of justification clear in your life and you try to build your Christian life I tell you that's the reason why you collapse.

That's the reason why you tend to fall down. So once the foundation is laid we can go to the next step. That is our second problem is the lack of power to overcome this nature of ours and for that God gives us the mighty power of his Holy Spirit.

See in the Old Testament people could not receive the Holy Spirit to live inside them. Why? Because their hearts were not clean and the Holy Spirit can never come and live in an unclean heart. He could come upon people and equip them to do certain jobs for him like Samson.

He could give him power to kill hundreds of Philistines single-handedly. He could give people power to preach, power to heal the sick. It was all external.

Many Old Testament people prophets and others had power but he could not live inside and make a person pure till Jesus Christ came and died for the sins of the world and made the means by which a man's heart could be pure. Then the Holy Spirit could come and live inside. That's the significance of the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out.

That could not happen before Christ died on the cross. Calvary had to precede Pentecost. So when Christ died on the cross that made provision for my sins to be cleansed away.

My heart could be clean. Now the Holy Spirit can come and dwell there and give me this power to live the Christian life the way it should be lived. Now you know many of us who are sincere Christians may have tried and tried to overcome sin in our life and trying to overcome sin is like a big struggle.

We try and try and try and for some time we are victorious and then we give up. It's too much of a problem. We can picture this like if you had not known anything about electricity and you see a fan you go to a room where you see a fan or maybe somebody has been kind enough to fit a fan in your house a ceiling fan and they tell you that when this fan rotates you can get some breeze and it can make the room cool.

So you tie a rope to that one of the blades of that fan and you keep turning it and turning it and turning it and you get some breeze. But how long can you go on like that? You get tired after some time and you give up. This is the experience of many Christians.

They try and try and try and try to live this Christian life and they have to admit they fail. This is what it means to live under the law. Under the law it was turning the fan on your own struggling struggling after some time you give up because you're just tired and exhausted.

But then somebody sees you and says hey that's not the way the fan is supposed to run. Put on the switch man and let the electricity flow. So when the electricity flows you don't need a rope.

The power comes into the fan and it goes round and round and round and round and you never get tired. It can run for 24 hours 48 hours no problem by the flow of electricity. Until electricity was discovered of course people couldn't have fans running like that.

So when you don't understand grace you cannot experience this power. You're trying to live the Christian life like a man trying to turn the fan with tying a rope to the blade and you get tired naturally and after some time you give up and you keep doing those sinful things which you're supposed to not do. But once you understand that God's way is to give you the power of his Holy Spirit it's exactly like electricity.

You suddenly get a power. Think think think of let me take another illustration take a bulb. A bulb can never burn by itself.

It has the capacity to give light but he can't give light till electricity comes in and that's a picture of man. Man has got the capacity like a bulb to reflect the image of God but he doesn't have the power. But when the Holy Spirit comes in it's exactly like electricity coming into a light it burns.

How much effort does a light bulb need to have in order to burn? If it just submits to the electricity coming in it burns effortlessly. Christian life is something like that. You allow the Holy Spirit to come and fill you give you grace and it solves this problem of your other nature seeking to drag you down into sin.

So this is God's dual provision for our dual problem for our past failure forgiveness and justification for our evil nature which the Bible calls the flesh the corrupt nature that we have inherited from Adam. For that God has given us the power of his Holy Spirit to fight against the flesh. But there is one difference between the bulb and us.

The bulb doesn't have a choice of its own it's just a lifeless being lifeless little thing that electricity goes in and it just submits there and the light burns. But in our case we have to make a choice. If we don't make a choice we're not going to be able to have this flow continuously and that's why we need to make a choice every day.

Lord I want this power to flow into me. It could be in different situations where I have to make a choice. Yes I want God's power to flow into me to overcome this problem.

Do you find it difficult for example because of your corrupt nature to forgive somebody who hurt you? That's a big problem for many Christians. I can find it very difficult to forgive that man that's fine. It's like you're finding it difficult to keep turning that fan with your hand.

Sure it's natural that you find it difficult but if God can give you the electric power to run that fan would you be willing to receive that? If God is willing to give you the supernatural love for a man who hurt you are you willing to receive it to forgive that person? If you're willing for that you can receive. Everything depends on your willingness. Do you want to be forgiven of your past? God's willing to forgive you.

Do you want power to overcome this corrupt nature that you got from Adam? God's willing to give it to you. You must be willing to receive. All you have to do is say Lord forgive me my sin and please fill me with your Holy Spirit.

I want to live a life that pleases you. That is how God makes a provision for man's dual problem. God bless you.

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