

God's Ways Are Different From Ours

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of humility, gratitude, and understanding God's ownership over our lives and possessions in his sermon on how God's ways differ from ours.

Duration: 1:00:04

Scripture: Isaiah 55:8-9, Luke 8:2-3, John 11:6, Romans 6:11, 2 Corinthians 4:10

Topics: "Humility", "Dying To Self"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility after being blessed by God, highlighting how pride often arises through comparison with others and the need to die to self in order to manifest the life of Jesus. It discusses the challenges of staying humble, avoiding covetousness, and the significance of dying to self daily to experience the power of Christ in our lives.

Transcript

In our last session, we saw how God created the universe with one word. It was the easiest thing for God to create the universe. As easy as it is for you to speak a sentence, God could speak a sentence and create the universe.

It was very easy for God to create the universe. What is today the most difficult thing for God to do? As I have thought about it, the most difficult thing for God to do is to keep a man or a woman humble after He has blessed them. After He has blessed them.

Because once God has blessed you in some way, spiritually or materially, we have a tendency to get puffed up. We think we are special. We have this crazy idea that God loves us more than other people.

Because we all have this tendency to compare ourselves with others. Do you know that all pride comes by comparing ourselves with other people? I often ask this question. If a child got 10 out of 100 in mathematics in a class, can he be proud? Yes or no? All the others in the class got 5, 4, 3, 1, 0. Can he be proud? He got 10 out of 100 and he comes home and says, Mummy, I came first in the class.

How can a person be proud when he gets 10 out of 100? How can a person be proud when he gets 10 out of 100? Because of comparing. And you are not a spiritual person. But how did you become proud? Because you compare yourself with those people who got 5, 3, 1, 0. You see the foolishness of pride.

Now, you take the same boy who got 10 out of 100. Put him in another school where everybody in the class is getting 98, 99, 100. Then what happens to him? He doesn't come home excited.

He says, Mummy, I came last in the class. And suddenly he became very humble. By comparison.

So, pride comes through comparison. Humility comes through comparison. So, the devil will always make you look at other people who are not as good as you.

And show that you are better than them. To puff you up. But when it comes to material things, He will not let you look at people who got less than you because you may be happy then.

He will show you things, people who got more than you so that you can always be jealous and covetous and want more and more. We must not be ignorant of the tricks of Satan. So, remember this.

In spiritual matters, he will make you look at other people and think you are more spiritual than them. But in earthly things, he will not allow you to look at the people in the slum and say, give thanks that you are so much better than them. Because then you will not grumble and complain.

And the devil wants you always to be covetous, wanting more. And to grumble and complain. So, he will show you people who got more than you.

And then you will be covetous. And you will be jealous. So, we have to be not ignorant of Satan's schemes.

So, the secret of, you know, earlier we were talking about how to love Jesus. Do you remember the three things I said? One, we love him because he first loved us. The more you meditate on that, the more you love him.

Second, the one who is forgiven more, loves more. So, you must think of how much the Lord has forgiven you. And then thirdly, to love God more, we have to love money less.

So, the more you move away from the love of money, the closer you will get to the love of God. Having money is not wrong. Loving money is totally wrong.

See, if you have worked hard and you earned money, that's a good thing. But provided you have learned to be rich towards God who enabled you to earn all that money. Do you know that all the money you have belongs to God? I'll show you that from scripture.

Don't believe anything I say if I can't show it to you from scripture. 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 26 1 Corinthians 10, 26 The earth belongs to the Lord and everything that is on this earth also belongs to the Lord. The fullness of the earth means everything on this earth.

All the trees, all the gold and silver hidden underground, all the money in all the banks in the world, it all belongs to the Lord. There's nothing on earth that belongs to any man. It's a clear verse.

Everything on earth belongs to the Lord. See, people ask me, supposing I find some currency note on the road, what should I do with it? I mean, you look around and see if somebody's dropped it, wait for a little while. If somebody's dropped it, they'll come and pick it up.

But otherwise, pick it up and put it in the offering box because everything on earth belongs to the Lord. But otherwise, pick it up and put it in the offering box because everything on earth belongs to the Lord. And first of all, remember that what you have earned belongs to the Lord.

And in the old testament, they did not have that understanding. Your gratitude to God for what he's done for you. See, in the old testament, tithe was not money.

It was grain. Or cattle. That means God blessed their farm or their flocks.

And 10% of that they gave to show their gratitude to God. Because out of the 12 tribes, one tribe was told not to do any earthly work. You must not have any fields.

You must not even have a house. You must not have any flocks. Those are the Levites.

They had to spend all of their time serving God in the temple. So then how will they live? So the other 11 tribes were told, What you earned from your flock and your fields, bring 10% and give it to the Levites. So if 11 tribes brought 10%, that was more than 100%.

The Levites would get a share also. And that was like today the government charges income tax. In Israel, God was the head of the government.

And the Levites were like the government servants. Today the government servants are paid from the income tax that you pay them. And whatever tax is given, those people who work in the government office get paid.

So God said, give 10%. And this is how the Levites were looked after. But in the New Covenant, God is not the head of the government.

He is our father. Do you pay income tax in your house to your father? No. So that is why we don't believe in paying 10% to our father.

Supposing you are a working son or daughter in your home and you are not yet married. And your father is poor and he is living with you. Won't you take care of his needs? Not out of any law.

Out of gratitude. If your parents are poor, you will give them a lot of money. Out of gratitude.

Even if your parents are rich, you may still take them a gift out of gratitude. So God is not poor. He is not a beggar.

He is the biggest richest person in the universe. You know all these people who preach that God's work is suffering, please support God's work. They are picturing God like a beggar.

And they fool believers to go and give money to them. And almost every church proclaims like that. We need money, give money, give money, give money.

You know who never said that? Who is the one who never said that? Jesus. And the apostles. You never read in the gospel, anywhere in the New Testament they are saying give me money, give me money.

Jesus said give money to the poor. That he said many times. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, give money to the poor believers in Jerusalem.

But never do you read in the New Testament, give me money, I am serving the Lord. Or give money to these preachers. Not even once.

Then we can ask, How are these preachers supposed to live? Aren't these preachers like the Levites in the Old Testament? No. Because one of the greatest preachers, the apostle Paul worked with his own hands. The Levites were not allowed to work.

Paul worked. And many servants of the Lord through these 20 centuries have worked and served the Lord. That's how I have served the Lord for the last more than 40 years that we have had CFC.

Not only me, all the other elders. We followed Paul's example. So it's very important in this area of money that we have a good testimony.

But we read that some people gave money to Jesus. How did Jesus support himself? Luke 8 verse 2 and 3. Verse 3. Luke 8 verse 3. Luke 8 verse 3. He never asked them. If they voluntarily gave, he took it.

Same way Paul says in Philippians. And chapter 4. And verse 10. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that you have revived your concern for me.

Not because I want anything. Verse 11. Because I've learned to be content in whatever I have.

It is in this context of money that he says in verse 13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I'm not dependent on your supporting me.

And if you don't support me, the Lord will strengthen me. But you have done well to help me in my need. And now.

Verse 17. I do not seek the gift. But the profit which will increase to your account.

He says I don't need anything. But when you give me something. I think of the blessing that will come to you.

Paul never made his need known to anyone. Do you know sometimes Paul was hungry? And sometimes he was shivering in the cold. But he never told anybody his need.

That is the testimony we have maintained. In all of our churches. It's a very important testimony.

Because there are two masters. God and money. And we never want to become a slave of money.

We don't want to push people to give money. If you come to our CFC Bangalore. On top of the offering box.

We have five conditions written there. Before you put money in this box. Check these things.

Number one. Are you born again? A person who is not born again. Cannot give money for God's work.

See this verse. This is the third epistle of John. John wrote three letters.

This is the third letter. There is only one chapter there. And it says here.

The people who went out preaching. In the name of Jesus. Took nothing from the non-Christians.

And it is written there. The people who went out preaching. Took nothing from the non-Christians.

If the non-Christians give anything. They don't say thank you. And it is a great privilege.

To serve God. But this privilege is only with his children. Are you born again? If not.

Put your money back into your pocket. Don't put it here. Second.

Are you in debt to somebody? Jesus said. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. And give to God what is God's.

If you owe some tax to Caesar. Go and pay Caesar. Don't put it in the offering box.

Or. If you borrowed money from that person. And you put money in the box.

It's not your money. That is that person's money. That person can say.

God. How can he give you my money? He should return my debt. God doesn't want Caesar's money.

Or anybody else's money. If you are in debt. Don't put money in the offering box.

Give it to that person. I want to clarify something. To take a loan for a house.

Is not a debt. No. You take loan from a bank to build a house.

Why is it not a debt? See if you take a weighing balance. One side is a house. The other is a bank loan.

Equal. Or take a loan to buy a car. There is no debt.

Because if you die. The bank will take the house. There is no debt.

So that is no debt. But if you borrow money from people. For some other thing.

You are in debt to that person. So people ask me. Should I give that person? Or should I give to God? But if you give to God.

You are giving that person's money. God doesn't want other people's money. But people say.

But I also owe God money. No. You don't owe God any money.

If you give to God. You must give joyfully. Not like a debt.

So that's the second thing. If you are in debt. Don't give to God.

The third thing. Jesus said. If when you come with your offering.

You remember. Somebody has got something against you. And he got something against you.

Because you hurt him. Because you hurt him. Don't put the offering there.

Go to him. Settle it. Then come and put your offering.

So that's the third condition. Has somebody got something against you. Because you did some harm to him.

Don't put your money here. Go. Settle it with him.

And number four. See there is a verse in 1 Timothy 5.8 That if you don't take care of your family. You are worse than an unbeliever.

So. If your children are in need. They don't have enough food.

They don't have proper clothes. Or you don't have money to educate them. Take care of them.

I am not talking about buying a car for each of them. I am not talking about things like that. I am saying if they have need of food.

Clothing or education. Don't put money in the box. Take care of your children.

Don't let your children grow up and say. We could never get proper education. Because daddy gave his money to God.

We had to wear torn clothes. Because daddy gave his money to God. Your children will turn against God.

So. Be right there. Take care of your children.

And number five. One thing I want to say. Take care of your children doesn't mean.

You pay a dowry for your daughter. That is not a need. Take care of your children.

Doesn't mean. You pay a dowry for your daughter. No.

God is 100% against dowry. You are disobeying God when you give dowry. Let me clarify.

It is right to give your daughter. An equal inheritance with your sons. That is okay.

When you die or whenever you write a will. That's okay. But not to buy a husband.

Don't buy a husband with dowry. That's not going to be a very happy marriage. Fifth condition is.

Don't do business with God. Don't give thinking that you will get a reward from God. Give saying.

Lord I don't want anything back. This is for you. So.

These are the five conditions. So some people come and they see all that. And they don't put anything and go away.

See these are like filters. One, two, three, four, five filters. So somebody asked me once.

Brother Zack with all these filters. Does anybody put anything in the box at all? Do you get any money? I said we have followed this principle for 41 years. And if you go to our website.

You will see this. Financial. Our financial policy.

That everyone in the world also can read it. We are not looking for money from anywhere in the world. We never send a report of our work anywhere.

You know for many years now. We have sent out a weekly message called word for the week. No we have sent a message from the word of God.

For many years. And there are thousands of people around the world who get it. We never send a report to all of them of what we are doing.

Because Jesus never gave a report to people of what he was doing. The apostles never sent reports to all the churches what they were doing. And the inspirations never sent a report of what they were doing.

And the inspirations and the elders shared among themselves what they were doing. And we share among our elders what God is doing. But we don't advertise it because advertising is like asking people for money.

So we are a unique church like that. For 41 years in all our nearly 75 churches we have never taken an offering in any church. None of our elders get any payment.

And God has met all our needs. When we put up a building we don't go to a bank for money. See because in many of our village churches we have to put up a building because all those Hindus and all will not give us their houses to have a church meeting.

So we have to put up a building. But we never ask people for money. Where we get we build, if we don't have we don't build.

So I am saying we need to know these principles that if we want to build a New Testament church we depend only upon God. We are not proud of it. God is a good God.

That is what we are trying to proclaim. God's ways are not man's ways. See Isaiah 55 Now many people listen to these ways we are saying.

We do our God's work and they can't understand why we do it like this. I say because we follow Jesus. I told you if you compare yourself with somebody better than you, you will always remain humble.

So we don't compare ourselves with other churches. We don't say we are better than other churches. If we get 10% we don't look at other people who get 5% and 4%.

We look at the one who got 100% Jesus Christ. We don't look at other Christians or other churches. We do things differently.

Because we follow Jesus. We still have not become like him. We want to be more like him.

We want to be like him in our attitude to money. We want to be like him in the way we speak. In the way we handle money.

In the way we look at women with purity just like Jesus looked at them. In the way we look at Pharisees denouncing Pharisees just like Jesus did. In the way we look at sinful women or men with compassion saying God forgives you.

In the way we look at sinful women or men with compassion saying God forgives you. We want to have the same attitude Jesus had towards people, towards things, towards everything. We want to have the same attitude Jesus had towards people, towards things, towards everything.

That requires a big change in our way of thinking. You see this verse Isaiah 55 verse 8 and 9. My thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways my ways says the Lord.

And we say Lord what is the difference between your ways and my ways, our ways and your ways. The Lord says in verse 9 as high as the heaven is above the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. So when many Christians hear about the way how we handle money in our church.

So when many Christians hear about the way how we handle money in our church. Or how we handle money our policy on money. And they say hey this is very different from what we have seen in other churches.

Because in every church they are always asking us to give money. But yours is different. You don't ever ask for it.

Is it because you got a lot of millionaires in your church? No. We've got poor people in our church. But we've got a rich heavenly father.

And we tell him our need. And his thoughts are different from the thoughts of most Christians. So we don't do it like other Christians do.

We do it the way Jesus did it. I never see Jesus telling anybody his financial need. Or any earthly need.

I never hear Jesus complaining about something. And so we must make our ways like his ways. And that is so much higher than other people.

And that is the only type of church I want to be in. I never want to be a part of a church where they are interested in money. Because the closer you get to money, the further away you are from God.

And the more you talk about money, the more you drift away from God. That is why I will never sit in a church that is always talking about money. Where they talk about God.

And about becoming like Jesus. That is a very important principle. There are people who wonder, why are we not growing spiritually? Because you are sitting in a church which is more interested in your money than making you like Jesus Christ.

It's like saying, why are my children getting 10% in mathematics? Because you put them in some corporation school where the teacher never comes. Why do you put your children in good schools? Because you want them to get a good education. If somebody is sick, why do you put them in a good hospital? We choose a good school.

We choose a good hospital. We choose not a good church. They say, my father used to go to this church.

Grandfather also. Do you send your child to the same school your grandfather went to? If your mother is sick, do you send them to the hospital your grandmother was taken to? There are better schools today, better hospitals today. And there are better churches.

But why are we careful about hospital and school? But not about church. Listen to the truth. You value good education for your children.

You value good medical treatment for your loved ones. But you don't value obedience to God's word when you go to a church. That's why you don't check, is this church obeying God's word? That's why you don't check, is this church obeying God's word? You go to a hospital and everything is dirty.

And you say, no, I don't want to put my loved one in this hospital. That's the reason many people don't grow. You have to learn to think the way God thinks.

That's why he has given us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit changes our way of thinking. God has been changing my way of thinking for more than 50 years.

To learn to think the way Jesus thinks. To love like Jesus. To be firm like Jesus.

To say to sinners, I don't condemn you, God forgives you. And when people make money in the name of religion, to take a whip and chase them out of the church. That is Jesus.

Who had grace and truth. Who was loving and strict. God's ways are not our ways.

He doesn't work the way we think it should be done. For example, we thought about, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. But before he can give us that strength, He has to make us weak.

Many of us don't understand. Why is God taking us through so many trials? He's taking us through trials to make us weak. Then only his power can come inside you.

See, when people say, Oh brother, I lose my temper so easily. I get angry. I get angry so quickly because I'm so weak.

Tell me honestly. Are weak people get angry or strong people get angry? You take an angry man who's admitted in a hospital. And first day he's yelling at the nurses and angry with everything.

You see him after a week, he has become a little weaker. And he doesn't have much strength to shout at the nurses now. And one more week, he's become very weak now.

And now he doesn't get angry at all. When was he getting angry? When he was strong. So don't say, I'm so weak brother, I get angry so easily.

That's a lie. Say, brother, I'm so strong, I'm angry. God has to make you weak.

God has to make you weak. Then only he can manifest his power in you. And I'll show you many examples of that.

Jesus once heard that Lazarus, his friend, was sick. Very close friend. Supposing you hear that your close relative is seriously sick.

What do you do? You'll get a ticket immediately and go. Listen to this. John 11 verse 6. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed two more days in the same place.

It's like you're hearing, my mother is seriously sick. I think I'll wait here two more days. Is this God's way? Is this man's way? No.

Jesus waited. And I think he stayed more than two days. Because, by the time he reached Lazarus' place, he was already dead for four days.

They said, don't open the tomb. He's dead for four days. He heard the message when he was sick.

But he went only after he was dead for four days. What is the spiritual lesson there? Lazarus has to die. There's a spiritual lesson here.

God can manifest his power in you only after you die. Spiritually. So, Jesus waits.

Jesus waits. Lazarus can still move around, so I have to wait. He can still lift his hand and all, I have to wait.

Now he's dead. Just to make sure he's dead, let's wait another four days. Maybe only a coma, don't know.

Four days means he's really dead. Inside the grave buried, definitely dead. Now I can go and manifest my power.

There's a spiritual lesson here. For you and me. As long as we think, I can do something for the Lord.

Jesus has to wait. He's still very confident in himself. He thinks he can get victory over sin just by a little more determination.

And the next day you're weaker and Jesus says, no, not yet. He's not fully dead yet. He had to become weak and completely dead to yourself.

I have no strength. In the church, we speak a lot about dying to self. And I have no strength.

And that's the meaning of taking up the cross every day. Die to self. And a lot of us hear it.

And we think we are dead. But we're not really dead. In the conference in Bangalore, I was telling a story that I heard.

They were acting a drama of Jesus dying on the cross. So there was one man hanging there on the cross. And these other fellows were supposed to spit at him and all that.

Pretend to spit and so on. But one man really spat at him. And this man on the cross said, wait till I come down from the cross.

I'll teach you a lesson. That is how many believers die to themselves. They haven't really died.

They're pretending to hang there and I've died to myself. Somebody provokes them and you discover suddenly that they haven't died yet. God has to wait till we are really willing to die to ourselves.

So many times when somebody comes and tells me, brother, this person has done this to me. My question is, how will a dead man react to that? You act like that. That is the meaning of dying with Jesus.

See Romans chapter 6. Verse 6. Your old man was crucified with Christ. So what should we do? Verse 11. Consider yourself to be dead.

Consider yourself to be dead. Because God has crucified you on the cross with Christ. So in the early days when I was trying to understand this, I can do all things through Christ to strengthen.

I must die first. Otherwise I'm doing it in my own strength and I'll fail. I want to do all things through Christ who strengthens me, not through my determination.

We saw in the case of Lazarus, Christ will come only after you die fully. This is the way I used to picture it. This is the way I pictured it in my mind.

Somebody gets angry with me or provokes me in some way. I say here I am lying as a dead man. I'm lying as a dead man here.

Somebody comes and shouts at me. What is the reaction in that moment? If he's really dead not pretending to be dead. No reaction.

That is what it means to reckon yourself dead to sin. Now that's not only when somebody criticizes you. What if somebody praises you? I've said some very good thing about you.

You don't get puffed up because you go to this dead man. Oh you're such a wonderful man. You're a great man of God.

He's not affected by it. It's a wonderful thing to be dead to the world. Alive unto Christ.

That was not possible in the old covenant. It's possible in the new covenant. The Holy Spirit helped Jesus to die.

The Holy Spirit will help me to die. He'll die to myself in every situation. Why did Jesus say take up the cross everyday? Because everyday we are facing some temptation.

People praise us or criticize us. The praise can puff us up with pride. And the criticism can make us angry.

For everything we need to die. It's not only everyday. Second Corinthians four.

It says we must always verse ten carry about in our body the dying of Jesus. Second Corinthians four ten. Always carrying in our body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus will be seen in our body.

Why always? Not just once a day. Always means throughout the day I can be tempted by so many people. I would keep asking myself how will a dead man react to this? How will a dead person react to this? He will not be affected.

This is the meaning of reckon yourself dead. Romans six eleven. This is the meaning of always carrying in our body the dying of Jesus.

What is the reward you'll get? Same verse. The life of Jesus will come forth in you. The bible says if you die with him you will live with him.

Then you ask yourself this question. In some situations why is the life of Jesus not being manifested in you? Answer second Corinthians four ten. You are not dying with Jesus at that time.

That is why your own life comes forth not the life of Jesus. Your life is the life of the flesh the life of Adam. I'll give you one example and finish.

John's gospel chapter seven. We read here that Jesus came and preached in the temple one day. He was preaching the whole day.

And at the end of the day remember this is in Jerusalem. Jesus' home was in which is about hundred kilometers away. And now he's in Jerusalem.

He's preaching there. And since at the end of the day John's seven fifty three last verse. Everybody went to their own house.

But where was Jesus' house? Hundred kilometers away. Nobody asked him where are you staying tonight? Lord please come to my house. Imagine all those people who are blessed by the message never asked him where he's staying that night.

You know how ungrateful they were for the blessing they got. So what did Jesus do? He didn't complain. It says in verse one next verse Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

This is one sentence. Everyone went to his own house but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. I'm sure if somebody had asked Jesus to come to his house he'd have gone to that house.

When he went to Emmaus and the two people said come to our house he went. But here nobody called him. Looks around everybody's gone.

What shall I do? Well praise God it's not raining. I can go and sleep under the trees. Perfectly happy.

Next morning verse two he comes to the temple and all the people came sat down and nobody asked him by the way Lord where did you stay last night? Can you imagine the ungratefulness of these people? And he also does not mention anything. You know how sometimes we like to make people feel bad by saying you know last night I was sleeping under the trees in the Mount of Olives. There are preachers like that who give little hints.

He never said a word. Why? He died to himself. A dead man doesn't complain if somebody doesn't show anything.

No if they don't treat me well what does it matter? This is how Jesus lived. And people called him Beelzebul Prince of Devils. He said forgive him.

To bear the dying of Jesus means that's the way I go. And if I die like that say Lord I want to be like a dead man. If people don't invite me to their home I just go sleep under the trees.

Or railway station or somewhere. But I will not complain because I've died. Then you will be able to experience Christ strengthen me I can do everything.

Let's pray. Heavenly father help us to be gripped by these truths. So that we can really experience the strengthening of Christ.

In Jesus name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/fwME7Op3YTU.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/gods-ways-are-different-from-ours/>

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