

God's Wonderful Message in 'Ephesians'

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being established in the foundational truths of God's Word found in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3 before moving on to practical living in chapters 4, 5, and 6. It highlights the need for revelation from the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit in the inner man to live out these truths. The speaker encourages deep study of the Scriptures, prayer for revelation, and a focus on knowing God through His Word to be strong and do exploits for Him in the last days.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:6, Ephesians 1:17, Ephesians 3:16, Daniel 11:32

Topics: "Foundational Truths", "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being established in the foundational truths of God's Word found in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3 before moving on to practical living in chapters 4, 5, and 6. It highlights the need for revelation from the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit in the inner man to live out these truths. The speaker encourages deep study of the Scriptures, prayer for revelation, and a focus on knowing God through His Word to be strong and do exploits for Him in the last days.

Transcript

Let's turn to Ephesians. I want to speak on Ephesians because this is the most spiritual of all of Paul's letters that we wrote. If you compare it with all the letters, there's a lot more spiritual truth here than in any of his other letters.

And in 1 Corinthians 2, he says, we cannot speak to you as to spiritual men. 1 Corinthians 3, 1. I, brethren, cannot speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh and infants in Christ. So we see here that Paul did not speak in the same way to all the churches or to all the believers.

He, inspired by the Spirit, he gauged the spiritual level of each church and wrote letters accordingly. And in 1 Corinthians, he says, you guys, I can only, 1 Corinthians 3, I can only give you milk to drink because you're not able to receive anything more than that. It's just like you don't put solid food in the mouth of a one-month-old baby.

It'll choke to death. In the same way, something similar to that, Paul could not say many things to the Corinthians. He says in 1 Corinthians 2, I could only preach among you, verse 2, 1 Corinthians 2, verse 2, only Jesus Christ and him crucified.

In other words, all I could teach you folks is how your sins can be forgiven. And because you guys are giving out sinning, and you don't take sin seriously. So what can I tell you? You're all babies, and I can only tell you about confess your sin, repent, accept.

And I know you're going to do it again next week and the week after that, even though you've been believers for so many years, you just keep on in that endless circle of sinning and then repenting and asking the Lord to forgive you and sinning and repenting. You never seem to break out of that circle. That is the Corinthian church, and there are lots of people today who are in a similar condition.

Okay? They are in that, I believe they're in that condition because they're satisfied to be in that condition. They don't seem to get fed up of living in this endless circle of sinning, confessing, cleansed, defeated again, confessing, cleansed, and never any growth. Now, if we are falling in sort of less and less, I mean falling, but not in the same old areas, then at least there's progress.

Just like in a student who goes to school, they find mathematics in the first grade tough. He finds mathematics in the second grade tough, in the fifth grade it is tough, in the 10th grade it is tough, but at different levels. I mean, if a 10th grade student is finding first grade mathematics tough, that's sad.

He can find 10th grade mathematics tough. So, spiritual growth is something like that, that we are overcoming a number of sins, but discovering new areas. Just like a person goes into mathematics, discovers new areas of math that they didn't even know existed when they were in the first grade.

Spiritual growth is something like that, where we discover new areas of unchristlikeness, I call it unchristlikeness rather than obvious sin, in our life that we didn't even know existed before. Then we are making progress. So, the Corinthians were like that, but he says to them in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 6, but we do speak wisdom among those who are mature.

So, he says, I can't speak that to you because you guys are not mature, but we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, but it's a wisdom not of human cleverness of this age of the clever people in this world, but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery. This word mystery is something that is found only in the New Testament. In our churches, we have spoken much about the new covenant, but one of the distinctive features of the new covenant is the word mystery, and a mystery is, to define it in simple words, a secret, a divine secret that can only be understood by divine revelation, and that's a matter of the spirit and not of the mind.

With a clever mind, we can understand the Bible very well intellectually and be completely blind to its mysteries. Mystery is a word which refers to a secret, and he speaks here about God's wisdom being a secretive thing, a hidden thing, which the entire Old Testament people could never understand, not because they were not serious disciples. According to the light they had, I mean, think of a man like Moses or John the Baptist, for example.

I think John the Baptist was far more radical than almost every Christian I ever met in my life, but yet he was under the old covenant. Jesus said the least person in God's kingdom is ahead of someone like John the Baptist, not because he's more wholehearted, but because he has opportunity to understand more. It's like saying a young boy today can calculate a mathematic problem faster than Albert Einstein, not because he's cleverer than Einstein, but because he's got a computer which Einstein never had.

So, when the Lord said that the least in God's kingdom can be higher than John the Baptist, it doesn't mean we are more wholehearted. Like I said, I've hardly ever in my life found a Christian who's more wholehearted than John the Baptist, but we have access to so much more, and we can think we are more spiritual because we understand some of these things. We understand many things that Moses and John the Baptist didn't understand.

It doesn't mean we are more spiritual, and it doesn't mean that we have understood the secrets. See this verse in Psalm 25, it says, Psalm 25, it says, the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him. Psalm 25, verse 14.

This is the mystery. To them he will make known his covenant. Psalm 25, 14.

There are two words there, mystery and covenant, and they are both revealed to those who fear him. And it goes on to say, further down, the Lord will reveal his will to those, sorry, verse 12, who is the man who fears the Lord. Again, that word, the fear of the Lord, he will instruct him in the way he should choose.

And the other quality mentioned here in Psalm 25 is verse 9, he leads the humble in justice. So there are two qualities mentioned in Psalm 25 which qualify us to understand the new covenant and the mysteries in our spirit, humility and the fear of the Lord. Like it says in one of the Proverbs, where it says, by humility and the fear of the Lord, we become spiritually wise and spiritually rich.

Now, it's possible to know the scriptures, to know the Bible well, to understand all the messages preached in our churches well with a good mind. And yet, with that good mind, we may not have a clue about the secrets of the Lord, or what exactly the new covenant is all about. So let's turn to this word mystery again in 1 Timothy, in chapter 3. In 1 Timothy, chapter 3, it speaks about the mystery of godliness.

As I told you, mystery is a new covenant word, never found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament was really a question of understanding, and that's why the Old Testament produced scribes. But Jesus said in Psalm 13 that the scribe must become a disciple.

So here in 1 Timothy 3.13, it speaks about the mystery of godliness being great. In other words, the secret of godliness is a very big secret. It's one of the greatest secrets of God, of all the mysteries of God.

The secret of, like the Living Bible says, the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter. It's a secret that God reveals to the humble and to those who fear him. There are so many brothers and sisters who attend CFC meetings regularly, and they have been in CFC many years, but they are still defeated by anger in their homes, still defeated by dirty thoughts, and sometimes even defeated with an unforgiving attitude towards someone, or an unwillingness to apologize to one's wife or husband.

Why is it like that? A lack of humility and a lack of the fear of God. And such believers can sit in a CFC church for years and come along and go along with everybody else and imagine that they are part of a wonderful church until the day they stand before the Lord and discover that they were not better than a Babylonian Christian, because they never took sin seriously in their life. I'm telling you this after watching CFC churches for 45 years, and all types of believers, and I'm not fooled when I'm not fooled by people who pretend to be spiritual.

It's God gives us discernment. So it's very important to understand these mysteries, secrets. So there are two secrets which are called great secrets.

One is how to live a godly life. 1 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16. And the answer to that, it says, is in knowing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, came like a man with a self-will and was tempted like us in every point.

Now we preach that often in the church and intellectually many people have understood it. But there's a lot of difference between getting a revelation on it. You remember what the Lord told Peter when Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus said, you're blessed, Simon, because you did not discover that with your intelligence. Jesus, my father in heaven gave you a revelation. How did Peter recognize that this person in front of him was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies? When there were people in Israel who had studied the Bible 10 times more than Peter, who had studied the Bible for 30 years more than Peter, and did not see that this was the Messiah.

It's not because they were not clever. Peter was not a clever one. The Bible calls him in Acts 4 as one of the uneducated people in Israel.

But it was revelation, a very, very important word in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, you did not need revelation. To study the law, you only need to have a good mind.

If you were intelligent, you could study the law and keep it all perfectly. But a good mind is not enough. In fact, it's no use in the New Testament.

It is revelation. And so, the reason why Peter got was because he had a humility about him. And not only humility, a sincerity, which made him give up everything as soon as the Lord told him to do something.

There was no hesitation to give up his nets or his fishing. See, that's the mark of a godly person. A real disciple is one who obeys instantly, not who obeys after four or five years.

The Lord says, give up your nets immediately. The Lord says, give up some sin, you drop it immediately. That's a serious Christian.

Not one who has to think about it. Not one who has to tell the Lord, well, Lord, let me think about it and I'll come back to you. That's why he got revelation.

So, I told you there are two great mysteries in the New Testament. We need to understand both. And one is the one we saw in 1 Timothy 3.16. The mystery of godliness, the secret of how to live a godly life.

And I've really seen through the years, it's really a secret. Many clever, clever people who come to our meetings, who listen to all our YouTube messages, never come to a life of victory in daily life. They grumble, they complain, they murmur, they love money.

They do everything that Jesus forbade. But they understand the message intellectually so well that perhaps they can even preach it to others. The other great mystery is what we read in Ephesians 5. He speaks about a husband-wife relationship.

In Ephesians 5.30, we are members of Christ's body. And for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. And we think that refers to marriage.

He says no. Verse 32, this is a great mystery. I'm speaking about Christ and his church becoming one flesh.

Yeah, it is a mystery. So the proof of these two, that we've understood these two mysteries. Number one, the secret of a godly life.

And the second is the church being built as the body and the bride of Jesus Christ. These are the two areas where most of Christendom has not understood. How to live a practical, daily, holy life as described in the Gospels, where we start murmuring and complaining, and we pursue up to perfection in our life, overcome dirty thoughts and forgive everyone and ask forgiveness from anyone we've hurt, and seek with all our heart to be free from the love of money, and have the same passion that God's heart has to reflect the life of Christ in our daily life, and, as it says here, to be built together with others.

Like when it says here about leaving our earthly connections, what's the meaning of Ephesians 5.31? A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to God. Jesus left his father and came here to become one with us, his bride, and he invites us in Luke 14.26 to hate father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, to be his disciple. Very, very few Christians would take that seriously.

But they are the ones who've understood these great mysteries, because they fear God. One of the marks of the fear of God is that I don't have to make the Lord tell me something a second time. Once is enough.

I don't need to hear a command ten times. I don't even need to hear it twice. I hear it once, and even if it takes me ten years to get there, I'm going to get there.

Those are people who take the New Testament seriously, who take everything that Jesus said seriously, who take what the Holy Spirit has said in the Epistles seriously. They will come into a life which is way beyond the average CFC church Christian who has understood all the doctrines and who apparently is stirred when they come to a Sunday meeting. But it doesn't seem—you know, I've come across so many people who are stirred in a Sunday meeting or in a meeting like this, but it doesn't seem to produce much of a change in their life the next day or the next week or the next month.

It's pretty much the same. It's like a child who's got a very good teacher in school, but he's still sitting in the same class year after year after year. You really need to take it seriously, brothers.

The Bible says let a man examine himself. That's something you need to examine. Let a man judge himself.

It's something you need to do seriously. So in Ephesians, let me just share a little bit about Ephesians. Ephesians is one of the most neatly divided letters of Paul.

It's got six chapters, and the interesting thing is in the first three chapters, there are no exhortations. There's not a single command telling us what to do in the first three chapters. Now, if you want to discover a command, you can go there, but it isn't there.

The first three chapters of Ephesians are only describing what it means to be in Christ, because that's the expression that comes frequently—in Christ. That's the subject of Ephesians, in a sense. And then chapter four begins with the word therefore, and the next three chapters are full of commands and exhortations.

So you see the balance there. The first three chapters are the foundation of what God has done for us, and on that foundation, we build chapter four, five, and six—what we are to do for the Lord. Now, if you go into chapter four, five, and six without understanding properly what chapters one, two, and three teach, you're going to have a lot of problems.

It's like building a house without a foundation. You don't have a foundation. You're very serious about building the house.

If you go to chapter four and five and six, it's got some amazing commands. It says, for example, in chapter four that we must preserve—chapter four, verse three—preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It must be a passion of my life to preserve the unity of the Spirit with every one of my fellow members in the church, with your wife, your husband, with everyone in the church in peace.

Not just a vague desire, but a passion. And I'm just picking out a few verses. Verse 15, always speaking the truth in love.

It must be my passion to speak the truth, but to speak it in love always, not seeking to be diplomatic. Because then it says we will grow up along with all the others in the body. And think of some of the other commands here.

It says in Ephesians 4, 25, putting aside all falsehood, never to tell a lie, always speaking the truth. Verse 26, never being angry lest we—and if you do slip up, verse 26, before the sun goes down, before you go to bed, set it right. That is the outer limit to ask forgiveness for getting angry before you go to bed.

How many Christians live like this? I tell you, if you have a church full of Christians like this, it'll be a very powerful witness for Christ. And he goes on to say, there must be no stealing. And you may think we don't need it, but if you cheat on your taxes, you're stealing.

Or if you take something that doesn't belong to someone, it's not yours, you're stealing. If you borrow something and you don't return it, you're stealing. So these are commands.

And then it goes on to say in verse 29, let no unwholesome word, in other words, unhealthy word, no unhealthy word should come from your mouth, but only what is good for edification. Because if such words come out of your mouth, you're grieving the Holy Spirit, verse 30. And all bitterness and all wrath and all anger, verse 31, and all clamor and all slander must be put away from you completely.

Now you see, if there are a number of chairs in a room, and I say, we want to clear all the chairs from this room, out of this room, how many are left? Not even one chair. So when it says all bitterness must be put away, how much bitterness should there be in your life? Zero. When it says all wrath and anger must be put away from your life, how much must be left? Zero.

All gossiping, slandering others, says your when it's put away, how much is left? Forgiving one another, verse 32, exactly as God has forgiven you. My heart of forgiveness towards others must gradually become as large as Jesus' heart was on the Calvary's cross, where he forgave people who were outright evil to him, killed him, whipped him, beat him, killed him, and did not repent, did not ask for forgiveness. You don't have to wait for anybody to ask for forgiveness before you forgive, and Jesus' example on the cross is there.

The world is full of people who do not know what it is to ask for forgiveness. When they hurt me, my duty is to forgive immediately. If you just heard that somebody spoke evil of you somewhere, before you find out any more, forgive that person.

If you want to investigate, that's up to you. I don't usually investigate. I just forgive and leave it.

It's very, very important, my dear brothers, I believe there are many people who will not make it into God's kingdom just because they haven't forgiven somebody. Because I believe what Jesus said, heaven and earth will pass away, but his word will not pass away, that if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven. It's very clear in Matthew 6, verse 13, 14, 15, if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven.

And so, can you imagine if somebody dies in that condition? Dies, all of a sudden, some accident or something happens, and he's never forgiven somebody and he dies. Where's he going to go? If you're a Roman Catholic, you've got some theory that says you go to some place called purgatory where you'll be purged for a few years, and then you'll ascend into heaven, which is absolute garbage and nonsense. It is appointed unto men once to die, Hebrews 9, 27, and after that, the judgment.

Jesus told a true story, a true story, not a parable, of a rich man who died and immediately he went to hell. Before the doctors checked up and found he was dead, he was already in hell. When they were singing his praises at the funeral, because he was a big man in the synagogue, the man was already in hell, immediately.

And that poor Lazarus in that story, true story, immediately went into paradise. It's immediate, and they're aware where they are. The rich man is aware he was in hell, immediately.

When a man dies, he immediately goes to paradise or to hell. That's the one place. It's not a parable, right? Jesus spoke clearly what happens to a person when he dies.

And so I say, think what happens to a person who has not forgiven someone. And God's Word is fulfilled. If you don't forgive others, your Heavenly Father will not forgive you.

What's going to happen to that person? This has become such a burden on my heart that I keep on preaching it regularly now. Many times I add this onto my messages. Dear brothers and sisters, make sure that you have forgiven everybody for every single thing that anybody's ever done against you.

First of all, start with your marriage partner. Have you forgiven completely every single thing that you don't bring up those things? Sometimes, you know, husbands and wives, when they have a fight, they bring up things that happened in the past. You can't avoid having them in your memory.

But if you bring it up and speak about it, it is a clear proof that you have not forgiven that person. As I said, please understand, you cannot remove things from your memory. You will remember things that you did 50 years ago.

You will remember what people did to you 60 years ago. I can remember. But I can honestly say before God that there's not a single human being on the face of the earth whom I have not forgiven.

Many, I'm a servant of the Lord, and the devil has targeted me for more than 50 years to human beings, and many people have troubled me, but every one of them is forgiven. I fear God. And it's not a great action of mine to forgive others.

God's forgiven me millions, and I'm forgiving somebody a few cents. That's how it is. You know the story where Jesus said of a man who was forgiven millions, and a little bit he couldn't forgive somebody else.

That model of that story is to teach us that the greatest sins that somebody, please listen carefully, the greatest sin that somebody has done against you, can you think of that in your life, is a few cents,

compared to the millions of dollars, God's forgiveness of your sins. If we had not seen the largeness of God's forgiveness towards us, it would be very difficult to forgive others. You know Paul felt he had been forgiven so much.

Now Paul was a man, in one place he says, he kept the entire law, never killed anybody, never committed adultery in his life, honored his father and mother, all those 10 commandments externally, he kept all of that. And yet, as he walked to the Lord, he became so aware of sin in his heart, that he felt he was the greatest sinner of all. He said among all the believers, I'm the least of all the saints.

He says here in Ephesians 3, because he was aware of how much he had been forgiven. Very important, not to be condemned, because all our sins are cleansed in the blood of Christ, but aware of how much we've forgiven. If you're aware of it, it'll be the easiest thing in the world to forgive somebody immediately.

And I'll tell you one mark of that, in your conversation with that person, you will never bring up that thing you have forgiven him for, in a bitter way. If there's something that person has to settle with you, that's up to him. If he doesn't settle it, leave it.

See, settling matters between people is for fellowship. You can't have fellowship with a person if he does not settle certain wrong things he's done. Jesus, see we need to understand this, the difference between forgiveness and fellowship.

Let me clarify that. In Matthew chapter 6, it's a very important subject, and that's why I just want to take a little time on it. Ephesians 6, sorry, Matthew 6, Matthew 6, verse 14.

Now if you ask most Christians, how can my sins be forgiven? They'll always quote 1 John 1 9. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive our sins. Correct. But how many will also quote Matthew 6 14? That if I forgive others, my father forgives me.

You've got to quote both verses. How do I know I'm forgiven for all my sins? Number one, I've confessed it to the Lord, 1 John 1 9, and I'm walking in the light, 1 John 1 7, so the blood of Jesus has cleansed me from all sin. But also because when it's Matthew 6 14, I've forgiven others.

Don't miss out that. Then the father will forgive you because if I'm not forgiven others, Matthew 6 15, however much I may confess my sin, 1 John 1 9, I will not be forgiven because it's a clear condition. Your heavenly father will not forgive you.

And it's terrible if a person dies in that condition. And since we don't know how short our life is, and we don't know when we will depart this world, we must live every moment of our life having forgiven every single human being on the face of the earth. There are people who have not forgiven their dead parents.

Parents died long ago. Maybe the parents were very evil to them, or deprived them of so many things, or were partial to some of their other family members. The parents are dead and gone.

They still haven't forgiven them. Can you think such people are believers? Far from it. So many people who are divorced, maybe they were treated badly by their marriage partner.

Fine. But if you don't forgive them, you will go to the same hell that your marriage partner has gone to. We got to take this very seriously.

This is not true in the Old Testament. Because to whom more is given, more is required. We read in 1 Kings 2 that David died without forgiving someone who cursed him.

Not someone who tried to kill him, but someone who cursed him. He died without forgiving that person. But David went into God's presence.

To whom less is given, less is required. We are living in the New Testament age. I want to say to you, God requires far more from you and me than he required from anyone in the Old Testament.

There are many things he overlooked in the Old Testament. There are preachers today who fall into adultery and quote David. I say, hey, if you're living in the Old Covenant, that's fine.

But if you're living in the New Covenant, you cannot quote David fell into adultery as a leader and still continue to be the leader. No, sir. I would never allow an elder brother in a CFC church who has fallen into sin of adultery as an elder to be reinstated to that position.

Christendom is full of pastors who do that because they have no understanding of God's standards. They quote David. Well, you might as well marry eight wives like David had.

Why don't they quote David there? Their people are selective. They go to the Bible to find, how can I condone my sin by quoting some example in the Old Testament? Why don't they go to Jesus and see if Jesus did it? Why don't they see if Paul or Peter did it? No. They're always looking the Bible, which is meant to teach us to be holy.

They go into it to find an excuse for their sin. And that judgment is just because God will say to them on the final day, you did not read my word to find out how to be holy. You read my word to find out some excuse for your sin.

Be careful that the devil doesn't deceive you. So it's very, very important brothers and sisters that we forgive others. So, so very important.

And that's why I quoted that in relation to Ephesians 4. So as I was saying, in Ephesians chapter four, verse one begins with therefore, therefore, all that comes later on about how husbands and wives must behave with each other. A wife submitting to the husband and husband loving his wife as the head of the wife. Like I've said many times, there are different types of heads in the world, head of a country, head of a department, head of an organization.

That's not the type of head of a husband is supposed to be. He's not the head of a department in the sense I'm the head of his home. There's another head that's spoken of, and that's the head of the body.

There's this head that Ephesians 5 speaks about. Now many husbands behave like the head of a department or head of a country in the way they relate to their wives. But what about this head? This head does control every part of the body, but at the same time, it is so sensitive to every part of the body that if you get a little injury on your hand, immediately the head does something about it.

Imagine if you get a cut in your hand, you do something about it. That is the type of sensitivity a true Christian husband has towards his wife's needs, a sensitivity to her need even if she doesn't talk about it. It's quite a height to come to, to be the head of your wife.

Then imagine a couple like that who have such a sensitivity to the wife and the wife so eager to submit to such a husband. What an example. That is a home that God delights in.

He hardly ever finds such homes even today in this new covenant age. That's what he's looking for. My dear brothers and sisters, you who have a family, please see that God from heaven is eagerly looking to find such a home.

That's what Ephesians 5 is all about. Then he speaks about bringing up children. That's another thing.

Ephesians 6, it's all based on the Ephesians 4.1. Therefore, if you have got your foundation chapter 1, 2, and 3 right, therefore, parents, fathers, not parents, but fathers, Ephesians 6.4, bring up your children in two things, instruction of the Lord and discipline of the Lord. See, it's unfortunate that there are people who have come to CFC who have come late in life and their children have gone astray. They were Christians, but they were in some useless church that never taught them how to bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

What can they do now? They can only repent and pray that God will somehow bring those children back and God can do it. I encourage such parents to pray and never give up. I always say to such parents, you and your wife kneel down every day and pray for at least five minutes and say, bring my children back and God will do a miracle.

But what about those who are, who've come to the Lord and come to RLCF or a CFC church when they are newly married? I say, you've got your whole life in front of you. From day one, from the time your first child is born, you can bring up that child in the instruction of the Lord, teaching that child God's word. Don't leave that task to the Sunday school.

I never left the task of instructing my poor son to the Sunday school. I say, I didn't care what they learned in Sunday school. My job as a father was to make sure they knew the word of God before they left my home.

They all left my home when they were 18 years old to go to college. I had a task laid out before me. You have a task laid out before you.

Your children are not going to be with you forever. From day one, instruct them in the word of God. Teach them to pray from a young age.

Discipline them just like the father disciplines us. Hasn't the father disciplined you? I know that my heavenly father has disciplined me so many times because that's the way he puts me on the right path. That's not an indication of his anger with me.

Revelation chapter 3, verse 17 says, as many as I love, I discipline. That's a great verse. In my younger days, if you ask me, how do you know that, I'm sorry, Revelation 319, Revelation 319, those whom I love, I rebuke and I discipline.

Revelation 319. In my younger days, if you ask me, how do you know that Jesus loves you? I'd say when he died for me on the cross. Today, I'm a more mature Christian.

If you ask me, how do you know Jesus loves you? I say he reproves me. He rebukes me. He disciplines me.

He gives me a sickness sometimes if I've tripped up somewhere and I lie in bed and I say, Lord, what is this spanking for? And you tell me. I said it right. Are you without discipline? Then Hebrews 12 says, then you're not a legitimate child of God.

You're an illegitimate child if you don't have discipline. Every true child of God gets discipline. When does the discipline stop? I know when it will stop for me.

When I have become 100% like Jesus Christ. All discipline will stop in my life. I will not have any discipline in heaven.

But until I leave this earth, I need discipline because there's some area in my life still un-Christ-like. I need to be rebuked by the Lord. I need to be disciplined by the Lord.

And I want to tell you, when you read the scriptures, if all you get is comforting, encouraging messages and never a word of rebuke, I'd say you're not hearing God at all. God certainly encourages us every time we read the scriptures. But if you only get encouragement and you never get a word of rebuke, brother, you better get your hearing fixed up.

You're not hearing properly. You're using your imagination to imagine that God is saying nice things to you. The Christian world lives in that deception.

So God speaks to us, bring up your children in the fear of the Lord. There's absolutely no excuse for our children going astray, especially if you are a family that's married and come to the church as a new family and your children are small. I want to tell you in Jesus' name, there's absolutely no excuse for your children to grow astray when they grow up.

Yes, they go through ups and downs, and especially in their teenage years, in their early twenties, there may be ups and downs. Some have it and some don't have it. But by the time they have grown up, they will follow the Lord.

That is God's will. And we can do that. And the other thing mentioned in Ephesians is a warfare with Satan, Ephesians 6. No, this is all based on that therefore in Ephesians 4.1. All that follows in chapter 4, 5, and 6. And finally, to stand against Satan and to overcome and having overcome everything, it says here, finally to stand.

Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 13. We'll be able to resist the devil and having done everything, having overcome completely, you stand firm. We're not going to be pushed down by the devil.

We're not going to be afraid. But I remember years ago, I've said this often and I repeat it again. Years ago, the Lord said to me, if you want to fight against these evil rulers, Ephesians 6.12, make sure that you will never fight with flesh and blood.

Never fight with a human being if you want to fight the devil. And I've taken that seriously. I have to rebuke many people in the churches sometimes.

I've had to rebuke many elders in different churches. It's my responsibility. But on a personal level, that's church.

When you have a responsibility as a church, it's like you have to rebuke your children when you're a father. Or if you're an officer in a factory, you have to rebuke your workers. That's not wrestling with flesh

and blood.

But when it comes to your personal matters, never wrestle with flesh and blood. Don't fight with people over money, property, things like that, where it concerns you. Give it up.

God is able to give you much more than this. You know, so many Christians have a grudge against somebody or their family who cheated them in some way or the other. I want to show you something from the Old Testament.

In 2 Chronicles 25, it's a word that God spoke to my heart many years ago and has blessed me tremendously whenever somebody has cheated me or taken advantage of me in some which has made me suffer personal loss or financial loss. All of us will go through such circumstances because of somebody's treatment of us, we come into some financial loss. What should you do? This is from 2 Chronicles 25, verse 5 onwards.

There was this king of Judah. You know, Israel was divided into two nations after Solomon's time and the time of his son Rehoboam. One consisted of 10 tribes, which is the northern kingdom called Israel.

And the other was the southern kingdom of Judah, which consisted of Judah and Benjamin. And Amaziah was the king of Judah, verse 1, 2 Chronicles 25, verse 1. And he was going to battle against the enemy. And he gathered all of the soldiers from, verse 5, from Judah and Benjamin, all those about 20 years old.

And he had 300,000 people. And he said, that's not good enough. I need a bigger army to fight against the enemy.

So what did he do? He hired, there were people who were willing to fight to compete him, mercenary soldiers. He hired from the northern kingdom, 100,000 warriors, but the northern kingdom were full of idolaters. Judah did not have so much idolatry.

Northern kingdom was full of idolaters. So a man of God came to him in verse 7 and said, don't take people from the army of Israel, because the Lord is not with them because they're idolaters. But if you do, you'll be defeated.

But he had already paid them. You see, you read in verse 6, 100 talents of silver. Now, I don't know how much it costs to hire 100,000 soldiers, but it must be a few millions of dollars.

Imagine a man having spent millions of dollars to get something, to pay somebody, and the Lord says, I don't want them. And you're not going to get that money back. It's lost.

Now, if he doesn't know, we don't want you to fight with us, we'll say, fine, we're going to keep the money. And so the man of God said to him, and MSI said to the man of God, but, verse 9, what should I do for the millions of dollars I've already given? And look at his answer. The Lord can give you much more than this.

I'll never forget it. Nearly 55 years ago, or nearly 60 years ago, the Lord spoke that word to me. Don't fight with people for money.

The Lord is able to give you much more than this. And I can tell you, in my 60 years of experience since I got that word, I've obeyed that command never to fight with people for money for myself. And I can also testify the Lord has given me much more than what I have lost through somebody taking something of mine.

Take it seriously. God will never fight with, that's what we read in Ephesians 6, don't struggle with flesh and blood. And Lord, that's what the Lord said to me.

Then you'll be able to conquer demons. You know, I used to go to Pentecostal churches, not go, I used to visit, and I used to see some of these Pentecostal pastors trying to cast out a demon. And they would scream and yell and shout and stamp their feet and spit, and what all they said, they'd go on for hours.

And I said, Lord, when I read the scriptures, I never see Jesus casting out a demon like that. I never see Jesus saying more than one sentence. He never had to say it twice.

Once, get out of him. No shouting, no yelling, no screaming. And I said, Lord, what these people are doing is so completely contrary to Jesus.

And I have a word for when somebody does something contrary to Jesus, I call that the anti-Christ. You know what anti-Christ is? Anything that Christ would not do. The opposite of Christ.

So when, you know, 45 years ago when we started CFC and you go into the villages in India to preach, non-Christians will go to temples and get demons inside them. And they come to the church. What they need is not counseling.

What they need is deliverance. If you don't deliver them from a demon, any amount of counseling them doesn't help. But the guy's got a demon inside him.

And so we have to cast out demons. And how am I going to do it now? With all this yelling and screaming? No. I said, Lord, I want to do the way Jesus did.

One word and it should go. You remember once the disciples tried to cast out a demon like that? And they couldn't cast it out. You read.

And Jesus came down from the mountain in Matthew 17. And they asked him, Lord, why couldn't we do it what you did with one word? And the Lord said, you have to fast and pray for this. Not fast and pray at that time when you're casting out a demon.

You should have done that before. You come into that situation already having fasted and prayed in your life. Why do we fast and pray? Because we set things right in our life between us and God.

I have an absolutely pure conscience. And we are right with God. And then, and I can testify to you still today, every single demon that was cast out in all these years was cast out with one sentence.

Never more than that. And no shouting. I remember once casting out a demon with a whisper.

And the man was about 35 feet away from me, 30 or 40 feet away. And the demon left. What I'm saying is, there's only one condition.

Not just fast and pray. Maybe two. Don't struggle with flesh and blood.

Ephesians 6.12. Ask yourself. Not just about casting out demons. You find some stronghold the devil has got in your life.

Some stronghold the devil has got in your family. And you're not able to extricate yourself or push the devil out of that situation. Maybe you're praying.

Maybe you're fasting. Good. But also stop struggling with flesh and blood.

Make a decision in your life that I will never fight with a human being about anything. I don't even fight about doctrine. Sometimes people send me emails.

And I know this chap is not wanting to know the truth. He just wants to get into an argument with me about some doctrine. I don't reply.

I trash those emails. You know, I can sense whether this guy wants an answer or whether he's starting an argument. I've had people come to my house like that who want to discuss a matter.

And I say, I tell them, listen, if you want me to teach you what scripture says, I'll teach you. But if you've already made up your mind and you've come to argue with me, I'm sorry, I'm not going to argue with you. I remember once a man came to me from some Pentecostal church and said, Brother Zach, I want to talk to you.

I said, what do you want to talk about? He said, I want to talk to you about being healed without taking medicines. I said, I take medicines when I'm sick and I get healed. But I believe in Jesus also.

I pray. No, we shouldn't take medicines. We must only pray.

I said, listen, I'm not interested in this discussion. If you want to talk about Jesus and the word of God, I'm ready to talk. And then within five minutes, we go back to that subject.

I said, next time you go back to this, I'm sorry, I'll have to open the door and ask you to leave. Because I do not believe in argument. And I'm sorry to say, he again went back to it and I had to open the door and ask him to leave.

One of the rare instances where I had to ask a man to leave my house, but I would not struggle with flesh and blood. But do you think he left me alone? No. He wrote a letter to me about not taking medicines.

And then I saw his handwriting and next time I never even opened the letter, just trashed it. It's amazing how many Christians are ready to argue with you. I refuse to struggle with flesh and blood because I want to reserve all my energy for the devil.

I will not allow a person to come and fight with me because it requires two hands to clap. And if I refuse to clap, then there's not going to be any fight, no matter how much he yells and screams. So I refuse to, I give you the simple principle, never fight with your wife or your husband.

You will lose strength with the devil. You want the devil out of your home, don't fight with human beings. Fight with the devil because all the fights in human beings are started by the devil.

You remember the time when David was a young boy and he says, a lion came and grabbed one of the little lambs in my flock and took it away. What did David do? Did he go to the lamb and give it a lecture? Why did you go away and all that type of stuff? No. Did he fight with that lamb? No.

He fought with a lion and released the lamb. There's a lesson there. When you see people under the grip of evil, it's the lion, the devil behind it that we have to fight with, not with the person.

Many children who are under the bondage of Satan, you need to release them from Satan's power, but make sure you don't fight with flesh and blood. So I was just mentioning a few things that I found in the latter half of Ephesians. But what I want to conclude by saying is, all of that is based on your being established in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3. Now I'm not going to study 1, 2, and 3 with you now, but take time to study chapter 1, 2, and 3. There's not a single exhortation there, no command.

It's just telling you what God has done for you. Let me give you a few examples. It says here, first of all, Ephesians 1, 4. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

I'm trying to give you a foundation for all the things I spoke today from chapter 4, 5, and 6. It's based on this foundation. Recognize that you were chosen in Christ before God created the universe. I said before Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

What was before that in the beginning? And this may sound blasphemous, but it's not blasphemous. It's the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and me in His mind. Do you believe that? I believe it, Ephesians 1, 4. I was not an afterthought.

It's not in 1939 when I was born that God thought about me, no. He thought about me before Genesis 1, verse 1. That's what it says in Ephesians 1, 4. He chose me in Christ before the worlds were created. That is why He could crucify my old man 2,000 years ago on the cross.

How could He do that when I'm born only in 1939? How could He crucify my old man 1,900 years before I was born? Only one way. Because I was in His mind long before Christ came to the earth, long before Christ was crucified. So He could put me in Christ, my old man was crucified there.

Now, be established in this and recognize that He chose us and also, Ephesians 1, 3, He has blessed us already with every blessing of the Holy Spirit in heavenly places in Christ. Now, if that was written in the Old Testament, it would read like this. Blessed be the God of Moses, that would be Old Testament, who has blessed us with every earthly blessing of healing and prosperity in earthly places, in Canaan, in Moses.

You see the difference? But with us, He has blessed us with every blessing of the Holy Spirit in heavenly places in Christ. Now, I need to be established in this. Then He goes on to say in Ephesians chapter 2, we were dead in sin, verse 5, but God raised us up, Ephesians 2, 6. Again, because we were in Christ before the worlds were created, we were crucified with Him and when Christ came out of the grave 2,000 years ago, verse 6, we came out of the grave with Him.

And when Christ ascended and sat in the heavenly places, we are there in the heavenly places with Him. If you're not established in these truths in chapter 1, 2, and 3, you will not be able to live the life described in chapter 4, 5, and 6 about being free from anger and being the type of husband and wife you should be and resisting the devil and everything else. Remember, it is based on chapters 1, 2, and 3. Take time to meditate on chapters 1, 2, and 3 and see if you believe.

There's not a single command in 1, 2, and 3. It's what God has done, but it does not become yours until you believe it. And it goes on to say here that He has placed us in Christ in the heavenly places, blessed us with every spiritual blessing, and now we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what Paul's prayer is.

There are two things he prays here. One is, I pray, Ephesians chapter 1, I pray, verse 118, that we will get the revelation, chapter 1, verse 17 and 18, from the Holy Spirit. The spirit of revelation, Ephesians 117, that's the first prayer.

Lord, I want the Holy Spirit to give me revelation. I remember very clearly, I read the Bible, studied it for 16 years, for 17 years, and I still remember the day in my home. I even remember where I was sitting, and suddenly I got a revelation on the new covenant.

It wasn't the result of study. It was just God revealing something in my heart, and my life changed. The spirit of revelation, fear God, and walk in humility.

He'll give you a revelation which is a million times greater than understanding. So the revelation of the Holy Spirit is one, and the second is, Ephesians 316, the power of the Holy Spirit in the inner man. There are two things we need to get from the Holy Spirit.

One is revelation on the scriptures and what God has done for me, and secondly, power through the Holy Spirit in my inner man to live according to that revelation. Then I can go to Ephesians 4, 5, and 6. It's a wonderful book, Ephesians, and if you want to see how I studied it in my early days, let me show you my first Bible. This is how I studied Ephesians 55 years ago.

Every page was like that. That's the next page. I'm not saying you've got to do that, but I said, Lord, I've got only one life.

I want to know your word because it's the only way I can live a worthwhile life on earth. I'm glad I studied the scriptures like that 50, 60 years ago. It changed my life.

It's made me live a useful life. Dear brothers and sisters, study the word of God intensely. You don't have to make all the notes I made.

I mean, God's called me to be a teacher, so I need to do more than you, but you need to pray that God will give you revelation on these things and let God see that you're a student of his word to get revelation. Log off the internet and read the word of God more. There's nothing wrong in the internet.

I look at the internet myself to see what's happening. Like I often say that Jesus knew that a tower of Siloam fell and he knew how many people died, and so he was in touch with the local news in Israel, and so we need to be in touch with the local news, but that should not be the main thing. We must know his word in these days.

The people who know their God will be strong in the last days, Daniel 11, 32. That's a word that often comes to my mind. It's referring to the last days in Daniel 11, and there it says in Daniel 11, 32, the people, not who know God's word, the people who know their God through his word, who know their God will get revelation, will be strong in the last days, and it says that they'll do exploits for God.

That's how it is in the King James Version. The people who know their God will be strong and do exploits. Why can't you be like that? Don't have such small thoughts about yourself and say, I'm nobody.

Well, we are all nobodies, but with God on our side, and if he supports us by the Holy Spirit, you can do exploits for God. God bless you. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/rUo28GPbtjA.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/gods-wonderful-message-in-ephesians/>

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