

God's Wonderful Promises

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the blessings and advancements we have today compared to the past, highlighting the importance of recognizing our spiritual blessings and seeking God wholeheartedly. It discusses the revelation of God as a loving Father who is always on our side, the need to trust in His provision, and the promise that sin will not have dominion over us. The focus is on prioritizing spiritual growth and holiness over worldly concerns.

Scripture: Hebrews 13:5, Zechariah 2:5, Romans 8:31, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Romans 6:14, Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:33, Proverbs 11:22

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Trust in God's Provision"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the blessings and advancements we have today compared to the past, highlighting the importance of recognizing our spiritual blessings and seeking God wholeheartedly. It discusses the revelation of God as a loving Father who is always on our side, the need to trust in His provision, and the promise that sin will not have dominion over us. The focus is on prioritizing spiritual growth and holiness over worldly concerns.

Transcript

I was telling you that after Jesus Christ came into the world, He has brought us to a much higher level. He told His disciples, Your eyes are blessed because you can see things so many people could not see. Your ears can hear things which people could not hear and understand earlier.

And I told you that because we are living now, we are even more blessed than the people who lived in Jesus time. You know even the apostle Paul never had a bible in his hand. He had to remember it in his head.

Or go to the synagogue and read it. How many people had a bible in the early days? Nobody. It is too expensive to have a leather scroll of a bible.

We must remember how blessed we are. And even in many other ways we are blessed today. We have got electricity, we have got lights.

Even at 10 o'clock at night we can read the bible. Just one bulb, put it on and we can read the bible. For many 150 years ago there was no electricity.

Even if you had a bible, after the sun goes down you cannot read it. Now you can read it at midnight also. And yet there were people who lived many hundreds of years ago who were more godly than us.

Why is that? They sought God. Today we spend so much time watching television and so many other things. When I grew up as a young man there was no television in the world.

That was a blessing because there was no distraction. So such people had more time to read the bible. Be very careful that you don't get led astray.

They also told you that Jesus came and showed us that God was a father. And not only that, God is a father who is on your side always. He is only against the devil.

He is against the sin in our life but he is not against us. Just like you are against the sickness in your child but you love your child. Jesus loves sinners if they want to give up their sin.

One of the great needs we have. I'll tell you what is one of the greatest needs you have. Now supposing you have some terrible sickness.

Maybe some of you have got some serious sickness in your body. I don't have sickness but I've got some aches and pains which I'd be happy if I can get rid of. But that is not my biggest problem.

Your biggest problem is not your sickness. I'm just telling you what a blessing it is to have electricity. When it goes we become such slaves that we cannot speak.

When it goes we become such slaves that we cannot speak. Do you know that Jesus once fed 5000 men? When you include the women and children there were 10,000 people. So if you count all the people here there are less than 2000.

So if you count all the people here there are less than 2000. If there were 10,000 people imagine how big a crowd it would have been. There should be two big halls on one side and three or four on the other side.

In such a huge crowd. There was no microphone. No loud speaker.

And Jesus stands up to speak. Out there in the corner they can hear him. He must have had a loud voice.

But I think because they did not have electricity they learned to speak louder. Because they did not have scooters they learned to walk. They learned to walk 50 kilometers without a problem.

We have become such weak people today. Anyway God has been good to us. What I was saying is Jesus came to reveal God as a father.

What I was saying is Jesus came to reveal God as a father. But not only as a father. A father who is always on our side against the devil.

That is very important to understand. So here is a verse that you already know but I will read it to you again. Hebrews 13.

Here is a verse that you already know but I will read it to you again. Hebrews 13. Have you found Hebrews all you children, young people? Hebrews 13 and verse 5. Hebrews 13 and verse 5. Here is what the Lord says, the last part of verse 5. Here is what the Lord says, the last part of verse 5. I will never desert you nor forsake you.

If you believe that. The Lord will never leave you nor forsake you. Do you believe that? How many of you believe that? The Lord will never leave you nor forsake you.

Don't be afraid to say yes. The devil must hear you. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus will never leave you, never forsake you? Let's say a loud yes so that the devil can hear you.

If that is true. Then what should you say? Verse 6. We must boldly say, the Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What shall man do to me? Will you all say that after brother Vincent? Now you must say it like it says here, boldly. Now you must say it like it says here, boldly. Not softly.

Loudly. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What shall man do to me? One more sentence. What can the devil do to me? One more sentence. What can the devil do to me? Do you believe that God is on your side against the devil? No witchcraft, nothing can touch you.

The devil cannot harm you. God will be like a wall of fire around about you. God will be like a wall of fire around about you.

Let me give you another promise. These promises are so wonderful. It's like money, hidden here and there.

Supposing a rich friend of yours told you. Some rich uncle or somebody who loves you. Some rich uncle or somebody who loves you.

He says, I have hidden little pockets of money in different parts of your house. He says, I have hidden little pockets of money in different parts of your house. Lot of money.

But it's all hidden in different places. And you believe he is speaking the truth. And you believe he is speaking the truth.

What will you do? You won't go to school. You won't go to college. You won't go to work.

You will be searching your house. Where? Is it inside the cupboard? Is it under the mattress? Where has he hidden it? You will not rest. Supposing he tells you, there are about 25 packets I have kept.

And all of them. 5000 rupees, 7000 rupees. And you have found 24 of those packets.

And you know there is one more. What will you say? Ah, one more. Forget it.

No. No. You will search for that 25th packet also.

You will not eat lunch that day till you find it. That is how God's word is. There are such wonderful promises here.

More than 5000 rupees. I will tell you from my experience. There are many situations in my life where even 1 lakh rupees could not have helped me.

But God's word helped me. Yeah, it's true. So here is one of those promises.

Zechariah chapter 2 verse 5 What a wonderful promise this is. I will be a wall of fire round about her. I will be a fire around her.

That is the old promise. You got it? Zechariah chapter 2 verse 5 Page number Zechariah 2 verse 5 Zechariah 2 verse 5 a wall of fire around about her. And if you have the good habit of underlining some good verses, do it.

I used to do that with my first bible. So very important verses, I would take some red pencil and color it. Because those days I didn't know where these verses were.

So if I colored it with red pencil or underline it with a pen, then quickly I can find it. That's how I studied the bible. My first bible is full of colors and underlinings.

That's how I came to know the bible. That's how these promises of God made me spiritually rich. You know in the jungles, if you go and sleep in places where there are wild animals, you know what people do? They put a lot of sticks around themselves and light a fire.

Then they can sleep peacefully in the middle. Because they know if there is a wall of fire around about them, no tiger or lion or anybody will come through that. You can sleep peacefully.

That's why the Lord says, I will be a wall of fire. Nobody can harm you. It's a wonderful promise.

You can sleep peacefully. You don't have to have frightening dreams. You know that God wants us to have peaceful dreams in our sleep.

If children watch all these cinemas with fighting and hitting, they will have scary dreams at night. Then you wonder why your children are getting bad dreams at night. Because they watch all these movies with people hitting, fighting, killing, shooting.

And that is all gone in their mind. Their dream, it all comes back and they wake up with a fright. We have to be careful what we allow little children to watch.

God says he will be a wall of fire around about us. We don't have to be afraid. One more promise.

Same chapter, verse 8. The last part. He who touches you, touches the apple of God's eye. Do you know which is the most painful part in your body? You can touch anywhere, there is no pain.

But if you touch the apple of your eye, it's painful. Don't touch it. But accidentally, sometimes we have touched it and it pains like anything.

That is the most painful part of the body. That means it is very sensitive. And the Lord says, if somebody tries to harm you, if the devil tries to harm you, you are the apple of my eye.

I will not allow anybody to touch you. I believe that. So, I can sleep peacefully at night.

People who look at your life, must see that. That you are not afraid because you have a father in heaven who takes care of you. What wonderful promises there are like this.

See Romans 8. Here is another wonderful promise. Romans 8. And verse 31. What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Did you find it? Romans 8 verse 31.

If God is for us, who can be against us? Like I told you, if I have a lion with me, I am not afraid of even 50 dogs coming against me. We must have faith in God. The one who is living inside is greater than the one who is in the world.

Fear is one of the great weapons with which Satan tortures God's children. That's why Jesus, when he came to the disciples, he would always say, fear not, don't be afraid. Peace, I leave with you.

So, why is it that we don't have to be afraid? Because God is almighty. He is not only a loving father, but he is an almighty father. So, when Jesus told his disciples to pray, see Luke chapter 11.

Luke 11 verse 1. We read that one day Jesus was praying alone in a place. And he was not, we can pray silently, we can pray loudly, God can hear us. But Jesus was praying loudly here because his disciples were with him.

And he was praying. And the disciples had never heard anybody pray like that. In their synagogue, they would hear all the Pharisees praying formal prayers.

But when Jesus prayed, it was so different. He was talking like to a close friend. Like a child talks to the father.

The other preachers were talking to God as if some employee is talking to the managing director of the company. You children, how do you speak to the principal of your school and how do you talk to your mother or father? A lot of difference. We don't talk to God like the principal of the school or managing director of your office.

No, don't talk to God like that. Talk to him like you talk to your daddy. Father, we must learn to speak like that.

That's how Jesus prayed. So, when the disciples heard that, the disciples said in Luke 11 verse 1, Lord, teach us to pray. We don't know how to pray.

I believe many of us must say that. Lord Jesus, teach me how to pray. See, in the world, even among Christians, the emphasis is on how long you pray.

We hear stories, somebody prayed for 2 hours everyday. Or somebody else, some pastor says he prays 4 hours everyday. Or all night I prayed.

Or I fasted for 21 days. You hear all this and you get discouraged. I don't have 4 hours everyday.

I have so much to do looking after my children at home. And you get discouraged. But Jesus never spoke like that.

Jesus never told his disciples, see I pray for 4 hours everyday. It is only today's pastors who speak like that. Jesus said when you pray, don't tell anybody how long you pray.

When you fast, don't tell people how long you fast. And I hear so many pastors, they are disobeying those commands regularly. They tell people how long they pray.

They tell people how many times they fasted. And they discourage people. Don't listen to such people.

I don't listen to such people. When I was young and I was foolish, I used to listen to them and get discouraged. I will give you an example in the Bible of some people who prayed for a long time, 6 hours.

The prophets of Baal on the mountain of Carmel. Oh God send the fire. In Elijah's time, nothing happened.

They could boast, we prayed to our God for 6 hours. What happened? Nothing. You read 1 Kings chapter 18 when you get time.

Elijah prayed for half a minute. The fire came down. So the important thing is not how long you pray.

The important thing is did you get an answer to the prayer? That is the point. So they prayed and said, this is so different. Then Jesus said, this is how you must pray.

Before you pray, you must address God properly. Our Father who art in heaven, that is the first thing you need to learn. Before you ask for anything, see whom you are talking to.

Are you talking to the managing director? Yes, he is the managing director of the universe. That is to the universe, but to me he is my father. Many of you are working in offices and factories.

From big factory with 10,000 workers and you are a junior worker there. Can you walk into your managing director's office? No. You have to go to the secretary and say, sir can I see him? No, he is busy for the next 3 weeks.

After 3 weeks you can come. You have to wait. Some application you have to wait for 3 weeks to go and give it.

Because he is such an important man. But that managing director's 5 year old boy, he doesn't go through the secretary. He doesn't even knock at the door.

He just walks in and says, daddy, I want something. Managing director puts everything down and says, yes, what do you want? See the difference between you and that 5 year old child. Don't go to God as if he is some big managing director.

When Jesus came into your heart, you became a child of God. You can walk into his presence and say, daddy, I want something. That's the way we must pray.

First of all, our father and second, verse 9, who art in heaven. Not a helpless father who is on the earth. We have got helpless fathers and mothers on earth who cannot do much for us.

They can do a few little things for us on this earth. But our earthly father is not almighty. Even the prime minister of India is not almighty.

No. They cannot do everything. If you are seriously sick with cancer, what is the use of asking the prime minister of India to help you? He will say, I can't help you with your cancer.

Even the best doctor may not be able to help you. That's where we can go to our father in heaven. Our father who art in heaven.

That means two things. Our father who art in heaven. Our father means one who loves me immensely.

Who art in heaven means almighty. He can do everything. He can be a wall of fire around me.

If anybody tries to touch me, he says, you are touching the apple of my eye. And when the devil tries to bring some temptation into your life, some trial into your life, God stops it. He says, no.

I will not allow you to test my child because she is not strong enough for it now. Isn't it wonderful to have a father like that? Here is another wonderful promise if you want to underline it. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13.

Have you got it? 1 Corinthians. Where is 1 Corinthians? I want to encourage you to learn where the books of the new testament are. At least new testament.

1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 13. Middle of that verse. God is faithful who will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability but will with the trial make a way to escape.

Isn't that a wonderful promise? That God will never, never, never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. Our children go to school. And I remember when I was going to school, at the end of the year they will have final examination.

Only after that you can get promoted to the next class. Now, supposing I am in third standard. Final examination I get the question paper or sometimes they would write the questions on the board.

What type of question will I get? If I am in third standard, I will not get 8th standard question paper. That's too much for me. I am only 9 years old.

How can you give me 8th standard question paper? That's too much for me. But the teacher is not foolish. They give you third standard question paper.

Next year, you go to fourth standard. Then the question will be little tougher. Then the next year, you go to fifth standard.

Then the question will be tougher. After 5 years, you are in 10th standard. Then you are really tough paper.

After 4 years, you are in college. Oh, you are in second year in college now. Then it is really difficult.

See how in our life, our children as they study, the examinations become tougher and tougher and tougher. Now you tell me, is that a good thing or a bad thing? Supposing you are in second year in college and they give you first standard question paper. How much is 2 plus 2? You are in second year in college.

How much is 5 plus 5? Are you happy that your children get papers like that? So what type of foolish teacher is giving you 2 plus 2 in second year in college? So when the question paper gets tougher, it's good, isn't it? That means you are in a higher class. Now apply that to your spiritual life. Supposing you get a really difficult trial in your life.

What does that indicate? That you are not in the kindergarten. No, you are not in second standard. You are getting a really difficult trial.

That means you are in a higher class. When I look at my life, I have been a Christian for 54 years. In the beginning, God did not allow difficult trials for me because I was in first standard, second standard.

Then little by little, the trials became more and more. As I came spiritually, I became stronger. The trials became more.

Because just like going in a school or going to a college, that means I was going to a higher level spiritually. So when a big trial came, I said, praise the Lord, that means I am in a high class now. So that is the way you must look at the trials that come into your life.

For example, after about 9 years after I was converted, I got married. Then I found I had a lot of financial difficulty. I didn't have much.

I had left my job. But God did not allow me to have financial difficulty in the first standard. That would be too much for me.

He waited till I was a believer for 9 years and then gave me the trial of financial difficulty. God waits and waits and waits before he gives us a trial. He did not allow other believers to attack me till I was strong enough to face those attacks.

So many believers have attacked me in my life. They have taken me to court. But God did not allow that till I was strong enough.

You know, it was almost 40 years after I became a believer that he allowed some believers to take me to court. Then I was strong. What do I mean by strong? Strong enough to love those who hate me.

That is strong. I am not strong enough to fight them in the court. That anybody can do.

Even unbelieving lawyers can do that. But in the Christian life, strong means strong enough to love those who hate me. Strong enough to forgive those who harm me.

The whole understanding of strength is different. That means I can fight, I can push that fellow down. I can win the case.

He fought for that property and I won the case and I got the property. That is all worldly way of doing it. In the Christian life, strong means that guy hates me but I can love him.

If you can love those who hate you, you are strong. If you can love those who hate you, you are strong. If you can win the case, that is worldly.

That means you got a good lawyer. That is all. Understand what spiritual strength is.

If somebody speaks evil about you, you can bless him. You can smile at him. That is the type of strength God gives us.

God will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability. See Romans chapter 8. Many of you know this verse. Romans 8.28. But I want to show you something here which you might not have seen.

Romans 8.28. You know where Romans is? It comes before 1 Corinthians. Romans 8.28. Romans 8.28. We know God makes everything work for good to those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. We are thinking of two things in prayer.

Our father who art in heaven, because he is in heaven, he does not allow any trial to come to me which is too strong for me. Because he is in heaven, he makes everything work for our good. Now we need to

understand what is that good which is working.

We don't understand what is good for us. Supposing you young brothers are considering marriage. And you know when young men look for marriage, they look always is the girl pretty or not.

That is about the main thing. Supposing you young brothers are considering marriage. And you know when young men look for marriage, they look always is the girl pretty or not.

That is about the main thing. She says no. And you say God is going to make everything work for my good.

That means God is going to give me a more pretty girl next time. But the next proposal is not such a pretty girl. God says you must marry her.

Lord she is not so good looking. The Lord says she is good looking in my eyes. You look at the face, I look at the heart.

That first girl had got a very good face. The heart was black. That's why I didn't give her to you.

This one face is not so good. But the heart is white. Which do you want? God makes everything work for your good.

See the Bible says in Proverbs. I always show this verse to young people who are considering marriage. Proverbs 11 verse 22.

As a ring of gold in a pig's nose, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion. Proverbs 11 verse 22. Proverbs 22 verse 7.

Think of a picture in your mind. Here is a dirty pig. We have all seen pigs, all dirty.

But it has got a beautiful gold ring in its nose. Gold, real gold. The Bible says beauty in a woman is like the ring.

The face is beautiful. That's like a gold ring. And her character, maybe she may be like a pig.

Spiritually dirty. And you are not looking at her heart, you are looking at the face. That is like you are looking at the golden ring.

Ah, I want that ring. How to get it? You have to marry the pig. Ok, I will marry the pig.

I will get the ring. What would you call such a young man? He has got a screw loose in his head. Something is wrong with him.

You see, you went and married a pig just for a golden ring. So the Bible says, these are not my words. It can be the other way around.

Most young women when they want to marry, they see, is that person rich? What about the nature? Does he love Jesus? Is he spiritually minded? What's the use of all that money? He will just rule you and slap you and maybe kick you out of the house one day. What's the use of all that money? He has another person. So you think of that proposal and it does not work out.

And you say, God will make everything work for good. He will give you a richer person? No. Maybe he will give you a poorer person.

The golden ring is like the money. And the character may be like the pig. You know when God does not give us something, because he knows if you get it, it will destroy your life.

So when you pray about your marriage, you young boys and girls, Say Lord, I want a spiritual person. One who loves you, so that we can love you together. Do you think God will let you starve? Impossible.

In the history of the world, God has never allowed his children to starve. In the history of the world, God has never allowed his children to starve. Another promise, Matthew chapter 6. This is a promise that God gives to his children.

If you seek the kingdom of God first, all the other things you need on earth will be added to you. If you seek the kingdom of God first, all the other things you need on earth will be added to you. Whatever you need.

Here is another promise. Philippians 4.19. I am trying to make you rich today. I am showing you all the little pockets of riches hidden in the Bible.

Philippians 4.19. My God will supply all your need according to his riches in Christ. Philippians 4.19. My God will supply all your need according to his riches in Christ. What is the difference between needs and what you want? In Tamil, what is the word? Koraiyu.

That means what is lacking. What is lacking God will give you. That is a good translation.

What is lacking God will give you. Not all that we want. Everything that we want may not be good for us.

I told you, you don't give your children everything they ask for. You give them what they need. So, God will supply all your need.

That is a promise. But he will not give you all that you ask for. Because you also don't give your children everything they ask for.

But you give them what they need. So, say, Lord, thank you. You will give me everything that I need.

Remember that promise. Whatever you need in your life, God will always give it to you. So, we can trust him to take care of us.

And here is one of the most wonderful promises. That is one of the best of the lot. Till now, we were speaking about earthly things.

Now, here is a spiritual need that we have. Romans 6.14. Romans 6.14. Have you got it? Romans 6.14. Sin shall not be master over you. Because you are not under law but under grace.

See, our biggest problem is not sickness. But sin. Jesus died for our sin.

There is no promise in the Bible that he will take away all sickness from us before he comes back. No. But there is a promise that he will take away all our sins.

Sin will not rule over you. That is a promise. You can conquer your anger.

You can conquer your fighting attitude. You can conquer your fear. You men, you can conquer the lust of the eyes.

You can conquer your dirty thoughts. That is more serious than any sickness. Sickness, Jesus will take away when he comes back.

We cannot have a body that is free from sickness and death till he comes back. We can pray and many times God heals us. I have experienced many times.

We pray and God heals us. But you can see as you look at me there are two sicknesses that are not healed. Tell me.

One is I cannot see without my glasses. That is a sickness. You think in heaven I am going to wear glasses? No.

I don't wear glasses in heaven. What is my second sickness? All my hair has gone off. It started when I was 21.

That is a sickness. You think you are going to see me like this without hair in heaven? No. I am going to have a full head of black hair.

Just like Jesus. So, I am not praying now. Oh God, please give me hair on my head.

Please deliver me from my glasses. I don't pray all that. I say, Lord deliver me from anger.

Deliver me from lusting with the eyes. Deliver me from bad thoughts, bad dreams. Deliver me from hating people.

Deliver me from jealousy. Deliver me from bitterness. Deliver me from anxiety and fear.

Deliver me from grumbling and murmuring and complaining. This eyes and hair and all, I can wait some more time. No problem.

The back aches and headaches and all, we can wait some more time. But Lord, bitterness, jealousy, now I want to be free. No murmuring.

I must never complain or murmur in my life. Sometimes I tell the brothers in the church, brother please try and do this some work that needs to be done before I come back. But, if you are not able to finish it for some reason, don't worry.

Don't think I will get angry with you. No. The only thing serious in life is sin.

That's what I tell them. If you accidentally lose some money, don't worry. The only thing serious in life is sin.

I have learnt that. The other things we must be careful, but those are not the most serious things in life. The only thing serious in life is sin.

The promise of God is that sin will not rule over you. So, don't be more concerned about your eyesight and your hair and all those things. Sin is most serious.

Secret sin. Sinful attitudes towards other people. This fighting quarreling attitude you have at home, that is worse than any sickness.

So, from now on you say, Lord please change my way of thinking. Make me hate sin more than sickness. I want to really tell you to pray that prayer.

Simple prayer. Lord Jesus, help me to hate sin more than sickness in my life. You got it? Lord Jesus, help me to hate sin more than sickness in my life.

All of you pray that prayer. In the next one year, you will become a spiritual person. Don't you want to be a spiritual person? That means you become beautiful in your heart.

Supposing somebody could tell you, I can change your face and make you look beautiful in one year. There are so many people in the world who spend so many thousands of rupees to change their face. They say, put my nose down a bit.

Put my teeth in a little bit. This ear is too long, make it a little shorter. There are people who do all those operations.

And now they even make you grow hair on the head also. You see these advertisements how people are having hair. And even operations in the eye, you don't need your glasses after that.

It all costs lakhs and lakhs and lakhs of rupees. Where to waste money on all this? Jesus says, I will make you beautiful in your heart, free. I will fill you with my Holy Spirit.

You must pray to Jesus, Lord fill me with your Holy Spirit. I don't care if my nose is too long or ear is too small or no hair on my head. But I want my heart to be beautiful.

I want to be holy. I want to be kind and good to other people. I want the words that come out of my mouth always to be gracious words.

Will you pray that prayer? God will do a miracle for you. You read some promises in scripture. Let's claim them.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, please help us to honor you and help everyone here to become spiritual, to become beautiful in the heart. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

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