

Honeydew - True Christianity

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes that true Christianity is about following Jesus and living sacrificially, recognizing our sinfulness and the importance of a sensitive conscience.

Duration: 1:01:35

Scripture: Luke 15:11, Romans 3:23, Hebrews 9:27

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse and forgive sins. The sermon uses the analogy of a videotape to illustrate how, through confession and belief in Jesus, the sections of our lives that are filled with sin can be blotted out. The preacher urges the audience to acknowledge their sins and pray for forgiveness, emphasizing that death can come at any moment and we must be prepared to face judgment. The sermon concludes with a call to respond to God and invite Jesus into our hearts for forgiveness and cleansing.

Transcript

I come from India and 98% of the people in our country are non-Christians and 2% are Christians. There was a very great, a very well-known Hindu man who was one of the presidents of India more than 40 years ago. He was a Hindu, but he had a great respect for Jesus Christ.

He studied the Bible. And he made a statement, which I cannot forget. He said, if all the Christians in India lived like Jesus Christ, there would be no Hindus left in India.

I believe that. I believe that the people of my country have not rejected Jesus Christ. They have rejected the Christ that they have seen in Christians, which I also reject, because that's not the true Christ.

A lot of people who call themselves Christians are so selfish. Jesus Christ was not selfish. A lot of people who call themselves Christians have no concern for other people who are in need.

Jesus Christ was not like that. Jesus Christ was greatly concerned about others who were in need. A lot of people who call themselves Christians are so taken up with this world that they don't think much about Heaven and Eternity, except when they are about to die.

But when you look at the life of Jesus Christ, he lived totally for Heaven and Eternity. I want to say that all Christians admire Jesus Christ. Very few people follow him.

But if you read the Bible, many of you have read the Bible, Jesus never told anyone, admire me. Have you noticed that? Never. Not even once did he say to people, admire me, admire me.

He always said, follow me, follow me. So, my calling is not to admire Jesus Christ. It is to follow him.

And it's only one who follows him who is a true Christian. See, I'm not a South African. If I pretend to be a South African, I'm telling a lie.

It's the same way with Christian. A Christian is one who claims to be following Jesus Christ. That's the meaning of Christian.

Let me show you a verse, if you have a Bible, Acts chapter 11. Do you know the very first time that people were called Christians? For many years, nobody called the disciples of Jesus Christians. But the first time the word Christian was used in this world, the very first time, is described in Acts 11 and verse 26.

In Acts 11, 26, in the last part of that verse, it says the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Who were called Christians? Disciples. Do you know what a disciple is? A disciple is one who sits at his master's feet and listens and learns and then follows his master.

That is a disciple. One who follows, learns, listens, learns and follows. He is a learner and a follower.

The learners and followers of Jesus Christ were called Christians. But the value of that word has come down so much. It's like the currency in India is called a rupee, the currency here is called a rand.

You know the value of it has come down and down and down in my country and in your country. That's the way the value of the word Christian has come down. And Christian means nothing.

Just like you say today the value of the rand is nothing compared to what it was ten years ago. I say the value of the word Christian is nothing today compared to what it meant originally. When we read here, the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

We need to ask ourselves, why did Jesus Christ come to this earth at all? I believe that if we claim to be Christians, we must at least know why Jesus Christ came to this earth. There was a man who came to the country of Congo in Africa. It was called Congo those days.

Some of you may have heard of him. He was an English cricketer who became a missionary called C.T. Studd. His father was a millionaire and he inherited a lot of wealth from his father and on top of that he was part of the English cricket team.

But he found Jesus Christ as his saviour and he gave up his cricketing career and he gave all his money away for Christian work. And he came and lived in Congo in a little hut for 14 years or more and brought about 10,000 people to Christ in his life. He did much more than if he would just been a good cricketer or a wealthy man.

But he made a statement which is another of those statements I can't forget. I want you to listen to it carefully. It's a logical statement, a very simple logic.

He said, if Jesus Christ is God and if he died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. Is that right or wrong? It's right. If these two things are true, which all Christians say are true, that Jesus Christ is God and he died for me, then any sacrifice I make will be too little.

No sacrifice can be too great to make for him. That's why he went to Congo. Many of us, we say we are Christians, we say we believe so many things, but we don't live according to what we believe.

Supposing you believe that 2 plus 2 is 4 and 3 plus 3 is 6, but when you did your calculations, you didn't follow those principles of addition and multiplication, you'd get everything wrong. And I think that's how a lot of Christians are. We say we believe so many things, but in actual life, we don't live as though we believe those things.

And that's what brings a great dishonor upon the name of Christ in my land, in your land and everywhere in the world. I believe the great challenge that comes to all people who take the name of Christ is to live a little more like he lived on this earth. And that cannot happen until God deals with my past life and my nature.

See, we all have two problems. When I speak to non-Christians in my country, I don't discuss religion, I don't discuss idol worship or different founders of different religions. I say we are not interested in all that.

I tell them, listen, I'm a sinner, you're a sinner. Haven't you done wrong things against your own conscience, according to your conscience? Yes. I've done wrong things according to my conscience.

We are in the same boat. I mean, because you were born in some Hindu family, you got a Hindu name and you call yourself a Hindu. You were born in a Muslim family, you got a Muslim name, you call yourself a Muslim.

I was born in a Christian family, so I have a Christian name and I call myself a Christian. But what is the difference in our heart? Just the same. If you see three or four children playing in the kindergarten in a school, by looking at them, can you find out which is a Christian and which is some other religion? Or which is the child of an atheist? Don't they all fight just the same? Don't they all go and grab the toys just the same? Aren't they all equally selfish? There is no difference.

Particularly when they are small, they are just the same. Religion, I tell them, is made by man. These children are all born with an evil nature and that evil nature develops just like everything else develops as we grow.

It becomes more and more evil and we do more and more wrong things. Little children don't do as many wrong things as grown-up people do. That evil nature develops as we grow.

So we all have the same problem, whatever our religion is. And I tell them, I say, listen, I am not trying to convert you to Christianity. I am not interested in converting anybody to Christianity.

I am not trying to change your name. I want to introduce you to Jesus Christ, to a person, not to a religion. People who follow the Christian religion are as corrupt and as crooked as people who follow any religion.

But when a person meets Jesus Christ, he can never be the same. That is true in my life. I was born in a very God-fearing Christian family.

As far as I can remember, I never got out of my bed without kneeling down and praying the Lord's Prayer, our Father who art in Heaven, every day. I mean, it took only one minute. I had to repeat it like a parrot.

It didn't mean anything. But I would always say that and then get out of bed. I read my Bible, I went to church, never killed anybody, never committed adultery, never robbed a bank, never did anything, what

the world calls terrible sins, I never been on drugs, I never drank alcohol, I never smoked cigarettes.

I was a good boy, but I was going to hell. Because on the outside, I was okay. But my inside was just as corrupt as anybody else's.

The Bible says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Many people have the idea that even though they don't say it, that in the final day, God will have a weighing balance. And He'll put all our good deeds on one side and all our bad deeds on the other side, and whichever is heavier will determine whether we go to heaven or to hell.

But it's not like that. The Bible says that if we have come short of God's standards, we sin. And when we sin, we're guilty.

And sin is like a debt we owe to God. It makes us criminals immediately. Whether I've committed one murder or a thousand murders, I'm still a murderer.

So it's like that. Whether I've committed one sin or a thousand sins, I'm a sinner. You know, if a man has committed one murder, everybody calls him a murderer.

Right? That's right. He is a murderer. How many people did he kill? One.

And there are a lot of people in the world who have been hanged for killing one person. And the man who killed a hundred people, he's also a murderer. We call Hitler a murderer.

Stalin, murderer. They killed thousands, millions. And the person who killed one person, murderer.

It's like that with the word sinner. If you've committed one sin, you're a sinner. If you've committed a million sins, you're a sinner.

And so the Bible says, you've come short of God's mark. That's what Jesus came to teach us. And I realized I was a sinner.

And that what I needed was not a religion. I already had a religion. I had the true religion, Christianity.

But it didn't change me. Till a time came in my life when I realized that I needed something more than religion. There was a bishop, he must have been at least 60 years old, who came to Jesus one night.

His name was Nicodemus. You read about him in John chapter 3. Today we would call him a bishop or an archbishop. He was one of the religious leaders of the Jews.

And he came to Jesus one night. And as he spoke to Jesus, Jesus said to this old bishop, who was not an adulterer or a thief or any such thing. He was a very upright man.

He was a God-fearing man. And Jesus told this religious bishop, you must be born again. What does that mean? You must be born again.

And he couldn't understand it. He said, what does that mean, I must be born again? Do I have to go into my mother's womb a second time and come out again, be born again? Jesus said, no. That type of birth won't help you.

You were born of the flesh. Even if you go into your mother's womb a second time, you will still be born of the flesh. He said, what I mean is, you must be born in your spirit.

See, man's got a spirit, which is the thing that distinguishes him from other animals. It's not our mind that distinguishes us from the animals. Because a dog's got a mind.

A dog can love you, show you affection. Dog's got feelings, we've got feelings. Dog's got a mind, we've got a mind.

Animals have got mind and animals have got feelings. Animals can be stubborn, like we can be stubborn. But there's one thing animals don't have, and that's a conscience.

They don't feel guilty, when they've done something wrong. Now you can train them to feel guilty, that's different. You can train a dog to feel guilty, if it did something wrong inside the house.

That's training, that's not conscience. If you get a wild dog in the jungle, that dog doesn't feel guilty about anything or any wild animal. But man's not like that.

People have gone into the jungles and seen barbarians, who had no contact with civilization, who have had no contact with any religion, who don't even know how to read and write. They've discovered that those people have a conscience. A conscience that tells them.

It's not a very sensitive conscience, but a conscience that tells them, you have offended your creator. And how do we know that? Because these people, they offer some sacrifice. They think the creator is the sun or some mountain or some tree.

They've got some understanding of some creator. They don't know who it is. The sun or the moon or some people worship the sun, some people worship the moon.

But they offer some sacrifice. Why do they do that? And they pray, not knowing whom they're praying to, because they're feeling guilty. Now, you'll never find an animal anywhere in the world, in some jungle, praying to some creator.

That is the thing that distinguishes us from animals, the conscience. And when you lose your conscience, you have become like an animal. I mean, you may be still very rich and cultured and civilized, but in God's eyes, you have descended to the level of an animal.

The only person who has not descended to the level of an animal is the one who keeps his conscience clear. Conscience is the one thing that lifts you above the level of animals. And it's when men don't live by their conscience, they do things to each other which are worse than what animals do to each other.

And you see that in the world around us. So, we recognize that God made man with a conscience. And when I'm talking to a non-Christian, I say, that conscience tells you, you're a sinner, tells me I'm a sinner.

Tells me I'm guilty, tells you you're guilty. How can we get rid of this guilt? How can we get rid of this guilt? We can kill the voice of our conscience, that's easy. But that doesn't get rid of our guilt.

Guilt is like a debt. Supposing I'm in debt to somebody, I can try and forget about it. But if I forget about it, it doesn't clear my debt.

It's there. God has placed a conscience in you and me to make us aware that we are answerable to him. And I want to tell all of you, my dear friends, if there's one thing you must keep most carefully, it is your conscience.

Let me use an example. In our body we feel pain. Pain is one of the greatest blessings in the human body.

Now, if you're a medical person, you'll agree, you'll understand that. If you're not a medical person, you probably won't understand why I'm saying pain is a great blessing. I don't know whether you know anything about leprosy.

I don't know whether you have lepers here in this country. We have lots and lots of millions of lepers in India. And leprosy is a disease where you lose your sensation.

If you get leprosy in the soles of your feet, you don't feel anything in your feet. You can stamp on a nail, it goes right through your foot, and a person with leprosy will feel nothing, because he doesn't have sensation. And so what happens? That nail has gone into his foot.

He does not even know that a nail has gone into his foot. And in India, a lot of people walk bare feet. They don't wear socks or shoes or many places they don't even wear sandals.

They walk bare feet, a nail goes into their foot, they don't know it, and the nail is inside their foot. And the foot gets infected with pus, but he doesn't feel any pain. This man doesn't feel any pain, even when the infection comes in the pus, because he's got leprosy.

His whole sensation is gone. And finally, it gets so bad that they have to cut off the foot. Now why doesn't that happen to you? Because you feel pain.

Even if a thorn gets in, you feel pain and you pull it out immediately. Do you understand how pain is a blessing? If you didn't have pain, you'd have all lost your feet by now. You'd have probably lost your hands as well, if you lost sensation.

Pain is one of the greatest blessings in the human body. When you feel a pain inside, that is an indication something is wrong. You go and get an x-ray, you go and get a scan, and the doctor can treat you, and you can be cured.

But if you didn't feel that pain, the thing would go wrong, and you would not know about it. You wouldn't go to a doctor, you wouldn't get an x-ray, you wouldn't get a scan, and you would die. So I hope all of us learn to appreciate pain.

Pain is one of the greatest blessings in the human body. The equivalent of that in our spirit is the pain our conscience gives us. When you do something wrong, your conscience gives you a little guilt feeling.

That pain is one of the greatest blessings God can give you. If you listen to it. Have you seen a little two-year-old child trying to tell a lie to his mother? The mother asks, Did you eat that cake I told you not to eat? And he looks and says, No, I didn't eat it, mummy.

Tell me, did you eat it? And you know by his face he is telling a lie. From his face you can make out he is telling a lie, because his conscience is so sensitive. But you wait till that child becomes twenty years old.

He can tell you a lie with a straight face. You won't even know that he is telling a lie, because he has become clever. In eighteen years he has developed the ability to tell a lie without letting other people know it.

And many of us have become such experts that we can tell lies without anybody knowing that we are telling a lie. What happened? Your conscience has got leprosy. You don't feel the pain anymore.

You can get angry and yell at a person and shout at a person, hurt his feelings, speak rudely to your wife and go to bed peacefully at night. How can you go to bed peacefully? Can you get a nail in your foot and go to bed peacefully at night? No. If you have got leprosy, you can.

But if you don't have leprosy, you cannot sleep even with a thorn in your foot. How is it you can hurt other people's feelings, violate the laws of God and go to sleep peacefully at night? Your conscience has got leprosy. Sensation is going.

Be careful. We have advertisements all over India in many many places, railway stations and bus stops. Leprosy can be cured completely.

It's true. Nowadays we have medicines in the last hundred years, particularly in the last fifty years. Excellent medicines that can cure leprosy one hundred percent.

Not ninety-eight percent, one hundred percent. If you take it quickly enough and those advertisements are put all over so that anyone who's got a little bit of leprosy can immediately go to a doctor, get these medicines which are not very expensive and be cured completely. That is the message of the gospel also.

Spiritual leprosy can be cured completely. Your conscience which has lost its sensitivity to sin can once again become sensitive. Don't you think that's a blessing? If you've lost your sensation in your feet and you suddenly get your sensation back, wouldn't you be happy? Sure, go and ask any leper.

Boy, I'd give anything in the world to get a little sensation back in my hands and my feet. It's a very wonderful thing to get sensation back in our conscience. That means if I've hurt somebody, even my wife or husband by my words or my speech, if I got angry and lost my temper, that I can't sleep at night.

I toss and turn and toss and turn just like having a nail in my foot. You are a blessed person. You've been healed of your leprosy and until you take that thorn out of your foot, you can't sleep.

Now how do you take the thorn out of your foot when you've hurt your wife? How is it? Go and apologize to her. Sometimes that is more difficult than taking a thorn out of your foot. To go to someone and say, I'm sorry that was my mistake, please forgive me.

I am sorry that was my mistake, please forgive me. Those are ten of the most difficult words for anyone to say. Try saying it.

Very difficult. You know why? Because we have a thing in us called pride. Pride which makes us the enemy of God.

Pride which makes us imagine that we don't make any mistakes. Which prevents us from going to someone and humbly saying, I'm sorry for what I did. You know, it will make you a much better man if you learn to do that.

It will make you a much better woman if you learn to do that. Jesus Christ came to teach us to do that. And we never become so spiritual that we have to stop doing that.

We have to do that till the end of our lives. I still have to do it because I'm not God. I'm not God.

I'm a man and I make mistakes. The only person who never makes any mistakes is God. So, I make mistakes and when I make a mistake, I have to go to that person and say, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry for that mistake. That was my mistake. I'm sorry, please forgive me.

And back on the road again. Following Jesus. Pride makes a man like the devil.

You know, the Bible says that the devil was not always the devil. God never made him. He was Lucifer.

And one day he became proud. He thought, oh, I'm better than everybody else. I'm higher than everybody else.

I'm going to be bigger than even God. The moment this pride came into his heart, he was cast down and he became the devil. The highest of the angels became a devil in a moment.

People don't become devils gradually over 10 years. No. The highest of the angels becomes a devil in a moment because of pride.

Not because of murder, not because of adultery, not because of theft, not because of telling lies, but by pride. You know, a lot of people say, I don't kill anybody. I don't harm anyone.

I don't cheat anyone. I'm living an upright life. I'm not stealing.

I'm not telling lies. That's fine. The devil can also say, I never killed anybody.

I'm not committing adultery. I'm not telling lies. I'm not stealing.

He could say all that at the beginning. Then how did he become a devil? How did he become a devil? By pride. So today if somebody says, I don't kill, I don't steal, I don't commit adultery, I don't tell lies, he can still be like a devil through pride.

Pride is an evil thing. We don't see it. Pride that makes us feel superior to others.

God hates it. There's a verse in the Bible that says, God resists the proud. That means God fights against proud people.

He does not give them grace. So we got to be very careful about this evil called pride that prevents us from humbly acknowledging that I've made a mistake. I have sinned.

And that's the reason why many people never get forgiveness of sins and never experience a relationship with Jesus Christ as what the born again experience does. What Jesus was telling Nicodemus the bishop was, you need to be born again. Just like when you were physically born.

What happened? You came into this world. You came in contact with your mother and your father and gradually as you grew up you came into a relationship with different people because you were born into this world. You could never do that as long as you were in your mother's womb.

You were in your mother's womb, you had life but you had no contact with anybody. As soon as you came out, you gradually you developed contact with your mother and father and it was another world. Something like that happens when we are born again.

When Jesus Christ comes into our life and we come into this new life, we suddenly come into a new world. A new world where we have contact with Jesus and contact with God and we can talk to Jesus just like we talk to somebody on the telephone. That's how I've been talking to him for 43 years.

What a wonderful thing it is. To relate to Jesus Christ as a friend. One to whom we can tell everything.

It's like a husband wife relationship. A very intimate loving relationship. Having a friend to whom I can share my problems and find a solution and who is almighty and who can solve my problems for me.

That's what happened to me when I was 19. I opened my life and asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. I said Lord I'm a sinner.

I want you to come into my life. That day began a friendship that has lasted for 43 years now. Then I began to experience true Christianity.

Till then what I had was a religion and it did not help me. Now I came in contact with Jesus Christ. So that's what I tell even non-christian people I meet.

I say I'm not trying to convert you to Christianity. Christianity did not help me for 19 years. I'm trying to introduce you to Jesus Christ.

A living contact with Christ. And I tell him 90% of Christians do not have a living contact with Jesus Christ. They only have a religion.

They go to church, say their prayers. Actually the people who don't go to church are much better than these people. Because people who don't go to church don't pretend to be religious.

These people who go to church pretend to be religious and behave just like the people who don't go to church. Then who's better? Supposing I pretend to be holy and I shout at my wife and that fellow does not pretend to be holy and he shouts at his wife. Don't you think he's a better man than me? Any day.

Because he's at least not claiming anything. I'm claiming to be holy. You know Jesus once told a story of a man who had two sons.

You know the story of the prodigal son. He went away taking his father's goods and property and wasting everything. Then finally he was repentant.

He had lost everything. He had wasted his father's money and he came back and said dad I'm ready to be a servant. I'm not fit for anything in your house.

And the father said no come and sit at my table. You're my son. That's how God receives those who come to him in humility acknowledging that they have sinned.

But in that same house was an older boy. And the older boy is a picture of this religious type of Christian who thinks he has done nothing wrong. And lots of people like that in the world.

And he told his father I have done nothing wrong. I'm okay. I'm not like this boy.

And you know in that story if you read it in Luke 15 at the end of the story that boy is outside the house. In this end of the story Jesus left that boy outside the house. So you know what the story of the prodigal son really is? It's a story of a man who had two sons.

In the beginning of the story the younger son is outside the house and the elder son is inside the house. At the end of the story the younger son is inside the house and the elder son is outside the house. How did that happen? Was it because the elder son was wicked? No.

The younger son was much more wicked than the elder son. But he had one thing that saved him. He acknowledged his sin.

He said Lord I'm a sinner. Dad I'm a sinner. I've done wrong things.

Dad said come. The other one was not willing to acknowledge that there was anything wrong with him. He was always comparing himself with the other people.

You know a lot of people are like that. They say I'm not so bad. I'm not so bad as that person.

Okay. Then there's no salvation for you. That was the difference between the Pharisees.

If you read the Gospels you read of a group of people called the Pharisees. They were there every synagogue on the Sabbath day. They read the Bible.

They prayed. They fasted. They engaged in missionary work.

They did so many religious activities but they were never saved. Jesus looked at them and said all of you will go to hell. But think of that thief on the cross.

When Jesus was dying there was this thief who turned to Jesus in repentance at the last minute. There were Pharisees standing at the foot of the cross and there was a thief on the cross. Tell me humanly speaking who was the better of the two? Definitely those Pharisees.

They were far better. They were upright people. They didn't harm anybody.

They lived moral lives. They prayed. They fasted.

They gave their tithes. What about this fellow on the cross? He never prayed. He had no time for prayer.

No fasting. No typing. He never went to the synagogue except when he was a little child.

His mother took him. His father took him. He never went after that.

He just lived for himself and killed people and made money and cheated and robbed people. I mean you compare that man on the cross with this religious fellow standing at the foot of the cross. Anybody will tell you that that religious fellow is a million times better than this fellow on the cross.

Right. But do you know this fellow on the cross went to heaven? And that chap at the foot of the cross went to hell? How is that? That's exactly like the story Jesus said of the elder son and the younger son. The younger son did so many wrong things.

It's not a question of doing wrong things or right things. It's a question of acknowledging. Are you willing to acknowledge? I am a sinner.

I may not be as bad a sinner as somebody else. Okay. But I'm still a sinner.

How many holes do you need in a vessel for all the water to leak out? Two hundred or one? Only one. It doesn't make a difference whether a vessel has got one hole or two hundred holes. You will not use it to store anything.

That's how sin is. One sin or two hundred sins. But to acknowledge I'm a sinner.

That's one of the most difficult things. That God finds it so difficult to get people to do. To acknowledge that they are sinners.

And I believe that's the reason why so many people can miss the kingdom of God. So many people can miss God's kingdom only because they find it difficult to acknowledge that they are sinners. But when they do acknowledge that and say Lord I'm a sinner.

Then they realize that the need for Christ to die for their sins. There are people who say well if I live a good life that's okay. God will accept me.

Well if that was the case there was no need for Jesus Christ to come to this earth and die for the sins of the world. I mean if living a good life is okay then why did Christ die? When Christ died God was showing the world one thing. There is absolutely no way into God's kingdom for anybody except through the death of my son on the cross.

He died to take away the guilt of our sin. So that's how the first problem that we have gets solved. When I come to Jesus as a sinner.

I ask him to cleanse me. My entire past life is blotted out and I become born again. Just like a new child.

A child of God. Then we have another problem. Problem number two.

All human beings have got two problems. One is the guilt of my past life. Whatever our religion.

The second problem is our nature. This nature we have inherited from Adam our forefather that is always so evil. That has a tendency towards evil and that makes us do evil even when we want to do good.

Haven't we all had that experience that we wanted to do something good but we ended up doing something evil. We all have that experience. That's because of our nature and Jesus Christ has got a solution for that also.

The Bible says he sends his Holy Spirit to come and dwell inside us. That's the only way to change our nature. It's not by trying to teach us to behave and act nicely.

If you take a pig and scrub it and put a lot of soap and clean it up and put a lot of perfume in it and make it look nice and smell nice. How long will it be like that? Not even one day. Because it's nature is to go towards filth.

And your nature and my nature is exactly the same. Even if we get some religion and scrub ourselves and put perfume on it, religious perfume, we still become filthy in no time. But have you seen a cat? Have you

seen a cat has got a tremendous desire to keep itself clean all the time.

That's another nature. Now if you could take the nature of that cat and do a miracle and put it inside the pig. You know what will happen? You will see that pig licking itself and keeping itself clean all the time.

That will be a clean pig. How did that happen? Change of nature. That is what the Lord does for us.

We have to humbly acknowledge, though it's a very humiliating illustration to say that our nature is like the nature of a pig. It's true. You know how easily your mind goes to filthy things rather than to clean things? Am I speaking the truth? Your mind goes to filthy things more than to clean things.

You know how much you are tempted to read a filthy book. More than a clean one. That's what I mean.

The pig prefers to go to that filthy area than the clean area. Same thing. You know how you would rather believe a bad story about somebody else than a good story about somebody else? That's not only true in South Africa.

It's true in India too. It's true everywhere in the world. Our nature is the same.

The color of our skin may be different but the inner nature is the same. So, our nature, the closest we can think of it is in the animal world is like the pig. Always going towards the filthy thing rather than the clean thing.

We'd rather speak evil about somebody than speak good about someone. Even our children. Many of you have got children.

Just ask yourself one question. How much have you scolded them and how much have you appreciated them? Ask yourself. They are your own children.

You say you love them. But the chances are you have scolded them much more than you have appreciated them. Our nature is like that.

We tend to do the minimum amount of work necessary in our offices and try to get the maximum amount of salary. It's our nature and it is impossible to change it. Just like it's impossible to change the nature of a pig, it is impossible to change the nature of a pig.

We can scrub it, clean it, teach it, educate it. You can't change its nature. But God can do it.

I want to tell you this. A thousand years of self-effort will not change a pig's nature. It will not change your nature or my nature.

But God can do a miracle. He can give His Holy Spirit that comes and lives inside us and changes our nature and makes us more like Christ. He can do that.

And that is the solution to our second problem. The solution to our first problem, all the sins I have committed in my life, Christ died to take away all my sins. The solution to my second problem, He gives me His Holy Spirit to dwell within me, to change my nature and it takes time, I admit, because I have lived for so long in filth that sometimes I slip and fall.

But there is a difference now. What's the difference between a pig falling into dirty water and a cat falling into dirty water? The pig stays there and the cat jumps out and says, I don't like this. So, one who is not

born again can fall into sin and one who is born again can also fall into sin.

But there will be a difference. What is the difference? One loves it and stays there. The other one feels so uneasy immediately and wants to get out and say, God, that's dirty, I don't want it.

If that's how you are, that's one of the tests that you are born again. That when you fall, supposing in the night I see an animal fall into dirty water and it's dark, I don't know whether it's a cat or a pig. How to find out? If it stays there, it's a pig.

If it comes out, it's a cat. It's like that. You can find out whether you are born again.

Very simple test. The next time you fall into some sin, particularly when you fall into sin without anybody seeing you. When somebody sees you, then we all like to behave like cats and come out.

That's not the test. The test is when nobody sees you. You know, your character is, there is a saying in English, your character is what you are in the dark.

How you behave in the darkness, that's your character. When nobody sees you, nobody knows you did something wrong, only you and God and the devil know what you did wrong. But no human being saw you.

Do you jump out like the cat? Or do you look around and say, thank God, nobody saw me. Then you know whether you are a believer or not. It's very simple, you can find out yourself.

You know, a lot of Christians, you know the 10 commandments in the Old Testament? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. A lot of Christians have got only one commandment. Thou shalt not get caught.

That's all. You can do whatever you like, but don't get caught. That's all they live by.

They are not born again. When a person is born again, he does not live by the rule, thou shalt not get caught. He feels uneasy, even when he has sinned in his thoughts.

You know when you have a dirty thought. Even your wife doesn't know it. Nobody knows it.

The person sitting next to you doesn't know it. But you realize that's a violation, that's a pollution of the beautiful mind God gave me. And I feel guilty and I go to God and say, God please, I hate that.

That wretched thing came into my mind and I sinned. Please forgive me. That shows that you don't have leprosy.

Your conscience is working once again. And that's spiritual growth. Another way I can illustrate this conscience, which I have spoken about today, is such a wonderful gift of God.

I hope you all learn to appreciate your conscience from today. It's like the gift of pain. Conscience is like a weighing machine.

You know these very sensitive weighing machines where one milligram, it will register it. When a child is born, it's like that. But as we grow older, the springs and everything in this machine are spoiled so badly that you put five tons on it and it doesn't move.

The needle doesn't move at all. All types of terrible wrong things we do and the needle doesn't move. But then we are born again.

And when we are born again, this needle begins to move once more. You know, from five tons it comes, even one ton makes the needle move. And then as we grow, a hundred pounds makes the needle move.

Wonderful. And then after some time, ten pounds makes the needle move and gradually we are coming down to the one milligram, which we lost when we were children. This is the message of the gospel.

Your conscience can register even those small weights, which once upon a time did not register. Dead people don't feel anything. You can put five tons on them, no problem.

But when we are living, we feel it. Well, I hope you have learned something about what the Bible teaches today, about our conscience, about why Christ had to come, why he had to die, why he had to send his spirit to change our nature. One last thing, the great hope we have as Christians is that Christ will come again in glory.

He is going to come again from heaven and set up his judgment seat on earth and we will all stand before him in that day. Whether we like it or not, whether we believe it or not, we have to stand before him and give an account of our life. And the Bible says that everything we have done is going to be exposed in that day.

You know how that is? Because in your mind there is a thing called memory. And memory is like a videotape that is running all the time. It started running the day you were born.

Running, running, running, running. That videotape is taping everything in your life, your thoughts, attitudes, words, actions, motives, everything is being recorded. And in the day of judgment God is to just press the rewind button, it rewinds back and then plays your whole life on a screen for the whole world to see what exactly you did.

And that is the day when Jesus said, many who are first will be last and last will be first. Because you will see everybody's life in that day. We are all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and God is going to show our life, my life to the whole world and your life to the whole world.

And a lot of people as they watch it, they will say, oh dear, I thought that man was a holy man. Look what I see. Look at the things that was going on in his private life.

And a lot of people whom we didn't think much about, we despise them. We will discover when their private life is manifested that they were God-fearing people who sacrificed so much in private for the sake of Christ and his kingdom and you did not value them. First will be last and last will be first.

Now there is only one way by which those bad areas of your videotape can be erased. That's a wonderful thing. It can be erased.

And that is, the Bible says, if we confess our sins. If we come to Jesus and confess our sins. It's so easy.

Because he has already paid the price. You don't have to pay any price, but you have to confess it. Lord, I did that wrong.

That was my sin. Adam couldn't confess his sin. He blamed his wife.

But if you confess your sin. Lord, that part, that part, that part in my videotape, when I was so many years old, I still remember. When I was that age, that age, that age.

Lord, everything you remember. There are a million things we don't remember. Forget them.

But the things you remember. Lord, I did that. I'm a sinner.

Please cleanse me. Cleanse my past life, Lord. Blot it out.

There are so many things I don't even remember. But whatever I did wrong, I acknowledge I'm a sinner. Will you please cleanse me in the blood you shed on the cross of Calvary.

That entire section of your videotape will be blotted out. And then in the final day, when you stand before the Lord, and they're going to play your videotape. And you know, it starts out with you as a baby, and you're quite happy for people to see you as a baby, because everything is okay.

It's a clean life. And then you come to the part when you were, you know, most of the naughty things we have done, we have done when we were teenagers, right? When we are 16, 17, 18, all of us have done a lot of terrible things. Okay, it comes to that age and you're scared now.

What are they going to see? And they're going to see nothing. It's blank. Because you confessed it.

It's gone. You're so happy and so thankful to God that whole section is gone. And then somewhere you did something good, that's on the tape.

And then a whole section that's blank, where you did a lot of evil things, it's not there. And you're so happy. And then somewhere you did some good thing, that's on the tape.

And you see, everybody says, boy, what a wonderful man. He did only good things in his life. What a wonderful woman.

She did only good things in his life. This is the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. That's the gospel.

Isn't that good news? It certainly is. Let's bow our heads before God. Well, I believe that God has spoken to you tonight.

I have no doubt about it. I'm sure you have no doubt about it either. I want you to pray a simple prayer in your heart, silently before God.

Death can come any moment. It does not come only to old people. It comes to young people too.

You can die crossing the street. You can die driving a car. You may never come home.

We must be ready at all times to meet with our Creator. Now is the time to respond to God. To say these words, Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner.

I thought I was a Christian. I realize today I'm a sinner. Thank you for dying for me on the cross, for rising from the dead.

I want you to come into my heart, forgive my sin, I confess my sin. Cleanse me from all my sins with your blood. Blot out those sections of my videotape that I'm ashamed of.

I confess my sin. I don't blame anybody else. It's my sin.

But you died for me, Lord Jesus. I want to be born again. I want you to come into my heart.

I want to be a child of God from today. I want you to give me your Holy Spirit. I want you to fill me with your Holy Spirit.

Change my nature that I can be a holy child of God from today. Make me sensitive in my conscience. Restore to me that sensitivity in my conscience that I had as a child.

Thank you, Lord. I believe you can do this. Heavenly Father, I pray for those who are sincerely calling upon you.

I believe there are many here who have a sense of need and who are calling upon you. I pray that everyone will have that sense of need. And I pray that from this day there will be a change in the lives, in the family lives, home lives, personal lives, business lives, church life of every single person sitting here.

Thank you, Lord. I believe you can do it. You will do it.

Thank you for this evening. Bless every home that's represented here according to their need. If there are people who are sick, I pray that you will touch them, Lord, and bring healing into their bodies.

Some who are in pain, relieve them of their pain in Jesus' name. Confirm your word, Lord, with signs following. We pray, dear Lord Jesus, according to the need of every person.

If there are people here going through financial difficulty or trial or testing, give them your supporting grace that they can overcome. Thank you for hearing us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4090.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/honeydew-true-christianity/>

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