

Keeping Ourselves in the Love of God

by Zac Poonen

Keeping ourselves in the love of God is essential for a life of faith and trust in God's sovereignty.

Duration: 59:20

Scripture: Genesis 4:5, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 12:43, Jude 1:21

Topics: "Love Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of guarding our hearts and controlling our words. He uses the analogy of a man who cleans his house of jealousy, but then invites more negative spirits back in, resulting in a worse state than before. The speaker encourages listeners to watch their hearts diligently, as the condition of the heart affects the words we speak. He also highlights the need to have the right attitude towards others and to be good to them, as God has been good to us. The sermon references Proverbs 4:23 and Ephesians 3:17 to support these teachings.

Transcript

Well, it's really good to be back. Sare jahan se accha has CFC hamara. You know what that means? In every place in the world, the best place is CFC.

I'll teach you a little Hindi. Shall we say it together? Sare jahan se accha has CFC hamara. Don't forget that.

There's no place like home. There's a song in English called Home Sweet Home, and I heard somewhere that it was written by a homeless man. He could appreciate home better than anybody else.

And it's like that in a church. God never intended the church to be an institution or an organization, but a family. And the best church is that which can create the atmosphere of a home.

And if we have created the atmosphere of a home, where people feel at home, we have succeeded. If we haven't done that, we have failed. And I'm not going to assess that.

It's the people who come here who must assess that. Home is a place where we can relax. We don't have to pretend.

We can be ourselves. We don't have to act spiritual. Do any of you act spiritual in your own homes? No, you're just yourself.

But, you know, when we come very often in the presence of other believers, we feel we have to put a mask, pretend to be spiritual, speak spiritual language, and become artificial. Why is that? Because we feel that they will not accept us as we are. If they really knew what we really are, things we are ashamed of, we feel they will not accept us.

But don't your parents accept you? I'll never forget the story I heard, I mentioned it before, of a man who was such a wicked serial killer, killed many people, and the whole town was waiting for him to be hanged. And on the day of the verdict, all the town gathered around the court, and the judge condemned him to death. But after he was condemned to death, an old lady got up, went by his side, and said, Whatever you people may think, I'm his mother, and I still love him.

There was only one person who would stand by him. So, that's home, you know, where despite all our faults and failings, we're accepted as we are. And we want to build a church here like that.

A church where you could be a drug addict, prostitute, you're welcome to come. Not to remain in that condition, because those habits are destroying you, but you don't have to change before you come. You don't have to give up your drugs before you come here.

You don't even have to give up your prostitution before coming here. You can come as you are, because Jesus welcomed sinners like that. Before he died for sinners, he was the friend of sinners.

And before we can proclaim as a church that Christ died for your sins, we have to be the friends of sinners. The most Christ-like person is the person who is a friend of sinners. He doesn't sin himself, and he doesn't want that sinner to continue in sin.

It's like a mother loves a baby who's got so many sicknesses. She hates the sicknesses, but she loves the baby. It's like that.

That's how God's love is for us. I want to read a verse to you this morning from the epistle of Jude, which is the second last book of the Bible. Jude was a brother, a younger brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Born to Mary and Joseph. James, who wrote the other epistle, was another younger brother of the Lord Jesus. None of these people believed in Christ, believed in their older brother Jesus during the entire time when he lived at home for 30 years.

They must have teased him and taunted him and troubled him in so many ways. But, you know, just like bad boys irritate good boys. So that's what Jesus faced in 30 years at home.

But he won them. He won them. It's great to be like that, where you can win those who taunt you and trouble you and harass you, because you don't react to them in the same way they treat you.

And how wonderful it is that Jesus didn't give up on them, even though they rejected him during this entire life he was with them in their home. Then Jude could be a servant. See, one of the things I appreciate about both James and Jude, they don't say when they write that letter, well, I'm Jude, the younger brother of Jesus.

You know, to try and get some special acceptance before people. You see the humility of these men of God in the first century. They never sought to promote themselves as somebody big.

He says, just a bondservant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. And what I want to read is towards the end of that letter. It says, verse 21, Jude 121.

Keep yourselves, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of Lord Jesus Christ to return to life. I want to read that in the message translation where it says, staying right at the center of God's love. Don't go to the periphery of it.

I mean, you'll be blessed there too, but stay in the center of God's love, keeping your arms open, ready for the mercy of Christ. This is the real life. I've discovered that all problems arise when we don't keep ourselves in the center of God's love.

All sin, all problems in relationships with other people. You may think it is because of their fault. It's not.

It's because you don't keep yourself in the center of God's love. Jesus had no problem with anybody. Do you think people didn't trouble Jesus? They troubled him a lot more than people trouble you.

But as far as he was concerned, he had no problem with anyone. People may have had a problem with him, but he had no problem with anybody. A lot of people have problems with me, but I have no problem with anyone.

And the secret is, you stay in the center of God's love yourself. Nobody should be able to shake you from there. And I'll explain in a moment what that means.

Because when you are there, it says here, verse 24, he's able to keep you from falling, from even stumbling. I can't keep myself. I can't keep myself for a single moment.

If God withdraws his grace from me, I fall immediately into terrible sins. But he can keep me from stumbling and falling. And like it says here in the message translation, now to him who can keep you on your feet.

That's where I want to be. The devil tries to knock me off my feet, but he's not going to succeed. I remember the days when he could succeed, when he could knock me off my feet into sin, wrong attitudes towards other people, into angry words and things like that.

But the Lord can keep us on our feet, standing tall. You know, that means we are overcomers. In his bright presence, fresh, always fresh.

And celebrating. You know, that's how a Christian life is supposed to be. Always on our feet.

Always fresh. And always celebrating Christ our Lord. And if your Christian life is not like that, the reason is, you're not keeping yourself in the center of the love of God.

That is the place of security. It means, first of all, that I believe. Faith.

Faith is the, you know, faith to believe. When Jesus spoke about faith, it essentially means to believe that God loves you perfectly. And when a person doesn't have faith, it means he doesn't believe that God loves him perfectly.

You know that the failure of Eve in the Garden of Eden was, disobedience came later, but first of all, it was a failure of faith. She didn't believe that God loved her perfectly and that it was in perfect love that he had

told her not to eat of that. If she had believed that, even if she couldn't understand, I mean, it looked so attractive, so tempting, and I can't understand why a good God should prevent me from eating this lovely fruit.

All that, those thoughts were put into her mind by the devil. But she could have overcome all of that if she had kept herself in the center of the love of God and said, well, I can't understand it. Satan, I agree, it's so tempting, so attractive, and I can't think of one reason why God would forbid it from me.

But, I know God loves me perfectly. So there must be some very good reason beyond what I can understand. What a different story Genesis 3 would have been.

And what a different story man's history would have been. When God tells you not to lust with your eyes after a woman, do you believe that he tells you that in perfect love? That is so tempting, so attractive. Internet pornography is so attractive.

God says, don't do it, don't click that mouse. Do you believe that it is in love, God tells you that? No, you don't. You don't believe that God's love for you is perfect.

Like Eve, you think that perhaps there's something which even God is withholding from you, which you can enjoy. And God tells you not to get angry with someone, or yell at him or her. Do you believe that it's in love that he says that? When he tells you to forgive your enemies and bless those who curse you.

It's in love. Keep yourself in the center of God's love. It's not only Genesis 3. Genesis 4, it's the same story.

Why did Cain get upset? He couldn't keep himself in the center of God's love. He couldn't bear to see God blessing his younger brother. Can you rejoice when God blesses somebody else, especially if he's younger than you? God gives him better job, better house, better husband, better wife, more spiritual gifts than you, etc., etc.

And you don't feel that he or she deserves as much as you, the spiritual person. That's Cain. And here in Jude, he speaks here about, earlier in verse 11, they've gone down the way of Cain.

See, almost the last book of the Bible, he's warning you about what happened in the Genesis 4. The way of Cain. It's not just 6,000 years ago that happened. Today, there are people walking the way of Cain.

You know, it could be you. You've got to be honest. You know, don't pretend or imagine.

No, no, no, I'm okay. I want to ask you, my brother, sister, you may be a good believer, come here to the church for many years. Have you felt a bit unhappy when somebody else is blessed in the church? Somebody you know is blessed, got something which you haven't got.

Are you unhappy? Do you wish that it hadn't been like that for that person? That's the way of Cain. Do you wish something bad could happen when something good has happened? That's the way of Cain. Face up to it.

You know, there's the saying in English, burying your head in the sand. And if you haven't heard it, what it means is, in the olden days, I don't know whether it's true or not, they used to feel that the ostrich, ostrich is that big bird that can't fly, and the ostrich, whenever it sees, you know, wild animals coming to eat it up, it knows it can't run faster than them. So it buries its long neck in the sand and imagines, oh, I can't see

anybody now, so nobody can see me.

Now, whether that's true or not, that's the origin of that expression, burying your head in the sand, imagining that everything is okay. Oh no, I'm not walking the way of Cain, I'm alright. Be careful.

It's the ones who don't face up to what is true when God speaks to them that get swallowed up by the enemy, by the devil. If you face up to it, God can save us from it. If you find yourself jealous of someone, face up to it.

Go to the Lord and say, Lord, it's true. I am jealous of brother so-and-so, sister so-and-so, because they've got some happiness which I haven't got. The fire of God has fallen on Abel's offering, but it hasn't fallen on mine, and I'm a bit disturbed by that.

You know, it can lead to something worse. The way of Cain doesn't end with jealousy, just like God is speaking to you. 6,000 years ago He spoke to Cain and said, Hey, why is your face fallen? Is the Lord saying that to any of you today? Why is your face fallen? And it's easy to find out.

Can you look at, let's start with everybody in this room before we go to the rest of the world. Can you look at everybody in this room straight in the face, eye to eye, with a cheerful smile? If not, you are on the way of Cain. Is there somebody in this room today whom if you meet, you have to give one of those weak smiles? You're trying to smile, you've got nothing in your heart but jealousy.

You're on the way of Cain. And every time you offer one of those weak smiles to somebody, tell yourself, don't be an ostrich, don't bury your head in the sand. Say, I am on the way of Cain.

Lord, save me. Save me. Something is wrong.

The problem is not in my lips, because I can see somebody else and smile brightly. It's in the heart. Cain couldn't smile at Abel.

If Abel said, Praise the Lord, Cain. Look at the fire that came here. Cain gives a weak smile.

You know, something is wrong. Now, it's possible that some of you have been like that for many years towards somebody. And you don't see how it has destroyed you all these years.

You could have been a very useful servant of the Lord, brother or sister. A blessing to many people. God has not been able to do that for you.

Because you have kept that jealousy in your heart. You have kept that anger in your heart against a brother. Maybe you are angry against some elder brother who didn't do what you expected.

You, the great Maharaja, expected him to do. He didn't do it for you, the great king. And you are upset.

That you are not treated like a Maharaja or a Maharani. So, it disturbs you. Who are you destroying? You are not destroying that other person.

You are destroying yourself. And you probably have done that for many years. I want to invite you.

Jesus invites you. The Holy Spirit invites you. Keep yourself in the center of the love of God.

If God has decided not to give you something which He gave somebody else, accept it. Praise the Lord, that's fine. If God has chosen to lead you through the way of difficulty and trial and suffering and given somebody else ease and comfort, just praise the Lord.

It's God in His sovereign love determining what each of His children should have. You know, this is how sin originated. I can prove to you that sin originated in the universe because an angel did not keep himself in the love of God.

We don't know what his name is. He is commonly known as Lucifer. But Lucifer could be just a word.

A Hebrew word meaning something. But anyway, that's how Satan was originally known. We don't know his name actually.

But whatever it is, he was the head of the angels. And God had drawn a boundary around him. It was a huge boundary.

You are the head of the angels. I have given you more intelligence than any created being. You are more good looking than any human being, than any created being.

And you are going to lead the angels in worshipping me, says God. Boy, what more do you want? To be the highest of all created beings. To be the leader of all those millions and billions of angels.

And to be the leader of the worship meeting in heaven. You think, boy, if I had that, I would never be jealous of anyone. You think so? Well, Satan, he wasn't Satan then.

The head of the angels, he was unhappy. He wanted people, instead of worshipping God, to worship him. That's all he wanted.

And it disturbed him. Disturbed him. He didn't keep himself in the center of God's love, and say, well, God's been so good to me.

Think of those, some of those junior angels there, who didn't have his position. Like Michael and Gabriel, they were also there. They were somewhere in the corner, Michael and Gabriel.

They were quite happy. They said, we're not the head of the angels in heaven, but we're quite happy. God's given us, I mean, we need not even have existed.

God has created us. We're so happy that we're existing. And we're in heaven.

We can praise this wonderful God who loves us so much. They remain there. They're there even today.

But the one who was not happy with what he got, even though he had more than others. Is there anybody sitting here you feel that you haven't got more than others? Just a mile or so from here you can go to the slums of Bangalore. You don't have to walk far.

Just walk down there half an hour from here. And come back and tell me if you haven't got more than most people. What are you complaining about? The devil is such a master.

He'll always show you those who have more than you. Even, and compare yourself to that person. He'll never show you those who have ten times less than you.

Because you might become happy. You might praise the Lord and he doesn't want you to do that. So he'll always point out, point you to someone who's got more than you, who's better than you, more good looking than you, more intelligent than you, who's got more gifts than you, who's got more prominence than you.

So that he can make you miserable. The devil loves miserable people. I'm not going to make the devil happy by being miserable.

I keep myself in the center of God's love. We got to really watch our heart. Because it's from the heart that everything comes out.

We turn to Matthew's Gospel chapter 12. Matthew's Gospel chapter 12. Jesus spoke here about a person from whom an unclean spirit was cast out.

Verse 43. Matthew 12, 43. We can say Jesus is speaking here about the danger you face when you cleanse yourself from some sin.

You got it? Not the joy we have when we cleanse ourselves from some sin. That's true. But the danger you face when you have got rid of some sinful habit from your life.

You want to know what that is? Supposing, let's say, you had this evil habit of jealousy. Or, you know what happened with Cain. When he didn't respond to God's call and invitation to turn from that, his jealousy led to murder.

And Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, verse 21 onwards, that in the New Covenant, anger is equal to murder. So jealousy leads to anger. And anger leads to bitter words.

And angry words, that's what Jesus said in Matthew 5, verse 21 onwards. Anger can lead to angry words. Starts with jealousy.

But let's say that you have decided to take that seriously in your life. Maybe you heard a message like this here some years ago, and you say, yeah, I'm going to get rid of that. I'm going to get rid of jealousy and anger.

So that's the unclean spirit. Okay? Now when the unclean spirit, verse 43, is cast out of the man, expelled, it's gone. But that unclean spirit is not happy.

Because it was living in this guy's heart for so many years, comfortably. And when it says, it passes through waterless places, the meaning is, the unclean spirits want something to, some food. Just like we need water more than we need food.

Water is the most important food that we require. The unclean spirits also require some type of food. Not physical water, they are spirits, they don't need anything physical.

But Jesus is speaking about waterless places, means places where they don't get the food that they crave. And the food they crave is somebody who's jealous. They go around and look at this person, oh, he doesn't have any jealousy, he's a waterless guy.

Then he goes to another person, and this fellow doesn't have any anger, he just keeps himself in the love of God, he's waterless. Let me find where there's some water, I'm hungry, I've been enjoying this guy's

jealousy for so many years. He fed me, fed me everyday with his jealousy and his anger.

And the number of people he was jealous of and angry of increased, and I got plenty of food. This evil spirit says, when I was living in this person, but now I've been cast out. I don't get any food anywhere.

Let me go back and see whether he will still welcome me back. Because it's about six months since he heard that sermon on jealousy. Perhaps he's forgotten all about it, and now maybe he'll welcome me back.

Unless somebody else has occupied his house. If somebody else has occupied his house, then of course I can't go there, but I'm just hoping that nobody else has occupied that house. And he goes back, and he finds the house is unoccupied.

And he says, praise Satan, or something like that. And says, this is great. The house is unoccupied, praise Satan.

Now I can go in and occupy this old house of mine. And not only that, he swept it and kept it clean, he's got rid of a lot of other things. I can go and occupy the whole thing.

And he says, I know seven other spirits also will be looking for water. I better bring them along too, and tell them there's a great house here, man. Come and join me.

And they all come, eight of them. And they live there. And the last state of that man, verse 45, is worse than the first.

How is it possible that a man can listen to a message like this, and get rid of jealousy, and a few months later he's worse than he was when he responded to this message. How is that possible? Because he did not replace his jealousy with something good. He did not replace his anger with something good.

That's the message of this parable that Jesus spoke. Don't just get rid of something bad, replace it with something good. For example, earlier on Jesus was speaking about the heart like a tree, in verse 33, Matthew 12, 33.

He said, you can't get good fruit if you don't change the tree. I mean, if you got a bad tree in your garden, and you want good fruit from that, you just can't get it. If you don't first, get rid of the tree, and plant another tree.

You can't just keep on putting manure, and fertilizer, and all that type of stuff to try and improve the product of that tree. No, you've got to change the tree. Make the tree itself good, then the fruit will be good.

If the tree is bad, then the fruit will be bad. And what is he talking about? What is this tree, and what is the fruit? Listen, because Jesus used that expression in more than one place. So it's good for us to understand, from Jesus' own interpretation, what is a tree, and what is the fruit? The fruit is, you see, he says, make the tree good, then its fruit will be good, verse 33.

And then he said, the tree is the heart, the evil person. The fruit is our words. So what is the fruit? The words we speak.

He said, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? That's the fruit. So the fruit that Jesus was speaking about is our words. The words you speak to your husband at home.

The words you speak to your wife at home. The words you speak to people you're terribly upset with, or terribly jealous of. That's the fruit.

You listen to a message like this, and say, hey, I've got to stop speaking like this. You can, if you change the tree. Not just control your tongue.

In the Old Testament, there are a number of passages on the tongue, particularly in the book of Proverbs. If you read Proverbs, it speaks a whole lot about the tongue. It speaks about people who flatter with the tongue, who tell lies with their tongue, who deceive with their tongue, who boast with their tongue, and who just keep on talking, talking, talking, talking, endlessly with their tongue.

It's like that joke, that man who said, I haven't spoken to my wife for ten years. Why is that? Because I didn't want to interrupt her. So, it's like that.

Some folks are just go on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on. You know, could be a man too, by the way. Didn't want to interrupt my husband, who's always talking.

There are many types of things, but nowhere in the book of Proverbs does it say how you can control your tongue. People who speak hastily, says there in Proverbs about a fool is one who speaks without thinking. Whereas, a wise man, he thinks.

Then decides whether to say that or not. But nowhere in the Old Testament did they tell you how to control this tongue. Till Jesus came, and he explained that you can't control the tongue if you don't control the heart.

That's the point. He said, the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. See, this is the tree, and this is the fruit.

You see, you deal with the tree, and then the fruit will be okay. The good man, because he's a good treasure in his heart, speaks what is good. The evil man, because he's got an evil treasure in his heart, speaks what is evil.

We got to recognize this thing that Jesus said. As I said, the way of Cain, today we don't kill people with a stone, like Cain smashed Abel's head, or with daggers, because we'll be caught by the police. In Cain's day, there was no police.

But today, we won't do that. Today, we slaughter people with our tongue, backbiting, gossiping, tearing down their reputation, suspecting, ah, it must be like this, we don't have all the facts, but because we don't like that person, we suspect and speak evil. It's from the tongue that we murder people today.

The way of Cain begins with jealousy in the heart and flows out through anger and backbiting in the tongue. That's why I'm coming to this verse. You can't change the words if you don't change the fruit, the tree.

You can't say, hey, I'm going to have good fruit from this tree from next week onwards. No, you won't get it. You got to change the tree.

That's what he's trying to say here. And that's what Jesus revealed. How our tongue can be controlled.

In other words, change your attitude to people first. Keep yourself in the love of God and see how much God loves you. How God accepted you when there were a million things wrong in your life.

You think I'm exaggerating? I'm probably understating when I say there are a million things wrong in your life. God accepted you. Can you accept somebody else who has got four or five things wrong in their life? Or is that a struggle? Four or five things wrong which you can't stand.

And God accepted you when you had a million things wrong in your life and he patiently worked with you and that number has reduced from a million to much less. Thank God. Bible says, accept one another just as Christ accepted you.

I'll tell you something, when you come to the end of your life, you will realize that the thing that will matter to you at that time will not be how many meetings you went to, how much of the Bible you knew, how many tracts you distributed, how many missionaries you supported or any of these things. The thing will be how much you loved people. That will be what matters finally.

I don't believe I'm approaching the end of my life. I hope the Lord will give me another 25 years or 23 at least. But I'm older and I'm moving towards either the coming of the Lord or meeting Him face to face.

And as I've got older, I see my own understanding. Understanding of what is important changes from what the understanding I had in this church 20 years ago. Maybe 20 years ago I was more concerned about pattern and so many things exactly according to some law here, some verse here.

But I've come to see today the important thing is to love people just as they are. Even if they don't change. We try to change them, but if they don't change, well, it's not going to change me.

I still love you. And love God. That's the most important thing.

And when that takes place in our heart, the tree becomes good. And then you will find you can control your tongue. You can control the words you speak.

The fruit of the Spirit, how many of you know Galatians 5, 22 and 23? The fruit of the Spirit is? Love is the first out of the nine. What is the last? Self-control. Don't forget that.

From love flows many things and finally self-control. But it flows from love. This is the same thing that Jesus spoke about.

What begins with love will always end in self-control. If it doesn't end in self-control, it proves that it did not begin in love. Keep yourself in the center of the love of God.

God has not made a mistake in the circle He's drawn around you. It's one of the greatest things that I discovered as a young Christian was that God did not make a mistake in the type of personality He gave me, in the gifts He gave me, in what He did not give me. No, God didn't make a mistake.

I remember when my wife and I, you've heard me say this before, when we were first married, we were poor as anything. Like they say, as poor as the church mouse. You know, mice who live in houses, they get plenty of food.

Think of a mouse who's in a church. Nobody's eating anything there. That's why you have this expression in English called as poor as a church mouse.

It's the poorest mouse in the world and gets hardly anything to eat. But, I see today that those two, three years were the best for me. I learned so much about God.

We grew closer to God. We grew closer to each other. We learned how poor people in India live.

We learned many, many things that today I've often told married people, I wish God would give you two or three years of financial difficulty as a wedding gift. So that, He won't extend it too long, because He never allows us to be tested beyond our ability, but I tell you, when I see young people today beginning life with everything under the sun, and they see something on a billboard, ah, we want that. They see something in a newspaper, they want that.

And they've got the money, they earn so much today. You think I'm jealous of them? Not at all. I tell you honestly, I feel sorry for them.

They've missed something. You know, don't feel jealous of people. God knows the exact size of the circle He's drawn around you.

Your salary is a circle. Stay within that. And say, Lord, when you give me more, I'll buy more things, till then I won't.

That's what we decided. And the result is, I'm near 66 today, past 66, and I've never been in debt a single day of my life. Never had to borrow from people.

It's not because I didn't have needs. It's because I decided that it's very important for me to stay within this circle God has drawn around me. I will stay there godliness with contentment.

Brings tremendous profit. I can tell you that. I can testify to it.

It's brought fantastic profit in my life. Changed my life. Changed my family.

Made me a blessing to my children. Made me a blessing to other people. Because I say, Lord, You're testing me to see whether I'll stay within this circle.

And He didn't keep me there forever. He expanded, expanded, expanded. I mean, it's pretty huge today.

But He knows when to do that. It's not just money. It's gifts also.

God doesn't give us all the same gifts. He's given some people so many gifts. Think of a man like Paul.

What a lot of gifts he gave him. He had almost everything. And then think of some poor mother there in the first century with many children who probably didn't have any gifts like Paul.

But she was important in the body of Christ. She could rejoice that Paul had all those gifts and could pray for him. There was no jealousy there.

See, the whole secret is to keep ourselves in the center of God's love and say, God knows exactly what's best for me. You know, God knows how many of you I'm an Indian too. How many of us Indians believe that God knows best.

Now listen carefully. Whether if you're married, your child should be a boy or a girl. Silence.

Do you really believe God knows what is best? Or do you feel perhaps in that area I think I know better than God. You don't. He knows exactly what is best.

How many of you can believe that if the second child is also a girl, God knows what is best. And the third and the fourth. You know, this is faith.

Faith is to stay in the center of God's love. God doesn't make any mistake. And you're not jealous or wish that you had what God never decided to give you.

Don't be like all those ignorant people in our country who think God makes boys and the devil makes. You know, some Christians behave like that sometimes. Jesus came to earth and exalted woman to the place of equality with man.

Same place that he gave Eve when he created her. And man had pushed woman down. And God, Jesus lifted her up.

So God is the one who decides whether you should be a boy yourself, whether you should have boys or girls. And I'm just taking different examples. When you're in the center of God's love, everything, you don't feel jealous of anybody else.

It is impossible. You're perfectly happy with God's gift. You know, there's a verse about this.

What's happening in the world today. People take scans and they discover it's a girl and they kill it. And there's a verse in Isaiah where somebody says to God, Hey, what have you created? Isaiah 45 Verse 10.

Isaiah 45 Verse 10. Woe unto that person who's I want to add something here. Who looks at the girl that's born and says to the father, what did you beget? And to the woman, what have you given birth to? It's there.

That's because such people, verse 9, quarrel with their maker. The problem arises there. And the clay says to the potter, verse 9, what are you doing? That's just one area.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you want to control the words that come out of your mouth, watch your heart. The Bible says, watch your heart with all diligence. That's in Proverbs.

The Proverbs didn't see the connection between the tongue and the heart. It says in Proverbs 4, 23, I think it is, watch your heart with all diligence, because from it flow the springs of life. So we've got to be very careful that our heart has the right attitude towards every other human being.

That's what it means to keep ourselves in the love of God. God has been so good to me that I want to be good to other people. How many of you will say God has not been good to me? Is there a single person who can say that? No.

God's been tremendously good to us. Brother, go and be good to other people. That's what God is saying to you.

If you say God's been good to you, God says, okay, go and be good to other people. And I'll be more good to you. I've seen that in my life.

As I have passed on to others what God has given me, God has given me more. As I rejoice every day in the tremendous goodness of God to me, I say, Lord, I want to be good to everybody I meet. I don't want to have a single thing in my heart against anyone.

God is my witness. I don't have anything against people who have taken me to court or harassed me or spoken evil about me or backbitten or whatever. The ones I know and the ones I don't know.

It makes no difference. I have decided to keep myself in the love of God. I mean, 30 years ago I didn't have that life.

And my life was pretty miserable even though I was born again. But the devil can't make me miserable anymore. He's able to keep me falling, keep me on my feet, standing tall, fresh and rejoicing every day.

It can be like that for you. You know, if you can believe that your life can be like this, when you see something written in God's word and say, Lord, I want my life like that. I'll tell you something I read in Scripture and it really challenged me.

I said, Lord, I want my life to be like that. In Ephesians chapter 4, you know, these are days when we are, particularly in the civilized world, people are becoming more and more health conscious. They realize that a lot of burgers and fast foods are not good for the body.

And people are becoming more careful in what they put into their mouth. Good. I encourage that.

Jesus said, be more careful about what comes out of your mouth. I hope there'll be some interest in the world in that, which is more important, he says, because things which go into your mouth, he says, that can't harm you. Of course, that was in the first century when they didn't have fast foods and all Jesus could say that.

I don't know whether he'd say that today. Today a lot of things we put into our mouth do harm our bodies. But those days in the first century, they ate healthy food.

But even then, Jesus said, be more careful about what comes out of your mouth. So he says here, Ephesians 4 in verse 29. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.

He's not talking about you know, you take the average of all the million words you spoke in the last week. No, no, no, no, no. And let the general average of it be at least 50% good.

No. Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth. I mean, just like have, I'm sure we've all had the experience of putting something of spoiled food into our mouth, right? All of us have had that.

I mean, food that's really spoiled. You didn't know it was spoiled when you saw it on the plate. You put it into your mouth and boy, what do you do with it? Spit it out immediately.

Now the reverse must also happen. When it comes up, you want to say something with your mouth and that's you know, I'm not going to say. Think if you can do that, just like you do with bad food.

Now I don't ask you among all the food that you ate last week, was most of it good and only less than 50% was bad. No. We don't allow one piece of meat.

It's old, spoiled, rotten. I don't want it. I'd rather go hungry because I know it'll make me sick.

Do I know that the other way also is true? Words that come out and I have no control, I just let them go because I've got a wrong attitude towards that person or when you backbite or criticize people, you've got a wrong attitude towards that person. Maybe what they did was wrong. The Bible says in 1 John chapter 5, if you see a brother sin, pray for him, not criticize him.

Have you noticed one thing, that you never pray for those whom you backbite against? It's true. Never pray for those you backbite against. Two don't go together.

Watch your heart. The Lord wants to keep you in the center of His love. And here it says that no unwholesome word come in but only words that are good for edification.

So I was talking about this unclean spirit that comes back with seven others. Why? Because he found this was empty. So it's not enough that I've got rid of the jealousy towards X. I have to now have love towards X. Then my heart is full.

Then when this wretched old unclean spirit comes back and says, hey this house is occupied. We've got to look for another house. Do you know that according to that parable of Jesus, the evil spirits are just going around looking for unoccupied houses.

Aha! There is a person who has got rid of jealousy but hasn't replaced that jealousy with love. Good candidate. Let me call my friends.

Goes and calls seven more evil spirits. Don't let that happen to you. Paul said, we are not ignorant of the tactics of Satan.

Don't let the devil make a fool of you, brother, sister. He was defeated on the cross. And the devil guns for your heart.

It's your heart that he wants. He doesn't matter if you have a lot of other things. Your heart.

He wants your heart. Make sure you don't give it to him. Say, Lord keep my heart.

Keep me standing upright that I will not fall. I will be rooted and grounded in God's love. Like it says in Ephesians 3. It's a lovely verse.

Ephesians 3 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you being rooted and grounded in love. That's a picture of a tree that's firmly rooted.

You know, when the storms come, you've seen that in Bangalore, sometimes a tree fallen on the road. You thought it was a pretty huge tree, strong tree but it wasn't strong. It was just big.

And it fell because it was not rooted. It stood minor storms but a really heavy one shook it. I think it was Amy Carmichael who said beautiful words.

No matter how heavily you shake a glass full of sweet water, it can never spill a drop of bitter water. Right or wrong? You can't say that guy shook me so hard, that's why this bitter water came out. No.

It was always bitter inside. Thank God that fellow shook you so hard that you discovered it. You've got to go to him and say thank you brother.

I never realized this bitter water. All my friends were so nice to me and not shaking my glass and I thought I was full of sweet water till you came and really shook me up so hard. Boy, that means I was carrying this bitter water all along.

Thank you. These wretched friends of mine never shook me enough to make me discover that. Thank God for enemies.

We would never be holy if it were not some of these enemies who shook us so hard that we discovered the sweet water we thought we had was not sweet. No. We've got to watch our heart.

It's got nothing to do with people shaking us. Nothing. It's got to do with what's inside the cup.

And so, if I make sure that I'm rooted and grounded in love, that means grounded is a picture of a building. Like, you know, if you've got your own house, that's your permanent address. So what he's saying is, love must be your permanent address.

Anytime you want to find a brother's act, care of love of God. He's there. Should be true of you too.

Always. Never care of jealousy or care of bitterness. Never.

Be grounded in the love of God. And it says here that Christ may dwell in your heart. This is not just asking Jesus to come into your heart.

It is a question of, like one paraphrases, that Christ may feel at home in your heart. You know the difference between visiting a home and feeling at home in that home? You and I have all experienced that, right? You go to some home and pretty soon you discover that they tolerate you. I remember once visiting an old friend of mine from the Navy.

I hadn't seen him for many years, but unfortunately I landed up there when there was a World Cup cricket match going on. And I discovered pretty soon that I was not entirely welcome at that moment, because they wanted to watch the cricket, not to talk to me. Don't blame them.

But anyway, that Christ may feel at home in your heart. How will Christ feel at home in your heart? When you are rooted in love. Then Jesus comes into your heart and says, Hey, I feel like staying here forever.

Let's pray. Far hence before God.

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