

# Knowing God and Reverencing Him

by Zac Poonen

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*Knowing God and reverencing Him is essential for a deep assurance in our hearts and for living a life that is solid and established.*

**Duration:** 1:03:43

**Scripture:** Romans 3:24

**Topics:** "Repentance And Forgiveness", "Holy Spirit Transformation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance, understanding the need for God's grace and redemption through Christ Jesus. It highlights the significance of revering God, respecting others, and being filled with the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and progress spiritually. The message stresses the need to acknowledge our past sins, embrace the forgiveness offered through Christ's sacrifice, and allow the Holy Spirit to transform our lives for a hopeful future.

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## Transcript

Praise the Lord. We need to know, like Peter says, the reason why we have a hope. And that's what I was thinking of this morning.

In 1 Peter chapter 3, it says in verse 15, 1 Peter 3, 15, Sanctify or that means set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks for you, asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. Or as a paraphrase says, be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks you why you're living the way you are and always with the utmost courtesy.

If anyone asks us why we believe what we believe, it's important that all of us should know the answer. And though some of these things may be elementary, I find many who've been believers for a long time are not able to give a proper answer. They're not able to obey this verse which says always be ready to make a defense.

See, because people are going to attack us. Defense means attack us with words. Why do you believe what you believe? And people can bring many clever arguments.

There are so many cult groups now claiming to be Christian. And we need to know why we believe what we believe and not only to answer them, but also that's the thing that gives us a deep assurance in our

own hearts. If we know the truths of the New Testament, the truths of the gospel.

And so I want to share some things this morning that are very elementary so that even those who are children who have grown up in our midst understand the gospel that we preach. And grown-ups who think they understand may learn something too. In 2 Peter chapter 1, just before Peter died, he wrote this letter.

And he says in 2 Peter 1.12, I will always be ready to remind you of these things. 2 Peter 1.12, even though you already know them. Why does the Holy Spirit say you need to be reminded of something that you already know? Isn't that a waste of time? The Holy Spirit doesn't think so.

He says through Peter, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them. And even though you have already been established in the truth, which is present with you. And I consider that right, as long as I'm living in this earthly dwelling.

And not only that, verse 15, I'll be diligent, then even after my departure, you will still remember these things that I told you. So, I want to start with Romans 1, the most elementary thing of all. It says here in verse 20, Romans 1.20, Since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

So, when Paul wants to explain the gospel, and that is the subject of Romans, in the very first verse, he says the subject of Romans is the gospel of God. The good news of God. And we need to understand that good news very clearly.

Fully, properly. I have a great feeling that a lot of people don't understand it properly, and so their life is not as solid and established as it should be. They're not rejoicing as they should, because they're not clear about some fundamental truths.

So, the good news of God begins with saying that creation indicates that there is a God. Now, you know the Bible doesn't make an effort in Genesis chapter 1 to spend even one paragraph proving that there is a God. There are really two things that prove that there is a God.

One is creation, the other is our conscience. Whatever we may say, whatever atheists may say, their conscience tells them there's somebody you're answerable to. Something that animals don't have.

But apart from that, we can deal with atheists, and here it says creation is what proves that there is a God, and therefore they are without excuse. And when speaking to such people, I say, how is it that you can believe that a watch was made by some intelligent person, because it keeps such perfect time? I mean, you don't believe that just suddenly there was an accident and some steel and glass crashed together and suddenly a watch came. Nobody believes such a stupid story.

Somebody took pains to make it, and yet this watch does not keep as perfect time as the stars, and that doesn't need any batteries to run it. So how can you believe this was made by some intelligent being and all of creation was not made by an intelligent being? That's stupid. Any sensible person will say, that must have been made by an intelligent being, and if that is the case, brothers and sisters, this is how it applies to us.

If there is a God, then that must be the most important relationship that we must seek to have in our life. And I'll tell you something more. All of us say there is a God, but if you believe, like almost all of us believe, that this God who created this universe wrote only one book for man.

Christians are supposed to believe that. Non-Christians don't, but Christians believe there is only one book written by God for man. Then why don't you read it? Why don't you study it? Why do you know more about the newspaper than about the Bible? Why do you know more about movies than about the Bible? I'll tell you why.

In your heart, you don't believe it. It's true. How in the world can a person believe that God is the most important person in the universe and he's written only one communication to man and you don't bother about it? There's something inconsistent in what we say we believe and our actions.

Our actions don't correspond with what we say we believe. I want to say to all of you who don't study the Bible carefully, you don't really believe it's God's word. You can say it is.

If you believed it, you would really want to know everything in it. If you believe that God's word gives us perfect directions for the best way to live on earth, you'd read it. Like I often say, manufacturers' instructions.

Would you buy a washing machine and not read the instructions? We say, oh, I don't need to read that. I can use it. And then something gets spoiled.

You take it back to the company and the first thing they'll ask is, did you follow the instructions? This is exactly the reason why so many people's lives are messed up, so many people's marriages are messed up, because they don't see what the manufacturer says, how you should live. They don't read what the manufacturer says, how your marriage should be. So many women have problems with their husbands because they don't do what the Bible says as to how a wife should conduct herself with her husband.

They think they know so much. I tell you, you don't believe in God. You believe you know better than God.

I can't find any other reason. If there's a single verse of Scripture, a single verse of Scripture, that you don't obey in the New Testament, I would say that you think you know better than God. What other explanation can there be? When a father tells his son to do something and the son does something else, he obviously thinks he knows better than his father.

And that's exactly how it is with people who call themselves Christians. Look at the number of divorces there are today. The Bible says in Malachi 2, God hates divorce, and yet there are Christians who do it.

Jesus said concerning lusting with your eyes, it's better to pull out your eye to save yourself from hell. And look at the number of Christians who don't bother about that. See, deep down in our heart we say, I mean in our lips we say, yes, the Bible is God's Word.

But like Jesus said, with their lips they honor me, but their heart goes after their greedy desires. If you believe what the Bible says, that the love of money is the root of all evil, would you drink a glass which is written poisoned and cause all types of evil? No, people don't believe it. That's written so clearly in 1 Timothy 6. The love of money is the root of all types of evil.

Not money, but the love of money. So I'm just giving you some examples how we think we are better than the atheists. In what way? Do you really believe everything God says? Do you believe that there is a God? Look at creation, do you believe there's a God? I'll give you another example.

Whenever a man becomes proud, particularly as a Christian, that he's better than others, I wonder whether he believes there's a God in heaven. I've sometimes sat at night and looked at the stars and, you know, knowing a little bit of geography, I know that Earth is like a speck of sand in this universe. A speck of sand.

That's all there is. And on that speck of sand, if you look with a microscope, there are some teeny-weeny things smaller than a speck of sand called human beings, that's you and me. And we stand up and compare ourselves with each other and think I'm better than another because I'm 0.0001 millimeters longer than you or some stupid thing like that.

And when we stand up and begin to talk as we know so much about God, I tell you, I fear and tremble when I stand in a pulpit to speak about the things of God. Mortal man trying to talk about God. And that, without knowing God's Word, I'm amazed at the number of people who stand in pulpits today and dare to speak about God without reading and studying the one book God gave man.

That's the height of arrogance. I'm just telling you what I feel as a disconnect between what we say we believe and our practice. So I want to encourage you if you believe that creation proves that there is a God, that if you believe that this watch was made by someone and the perfect timing in this universe indicates there's an intelligent creator and he's the most important person in this universe, he's the one who created us, he never had a beginning and that's what our minds can't comprehend.

We cannot comprehend something that didn't have a beginning and that shows how much greater than us God is. It doesn't surprise me that there are a lot of things about God I don't understand. The only way I could understand everything about God is by being God myself.

So I have no problem admitting that I cannot fully explain the Trinity, that God is three persons and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and yet one God, not three gods. It's not difficult for me to believe it even though I can't explain it. See, I often compare the distance between God and man with the distance between man and a dog.

See, the distance between man and a dog is probably one millimeter. It's compared to the distance between God and man which is millions of miles. I don't know whether you realize that.

I mean, you know there's a lot of difference between a dog and a man but that compared to the distance between us and God is only one millimeter and yet that dog can't understand us. Dogs wonder, why do human beings wear clothes? We don't wear any clothes. We're quite happy.

Why do these stupid human beings go to school? I never send my little dog puppies to school. Why do they have bank accounts? You know the number of things a dog can't understand, the stupid things humans do. However much you train a dog, it still won't understand.

Why is that? Because it's a dog. Even if you had it for 12 years. But your little five-year-old son can understand.

Why is that? Because he's a human being. It's good for us to humble ourselves and recognize that just like a dog cannot explain everything but a dog can understand some things. For example, a dog can understand affection that its master shows it.

It can wag its tail at the ones it knows. In the same way we need to humble ourselves and say I can know God's love but there are millions of things about God I cannot understand. I don't have to try and explain it all.

God's wisdom is like an ocean. My mind is like a little cup. Is it surprising that the ocean doesn't fit into the cup? It's only an arrogant person who thinks that he can explain everything about God.

In fact, all these people who say God cannot be a trinity, God must be one person. Hey, that's a God I can explain. Then that can't be the true God.

To me, one of the clearest proofs that the Christian faith is true is that God is a trinity. How three persons can be one God baffles my mind. That must be the truth.

Just like what we do and baffles a little dog. There are a lot of things about God that baffle my mind. See, that's the first thing that will keep us in humility.

All of you know, as I do, the biggest problem we have in our Christian life is to remain humble, especially when God has blessed us. If God has blessed you in some way or God has blessed your family in some way or work or any such thing, it's very difficult to remain humble and give all the glory to God for it. And that's because we haven't seen our position in relation to God.

You think it's difficult for an ant to remain humble in relation to a human being? Which ant thinks I'm pretty smart compared to this human being? That's the stupidity of a proud person. Anyone who's proud about anything, about people looking at their face and they're proud of their beauty, who gave it to you? Proud of their intelligence, proud of their spirituality, proud of their Bible knowledge. It all begins with knowing God, brothers and sisters.

And that's why Romans 1 begins with creation. Okay, we move on from there. There's a lot more that we can talk about that, but it's important to know that.

In Romans chapter 1, it describes the terrible things that happen to man when they don't acknowledge him as God. It says they, all this is, they know God, verse 21, but they don't honor him as God or give thanks. You know, if your dad writes you a very important letter and you just throw it there and say, I'll read it when I have time.

And you pick it up six months later. What do your dad think of you? Do you think you're honoring him? And that's how it is. When we ignore the word of God, when we ignore the Bible, when we don't take pains to study it and read it and say, I don't have time.

We have time to gossip. We have the time to watch television. We have time to do so many things.

It's not that we don't have time to read God's word. Be honest. Be honest.

And say, Lord, I'm not interested in reading your word. To be quite honest, Lord, I think your book is pretty boring. I have, about 12 years ago, I produced that DVD, 70 hours through the Bible, covering every book of the Bible.

The reason I wanted to do it was I wanted to communicate to the next generation after mine, all that I had studied at that time in the Bible in 40 years. And I felt that was a legacy I could leave to the next generation. And I had two burdens when I took every book of the Bible, every one of them, and explained

what each book taught.

First of all, to prove that the Bible has got a relevant message for us today. Every book. And secondly, that the Bible is an interesting book.

That CD has been available freely for 12 years, or at least 11 years, on the Internet. Our Internet or as a CD. Can I ask you a question? How many of you have listened to the whole thing? I can tell you people around the world who have heard it three times.

Have you heard it once? You don't have to care for me. You don't have to hear it if you know the Bible better than me, that's fine. Maybe some of you do, then you don't need to read it or hear it.

But it is this casual attitude to Scripture, which is indicated by that. And that's why a lot of people in other parts of the world know the Lord better than people who are here in CFC. We can glory that I belong to CFC, but you're not growing spiritually.

You still fight with each other at home, husband and wife. What's he saying, I sit here and I belong to CFC. It's empty boasting.

We do not honor God as God. We don't honor his word. We don't seek to study it.

That's why we remain ignorant. And also, the second thing it says in verse 21 is we're not thankful. All spiritual progress depends on being deeply thankful to God for what he's done for us.

A humble person is always thankful for the smallest little thing. You've heard me use the example if a cabinet minister was walking down and he dropped his handkerchief and his secretary picked it up and gave it to him, he just put it in his pocket. But if a beggar is walking down the road and he drops his handkerchief and you pick it up and give it to him, you say, oh sir, thank you.

What's the difference? We're both human beings. Why is the cabinet minister not thankful that his secretary picked it up? Because he thinks he's a big man. The other fellow is a small fellow.

The beggar knows he's a small man. And you're such an important person you picked up his handkerchief and gave it to him. What am I trying to prove from that? The attitude of thankfulness is entirely dependent on the degree of our humility.

The humbler we are, the more we'll be thankful. Why does Jesus say I will give thanks to someone who gives a cup of water to one of my disciples? Can you think of anything cheaper than a cup of water? It's free. Why does Jesus give thanks to somebody for that? I'll tell you why.

Because he's the humblest human being that walked on the earth. That's why. And I've learned something from that.

If you make this life of Jesus your study, you will learn a lot of things. One is to be thankful for the smallest little thing that other people do. And to express that thanks, not just to say, yeah, inwardly I'm thankful.

I'll tell you, my brothers and sisters, whether you believe it or not, I've known some of you for many, many years here in CFC. Some have been here for more than 20, 25 years. And I'll tell you the honest truth.

I don't see much spiritual growth in you. Because you still grumble, complain, so many things. And I'll tell you the reason.

You're proud. With all your understanding of the new covenant, you're proud. A humble person cannot grumble or complain.

It's pride that makes us think, I deserve more. They did not give God thanks. They did not honor Him, verse 21.

They knew God. Don't we know God? There is a God. We don't honor Him by reading and studying His word.

We're not thankful for the little things He does for us, the little things that other people do for us. We're not thankful because we have such a sense of importance. So what happens? They become futile in their speculations.

They became confused. Their foolish heart was darkened. There was no sense of direction anymore in their lives.

Spiritual direction, I mean. They're all very clever in your academics and your business. But no sense of spiritual direction because God just left you.

Do you have a sense of spiritual direction? No direction left in their lives. That's how it says in the paraphrase here. They pretended to know it all.

Professing to be wise. But actually, they were spiritually illiterate. And then it says, verse 24, God gave them up to dishonor their bodies with impurity.

See, whenever people commit any type of sexual sin, the reason is God's given them up. It says there, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity so that their bodies would be dishonored. It first begins in the heart.

When you're keeping on lusting in your heart, go back and see whether God's just given you up to do that. Okay, you don't take it seriously what I've said in my word. Go on, keep on doing it.

I've just given up on you. Imagine God saying to us, He's given up on us. Why? Because when you knew God, you didn't honor Him.

You didn't give thanks. We need to take some of these things seriously. It's not enough to say, I'm not an atheist, I believe in God.

Then respect Him. Honor Him. Read the one book that He gave to man that has been around for 2,000 years and that you have in many translations.

Read it. Study it. I can never know the mind of God without knowing this book.

And even though I've read it for 54 years, I still read it and I get new things from it all the time. It's like a well that never dries up. Dear brothers and sisters, I want to encourage you, at least from now, learn to honor God and give Him thanks.

Then you will discover some of those struggles of impurity in your heart with lust. You'll suddenly find, hey, how am I getting victory over that? You see the progress? They didn't honor God. They didn't give Him thanks.

But God said, okay. He gave them up to the lust of their hearts, to impurity. And there's a progression downwards in Romans 1. They exchanged the truth of God for life, worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

What does that mean? In verse 25, I'll tell you what it means. It means you're more concerned about the opinion of men than the opinion of God. You bow down before men and say, I'm interested in your opinion about me.

I hope you think I'm a good man. I hope you think I'm a spiritual person. All you brothers and sisters in CFC, I bow down before you.

I hope you think I'm spiritual by the way I'm conducting myself. Because you guys don't know how I live at home. You guys don't know how I handle my finances.

But in my outward life, I hope you all think I'm a very spiritual man. That is to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator who knows all about your private life, who knows all about your financial transactions, who knows all about your thoughts, who knows about dear brothers and sisters. Worship Him.

Worship Him. Don't bother about what the creature thinks about you. Do you worship and serve the creature? Maybe you don't have idols of brass and wood, but you have idols of flesh and blood.

Your fellow human beings whose opinion matters so much to you. I have often used the example of we can test ourselves in this. If a husband and wife are having a fight at home and the doorbell rings, what's the first thought that comes to your mind? Ah! I hope they didn't hear what we were saying.

And when that brother comes into your house, you behave so nicely to each other. And then when he's gone away, you resume the fight. Because now, only Jesus is in the house.

Who cares for him? The brother whose opinion I valued has left. Jesus whose opinion I don't value is still here. Who cares for him? Dear brothers and sisters, this is the truth.

You've heard me use that illustration many times and I'll keep on using it until you value Christ's opinion more than the opinion of brothers and sisters. Till then, you need to hear it. They worship the creature more than the creator.

Can you imagine what Almighty God thinks of that when you behave like that in your home? When you bow down before a human being and say, I want your opinion. Good opinion about me. And when he's gone, Almighty God, I couldn't care less about your opinion.

The fundamental reason why people don't grow spiritually is because they don't fear God. They don't reverence God. The reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom.

And you can see that in the way today's younger generation is so disrespectful of older people. You go down into the villages and you see those who are non-Christians, they touch the feet of their father and mother. We Christians, we don't worship.

I know. But Christians have gone to the other extreme of not having any respect at all for anybody. I have more respect for those people who touch the feet of their father and mother.

They're not worshipping them. They're showing their respect that way. Compare that with places where Christianity has been preached for so many years in Western countries.

Totally disrespectful, the young people of today. They have no respect for older people. One of the laws in the Old Testament was whenever you see an older man, this is one of the things which God taught the Israelites.

It says in Leviticus 19, verse 32, you shall stand up before a gray-headed person and honor older people and thus prove that you reverence God. What is that a proof of? Leviticus 19, 32. Respecting an older person is one way we show our reverence for God.

That's why we teach children to obey their parents. Because a little child doesn't know who God is and who Jesus is, but they know who their parents are. If we teach our children to respect and obey their parents, one day they will grow up to respect and obey God.

If your children are not respecting and obeying God when they grow up, my dear brother, sister, why not consider the possibility, humble yourself and consider the possibility that when they were young, you did not take pains to teach them to respect older people. Maybe you allowed them to respect you as parents, but you sat at home in their presence and criticized other brothers and sisters who are much older than them, allowed them to speak evil of older people. And you say, oh, that's all right.

They're talking about others, not about dad and mom. What's the use they're respecting you, dad and mom, if you allow them to speak evil of other older people? No wonder your children are wayward. I remember when my children were growing up here in Sunday school and they had Sunday school teachers.

And those Sunday school teachers were our young brothers. They may not have been all that spiritual. They were not all that perfect.

But if those Sunday school teachers ever told me something wrong that any of my children did, I would never take the side of my child. Never. Never, never, never.

Do you do that? Have you done that? Well, no wonder your children have gone astray. You support them against that older brother or sister who's their teacher. Well, now you've got to reap what you sow.

You can repent of it, but the rest of you can learn something. When you teach children to respect older people, you're teaching them to respect God. I told my children, I said, I'll never take your side.

If that brother says that you are not doing it, doing things properly in the class, you better take care of yourself because I'll take that very seriously. I would never allow, I've seen some homes where children, some CFC homes, where children would speak rudely to an older servant woman in their house. I cringed at that.

I said, oh, I don't know what's going to happen to these children when they grow up. They are taught to despise someone just because that other person is on a lower social level. I never allowed it.

We've had servants working in our house too. Never once did I allow my children ever to speak rudely, even one word, to a servant who was older than them. Dear brothers and sisters, when God, when we don't respect God, God gives us up.

We worship and serve the creature rather than the creator. And then it says in verse 26, God gave them up to a still lower level, Romans 1, 26, to degrading passions. The women exchanged their natural function for what is unnatural.

In the same way, men abandoned the natural function of the women and burned in their desire for one another. Men with men, women with women, committing indecent acts. This is happening around the world now.

They're even getting married, men and men. It is an indication, according to Romans 1, 26, that God has given them, I believe the Bible. I believe the Bible.

See how there's progression. First of all, you get indulged in illegal sexual actions, normal sexual actions, but illegal, adultery. And then you go one step further.

God is a progressive downward step. And then further, verse 28, God gave them up again. Three times it says, God gave them up, God gave them up.

Each time, they don't honor God. They don't give thanks. God gave them over to a depraved mind to do all those things which are not proper.

Everything that you do which is not proper, according to your conscience, is a proof that, according to God, you've got a depraved mind. Now if I were to say that you've got a depraved mind, you'd feel insulted. How dare you say that about me, Brother Zach.

I don't have a depraved mind. But I'll tell you this. If you do things which are not proper, according to your conscience, you've got a depraved mind.

It may not be as depraved as all the terrorists, but it's still depraved. Because God didn't create you to live like the animals. God created you to live by your conscience.

Being filled with unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossips. Gossips. Do they have a depraved mind? Sure.

Slanderers. Haters of God. Are people who speak evil of others in the same category as haters of God? I mean, if somebody said to you, you're a hater of God because you speak evil of others in your hall.

You know, it's all there, brothers. It's all in this book, by the way. It's not from my mind.

If you read it, you'd understand it. If you spend a little more time with the Bible than with the newspaper, you get to know more about things that are more important for eternity. Disobedient to parents.

Boastful. Inventors of evil. Understanding.

Without understanding. Untrustworthy. Unloving.

Unmerciful. And although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death. Worthy of death? You mean gossips are worthy of death? You mean those who are disobedient

to parents are worthy of death? You mean those who are unmerciful, verse 31, to those who did harm to them are worthy of death? I don't think most Christians believe that.

I believe it with all my heart. You know, people who listen to me think that I'm preaching a very high standard. No, brother, sister.

I'm preaching exactly what I read in the Bible. You think it's a high standard because you've allowed the devil to deceive you into thinking that your own understanding of God's standard is the right understanding. It is not.

Go to the manufacturer's instructions and see what he says. I've learned to accept it. I've learned to give thanks to God.

I've learned to give thanks to people who give me a cup of water. It's just... It's just the way God's created man to be and I want to... I say, Lord, I don't know how this human being is supposed to function, but I want to function the way you're supposed to... The Bible says the love of money is the root of all evil. I say I don't want one atom of a love of money in my life.

Not one atom because I don't want one atom of evil in my life. I don't take a small dose of poison, saying it's only a small dose. I don't want it.

If you believe God's word, I believe that your life would shoot up like a rocket towards God. Why is our progress so sluggish? One fundamental reason. We don't read God's word.

We don't understand. We don't believe it, as it says. And then in chapter 2, in Romans chapter 2, he goes on to speak about the guilt of those who are religious.

Religious people, you know, we heard all this about these terrible people who commit these terrible sins. And religious people can think, hey, I'm not like that. But he says, you practice the same things, you religious people, verse 1. And when you pass judgment, verse 3, on somebody else, you think you'll escape the judgment of God when you're doing those same things in some other way.

Like I showed, told you how we can worship human beings. It's like worshiping idols. So you pass judgment on that other guy and then this wonderful verse in verse 4. Do you think lightly of the riches of God's kindness and tolerance and patience? I like that.

God has been rich towards us in His kindness, His tolerance, and His patience. And the whole purpose of all that kindness in all our life is to lead us to one point. Verse 4. Repentance.

That's the beginning of the gospel. Repentance. All of God's kindness.

Now we take kindness and say, God must be very happy with me because He's been very kind to me. He's been very patient with me. He's been very tolerant of my failures, dear brothers, sisters.

His kindness and His tolerance and patience is only to try and urge you to repent. It's not because He's happy with you. In other words, He's not threatening you and getting you to repent.

He's being kind to you and saying, why don't you repent? It's a beautiful verse. Sometimes we think it's by threats that we have to bring people to repentance. God leads people to repentance through kindness.

But we can despise that kindness. That's what He says here. Do you despise the kindness of the riches of His kindness? You despise it? You don't realize the whole purpose of it is to lead you to repentance? That means, the kinder God is to me, the more I must repent.

That means, if one day you receive something from God totally unexpected, you didn't deserve it, that's meant to lead you to a little more repentance in your life. Haven't you sometimes received a blessing from God which you didn't expect and you know you didn't deserve? Whether it's a financial blessing or a health blessing or some material blessing? How do you react to that? Do you sit back and say, well, praise God, He's been good to me? Or did that kindness lead you to greater repentance? You see, brothers and sisters, how little we know Scripture. My whole aim is to try and show you that if you spend a little more time with Scripture and do what Scripture says to meditate on it, your life would be far ahead of what it is today.

Just like you tell your children, listen son, if you had studied some more, you wouldn't be failing so many times in the same class. If you had taken your studies a little more seriously. I mean, we'd be disturbed if our children sit in the same class even for one more year.

What does God think of so many of His children sitting in the same class for so many years? So many years they've been in CFC and they're sitting in the same class. They keep saying, God's been very kind to me. I prospered so much.

I came to this church as a very, very poor person with hardly anything. See how God has prospered me. See how God has blessed my children.

You know what's the purpose of it all? To lead you to repentance. Has it led you to repentance? Has it led you to put your mouth in the dust and say, Lord, I need to be more like Christ. All these things are an indication that you want me to become more like Jesus.

There are things in my life which are not like Jesus. My speech needs to improve. My attitude towards others needs to improve.

I need to be more respectful to people who are older than me. I want to ask you a straight question, dear brothers and sisters. Are you respectful to people who are older than you, even in CFC? That's for your own good.

I've seen through 40 years in many of our churches how it has gone with people who are respectful and how it has gone with people who are not respectful. It's clear in my mind. It's gone badly with people who are not respectful.

And it's gone exceptionally well with people who have learned to respect those who are older instead of imagining that they know everything. There's a lot of young people I find who think they know everything and finally they end up outside the church. It's happening all the time.

It's happening even now. So he's trying to say all those of you who think that you're very spiritual, you know the Bible, that's what he's talking about in Romans 2. Romans chapter 3 brings to a conclusion this whole thing saying whether you're that wicked worldly type of sinner mentioned in Romans 1 or the religious type of sinner who thinks he's very holy because he knows the law and he understands all these things, it makes absolutely no difference because verse chapter 3 verse 10 there is nobody righteous, not even one. It's good to understand that.

Lord, I was not righteous. There's nobody righteous in the whole world. There's no one who understands.

Did you say you sought God? Let me tell you what verse 11 says. There is nobody who seeks after God. You say, but I sought him and found him.

No, you didn't. He sought you and found you. That's got a different flavor about it when you say I sought God and found him and to say he sought me and found me.

There is nobody who seeks after God. I believe it. I don't believe I sought after God.

I fall in the category of Romans 3 11. No interest in seeking after God. But he sought me and found me.

And Adam drifted away from God. He should have been the one going running after God and saying, God, where are you? Instead of that, God comes into the garden and says, Adam, where are you? And he came after me and said, where are you? Why are you in sin? Where are you? He came after me. I have no doubt about it.

I mean, you guys may not know it and you may not think like that about yourself, but in my case, I'm absolutely clear, crystal clear, and that's made all the difference in my life to recognize that he came after me. And that's why I never can despise a sinner. I can never despise a backslider.

If people come and confess to me the worst possible sins they've committed in their life, I cannot despise them. It is impossible. Not because I've committed greater sins than them, but because I know I didn't seek God.

He sought me. And for all my life, it'll keep me on my face before him. No matter what God does in my life, no matter how spiritual he makes me, no matter how much he uses me, I'll never forget one thing.

I never sought after God. He sought after me. Don't forget that, brothers.

Everybody has turned aside. Everybody has become useless. Verse 12.

Do you believe that about yourself? That you become useless? There is no one who does good. You know, a lot of people say, what's God going to do with all these people who do a lot of good? Uh-huh. Do you believe them or do you believe God's word? There is no one who does good.

We think it is good. In God's eyes, it is not. There's some impurity there.

Because God's standard is so high. You know, in a surgery, they sterilize the instruments and kept it, keep it in a thing called an autoclave, boiling steam for those instruments they use in surgery, the knives and all. It's not just for one minute or so.

They keep it for a long time. The surgeons have, even though the surgeons are going to wear gloves, even though they're going to wear gloves, they still have to scrub their hands for so many minutes. It's standard procedure.

And then, if one of those instruments drops to the ground, I mean, if you, if your spoon drops to the ground, you can still pick it up and use it. It's not that dirty. But if that instrument drops to the ground in the surgical theater, that surgeon won't touch that.

He can't use that again. On the man, that is the standard of hygiene in a good hospital. Then that knife, it just fell to the ground and you look at it, it looks just as clean as before.

You may even examine it under a microscope and say, yeah, there's hardly any dirt in this. As far as the surgeon is concerned, that is just as filthy as a knife, which has been mixed up with dirt and rubbish. Exactly the same.

That's what it means here when it says, there's no one who does good. Now you look at that knife and say, this is much cleaner than that. Maybe in your eyes, but not in the eyes of a surgeon.

And so we look at ourselves and we say, I've done a lot of good compared to that guy. God says, no, you haven't. No one has done any good.

Their throat is an open grave. Their tongues, they keep deceiving. The poison of asps is under their lips.

Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. You know, in the list of man's sins mentioned in verse 10 to 17, have you noticed, very interestingly, there are four lines about the tongue. Four sentences just about our speech.

The throat is an open grave. That means only death comes out of there when they speak. It's not life.

And their tongue, they deceive. They try to give people impressions that are not true. Third, under their lips, there's poison.

There's a sting in some of the words they use. They make it sound so innocent, but there's a sting in it. And their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

That shows us that among all the parts of the human body, the thing that we sin the most with is the tongue, more than even with our eyes. And their feet are stripped to sweat along the path of peace they have not known. And what is the reason for all this? All these things, the fundamental reason, verse 18, is what we come back to what we said in the beginning.

There's no reverence for God in their eyes. That's why I keep saying, brothers and sisters, begin with learning to reverence God. Learn to respect people.

And so it says, what shall we say? All have sinned, verse 23. Religious people, godless people, all have sinned and come short of God's standard. Some people came short 80%, some people came short 90%, but all have come short.

You know, it's like the student who got 20% and failed and sat in the same class going up to the teacher and saying, how can you put me in the same class as the other fellow who got 2%? I got 20%, I got 10 times more than him. Sorry, you both failed. That person got 20%, got 10 times more than the fellow who got 2%, but they're sitting in the same class.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And that's why the only way to save such sinners was by God, beautiful verse 24, as a gift by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood. You know, like we sing, the wrath of God was satisfied in that song.

God's judgment was satisfied propitiation. God was propitiated. Propitiated means he was satisfied that sin has been punished.

The punishment for sin has been taken. My son has suffered eternity in hell during those three hours on the cross. Have you understood that? Three hours on the cross, the eternal son of God suffered hell so that I might be forgiven.

And the weight of my sin was heavier for him than the weight of the universe that he can easily bear on his shoulders. And therefore, as a gift, I am justified, declared righteous, because God passes over, verse 25, all the sins previously committed. He had to do it to demonstrate his righteousness.

You know, that means I'm not going to just say when somebody says, I'm sorry, okay, I forgive you. That would be unjust. It would be like a judge telling his own son, standing in the court, who's committed 10 murders, okay, son, I forgive you.

That would be totally unjust. No. He's got to be hanged.

And nobody else can be hanged in place of him. That's also a crime. If the mother comes and says, okay, I'll be hanged in place of my son, the judge says, sorry, I can't hang you.

That would be unjust. And that is the reason why I say the only person who could hang on the cross for my sin was one who was God himself. If God had asked an angel or some other person to die for my sin like the Jehovah's Witnesses and others say that Christ was a created being, then, brother, your sin is not forgiven and your God is totally unjust to punish another created being for your sin.

What would you think of a judge who punishes somebody else for this fellow's sin? God couldn't do that. He had to take it himself. That, to me, is the clearest proof that the one who died on the cross was Almighty God.

That's why I'm sure my sins are forgiven. So if a person has a doubt in his mind about whether Christ is God, brother, then your sin is not forgiven. And that's why the Christian faith is the only true faith because there's no other faith that teaches us that God came as a man and took the punishment for man's sin.

And one more reason in conclusion. It says we, Romans 4 and verse 25, Jesus was delivered up because of our transgressions. He died on the cross for our sin and he was raised up for our justification.

The resurrection from the dead is another proof that the Christian faith is the true faith because in the history of humanity, nobody has risen up from the dead never to die again. There's a difference between Lazarus being raised from the dead and Jesus' resurrection. He was raised and he died again.

Whereas Jesus conquered death completely and death couldn't hold him. He was resurrected permanently. The only one in the history of humanity who did that.

And that's why we believe what we believe. So I hope you have an understanding now why the death of Christ on the cross is so meaningful. Why we can be sure that our sins are forgiven and we have a reason for the hope that we hold on to.

Why we declare that we are righteous because God has taken the punishment for my sin on the cross. He's overlooked my past and Christ is raised up from the dead to live in us through his Holy Spirit. That's the second part of it because we have two problems.

One is our past and the other is the future. The past was dealt with on the cross and the future is dealt with by the Spirit of God coming inside us. That's why it's so important to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Otherwise only your past is dealt with. Your second problem is not dealt with at all. This nature within us that keeps on committing sins.

Seek that all of your life will be yielded to the Holy Spirit that he can fill you. It's Christ coming and flooding every part of your life through his Spirit. You know when you ask Jesus to come into your heart in the early days they would say receive the Spirit.

Today we say receive Jesus. It's the same thing. Spirit of Christ.

If a person doesn't have the Spirit of Christ he doesn't belong to him. Because today if you go to a non-Christian and say receive the Spirit he doesn't understand it. So we have to say receive Jesus Christ.

And it's Christ is the right hand of the Father. Who comes in? The Holy Spirit. When you're born again it's the Holy Spirit that comes in.

But you may not have yielded all of your life to him. You may not be filled with the Holy Spirit. So let the kindness of God lead us to a turning from everything in our life that is displeasing to God.

Let's pray. Almighty God, our Heavenly Father help us to have a proper understanding of ourselves in relation to you. Help us not to become so familiar with you that we lose our reverence.

For we know that many have lost that reverence for you because they don't respect human beings anymore. Father in heaven help us never to worship any creature but only to worship you all our days. To live before your face to care more for your opinion than the opinion of any human being.

Deliver us from the sluggishness that keeps us always in the same place without progressing. We want to expose the lies of Satan who has come to steal the truth from us and destroy our lives. You know the truth will set us free.

And we pray that the truth that some have understood this morning will set them free. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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