

Laws of the Spiritual Life #2 - the Law of Humility

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the critical importance of humility in receiving God's grace and overcoming sin in the Christian life.

Duration: 52:50

Scripture: Psalm 103:2

Topics: "Spiritual Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the promise in Romans 6:14 that sin shall not have dominion over believers because they are under grace, not under the law. He explains that while the old covenant was represented by the law given by Moses, the new covenant is represented by the grace brought by Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The preacher distinguishes between saving people and forgiving them, using the analogy of a child falling into a pit despite being warned by their father. He emphasizes that forgiveness alone does not save, and that Jesus came to save people from their sins. The preacher encourages believers to trust in God's word and promises, and to surrender themselves fully to the Lord in order to experience victory over sin through His grace.

Transcript

I was mentioning that God has made this world to operate according to certain laws. There are laws in the natural realm, in this inanimate creation. There are also laws in our human body.

And when we understand those laws and submit ourselves to them, we get the benefit of those laws. I thought of electricity, for example. Electricity was something which man did not invent, but man discovered.

If Adam had known the principle, he could have had electricity even in his time. But you know how for thousands of years man lived without electricity. And that's one example of how when you discover a law in the world, you get the benefit of it.

When you don't discover that law, then you live without the benefit of it. It's the same with the human body. Medical research has discovered foods that are good for certain sicknesses and foods that are bad.

And when we discover those laws and obey those laws, our physical life is healthier, we live longer. It's all the result of following God's laws. Now apply that spiritually.

As long as man does not know God's laws, he does not enjoy the benefit of them, even spiritually. Jesus himself said in John chapter 8 verse 32, You shall know the truth. Or we could say, you will know when you know the laws of the spirit.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. Jesus also said in John chapter 14 and John chapter 16 about the Holy Spirit being the spirit of truth that had come to guide us into all the truth. And the more truth we know, the more we will be set free from bondage.

If Christians are in bondage in any area, that's certainly not the will of God. God does not will or wish that any of his children should be in bondage. In the Old Testament we have that great story of the redemption of the Israelites from Egypt, which is written to show us that God never desires that his children should be in bondage.

But when we don't know the truth, when we don't allow the Holy Spirit to show us the truths of scripture, then we remain in bondage. Or even if the Holy Spirit shows us certain laws, and we don't follow those laws, we still remain in bondage. For example, if you have heart disease in your body, and medical research has proved that certain types of foods are not good for heart disease, you know it, but you don't follow the instructions your doctor gives.

If you get a heart attack, you've only got to blame yourself, because you knew, but you didn't follow it. There are lots of people like that, who know but don't follow. It's exactly the same in the Christian life.

Some don't know. Some know the laws, but they don't obey them. And then they suffer loss.

So it's good for us to understand the laws of the spiritual life. Yesterday we were considering the law of wholeheartedness. I was saying how God has said, you will seek me and find me only when you search for me with all your heart.

Only when God becomes the most precious thing in the world to you. And when you're willing to sell all that you have to get Him. When you're willing to give up everything in order to have Him.

When you can say to Jesus, I desire nothing but you. Then you find Him. And the Lord says in Proverbs, whoever finds me finds life.

Now today, I want to talk about another law. It's the law of humility. We read of it in 1 Peter chapter 5. This is a law that never changes.

It is always true. And if we obey the law here, we'll get the benefit of it. And if we don't obey the law, we suffer the consequences.

With God there is no partiality. So we read here in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 5. The last part. God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

That's a law. If you are humble, you get the benefit of that grace. If you are proud, God opposes you.

And this is a law that applies equally to the believer as well as to the unbeliever. It's like the law of gravity. If you jump off the roof of a building, the law of gravity does not first find out whether you're a believer or

an unbeliever.

It doesn't make a difference. The law applies exactly the same whether you're a believer or an unbeliever. The law of gravity immediately begins to operate as soon as you step off the roof.

And it makes no difference who you are. It's exactly the same here. If a person is proud, whether he's a believer or an unbeliever, God will fight against him.

Now, the devil is already fighting against people. The lusts in the flesh are fighting against people. And on top of that, if God also fights against people, there is no hope for such people.

We have the devil fighting against us. We have our lusts fighting against us. We have human enemies fighting against us.

Our only hope is if God also doesn't fight against us. But you say, does God fight against people? Well, listen to God's word. He's opposed to the proud means he fights against proud people.

Sin came into the universe when an angel became proud. Proud of his beauty. Proud of his intelligence.

Proud of his position. Do you think believers cannot be tempted to be proud of their physical beauty? Their spiritual beauty? Do you think believers cannot become proud of their mental intelligence? Their knowledge of God's word? Do you think believers cannot become proud of their position, either in the world or in Christian organizations or in a church? Christendom is full of people who are proud of some of these things. Proud of their accomplishments.

Boasting of many, many things. And do you wonder why such Christians don't make spiritual progress? Do you wonder why such Christians don't draw close to God? Do you wonder why such Christians don't know God? Do you wonder why when such Christians get up to speak, their messages are boring and dead, because they don't know God. They are not close to Him.

There is no fire in their life, because fire comes only from God. And what's the reason? They are proud of something or the other. Why is it so many Christians do not receive grace? It's very simple.

God gives His grace only to the humble. And we could also say God always gives His grace to the humble. It's a law which cannot be changed.

It's like saying water always flows down to the lowest place. If you want to collect water, make sure you are in the lowest place. You will get it first.

That's a law. It doesn't change. Grace always flows down to the humblest person.

Always. And therefore, it says in verse 6, since this law is true, therefore Peter says, Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time. Now, how do you understand God exalting you? You see, our understanding of the Bible depends on how our mind is oriented.

Oriented means which way we are looking, which direction we are facing. If I am worldly in my thinking, I will read this verse as God exalting me in a worldly way, making me a leader, making me an elder, putting me over people, giving me authority over people. That means if I humble myself for a little while, one day God will give me authority over people.

I am sorry to disappoint you, because that's not what this verse is speaking about at all. It's speaking about God exalting you over sin. Where sin comes under your feet, not people.

I am not interested in having people under my feet, under me. Not at all. I am called to be a servant.

A slave. I don't want people under me, but I want sin under my feet. God will exalt you over the devil.

I want the devil under my feet. And if you are a serious Christian, you will be far more interested in having sin and Satan under your feet than people. The trouble with a lot of Christian leaders today is that they have people under them, but sin is not under them.

The devil is not under them. The devil runs rampant in their organizations. Sin overcomes these people in their life.

But if you humble yourself, God will exalt you. Spiritually. It's got nothing to do with leadership.

It's got nothing to do with authority. It's got to do with overcoming sin, the lust in our flesh, and Satan. Everybody in the world has got sin sitting on top of their head.

The devil is sitting on top of their head. But the one who humbles himself, God gives him grace. And grace exalts him over the things that were sitting on his head.

Sin and Satan. And they come under his feet. Romans 16.20 says, The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet.

He's not only going to be under my feet. He's going to be crushed under my feet. He was already defeated on Calvary 2,000 years ago.

And Romans 16 was written 30 years after Calvary. And 30 years after Calvary, the Holy Spirit says, through the Apostle Paul to the Christians in Rome, The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. He was already defeated by Jesus on Calvary.

But he's still been permitted to attack God's people. So that God's people can have the joy of crushing Satan under their feet. There is an example of this in the Old Testament.

Where when Joshua went with the children of Israel into Canaan. When he defeated some kings, he brought those kings and made them bow down. And he got the leaders of Israel to put their legs, their feet on top of the necks of these kings.

And the leaders of Israel stood with their feet on top of the necks of these kings. And Joshua said, Thus will the Lord do to all the kings of the Canaanites. And that's what the Lord says to his people.

If you will humble yourself under my mighty hand, I will give you such grace that Satan will never have any more power over you. He will be under your feet. Satan will not have power in your home.

Satan will not have power in your church. He'll be under your feet. Every demon will be under your feet.

Sin will not rule over you. There is a promise like that in Romans chapter 6. Romans 6 verse 14 says, Sin shall not be master over you, because, and here is the reason, you are not under law, but under grace. The old covenant was symbolized by the word law.

The new covenant is represented by the word grace. Moses came down from heaven and brought the law. Jesus went up to... Moses came down from the mountain and brought the law.

Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, who brought grace. But that grace is not available for everyone. There is a law.

There is a law of humility. God gives His grace to the humble. He forgives everybody's sins when they come to Him and repent.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us. 1 John 1.9 And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So if you want only forgiveness of sins, well, I really don't have anything to tell you.

Because even in the Old Testament they had forgiveness of sins. In Psalm 103, David could stand in the temple and say, in the tabernacle and say, Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who blesses your life with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. You know what all they had in the Old Testament? Forgiveness of sins, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, healing, material prosperity.

A gospel which preaches forgiveness of sins, healing from sickness, and material prosperity is a Psalm 103 gospel. It's an Old Testament gospel. It's a gospel, sure.

All I say is, it's a gospel that's been preached for 3,000 years, was preached 3,000 years ago. What is the thing that Jesus brought, which David could not thank the Lord for? When David said, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who crowns your life with good things, there was one thing he could not say. He could not say, Bless the Lord who gives me victory over sin, so that sin does not rule over me.

He could never say that. Because he was not under grace. So when a believer also stops where David stops, Bless the Lord who forgives all my sins, who heals all my diseases, and who has blessed me materially, he has not got even as far as Calvary.

He is living in 1,000 B.C. He has not understood what grace can do. Romans 6.14 says, When you come under grace, you get something more than David had. David could not come under grace.

Sin comes under your feet. Sin that was ruling you, comes under your feet. That violent temper that you have, comes under your feet.

Anger does not rule you anymore. It comes under your feet. Bitterness.

Your heart is no longer bitter with people. It comes under your feet. You are no longer jealous of somebody who has more than you, or who is better than you.

It comes under your feet. Dirty thoughts, which rule the minds of so many people, stop ruling the mind. It comes under your feet.

You need grace. And God gives His grace to the humble. Grace is a tremendous power.

Grace is power. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace. And when you turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 12, you see there very clearly that God speaks of His grace as His power.

You know when the Apostle Paul is giving his personal testimony there, how he sought the Lord to remove a thorn from his flesh, the Lord did not grant his prayer. But the Lord said to him in 2 Corinthians 12, in verse 9, My grace is sufficient for you, because My power is made perfect in your weakness. So there in that one sentence, we see grace, God's grace, equals God's power.

And I'll show you one more verse. That's Hebrews chapter 13. It says in verse 9, Don't be carried away by varied and strange teachings.

There are so many doctrines that people preach, even today. And in Paul's time when he's writing this, he's talking about people who preach all types of strange doctrines. He says don't get carried away by them.

Because the main thing is that the heart should be strengthened by grace. Do you know what grace does? It strengthens my heart, my heart's defenses, so that the enemy cannot come in. When the heart is not strengthened by grace, temptation comes knocking at the door of my heart and comes right in.

Whether it's anger, or dirty thoughts, or bitterness, or jealousy, or the love of money, or anything. It finds easy entrance into a person's heart. Because it is not strengthened by grace.

And so it says don't be carried away by strange teachings. There are so many teachings in Christianity today. There are thousands of denominations in Protestant Christianity, each preaching from the same Bible, each saying that we are the ones whom God has chosen, each saying that we are the only ones who got the truth.

But they are all defeated by lies. What's the use? All these varied and strange teachings, thousands of teachings, what is the use? There are people who say they are infants, who are baptized as infants, and there are people who say that's wrong, we must be baptized as adults. But if both are defeated by dirty thoughts, and both are defeated by the love of money, what difference does it make to the new God? There are some people who say speaking in tongues is of the devil, there are others who say that is the only mark of the Holy Spirit.

But what difference does it make if both these people are defeated by lust and the love of money, and all these things? It doesn't make any difference. This is all varied and strange teachings. The main thing is your heart must be strengthened by grace.

If your heart is not strengthened by grace, it doesn't make one bit of difference which way you are baptized or whether you speak in tongues or not. Now I know there is only one right way of baptism, that speaking in tongues if it's genuine is not from the devil. But what I say is, that is not the mark of grace.

Romans 6.14 is very clear, when you come under grace, sin will not rule over you. I want to say that. Take it seriously.

Don't be carried away by varied and strange teachings. And it goes on to say, it's good for the heart to be strengthened by grace and not by, he uses a parable there or an illustration, foods which have not benefited those who are occupied with them or those who have eaten them. He is talking about doctrines.

He talks of certain doctrines like foods. He says it's good that the heart be strengthened by grace and not by doctrines that have not benefited the people who are preaching them. That's no use.

Jesus, don't let the devil lead you to be occupied with unimportant things in the Christian life. He always, the devil's one of his major tactics is to make us major on minor issues. And to glory in the fact that we've got the right doctrine on some trivial minor issue in scripture.

Which is not the main thing. What is the most major issue? Let's ask ourselves, why did Jesus come? Do you know what is the first promise in the New Testament? It's the word which the angel told Joseph in Matthew chapter 1 verse 21. You must call his name Jesus when this baby is born, he told Joseph.

You must call his name Jesus and here is the first promise in the New Testament. He shall save his people from their sins. Not that he will forgive their sins, that is in Psalm 103.

He will save his people from their sins. And there is a lot of difference between saving people and forgiving them. I use this illustration to make it clear.

If I have a little child and I tell him be careful, don't go outside the road, they are digging the road there and there is a deep pit, you may fall into it. And he doesn't listen. And he goes and falls into that pit.

8 feet or 10 feet deep. And he cries out saying daddy. And I come there and I ask him, son what happened? He said I am sorry dad, I disobeyed you.

I came near the pit and I fell in. Please forgive me. And if I say ok son, I have forgiven you, goodbye.

What have I done? Have I forgiven him? Yes or no? Have I saved him? No. You shall call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. When Moses said that God had come to save them from the Egyptians what did it mean? It meant only one thing, the Egyptians would not rule over them anymore.

That is the distinctive feature of the New Testament. And so whenever I am defeated by any sin and I believe that Romans 6.14 is true I must say that's because in that moment I did not get grace. I want to say to all of you married people every single time you shout at your wife or your husband it's because you did not get grace at that moment.

I don't care which way you are baptized and I don't care which tongue you speak. The tongue you speak to your wife and husband is pretty clear at that moment. In your mother tongue.

Forget other tongues. It's clear. It's amazing.

I have seen people who say the Holy Spirit gives me other tongues but he cannot control my mother tongue. What sort of spirit? What sort of spirit is that? It's not the spirit of grace. The spirit of grace can give other tongues and control my mom 24 hours a day.

That's the spirit I received. That's the spirit that delivered me from getting angry with my wife. If he doesn't deliver you I don't know which spirit you got.

The spirit of God brings sin under our feet. It's the spirit of grace. Dear brothers and sisters it's because you have not followed the law of humility that you have not got it.

There is no partiality with God. All people are the same. And I want to say to you if there is a single person here and you don't have to wait till you are 40-50 years old you can be 15 years old and you seek God.

Humble yourself. God's laws are the same. I told you the law of gravity.

When somebody jumps off the roof of a building gravity does not question is it a believer? Is it an unbeliever? How old is he? Is he 15? Is he 50? It makes no difference. It just operates immediately. God gives grace to the humble.

What difference does it make whether that humble person is 10 years old or 100 years old? God opposes the proud. It doesn't matter whether that proud person is 7 years old or 70 years old. Whether he is believer, unbeliever so called spiritual believer it makes absolutely no difference.

Is he proud? God will fight against him. Is he humble? God will give him grace. And so whenever I am defeated by any sin when person says Oh, this wretched, these dirty thoughts they enslave me, enslave me I try, I try and I fall and I fall and I fall and I fall What's the reason? Be honest.

Is God's word true or not? Before we come to Romans 6.14 Do you know there is a verse in Romans 3.3 which says let God be true and every man a liar. So I say let God's word be true and every man a liar. God's word is true.

Heaven and earth will pass away that word will not pass away. God's sin shall not rule over you when you are under grace. I believe that with all my heart.

I remember the years when I was defeated by sin in my life. As a believer born again, tongue speaking, spirit baptized, believer defeated by sin. Is it possible for a born again, water baptized, spirit baptized, tongue speaking, believer to be defeated by sin? I was and so are many other people I know.

And I looked at that verse and I saw sin will not rule over me when I am under grace and I said Lord I am baptized in water the correct way. I am baptized in the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues. I have no doubt about that.

I have a gift. But I haven't come under grace when it comes to many areas in my life. You know I believe one of the first things we need is honesty.

And humility and honesty are very closely connected. They are like twins. They are twins.

Humility and honesty. The humble man is always honest. He will not pretend that he has something which he doesn't have.

The proud man is dishonest. You know there are different groups that have preached holiness through the centuries. And if you do a little research into this you discover there were certain people who preached a doctrine of entire sanctification.

They thought that God does such a work that he burns up the flesh and the person is entirely sanctified and he cannot sin again. But some of these people sinned after that. They didn't know what to do.

Because they had already testified that they were entirely sanctified. So you know what they did? The human mind is very clever and the devil is always there to assist them. And they didn't know what to do.

Because they had already testified that they were entirely sanctified. So you know what they did? The human mind is very clever and the devil is always there to assist them. They called their failure mistakes.

So when they slipped up, they called it a mistake. But the unfortunate thing is the blood of Jesus does not cleanse mistakes. It only cleanses sin.

So they had to remain with their sin calling it mistake and they became backsliders and some of them fell into adultery. Why? Because they were dishonest. When they sinned, they gave it some other name.

Don't give sin any other name. Because if you give it any other name, you'll never be cleansed from it. The blood of Jesus cleanses sin.

If you confess your sin as sin, the blood of Jesus will cleanse you. But if you are dishonest and call it by some other name, it won't cleanse you. Be honest.

And let me tell you this. The Apostle John says in 1 John 2 These things have I written unto you that you may not sin but if any man sin and he also says in 1 John 1.8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. He includes himself.

So I am not saying that we can come to a life where it is impossible for us to sin. Such a life does not exist on this earth. For that we have to wait till we go to heaven.

But what I say is that we can have victory so that falling becomes a rare event. None of us can say today that I will and let's take the physical realm you cannot say I will never fall down. You may just go outside here and fall down the steps.

It can happen to any of us. But there is a difference between you falling and that eleven month old child falling. There is a lot of difference.

Once upon a time you were eleven month old child and you were trying to walk and you fell and got up and fell and got up perhaps five hundred times a day. There is a difference between that now your falls are rare. You still cannot say I will never fall.

But it is so rare. You have learned to walk and that is what the Bible teaches. We can learn to walk in victory.

Grace is given so that we overcome sin. And so when I fall into sin, when I lose my temper or I have a dirty thought or I have bitterness or jealousy or anything all I need to ask myself is Lord, I don't need to ask myself anything other than this one question. Lord where was I proud? That's all.

Where was I proud? Because in this moment, a few seconds ago you didn't give me grace. That's clear. And you automatically give grace to every humble person.

In this moment when I was tempted you did not support me. You left me alone. Why? Where was I proud? Don't ask why.

No need to ask why. It's because you were proud. Just ask God where was I proud? And God may show you.

We can be strong in ourselves. A strength that comes through our confidence in ourselves and God has to make us weak before he can give us grace. That was the case with the Apostle Paul.

The Apostle Paul, you know, was a very strong personality. He was the type of person who would tell the high priest, God will smite you, you whitewashed wall. He was the type of person who would stand on his convictions, if I say no to John Mark once, don't ask me about it again.

That's all. He was a very strong person, but he was a very radical, wholehearted person too. And he was a man who had tremendous experiences with God.

He was caught up to the third heaven. He raised the dead. He wrote scripture.

He established churches. He was an Apostle, elder to many elders and God saw that this man is in danger of becoming proud because of what all, the way I'm using him and the moment he becomes proud, even if he is the Apostle Paul, I'll have to fight against him and I don't want to fight against him because he's the Apostle Paul, because he's such a good brother. How can I help him? And God saw there was only one way to help him.

Give him a thorn in the flesh. And that thorn in the flesh, we don't know what it was. It could have been a sickness that kept him weak, weak physically all the time.

It could have been some Jewish man who was following him wherever he went, harassing him, troubling him, getting him taken to court or something like that and speaking evil about him to the elders of the synagogues wherever he went. There was some, it was either a sickness or a person that kept on harassing Paul wherever he went. And he prayed.

Naturally we pray and we should pray when we are sick or when people harass us like that. Lord, finish with this. Get rid of this thorn in the flesh and we know that God is almighty.

He can do it. No answer. He prayed a second time.

No answer. He prayed a third time and if he didn't get an answer the third time, he'd have prayed a fourth time and a thirtieth time and a four hundredth time because Paul was radical. He was a person who would persist until he got an answer.

He got an answer and the answer was, I'm not going to remove that thorn in the flesh. That fellow is going to harass you till the end of your life. That sickness is going to remain with you till the end of your life.

But, that fellow will not hinder your ministry. That sickness will not hinder your ministry. That thorn is necessary to keep you humble because it's only when you're humble that I can give you grace.

Paul, that's the reason. And when Paul discovered that, he says in 2nd Corinthians and chapter 12, he says Oh, if that's the case verse 10, verse 9, last part, then I will boast about my weaknesses. I'm perfectly content he says in verse 10, with weakness, insult, distress, persecution, difficulties.

Are you content with difficulties? Paul was. Most people, when they have difficulties, they say, Lord, get rid of them. Yeah, it's good to pray like that.

But, there may be some situations where God does not remove those difficulties, He does not remove those persecutions, He does not remove those distresses, insults and even those weaknesses, physical weaknesses. Because these things serve to keep us humble. And particularly if God is using you, anointing you and loves you.

He never wants to become your enemy. That's why He gives you weakness, physical weakness in your body. That's why He allows people to insult you left, right and center.

That's why He allows you to go through many distresses. That's why He allows you to be persecuted. And that's why He allows you to face difficulties.

For Christ's sake. Because, Paul says, when I am weak, then I am strong. This is the law of humility.

In the Christian life, it's when I am weak, that I am strong. And that's why, we read in 1 Corinthians in chapter 1, Paul says, in verse 26, onwards, Consider your calling, my brothers, that among you there are not many wise people according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.

The base things, the despised things. God has chosen the things that are nothing so that He might nullify the things that are. And what is the purpose of all this? Here is the purpose.

It's very important for us to understand. Verse 29. So that, no man will be able to boast before God.

You know, there is a lot of boasting in Christian circles. Those are the people who don't get grace. Those are the people whom God opposes.

You know, you can have God on one of two sides. You can either have God in front of you, facing you, pushing you backwards, backwards, backwards. Or, you can have God behind you, pushing you forwards, forwards, forwards.

Which do you want? I hope you know the answer. And you are the one who is going to determine whether God is going to be in front of you, pushing you backwards, or behind you, pushing you forwards. It's not God who determines that.

You determine that. The moment you become puffed up, you may have been a humble brother, sister for 10 years. And then one day you look back over your accomplishments for 10 years, and you begin to think, boy, I've really done something for the Lord, compared to some of these other fellows.

Immediately, God moves around from the back to the front, and begins to push you back. Even if you've been faithful for 30 years. The law of gravity does not respect how many years you've been faithful.

The moment you step off, you fall down. And the law of humility works the same way. It's day by day.

And so, that is the reason why those whom God loves, and those who have surrendered themselves totally to the Lord, to allow Him to do anything with them. If you have come to God and said, Lord, do anything with me, but don't let me lose your anointing. Don't let me lose your grace upon my life.

Then He will watch over you, my brother, sister, with a very jealous care. You know, like a husband watching over his weak wife with a very jealous care. Jesus will watch over you with a very jealous care, protecting you from the things that will prevent you from losing grace.

He won't prevent you from losing money. Sometimes He may allow you to lose money so that you don't lose grace. He won't protect you from losing your health.

Sometimes He may allow you to lose your health so that you don't lose grace. God's not so interested in health and money as all these health and wealth preachers are today. Don't believe all those, that type of gospel.

God is interested in your overcoming sin, in your getting grace in your life, for your life and for your ministry. That's what God is interested in. God wants you to live such a useful life on earth, where your life is saturated with the grace of God, that you live in victory over sin, lead others to victory over sin, that your ministry leads to people being delivered from bondage, your ministry leads to the building of believers together as the body of Christ, in the midst of an adulterous Christendom.

That is God's will for you. But whether it will be fulfilled in your life or not, I don't know. That depends entirely on you.

It does not depend on God. There is no partiality with God. He gives grace to the humble.

That's why the Bible says humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. What is this mighty hand of God? In Paul's case, it was this thorn in the flesh. As I said, that could have been a sickness, it could have been a man who was harassing him, some enemy of the gospel, somebody who didn't like Paul, possibly a fellow Jew.

I don't know, but whatever it was, that was the mighty hand of God. That sickness was the mighty hand of God. That Jew who was an enemy of the gospel was the mighty hand of God crushing Paul, making him small, making him weak so that in his weakness God could manifest his strength, and when God did something through a weak man like Paul, Paul would never be able to boast about it, as though I accomplished something for God.

No, he didn't. He was weak. You know, whenever we think we have accomplished something for God, that shows we are strong, because it says in 1 Corinthians 1.29 that no man will be able to boast before God.

You tell me honestly, my brother, sister, have you ever sat down and thought about what all the Lord has done in your life in such a way that you take the credit for it, where you don't give God the glory for it? Publicly of course you will give the glory to God. Whenever you give a testimony about your life, you give the glory to God. Whenever you give a testimony about your ministry, publicly you give the glory to God.

I say what we say publicly very often is not true. That is only to show people that we are very humble people. What you really think about yourself may be something quite different.

You know, there are people who get up and say in their testimony, well, I'm a good for nothing sinner, but Jesus saved me. But one day they hear that somebody said about that person that so and so is a good for nothing fellow, and he gets angry. Why does he get angry? That's the very thing he said in his testimony, that he was a good for nothing person.

And now when somebody said that about him behind his back, he gets upset, which shows that he was an absolute liar with this mock humility, saying, oh, I'm just a humble good for nothing person. He doesn't really believe it at all. If he believed it, he would not be upset if somebody said that behind his back.

So I'm not talking about what we say publicly. I'm asking whether when you're alone, what do you think about your life and your work? Do you really believe it is God Almighty who made you what you are, who did whatever he did through you, and that you cannot take one bit of the credit for it at all? If we had lived in that place, perhaps God could have done more through us. Do you know why it is so difficult for God to give us victory over sin? So many people have come to me.

I have preached victory over sin for more than 20 years. And I've been called a heretic, a false teacher. If, on the other hand, I had kept on preaching that you will sin, you will sin, then I would have been probably called a true teacher.

That's the tragedy. It says when Joshua and Caleb stood up in Israel and said, we can kill these giants and get into Canaan, they called them false teachers and wanted to stone them to death. You read that in Numbers 13 and Numbers 14.

And all the other fellows who said, no, no, no, no, we can't overcome these giants, we can't overcome these sins, we have to be defeated by them. Yeah, yeah, these are the true teachers. It's the same thing happening today.

600,000 people said Joshua and Caleb are false teachers because they preached victory over the giants. We can put the giants under our feet, they said. God will help us.

But those are the only two who got in. Many people have asked me through the years, Brother Zach, why can't I get victory? I really believe what you teach and I really want victory in my life. And I say, you know, God wants to give you victory with humility.

A victory without humility is a useless victory. The primary mark of genuine holiness is humility. A really holy man will be humble.

We can think of anger or lustful thoughts as, say, a 100 foot pit. Maybe you're in that 100 foot pit and you're praying to God, Oh God, deliver me from this 100 foot pit. Now here's another 1000 foot pit called spiritual pride.

Supposing God delivers you from this 100 foot pit of dirty thoughts or anger and you fall into the 1000 foot pit of spiritual pride. What's that? Is that victory? That's not victory at all. That's why God allows us to be defeated, defeated, defeated until we are convinced we can never get victory.

And when we are convinced we can never get victory, then the Lord comes and delivers us. And we cannot boast because we were convinced we could never make it. We were like those disciples who went fishing, fishing, fishing, fishing and didn't catch anything.

And then Jesus came and filled their boats with fish. So brothers and sisters, that's why God allows us to be defeated. To humble us so that, and God knows the point of time where we have been so thoroughly defeated.

That's how it was in my life. I was defeated, defeated but I confessed my hope that sin, one of these days, sin will not rule over me. And I said, Lord, I don't care how long it takes.

I want to come to that life under grace where sin does not rule over me. And it came. And it can come in your life too.

If you persist. Be honest. Don't call sin by any other name.

When you have fallen, say, I have fallen. Humble yourself. Go down and say, Lord, I have fallen.

Forgive me. But I believe that grace will come upon my life one of these days and sin will come under my feet. God gives his grace to the humble.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. All the circumstances God sends into your life. Humble yourself.

The difficult people God sends into your life, like thorns in your flesh. Don't fight against those circumstances. Don't fight against God.

Say, Lord, these are necessary for me. To humble me. I go down under them.

I accept them. And you will find one day God exalts you. It's up to us whether we get the benefit of this law of humility or whether we find God opposing us.

Let's choose wisely. Let's pray. While our heads are bowed in prayer, I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, if God has spoken to your heart this evening, I want to invite you to respond wholeheartedly.

Don't glory in anything. And least of all in your doctrine. In the correctness of your doctrines.

Don't glory in your experiences. Don't glory in the denomination you belong to. Say, Lord, all these things still leave me as a defeated Christian.

I want to be a Christian who's under the grace of God. I want to walk humbling myself under your mighty hand every day of my life so that grace can come upon me and sin and Satan can come under my feet. God loves honest people and if you're one of those honest people here tonight, I can assure you, God will meet with you.

Heavenly Father, apply these truths to every life here so that there will be some transformed lives who have experienced the riches of your grace in the coming days. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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