

Narrow Gate, Narrow Path

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of not only entering the narrow gate of salvation but also walking the narrow path of righteousness in Christ.

Duration: 58:47

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:13-14, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:6-7, Hebrews 8:10-12

Topics: "New Covenant", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a righteous life in Christ, highlighting the difference between the old covenant of rules and the new covenant of God's work in us. It challenges believers to seek God's transformation in their hearts and minds, leading to a life of rest in God and a genuine change in behavior and character.

Transcript

to be righteous. And it's very important to understand that God doesn't look at us anymore as sinners but as righteous in Christ. If we have come to him acknowledging that even our good deeds are like filthy rags and the only way we can come into God's presence is by being clothed to the righteousness of Christ.

But the Bible says that there is a narrow gate and a narrow way that leads to life. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 7 and verse 13 and 14. Matthew.

Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it. But the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

So many Christians feel that there's only a gate that leads to life. That means I got into the gate so I got into life. But that's not what Jesus said.

He said there's a way that leads to life. So there it's not just entering through the gate but there is a way that is narrow that leads to life and he also said there are very few who find that way. And I think there are very few who find that way because most people are not interested in finding the way.

And it's in this connection that Jesus said in verse 15, beware of false prophets. Whenever you read a verse you must read it in the context of the previous verses to understand it. If you take a verse by itself you may not understand it properly but if you understand it in the context of the previous verses.

So what's he saying? There's a narrow gate and there's a narrow way that leads to life and beware of false prophets. So what do you think these false prophets are saying? Is it possible that some false prophets are saying there's only a narrow gate that leads to life? And knocking off something else that Jesus said there's a narrow way as well. And I believe that a reason for so many backslidden Christians and the reason why so many Christians never seem to come to a happy victorious life, the way God wants them to live, is because false prophets have told you all you need to do is get in through the gate and you're okay.

So I have to check the words of these prophets with what Jesus said, there is a gate and a way that leads to life. And that is you come to the gate and you're made righteous and then there is a path, a way for the righteous person to walk. Now how do I know whether I'm on that way or not? Let me show you an Old Testament verse in the book of Proverbs in chapter 4. In Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 18, it tells us about this way that God has ordained for those who have been made righteous in Christ.

Now we understand right at the beginning, let me emphasize that we cannot go into God's presence with our own righteousness, it's like filthy rags. We need the righteousness of Christ, but having been made righteous in Christ, there is a way and look at it, it says in Proverbs 4 18, the way of the righteous is like the light of dawn, it's like sunrise. Now you know when the sun rises, that's just a moment of time.

You sometimes see in the moment, but then it says the sun shines brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter until the noonday position. That is the path of the righteous, is like that. That is the way, that is the narrow way and the full day is when the sun is overhead, which is the day of Christ's return when we shall be like him completely.

Now my question to you, my brothers and sisters, is not have you come into the gate? My question is, are you along this way? Let me repeat, there is a gate and a way that leads to life and let's not change the words of Jesus and if you say there's only a gate, you're canceling out something that Jesus said. And the devil, you know Jesus said the devil's a liar and he's a thief. He's a thief who's trying to steal something that God wants us to have.

I know that in my own life, even though I've accepted Christ more than 50 years ago, because I had not seen this path clearly, I used to be frequently discouraged and depressed and my life was not like the sun shining brighter and brighter and brighter. I was not on the path of the righteous. So if I'm not on the path of the righteous, what path am I on? The result was that I went through a period of backsliding and if I had continued like that, even though I had accepted Christ once, I would have gone to hell.

There are very few who find the way to life. Jesus never came only to open a door for us. He said, I am the door.

We all know that no one can enter into life except through that door. But do you know that Jesus also said, I am the way. I'm not only the door, I am the way.

There is a gate and a way that leads to life and that way of the righteous we saw in Proverbs 4.18 is one where the light becomes brighter and brighter and brighter. And along that way, there is no backsliding. There's no sliding back because the sun never goes back in the sky, not even for one second.

You don't see it moving, but you know that it's slowly moving to that perfect position. And it's very important for Christians to understand that when a person is backsliding, he's not on the path of the righteous. No, the path of the righteous is like the shining light that shines brighter and brighter and

brighter until the perfect day.

We must believe God's word and hold on to that. Now, you know, the great danger is that when we come into God's word, we can try to understand it with our human reason. And our human reason is deceptive.

Because the Bible says, let me show you another verse in Isaiah chapter 55. I want to show you these scriptures so that your faith does not rest in what I say, but on God's word. Isaiah 55 in verse 8 and 9. God says, my thoughts are not your thoughts.

My ways are not your ways. As the heaven is high above the earth, so different are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. So in other words, when you read the word of God and you try to apply your way of thinking to it, you're completely wrong.

Because God says, my way of thinking is not your way of thinking. We not only need the righteousness of Christ, get rid of our own righteousness. We also need Christ's wisdom and get rid of our own way of thinking.

So let me show you when God says, my ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts. As the heaven is above the earth, so different are my thoughts than your thoughts.

That means God's way of thinking is not the way you and I think. So that's why it's very important when we come to the Bible that we don't come to the scripture trying to understand it with our human understanding. And that is the reason why we do not develop in the Christian life.

Remember these words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 11. I want you to see the words of Jesus so that your faith rests upon scripture. Matthew 11 and verse 25.

Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent and revealed them to babes. Can you think of any book in the whole world that only babes can read, understand, and clever people can't understand? Is there any book like that in the world? What did Jesus mean that clever people can't understand something of God? Intelligent people can't understand. Now most of us are clever and intelligent.

So it says here God has hidden these things. Why? Is it God against clever people and intelligent people? Not at all. We got our cleverness and intelligence from God.

He only gave it. How could he be against us? He's not against us. But the great danger I have seen of clever and intelligent people is that they are proud of their cleverness.

What did Jesus mean when he said it's so difficult for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God? And that richness can be not only money, it can be being rich in our own cleverness and intelligence and education. What's wrong in that? It's not our wealth that prevents us from God's kingdom, it's most rich people are proud. It's that pride that prevents them from getting into God's kingdom.

Most clever people are proud. They inwardly, they look down a little bit on other people who are not so smart as they are and that pride makes them blind. I don't know whether you realize this, that pride, it doesn't make us blind to earthly things.

You can be the very proud person and an excellent businessman. You can be a very proud person and a first-class computer engineer or doctor, lawyer, attorney, anything. Your pride and your cleverness will not

hinder you in those professions.

But when you try to come to scripture and you come with your cleverness and pride, you'll be blind. That's the meaning of God reveals it to babes. And you remember Jesus picked up a baby once and said, you got to humble yourself like this baby.

So he was emphasizing humility. Not that we have to become babies again, but I could paraphrase these words like this. Father, the great truths of eternity and of your word, you have hidden from those who come to it with pride in their cleverness and intelligence and try to understand it like that.

But you reveal them to those who come with humility like a little baby. And I believe that many, many Christians do not understand God's ways because they don't come with that humility. It's so important.

So here is a word that Jesus uses here, which is never found in the Old Testament. It's not explained. Now we think of explanation.

We think of a teacher who is explaining scripture to us. But Jesus never used the word explanation. You read through the Gospels.

He never used the word explanation. He used the word revelation. Revelation is different from explanation.

You can have a good teacher who can explain mathematics, chemistry, physics, but not someone who can explain the Bible. When somebody explains the Bible to you, he's speaking from his mind to your mind. And you think you've understood something.

And a lot of people who understand the Bible so well in their minds still live in sin. That's so clear. And the greatest example is the devil himself.

He knows the Bible better than any of us. He's full of sin. So it's not explanation.

Many of us may have understood so many doctrines in the Bible, but you're defeated by sin. You know why? Because you haven't got revelation. Jesus used the word reveal.

And I want to encourage you to seek God for revelation. Many Christians do not seek God for revelation. They study the Bible in order to understand and explain just like they study some history book or chemistry book.

And it doesn't change their life. Let me show you an example in Ephesians chapter 1. It's very important to understand this because I believe this is the reason. You know, I have been so distressed when I have seen believers who have even heard my preaching on the internet or in the churches for so many years and they don't seem to grow.

And I know they've got it in their head. They've not got revelation. Ephesians chapter 1. Paul says, I'm praying for you that the God of our, this is Ephesians 1 verse 17.

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Now we would say, if you don't understand a passage, read it 10 times. Read it again and again and you'll understand it.

Paul is saying, you can read it a hundred times, you won't understand it. What you need is revelation. And revelation comes through the Holy Spirit.

He says, I pray that you will get a spirit of revelation. And that doesn't come through cleverness. It comes through humility.

In other words, you will understand the Bible only if you are humble. You remember when Jesus asked the disciples, who do you say that I am? Peter said, you're the Christ, the son of the living God. Now Peter was not an educated Bible scholar.

He was just a fisherman. There were many people in Israel who spent many years studying the Bible. They were called the scribes, the Pharisees.

They read and read and read and studied and studied. And you know, the entire Old Testament speaks about Jesus. Every book, we read once that Jesus, when he was walking to Emmaus, he opened the entire Old Testament and showed those disciples how there was Christ in every book.

That's what he taught them on the way to Emmaus. In Genesis, he's the seed of the woman. And in the offering of Isaac, Abraham offering Isaac, you see Christ.

In Exodus, he's the Passover lamb. It's all a picture of Christ or the sin offering in Leviticus and the brazen serpent lifted up in numbers and all the way to Malachi where he's son of righteousness. Now the Pharisees and scribes read that, read that, read that, and it's all referring to Jesus.

And when Jesus came into their synagogue, you know what they called him? Prince of devils. They were so blind. They read the scriptures, but they did not have revelation, but they could explain it.

Now, why do I say that? Is it possible that we today who read the New Testament could also be spiritually blind to things that the Lord wants to show us? Because we have emphasized understanding with our mind instead of revelation in the heart. Understanding is a thing of the mind. Revelation is a matter of the heart.

And that's what Paul is saying. He's not saying read my letter 10 times. He's, I'm praying that you'll get revelation from the Holy Spirit.

And when you get that, you will know him in a way that will never come through explanation. I thank God when such a time took place in my life. I remember when the Lord baptized me in the Holy Spirit, and I wasn't sure whether, was it a real experience or was it just emotion? You know, because I've seen a lot of people who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and it's only emotion.

So I said, how will I know whether this is real or just an emotional thing? So for me anyway, this is the test I applied to myself. I said, Lord, if this is really what I experienced which was a real fullness of the Holy Spirit, then this book that the Holy Spirit has written called the New Testament, when I read it, it'll be completely new to me compared to all the previous years when I was born again for so many years and not really filled with the Holy Spirit. It's going to be completely new.

Then I'll know it's really from the Holy Spirit. But if I read the Bible and it's just like it was before, then maybe I just had an emotional experience. And so I decided from the very next day onwards to start with Matthew chapter 1 and say, Lord, now I'd already read the Bible and studied it in my head for so many

years.

I said, now Lord give me revelation. And that's when the Bible became a new book for me. That's when the reality of the spirit-filled life became real in my life.

Then I began to experience the things written in scripture and not just read about them. Let me give you an example. In the Bible, it says in the New Testament, I'm talking about the New Testament, the word revelation is a New Testament word.

It's not in the Old Testament. In Philippians chapter 4, here are a couple of things it says in Philippians 4. Philippians 4.4, it says, Rejoice in the Lord always. Always.

Now I can read that. I can understand it. I can talk about it.

And yet it always means 24 7. That means seven days a week, 24 hours a day. And yet in my daily life, I'm not rejoicing always. I haven't got revelation, but I've understood it.

Maybe I've memorized it. Yeah, I know. Philippians 4.4, Rejoice in the Lord always.

Maybe I've got hanging in a wall in my house. Rejoice in the Lord always. But it's not true in my life.

I'm grumbling and complaining sometimes. Well, then I have to say, I've understood it in my head, but I've got no revelation. The Holy Spirit has not made it real in my life.

And that's exactly, I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, the devil wants you to be happy with an intellectual understanding of the Bible. And thereby you think you know more than others because you've got some doctrine which you think others don't have. But what about the reality? So to face that reality, the first step is to acknowledge that I don't have it.

If I pretend that I have it, I'll never get it. I have to first say, Lord, I don't have it. And that's what I had to say to the Lord.

Sixteen years after I was born again, after I was baptized, and I knew a lot of the Bible, I read this verse. Now I was filled with the Holy Spirit and I read it. Rejoice in the Lord always.

And I said, Father, that's not true in my life. I can rejoice sometimes. Sometimes some days a little better than others.

But it's certainly not true always. Is it possible? And the devil was quick to say, no, not possible. And that's probably what the devil is telling some of you right now.

This is not possible. So then you have two statements. The Word of God, you see, you believe this is the Word of God telling you to rejoice always.

And the devil saying it's not possible. And you make a choice in your life either to believe what God says or what the devil says. And unconsciously, I don't believe it's conscious.

I believe you all love Jesus Christ. I believe you know that your sins are forgiven. I believe that.

But unconsciously, you're choosing what the devil says. This life is impossible. And because you believe what the devil says, it is impossible for you.

That's the reason why it's impossible. Because in your heart, you say, it's not possible. I've never seen anybody like that.

That's exactly what I said. I said, Lord, I don't see people around me like that. I see the preachers also grumbling and getting angry and upset.

So I suppose it doesn't work. But you know, there's a great verse that helped me. And I want to give it to you.

Romans chapter 3. When I come to such questions, Romans in chapter 3 and verse 4. Please remember this all your life. Romans 3, 4 says, in the middle of that verse, let God be true, even though everyone is a liar. Can you remember that verse? Let what God said be true, even if everyone around me is a liar.

I said, Lord, I'm going to take what you say and not the experiences of people around me. So I pursued this path. I said, Lord, I will not give up till you bring me into a life where I actually rejoice 24-7.

Where nothing that happens is going to take away my joy. Nothing. I may take some time to get there, but I'm going to get there.

And God will really lead you there if you are serious about it. For example, one of the things which comes earlier in Philippians 2, 14 was, do all things without grumbling or disputing. No grumbling, no complaining in my life.

That's what the word of God says. It should be my life. Everything.

And yet when I looked into my life, I found even though I was a born-again Christian, and even a lot of other people around me who claim to be filled with the Spirit and speak in tongues and all that, I would find them grumbling about something. I'd find them complaining about something. I said, well, they don't seem to have come to this life.

There must be something wrong here. So I said, well, I'm not going to make any believer my standard. Let God be true.

Everybody a liar. Even though they claim to be Spirit-filled or pastor or preacher or prophet or anything. If they grumble and complain, they are liars.

God is true. I've got to live a life without grumbling or complaining. And I saw in the previous verses how it's going to take place.

Philippians 2, verse 12 and 13 says, the last part of verse 12, work out your salvation with fear and trembling because God is at work in you to will and to work his good pleasure. That is an amazing verse. God is at work inside me to make me do his will, to love his will, and to do it.

Now, that was never possible under the Old Testament. And then it says, do all things without grumbling and disputing. So if you don't believe, verse 13, that God can do something inside you, you will never experience verse 14.

If you're trying to do it yourself, you'll never get there. When you try to do it yourself, it's like life under the law. Life under the law was a struggle.

God gave them so many commandments, and the Israelites tried for 1,500 years to keep it and keep it and keep it, and they could never keep it. Because by human effort, they couldn't keep it. And that was the main lesson God wanted to teach those Israelites.

You can try all your life, you will not be able to come up to my standards. Do you know that that was the main lesson that Jesus wanted to teach his disciples? If you were to ask me, what is the number one lesson that God, that Jesus wanted to teach his disciples in three and a half years? It was not doctrines about the Trinity and about justification and holiness and all that. He wanted to teach them one thing in three and a half years, that without me, you can do nothing.

John 15, verse 5, you can try as much as you like, you'll get nothing. And that's what you see even in the last miracle that Jesus did in the Sea of Galilee, where after his resurrection, we read in John 21, the disciples went fishing and they never caught anything. And Jesus comes in the morning and asks them, do you get any fish? Now Jesus was risen from the dead.

He saw them going for fishing at maybe six o'clock in the evening. Why did he wait till five o'clock the next morning to come when he knew they're not going to catch any fish? Why didn't he go at six o'clock in the evening when they went fishing to tell them, hey, fellas, you're not going to catch anything, let me fill your boat with fish and come home. No, he allowed them to go out at sea for 10, 11 hours, struggling, struggling, struggling, struggling, getting nothing.

Then he came and said, OK, have you got anything with all your 10, 11 hours of struggle? No, Lord. Now I'll give it to you. Cast your net on the right side.

What was he trying to teach them? You can think you are expert fishermen and you go out and try to catch fish, you'll get nothing. Without me, you can do nothing. But with me, you can do it all.

So there are like two sides of a coin. John 15, five is one side. Without me, you can do nothing.

And the other side is Philippians 4, 13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. If you can keep these two things in mind, you've found the secret.

Without Christ, I can do nothing. And with Christ, I can obey every command he has given me. I can do all things.

Paul found that secret. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And that's the lesson of that fishing expedition where they failed completely.

So that's Philippians 2, what we just read. God is at work in you. Now God is at work outside us and is at work inside us.

Now whenever it says God is at work outside us, that's speaking about the ministry of the Father making all things work together for our good. But whenever the Bible speaks about God's working inside us, that's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Because it's the Holy Spirit who's inside us.

And what is the Holy Spirit working inside us? It says in Philippians 2, 13, to will God's pleasure and to do God's pleasure. That means, first of all, he creates in me a desire to do the will of God. And the will of God is, next verse, to do everything in my life without grumbling and complaining.

Now I'm just saying you could take some little verses like this and say, Lord, that's not true in my life. But I want it to be true. So often we read the scriptures.

I'm sure you've read through Philippians 2. What did you do when you came to verse 14? You probably read it many times. But you read it and you go on. That's exactly what the devil wants you to do.

You read it and go on. You don't stop and look at that mirror and say, Lord, is that true in my life? And you'll see in the mirror of God's word, it's not true. You say you have so many experiences, you've been a believer for 20, 30 years, but you're still grumbling and complaining.

You've missed out on something God wants you to experience before you leave this earth. You missed out on the real spirit-filled life. The Holy Spirit working inside us to make us desire and do God's will.

So when God puts a desire, and I hope he'll put a desire in your heart this evening as you hear God's word, because that'll be the first step. It's like a little seed. And don't start with everything.

Start with one small thing. Like when you go to school and you find somebody goes to school and find so many subjects. Okay, start with one little subject.

Start with, Lord, I'm doing so many things in my life I find I grumble and I complain. And the Bible says I must do all things without grumbling and complaining and murmuring. And never imagine what your home will be like.

Can you imagine what your home will be like if husband and wife never complain or grumble about anything? Boy, it'll be a little bit like heaven. It really will be. When I got married, my home was not like that.

But I can tell you today, it is a little bit like that. It's a little taste of heaven. Because we decided we are going to take some of these scriptures seriously, which we have just ignored for so many years.

God gives you a command and you ignore it. What an insult it is to God. And when you acknowledge, Lord, it's not true in my life, what shall I do about it? You read verse 13, God is at work in you.

God will do that. But we have to thirst for it. There's an Old Testament verse in Jeremiah 29, which often comes to me in this connection.

In Jeremiah 29, it says in verse 13, Jeremiah 29, 13, you will seek me. Let's say you're seeking God for one thing. God, I'm seeking you, my father, for a life completely free from murmuring and grumbling, where I will rejoice 24 hours a day.

Good. The Lord says you will seek me for that and you will find me. What a promise.

You will find it. You'll find this life, provided you search for me with all your heart. When it becomes the most important thing in your life, you'll find it.

But if it is not the most important thing in your life, if making a little more money or doing a second job in order to make some more money or building a house is the most important thing or something else is more important, I might as well tell you right now, don't waste your time. You won't find it. Somebody else will find it.

And if he found it, it's because he made that the most important thing in life. And you say, well, you mean I'm not supposed to do any other thing? No, you can do everything else in life. But this must be priority.

You know how we can do so many other work and our mind can be on something that's important. I'll give you an example. Supposing your child is seriously sick in hospital and needs to be in hospital for, say, 10 weeks.

You're not going to shut down your home and neglect all your other children and stop going to work for 10 weeks. No, you will do all your work because you've got to cook food at home for the other children and the husband has to go to work during those 10 weeks. But all the time, father or mother, their mind will be on their child in the hospital while they're doing other things.

Even if they wake up in the middle of the night, their mind will be, my child is in the hospital. I wonder how that child is doing. You see how you can do so many earthly jobs and your mind is taken up with something very important in your life.

My child is in the hospital while you're cooking the food, while you're doing your work, doing anything. And it's in the same way it is possible while we are doing so many other things in our life for our mind to be, say, Lord, I want to enter into this New Testament type of life, a life filled with the Holy Spirit, where I'm free from murmuring and complaining, where I rejoice always. See, once we experience that, let me show you another verse.

These are just two or three verses I'm taking. I mean, there's so many verses in the New Testament. Here's another one, Philippians 4 and 6. I'm just trying to show you how carelessly we take scripture.

Philippians 4 and 6 says, be anxious for nothing. Now, immediately the devil will say, it's not possible. In this world, that is impossible.

Now, we can have a concern for many things, but to be anxious means to be in a panic about something, to be disturbed. I can't sleep at night because I'm anxious. It's more than being concerned.

I think a father and mother will have a concern for their children, but to be anxious is a little more serious than that. It says, be anxious for nothing. But in everything, for example, right now, think, for example, all of you who are sitting here right now.

Is there something that's really disturbing you, something in your home, something in your life, maybe a sickness, maybe a problem that you don't seem to be able to deal with, and it's really making you anxious, maybe something with your children. It's making you anxious, and it makes you sometimes seriously anxious at night or many times in a day. And here's a word which says, be anxious for nothing.

Nothing means nothing. What should I do then? Just forget about it? No. He says, you've got to do something about it.

That matter which is bothering you in everything which is making you anxious, Philippians 4-6, take it to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and tell God about it. Lord, this is my supplication means a specific request. Let your request be made known to God.

Lord, this is the thing that's bothering me. I want you to solve it for me. I can't handle it myself.

I can't solve it, but I want you to please solve it for me. You know, this is how the children of God are supposed to live. And the peace of God, here's a promise, the peace of God which is beyond all understanding with God, your heart, and your mind in Christ Jesus.

I want to say, if you think things are pretty bad in the world today, things are pretty bad in this country, let me tell you it's going to be worse in another year or another couple of years. And if you can't handle what you're facing today, what are you going to do in a year or two? Now is the time to take these verses and say, Lord, I want to come into the good of this type of life where the Christian is supposed to live, where there's no backsliding in my life, like the sun getting brighter and brighter. I don't suddenly shoot up in one day and become like Christ.

No, it's a slow progress. It's so slow that you can't even see the sun moving. And there will be that slow progress which you're not able to observe, but boy, you'll find at the end of another of a year that something's happened.

I found that true in my life. It didn't happen overnight, but I determined to pursue this way. I'd already gotten through the gate, but I discovered there's a way.

And there are plenty of false prophets in the world, like it says in that verse, who hide from me the fact that I need to walk this way, who keep on saying the gate, the gate, the gate. Have you gotten through the gate? That's it, brother. No, there's a way that leads to life.

So to allow God to make me see things the way he sees them. We may think these things are not important. Let me show you what the new covenant is about.

I want to show you, maybe you've heard this before, but if not, if it is and you haven't heard it, let me repeat it. I want to show you two chapters. One chapter which basically symbolizes old covenant, and another chapter which basically shows new covenant, and you'll see the contrast.

You know where the old covenant is, the ten commandments. In Exodus 20, you have the ten commandments. And the ten commandments are, you shall do this, and you shall not do this.

And you shall not do this, and you shall not do this. But you shall do this, and you shall do this, and you shall not do this. I'm just reading Exodus 20 verse 3, verse 4, verse 7, and verse 8, and verse 12, and verse 13, and 14, and 15, and 16, and 17.

Those are the ten commandments. What are the ten commandments? You shall, you shall, you shall not, you shall not, you shall not, you shall, you shall honor your father and mother, you shall keep the sabbath day holy, and you shall not murder, you shall not. This is the ten commandments.

You shall do this, and you shall not do this, and you shall not do this. Now a lot of Christians, when they hear the preaching in the pulpit today in this New Testament age, hear it in the same way. You shall not do this, you shall not murmur, you shall not complain.

It's in the New Testament, but the spirit in which they hear it is old covenant. And they try, they say, okay, from tomorrow onwards I'm not going to grumble or complain, and they fall. And they try all night and discover they haven't caught any fish.

And we need to go through that till we learn that we cannot do it on our own. That takes time with some people. But once we have learned that lesson, we enter into another level of life where the Lord fills our boat with fish.

It's true. It's not just a picture, it's really true. Now let me show you the new covenant.

You saw what the old covenant was full of. You shall, you shall not. I'm trying to explain the spirit of it.

And if you understand the spirit of it, you've got to see that you should not bring that spirit when you read the New Testament commandments. Now let me turn you to the New Testament, new covenant chapter, which is Hebrews chapter 8. This is the opposite of Exodus 20. In Hebrews chapter 8 we read, God says, verse 7, the first covenant was faulty.

There's something wrong with it. That's why there was a need for a second covenant. Why does God, did God make a faulty covenant? God didn't make a faulty covenant.

It was faulty because it could not bring man to the life God wanted him to have. Then why did God give it? Because God had to teach man, you cannot make it on your own. Just like Jesus had to teach those disciples, you try fishing, try fishing, all night you will not get it.

It takes a long time for us to understand that. Why did God make Abraham, the great father of faith, wait for 25 years before he got an Isaac as a son? Because he hadn't come to the place where it is impossible for me to have a son. In the early stages of Abraham's life, when God said, you got to have a son, I'm going to give you a son.

He said, well, Sarah can't have a son, but I'm pretty strong still, and I can have a son. And he did have a son at the age of 86, and the name of that son was Ishmael. And he says, boy, I've made it.

And when he lifted up Ishmael to God, he said, God, here's the son. God said, I can't accept that. That's the product of your own strength.

And I don't know whether you have noticed this verse. It's very interesting to see some of these interesting verses. Let me show you one of these interesting verses in the Old Testament.

Genesis chapter 16 and verse 16. Genesis 16 verse 16. Abraham was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

How old was he? 86. What's the next verse? Very next verse. Abraham was 99 years old.

What happened during those 13 years? And if you read the rest of the chapter, you find when he was 99 years old, Sarah became pregnant. And when he was 100, he got a child. So what was God waiting for 13 years? There's nothing mentioned there.

It's a big gap. 13 years of nothing. You know what God was waiting? God was waiting for Abraham to become impotent.

At 86, he could say, well, Sarah can't have a child, but I can still have a child. God says, really? Okay, then I'll wait till even you can't have a child. So he keeps waiting, waiting, waiting, just like Jesus waited for the disciples all night to struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle, fight until finally, I think they went, maybe they went fishing at six o'clock.

They said by the time it's 12 o'clock, it's difficult tonight. But by the time it came to five o'clock in the morning, they said, impossible. Then they got it.

So God waits till we come to a zero point. For the disciples, that zero point came at five o'clock in the morning, then Jesus came immediately. For Abraham, it came when he was 99 years old, and God appeared immediately and gave him a son, Isaac.

And when that zero point comes in your life, you'll find that the Spirit of God comes and does a miracle in your life too. It's exactly, I found that in my life. God is waiting for me to come to that place where I say, not just with my mind, but from the depth of my heart, Lord Jesus, without you, I can do nothing.

And with you, I can do everything that you have commanded in scripture. Now, I know theoretically, you all know it. You know those verses, you can quote them by heart.

But you haven't got revelation. When revelation hits your heart, it'll change your life. Not explanation.

What you're getting right now is an explanation. I often tell people in my church, listen, brothers and sisters, you can trust me. I will not deceive you.

I'm a servant of God. I've studied the Bible for 50 years. I will not deceive you.

I will tell you the truth. I'll show you scripture for everything I say. But after you've heard it from me, you got it in your mind.

You need to take that before God. This is exactly what I tell them. You'll never get any benefit from it.

You take that before God and say, Lord, I got this from brother Zach this morning. I trust him. He's an honest man.

It's the truth. And I've got it from him, but I got it secondhand. Now I want you to convert this to firsthand in my life, where it becomes real in my life.

Make it revelation. Then things will change. So come back to Hebrews 8. Hebrews 8, he found fault with that first covenant saying, now I'm going, verse 8, I'm going to make a new covenant.

Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 8. And this will not be like the covenant which was made with the fathers. And now I want you to see the terms of the new covenant. Do you remember the old covenant? You shall, you shall not, you shall, you shall, you shall, you shall not, you shall not, you shall not, you shall not.

And nobody could keep it. Hebrews chapter 8. This is the covenant. Verse 10 to 12, just three verses here.

In three verses, the entire new covenant is explained. And there is, notice one thing, there is no, you shall, you shall not, you shall, you shall not, is not found there at all. Instead, what you find in these three verses is God saying, I will, I will, I will, verse 10, I will, I will, I will, verse 12, I will, I will, they shall know me.

You see the difference? It took me many years to see that, that it was God working in me by which I could come into this life. And when it says in verse 10, I will put my law into their mind. I will write them upon their hearts.

I will be their God. Let's just take those two statements. What does it mean when it says, God says, it's not you.

You've come to the place where you discover that you can't do it. If you come to that place, God says, now, okay, then now I will do it. I will put my law into your mind, which means I will give you a passionate desire to do my will in everything.

I'll show you in your mind that my plan for your life is the best possible life you can ever live. And you'll have a passionate desire to do that plan, to fulfill that plan of God at any cost. And then I will put that, write it in your heart, which means I will give you the ability to do my will as well.

We need two things, desire and ability. God works in us, we read in Philippians 2, to will, that is desire, and to do, that is ability. Desire alone is not enough, but ability.

And I will give you the desire, means I'll put my law into your mind. And I'll write it in your heart, means I'll give you the strength to do it. This is the real Christian life.

It's a life of rest in God. It's not a life of struggle, struggle, struggle. It's a life of rest in God.

You know, the Bible says there's a Sabbath rest God has designed for his people. Are you eager to enter into that rest? In Hebrews chapter 3 and chapter 4, it says, so many believers who came out of Egypt never entered that rest. They lived that life of struggle in the wilderness.

They never entered into the rest. These things are written for our instruction. So what I wanted to do today was just put a little challenge into your heart to show you, my brother, sister, there is a life that God wants you to live on this earth, which is way beyond what you're experiencing right now.

Don't miss out on it. Read God's word and let God change your way of thinking. That's one of the prayers I pray for myself.

You know, when it says in Romans 12 too, that God will renew my mind. Renew my mind means he will change this Adamic way of thinking to God's way of thinking. And it makes a tremendous difference.

Tremendous difference. In many areas, we may be looking at things just like Adam and the children of Adam look at them. And that's why there's so much panic.

And that's why there's so much anxiety. That's why there's so much murmuring. That's why you look at the life of the average believer and the average unbeliever.

There's not much difference. I've seen that. See, for example, in some very difficult situation, what does the atheist do? Atheist.

He gets into a panic. How shall I solve this? What does the average believer do when he faces a similar situation? He also gets into a panic. What shall I do? Practically, there's not much difference between the atheist and the believer.

But the atheist watches television on Sunday morning. The believer is singing praises to God on Sunday morning. But in their daily life, it's just about the same.

You go to the atheist's home and husband and wife are murmuring and grumbling. You go to the believer's home. The husband and wife are murmuring there too.

What is the difference? In daily life, there's nothing. Somebody asked me once, Brother Zach, why did you start a new church? What is the difference between your church? There are already hundreds of churches. Why do you start a new one? I said, I believe that I didn't start a church.

I believe God did it. But I say, they asked me, what's the difference between your church and other churches? Okay, I said, I'll tell you. First of all, I want to say, our church is not better than other churches.

That's not for me to decide. God is the one who decides which is a good church and a bad church, and I will never pass an opinion on that. Secondly, I will not say there are no hypocrites in our church.

There are hypocrites in our church also. Like in every church in the world, there are hypocrites. And whether you know it or not, there are hypocrites in this church also, because even Jesus' church has had a hypocrite.

And your church is not better than Jesus' church of twelve. I have never seen a church in the world without hypocrites. The percentage may be different.

Then what is the difference? I said, here is the difference. For most churches, Sunday is the important day. You know, where they come to sing and praise and worship God and listen to the message.

In our church, the important day is Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday and Sunday afternoon, after you go home from the service. In other words, what I'm trying to say is, for us, the important thing is not how good was the singing on Sunday morning. It doesn't bother me one bit if the music was bad, the singing was out of tune, and even the sermon was a bit boring.

It doesn't matter. Did you live a godly life on Monday? Did you live Christ-like in your office, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday? When everybody else had road rage in the roads, were you free from it? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday? Brother, it doesn't matter one bit if the musicians were not singing properly or the sermon was boring. That is the difference.

In other words, for us, it's not how well the Sunday morning service went. You know how some people say, boy, wasn't that a lovely time of singing we had? Was that a rock concert or was it a worship of God? In a rock concert, they'll say, wow, that was wonderful. We had a good time of singing.

We say we are worshiping God, and we're not thinking whether he had a good time up there listening to us. We had a good time. It's all emotion.

It's a deception. I'm telling you the truth. You may not hear it from anybody else.

I might as well tell you. And boy, that was a lovely sermon. If it didn't change your life on Monday and Tuesday, if it didn't change the way you behave on the roads when you drive the car, that was a useless sermon.

It stirred your emotions. It informed your intellect, but it didn't change your life. That's what I mean.

In the new covenant, it is a changed life. And that's why the Holy Spirit has come. He's come to change us from one degree of glory to another, and he'll do it if you search for him with all your heart.

I tell you, brothers and sisters, I'm not a salesman trying to sell something. I'm trying to challenge God's people not to let the devil rob them of the inheritance which Jesus purchased at such tremendous price on the cross.

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