

(New Year Message 2021) Reaching Towards What Is Ahead

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of looking up to God, examining our own sins, and being a blessing to others. It encourages confessing known sins, seeking forgiveness, and focusing on humility and worship. The message highlights the need to seek the Holy Spirit's power to overcome sin, control our tongues, and spread goodness and mercy to those we encounter.

Scripture: Philippians 3:13, Hebrews 8:12, Isaiah 6:1, 1 Peter 4:17, Genesis 12:2, Psalms 23:6, Zechariah 8:13

Topics: "Humility", "Seeking Forgiveness"

Description

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Transcript

So, Annie and I just want to say, Annie just wants to say hello to everybody there. Yeah, yeah. Then she can speak a few words, Sister Annie, this New Year.

Praise the Lord, dear brothers and sisters. We are so thankful to the Lord for all His goodness to us in the past year. Many of us have gone through many painful situations.

But the Lord has taken care of us so wonderfully. He has done miracles in some of our lives. He has saved us from sicknesses and accidents.

He has helped us to live simply, more simply than we did before. And He has taught us to depend on Him more in the last year. So, we are so thankful to Him.

And we give all the glory to Him for what He has done for us. Amen. Amen.

Thank you, Sister. Yeah, praise the Lord, brothers and sisters, that we can start another year. God is the one who has arranged that the earth must go around the sun in 365 days.

So, at least once a year, it's good for all of us to check up our lives. We should do it more often. I do it every day.

Because Jesus said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. And just like we need food every day, we need God's word every day. And that's a good habit to begin in this year.

So, right at the beginning, I want to read a verse in Philippians 3. And this relates to the past year, 2020. There could be many failures we had. And many successes.

But Philippians 3 we read, There is only one thing that I do, verse 13 middle. Forgetting what's behind, I reach forward to what lies ahead. So, we have to forget all our past failures and ask Jesus to forgive all that.

So, we have to forget all our past failures and ask Jesus to forgive all that. And we must ask the Lord to put it all under His blood and blot it out. And He has promised never to remember our sins anymore.

Hebrews 8.12 says that. So, I want to ask you, are you willing today to confess every known sin of the past? So, I want to ask you, are you willing today to confess every known sin of the past? Whatever comes to your mind. Please forgive me.

Help me to ask forgiveness from them also. Please forgive me. Help me to ask forgiveness from them also.

See, that is how we can clear the account of the past. We must start with a clean sheet. And then we can look forward to the future.

If there's anybody you need to ask forgiveness from, please do it at the earliest opportunity today itself. From your husband or wife or even children. That way you can finish with the as soon as possible.

And any anxiety or worry that you're carrying over from the back, put it in the Lord's hand today. Then we can look to the future. And we can expect God to do great things for us.

So remember this verse. One thing I do. Forgetting all that lies behind.

I press to the future. But it's not only our past failures that we must forget. Also our successes so that we don't become proud of what we have accomplished.

So we must put all that behind us. Our failure and our success. And say Lord forgive us where we have become proud of anything we have accomplished.

And help us to humble ourselves as we begin this new year. And determine that throughout this year you will grow in humility. Most important.

Okay. What I want to share with you now for the new year is from Isaiah chapter 6. And here the Holy Spirit teaches us that we should look in three directions in the new year. First of all it says in verse 1. Isaiah 6.1. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty, exalted, the train of His robe filling the temple.

That is the first thing we need to see. The first direction we must look is up throughout this year. The Lord sitting on the throne.

We are told to run the race looking unto Jesus who is seated at the right hand of the Father. You must determine that every day of this year you are going to look up and see Jesus there at the right hand having all authority. You begin every day of this year like that.

As you get up from bed, even before you get out of your bed. This is what I do every day. Before I get out of bed, I spend some time looking up and seeing the Lord on the throne.

Keep your eyes closed a little while before getting out of bed and see the Lord on His throne. Make that a habit. At least spend 2 or 3 minutes or 5 minutes like that.

Don't rush out of bed to do so many things. Few minutes say, Lord I want to see you on the throne as I begin this day. Because I have to race to run and there may be so many obstacles in the race today.

The Bible says I have to run the race looking unto Jesus who is at the right hand of the Father. So I want to run the race like that. Help me to see you clearly.

To see you as one who loves me intensely to give your life for me. You said greater love nobody has more than giving one's life for one's friend. And I also want to see you as one who is ruling the universe.

You said all authority in heaven and earth is given to you. That is the first look we must have. Seeing Jesus having all authority in heaven and earth.

Authority over people. Authority over Satan. Let me show you a wonderful verse in Daniel that describes this perfectly.

There was a big king, worldwide king called Nebuchadnezzar in those days. He was a very proud man. And he one day was looking at the big palace he had created, he had made.

Daniel chapter 4 verse 28 to 30. And while he was congratulating himself for this wonderful palace that he had built. In Daniel 4.30. He said isn't this Babylon the great and I built this royal residence by my power for my glory.

Immediately God punished him. And he became like a mad man. And he started eating grass like the animals.

Verse 32 for seven periods of time, maybe seven years, he became like a mad man. And then he humbled himself. And God restored him to his throne.

And then he said something which we must all remember. It is the most complete statement about the power of God found anywhere in the Bible. I have never found a more powerful statement of God's almighty power anywhere other than here in verse 35.

See what it says. All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, zero before him. All the people you are afraid of.

They are zero in God's eyes. You don't have to be afraid of anybody. See many of us may have difficult neighbours or enemies or difficult bosses.

God says here Nebuchadnezzar says they are all zero before God. And next he says God does exactly what he wants in heaven and among all the people on the earth. God's will.

He can do anything he wants anywhere in this universe. And no one can stop his hand or say to him what are you doing. He has got all authority over Satan.

So that is the first direction in which you must look. Up. See the Lord on the throne.

Never forget that. Turn back to Isaiah 6. When he looked up he saw angels going around the throne of All the seraphs or angels had six wings. And it says here with four of them they covered their face and feet and with two he flew.

We don't understand how holy God is. These angels have never sinned in their whole life. And even then they cannot look at God.

Is there a problem? Even the angels, the holy angels cannot look at the face of God. That is how holy God is. And that is another thing we must realize when we look up.

That we are looking to a God who is so holy that even angels cannot look at his face. So many people talk about God as if he is an old friend of theirs. We must respect him as holy.

You The two wings they fly showing their ministry or service. Four wings to worship God. Two wings to serve God.

Teaching us that we must worship God much more than we serve him. For many people serving God is the main thing. But these angels are not always flying, flying, flying doing things for God.

No, with four wings they cover themselves and worship God. So when we look up, that's another thing. We must learn to become worshippers in this new year.

We must learn to see more of God's holiness this year than we have ever seen in our life. Don't think service is the main thing. I try to do a lot of service for God but I am first of all a worshipper.

I told the Lord once, Lord if my tongue is paralyzed, my body is paralyzed, I am in bed and I cannot preach anymore. I will still be a worshipper all my life. To me the important thing is not preaching.

Not going here and there or preaching to the churches. Though I am glad to do that till the end of my life, I am not primarily a preacher. I am a worshipper.

With four wings I worship God. Two wings I serve God. And then my service will be more effective.

I know that. If you spend more time with God than with people, your service will be more effective. I am not talking about being on your knees.

We must live in God's presence throughout the day even when you are working in the office or factory or anywhere. Always I am being a worshipper. Many of you feel oh I don't have a gift of preaching.

No. Don't worry. Be a worshipper.

You sisters, you may not preach but you can be a worshipper. See here the angels are more interested in you. That is the first lesson you must learn for the new year.

Look up and be a worshipper. See him as so holy that the angels cannot even look at him. And it is very interesting.

It is interesting. I saw this vision in the year that King Uzziah died. Let me tell you something about King Uzziah from 2nd Chronicles in chapter 26.

Uzziah was one of the good kings of Judah. 2nd Chronicles 26 verse 1. He was 16 years old when he became king. And verse 3 it says he reigned for 52 years.

And it says in verse 4 he did what was right in the sight of the Lord. And he continued verse 5 to seek God in the days of Zechariah who had understanding of the visions of God. And Uzziah the king verse 5 sought the Lord and God prospered him.

And verse 6 he defeated the enemies of Israel. He read in verse 7 God helped him against all the enemies. And those enemies verse 8 came and paid tribute to him.

And he made a good army to keep Israel free from its enemies. And there is a big list of all that he prepared for war up to verse 15. And I think that went on for 30-40 years.

And he became a very famous king. And then something very sad happened. It says in verse 16 when he became strong he became proud.

This has happened to so many believers. They start out as ordinary weak believers. They come to the church.

They sit in the back seat. They say I am a nobody. I am happy to come to this church.

But as God blesses them and blesses them they become proud. And then they drift away from God. I have seen that happen to CFC elders.

Not very many. But a few CFC elders I have seen in the last few years who started out well. Very simple ordinary humble brothers.

They came to CFC and they got a ministry. And gradually they became proud. Because God was using them.

And as they became proud, the Bible says God opposes the proud. He pushes them down. But they themselves don't realize that God is pushing them down.

It's very sad when a person has lost the anointing of God, lost the grace of God but he doesn't even know it. And you also have seen some people like that. Uzziah was like that.

What a wonderful king he was for 50 years. But because God blessed him and he didn't give the glory to God, he thought he himself was a great man. Learn from the failure of King Uzziah.

And from the failure of CFC elders whom you have seen who started well, you have fallen. It says here when he became proud, he went into the temple and began to burn incense there. You say what is wrong in that? There was a law in Israel, in Judah, that a king must never be a priest.

And a priest must never be a king. These are two different ministries in Israel and Judah. Because the first person who has to be a king and a priest would be Jesus Christ.

He is a king and a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. And he has made you and me also priests, junior priests. You have heard of some foolish preachers boasting that they are priests according to the order of Melchizedek.

That is not only a priest. Every believer is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. But in the Old Testament, if you were a king, you could not be a priest.

But he thought, God has blessed me so much. I can do this also. He did not submit to God's authority.

And when the priest saw him going to do the ministry of the priest, they ran into the temple and it says in verse 18, they opposed him. They said, you may be a king, but in the temple we have authority as priests. And we tell you in the name of the Lord, get out of here.

You can't do this. He was so proud, he would not submit to any authority. And this is what happens to some elders also.

When they become proud, they will not submit to anybody's authority. And then he opposed the priest and the priest opposed him. And he became angry.

But it says in verse 19, all of a sudden, leprosy came upon his forehead. And as soon as he saw he had become a leper, verse 20, he ran out of the temple because the Lord had smitten him. See how quickly God judged this man for being proud and not submitting to authority.

He thought that because I am a king, I can do everything else. And it says in verse 21, he was a leper until the day of his death. That is a warning to us how you can start out very well and if you don't humble yourself, you can destroy yourself.

After 52 years of a wonderful ministry, he became a leper and died as a leper. Isaiah 6, we read, Isaiah saw all this. And in the year Isaiah 6 verse 1, when king Uzziah died, Isaiah began to think what a wonderful king this man was.

And he must have been very discouraged because he must have been very close to the king. We have to learn a lesson from the failures of other leaders. Otherwise we will make the same mistake ourselves.

So Isaiah humbled himself before God. The Lord gave him a vision of him sitting on the throne. All the angels saying verse 3, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

So Uzziah's judgment was an indication of the holiness of God. And God showed Isaiah his holiness there. Whenever we see the holiness of God, next thing that happens is we get immediately convicted of our own sins.

And that's what happened to Isaiah. So he first looked up and here is the second look. He looked inside.

He said in verse 5, woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips. Now Isaiah was a prophet. And as a prophet he had proclaimed judgment on other people.

And he has to do that. That is the ministry of a prophet. See Isaiah 5 verse 8. He looked at certain people who were sinning and said woe unto those who add house to house and join field to field.

And then he says further in verse 11, Isaiah 5 verse 11, woe to those who rise early in the morning to get drunk. And then again in verse 18, woe to those who drag sin with the cords of telling lies. Again he says woe in verse 20 and 21 and 22 to different groups of sinners.

See woe to this group, woe to this group, woe to this group. Everything he says is right. But when he sees the Lord, he says in verse 5, woe is me.

Now he is not judging others. He is judging himself. See when you see things wrong in others, it is very easy to say woe unto them.

But if you really want to see the Lord, you will say woe is me. If you never say woe is me in your life, it shows that you are not seeing the Lord. Every day of this new year, after looking up you must look in.

Don't look inside first, you will get discouraged. Because there is so much sin inside all of us, in our flesh. But we must look up first and let the Lord show us our sin.

Lord you show me what is wrong with me. That is how we must pray. I don't want to look inside and discover things.

I want to look up, see the holiness of God and then say woe is me. And then you will not be so quick to say to others woe is so and so and so and so. So that is the second decision we need to take this year.

Look inside and judge yourself more than you judge other people. Yes, there are so many things wrong in other people. It is right they are woe unto this group and this group and this group.

But first say woe is me. Judge yourself in the light of God. And what Isaiah was particularly convicted about the way he was speaking.

He said I am a man of unclean lips. And that is one of the main areas we must judge ourselves in this new year. Look inside and see.

Correct your language. Say Lord help me to control my tongue. See the Pentecostals say that if you are filled with the spirit you will speak in other tongues.

Now that is a good gift of God. But God doesn't give it to everybody. 1 Corinthians 12 says God gives some people the gift of tongues.

When I was seeking God about 50 years ago for the power of the Holy Spirit, I was not seeking for speaking in other tongues. I was saying Lord control my mother tongue. Help me to overcome my anger.

I control my tongue in the way I speak to people. Lord I want to come to a life where I will never speak an angry word with my tongue. To nobody.

Not to my wife. Not to a servant in the house. Not to an auto rickshaw driver who is asking for more money.

Or a railway porter who asks for more money. To nobody. I must not get angry.

I must be angry that God's name is dishonored in India. That I must get angry about. Like Jesus was angry that people were making money in the name of religion in the temple of God.

There I must be angry too. But Jesus was never angry when they spat on him or called him the devil. I learned that I must never be angry about what people do to me or say to me.

My anger must be reserved for one thing. That the glory of God is being dishonored by Christians in India. Lord please give me clean lips.

That's the second thing we need to see. The sin in our own life. Lord I am a man of unclean lips.

Lord I am living among people who have unclean lips. I am living in the midst of people who don't think that anger is a sin. Lord please cleanse me.

Verse 5. I have seen the king, the lord of hosts and I see my sin. That is how we see our sin. When you see the holiness of God, you will not say woe is that person and woe is that person.

You will say woe is me. Lord particularly my tongue. Please give me control in this new year.

That is the second direction we need to look. The Bible says in 1 Peter 4. 1 Peter 4. Verse 17. The time has come for judgment to begin in the household of God.

Where should judgment begin? In the church. In us. It says it must begin with us first.

So in this year. Who should we judge first? Not your husband. Not your wife.

Not your neighbor. Not the brothers and sisters in the church. What does it say here? Us first.

In the world they all judge other people first. In all other matters they will put themselves first. But in judgment they will put others first.

But we have been taken out of the world. We are a different type of people. We have a different spirit from the world.

It says here this is the mark of those who belong to the household of God. How do you know whether you belong as it says in verse 17 to the household of God? I will tell you. You will judge yourself first.

Many years I have kept that verse in front of me. Lord I belong to the household of God so I will judge myself first. I will not preach on any subject in which I have not judged myself first.

In Hebrews 4.12 it says the word of God is like a sharp two edged sword. One edge must cut me first. Then I can use it to cut other people with the word of God.

You must make a decision in your life that you will never preach or talk about any sin which you have not judged yourself first. So look up first and then look inside. Don't stop there.

There is a third direction we must look. And that is outward to the world that needs the saviour. That is the third thing we see here.

Isaiah looked up and saw the Lord. Then he looked inside and saw his own sin especially the way he was using his tongue. Then the Lord told him verse 8. Who will go now for us and who will speak for us? Isaiah said verse 8. Here am I. Send me.

Verse 9 the Lord said look out now. Go and tell these people my message. Look outward now.

You have looked up. You have looked in. Now look out.

See those needy people around you and give them my message. And in order to prepare him to do that. We read in verse 6 and 7. One angel came with a fire from heaven and touched his lips.

We read in verse 6 and 7. One angel came with a fire from heaven and touched his lips. This is a picture of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Where the fire from heaven comes and touches our lips and our heart.

We burn with the fire of God so that we can share God's word with other people. See fire is making a lot of noise. Because I was seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit.

Somebody said go to the Pentecostal church. When I went there I saw them just shouting and yelling and screaming. I didn't see holiness there.

I saw the pastors love money. So I came back to my room and said Lord I don't want that. I never went to those people again for the power of the Holy Spirit.

I said that's not the real thing. That's a fake. So I sought the Lord in my room.

God met with me in my room. You don't have to go to any meeting to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Kneel down in your room alone before God.

Confess your sin. Set everything right with God and man. And give everything of your life to God.

And believe and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit. And that fire will come and touch your heart and burn you up. And I can tell you that fire has not gone out of my heart in all these years.

I always pray Lord keep that fire burning in my heart. I don't care if I lose my money or my health but I don't want to lose the fire of God. Value the fire of God more than anything else.

So nobody has to stir me to go and serve God. When the fire of God is burning in your heart, you long to serve Him and do something for Him. It doesn't matter how old you are.

We read in Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah chapter 40 and the last verse. Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength.

That is those who wait for the Lord for the power of the Holy Spirit. Like they waited in the day of Pentecost. And they got new power.

They will mount up with wings like eagles. That means they will overcome every obstacle in the way. If there is a mountain in the way they will fly over it like an eagle.

And verse 31. They will run and they won't get tired. And they will walk and they will not become weary.

Verse 30. Even young people will grow weary and tired. Even young men will stumble and fall.

But even if you are an old man or woman, you wait on the Lord and you will run and overtake all these young people. Like Isaiah got the fire from heaven, we need the fire from heaven in order to reach other people. So when God blesses us, it is so that we can bless other people.

Why does God give us the power of the Holy Spirit? Not just to give us some excitement. No. It says in Galatians 3. Galatians 3. Do you know that Jesus Christ became a curse for us on the cross? Galatians 3.13. A curse is a very strong word.

That He took our sins. We can understand. But to be cursed by God.

That's what happened on the cross when He hung there for 3 hours. Why was He cursed? Because I deserve to be cursed. That's why He took it for me.

You deserve to be cursed and He took it for you. Why did He take it? So that it says here, the blessing of Abraham verse 14 can come upon us. And that comes through the power of the Holy Spirit verse 14.

Jesus took the curse so that the blessing of the Holy Spirit can come upon us. And that is called the blessing of Abraham. So what is the blessing of Abraham which comes through the power of the Holy Spirit? Turn to Genesis chapter 12.

When God called Abraham from his country. He told him two things. I will bless you.

Verse 2. And you will be a blessing to others. Verse 2. You will be a blessing to all the families of the earth. So there are two things in the blessing of Abraham.

I will be blessed and I will be made a blessing to other people. That is what comes through the Holy Spirit's power. The Holy Spirit will come and bless me with power to overcome sin in my life.

Control my tongue. And then it won't stop there. Listen to this.

He will make me a blessing to every family I meet. If I go somewhere, to some house, I will bless them. If I go to another house, I will bless them.

I can't do it. But the Holy Spirit will do it. Rivers of living water will come out from me blessing others.

You know it says in Psalm 23. Psalm 23 verse 6. Goodness and loving kindness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Psalm 23 verse 6. Goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

What that means is, I go to a house and when I leave that house, I have left some goodness and mercy there in that house. I go to another house. Because it says here, goodness and mercy are following me all the time.

Wherever I go, goodness and mercy are following me. When I go to another house, I leave some goodness and mercy there also. That is how He can make you a blessing to every family you meet.

So many people have created problems when they go to other people's houses. From now on, it's going to be different. In this new year, God is going to make you a blessing to others.

That is God's promise. That is God's will for you. Let me give you a final promise concerning that in Zechariah chapter 8. That is God's will for you.

Let me give you a final promise concerning that in Zechariah chapter 8. If you have not been a blessing to families in the past in your life, have you been creating problems for others? Are you a type of person who creates problems for people in the church? Say Lord, make me different in 2021. Make this promise in Zechariah chapter 8 verse 13 to be true in my life. Make this promise in Zechariah chapter 8 verse 13 to

be true in my life.

As you were a curse among the people, in future you will become a blessing. As you were a curse among the people, in future you will become a blessing. Say Lord, I have been a problem to people in the past.

But you be my shepherd and goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Say Lord, I have been a problem to people in the past. But you be my shepherd and goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

So what are the three directions we must look? Look up and see the Lord on the throne everyday. And as you see Him and you see the holiness of God, see your own need. Confess your sin.

Hate your sin. Set it right with God and with man. So look up and look in, then look out.

Lord, make me a blessing to other families. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Touch my heart with the fire of God.

God can make you a blessing. Let us pray. While our heads are bowed in prayer, please ask the Lord to fulfill these three things in your life.

Heavenly Father, help everyone to remember what the Holy Spirit has spoken to them and help them to walk in victory this year. Seeing your glory. Seeing their own spiritual need.

Being filled with your Spirit to serve others. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Vincent. You probably have a cough. Thank you for struggling through.

Thank you, brother. Thank you. I'm sorry for that.

Thank you for spending your time. It's a very late night. No, no, no.

It's quite okay for me. I was concerned.

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