

Principles of God's Kingdom

by Zac Poonen

God's purpose in marriage is to produce a godly offspring, and faith is the key to overcoming evil circumstances and raising godly children.

Duration: 1:14:01

Scripture: Malachi 2:15, Matthew 3:2, Matthew 24:14, Acts 1:8, Romans 14:17

Topics: "Kingdom Living", "Godly Parenting"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of dedicating our lives to God's kingdom, focusing on raising godly offspring by allowing God's government to rule in our hearts. It encourages humility, submission to God's wisdom, and facing tribulations with the assurance of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The message highlights the need to preach the gospel of the kingdom, centered on righteousness, love for God, and treating others with kindness, leading to inner peace and joy.

Transcript

So we are first going to have a dedication of two children, and then we'll continue after that. You want to turn first of all to Malachi in chapter 2. In Malachi 2, verse 15, it reads slightly differently in different translations. It says here, Didn't he make you one? In the middle of that verse.

And why did he make you one? Because he was seeking a godly offspring. That's the middle of Malachi 2, verse 15, the middle of that verse. Why did he make you one? Because he wanted a godly offspring.

So God's purpose in making a husband and wife one, is to produce a godly offspring. Not just children, but godly children. So it's very important to remember that, that God hasn't united husbands, husbands and wives just to become one.

Just to be husband and wife, not just to have children, but to have godly children. And that's where we really need the help of the Holy Spirit. To give us grace, to be able to, you know, in an evil world where everything around us is evil, to have wisdom, to teach our children God's ways in a world that lies, as the Bible says, the world lies in the power of the evil one.

And to help our children to overcome that power as they grow up. Who can do that? All our cleverness won't help. We can educate our children, feed our children, clothe our children, but to to give God what he wants, a godly offspring, that every one of our children will become godly.

Do you think God will give us a command like that and not give us the power? You think God will tell us to do something and not give us the ability to do it? It's impossible. God's word is the word of his grace, which means if there is a single command in scripture, you can be absolutely sure that he will give you the grace to keep it. You can be sure of that without any doubt.

So that's why when we read something like this, we know that, yeah, God wants a godly offspring from me and my wife. He will definitely give me the power for it and the grace for it. And when we say, Lord, I believe, you'll give me the power and the grace to raise up all my children as godly.

You know what the Lord will say to you? My son, my daughter, according to your faith, be it unto you. But if there are some who say, oh, children are all different. We can't expect them all to be the same.

Some will turn out badly. God will say, according to your faith, be it unto you. You believe the giants of Canaan are more powerful than Almighty God.

You will never enter the land. You believe that the evil in the world is more powerful to influence your children than the power of Almighty God. You will never get godly offspring.

But if you say, Lord, I believe, what power can stand against you if you told me that that's why you united us as one? To give us godly offspring? Well, it shall be so. You know, when we read a command in scripture or a promise in scripture, our duty is only to say Amen. It will be so.

That's an expression of faith. And I'll tell you one thing. When we stand before the Lord, it's good to know it now.

You know, it's good to know how to do a mathematics problem before the examination, not after the examination is over. The examination will be over when we stand before the Christ on the final day. And in that day, we will discover that some people who had real problem children but trusted God produced godly offspring because they trusted Him.

And those who kept on blaming circumstances and children and evil in the world and they said it's not possible. It did not happen and you'll discover in that day it had nothing to do with the children. It had nothing to do with the evil circumstances.

It had to do with how much you had faith that an almighty God is more powerful than all the giants of Canaan and all the evil in the world. And if a husband and wife, let me tell you this. If a husband and wife unite in prayer, Jesus said, if two of you agree concerning anything, it will be granted by my father in heaven.

We need to have more faith, brothers and sisters. It's not enough just to come to the meetings and to hear good things and have our external life a little improved and we think we are a little better than other Christians and say we hear wonderful truths here. It's not enough.

It's not according to your knowledge, be it unto you. It's according to your faith. And if you have faith, Jesus said, even if there's a mountain in your way, it can be removed.

Let's have faith for that. Some of you who have problems or who may have problems in the days to come with some of your children. It's like a mountain.

Let's say, Lord, you said you're seeking a godly offspring. Why did you make us one, Lord? Why did you make me and my wife one? The answer is you're seeking a godly offspring. Then, fulfill it in my life.

I believe you'll do it. So, let's have faith. You know, sometimes we read when it's not we read that beautiful story in Matthew 17.

Let me turn you there. Matthew 17 and verse 14. Matthew 17, verse 14.

From out of the crowd, a man came up to Jesus. Put yourself there. You fathers and mothers, put yourself there.

A woman came up to Jesus. A man came up to Jesus and falling on his knees before said, Lord, please have mercy on my son. Please have mercy on my daughter.

For he behaves like a lunatic. He behaves like a worldly person. He's growing up ungodly.

He's spiritually very ill. He often does a lot of stupid things. I brought him to your disciples.

They could do nothing for him. I come to you. And Jesus said, bring him to me.

Verse 17, last part. Bring him here to me. Have you heard that? You got more than one child? Bring them here to me.

I say, Lord, I bring them before you. The child didn't have any faith. It's the father who had faith.

It's a mother who can have faith. It doesn't matter if the children don't have. Such a great example of a father who had a needy child.

Took him to this church, that church, to all the brothers and sisters. Nothing could do for them. He brought him to Jesus.

And in a moment, what a word it says. The boy was cured at once. According to your faith, be it unto you.

We can read books on bringing up children. You know, many people have asked me to write a book, Brother Zach, you've written many books. There are very few people who have godly children.

Why don't you write a book about bringing up children? I said, no, I won't write that. Because it had nothing to do with me. It was God.

One hundred percent. What will I write in a book? God did it all in spite of my mistakes and my failures. We would just fall on our knees, my wife and I, and say, Lord, do something for our children.

That's all. That's the end of the book. It's all these techniques.

There are so many people around who write books just to make money. You can read all the techniques and all the books on parenting and everything else in the world. I'll tell you, there's nothing superior to the Bible.

Bring your child before Jesus from a very young age. Hold that child up before Jesus' father and mother and say, Lord, let this child grow up to love you, fear you, to be another generation of witnesses for you in this ungodly world. Yeah, it says all must prophesy.

I'll tell you what I prayed for my own children. Lord, I pray that all my children will prophesy. I have 14 grandchildren, 8 grandsons and 6 granddaughters.

You know what I pray for them? I never pray they'll be great in the world or they'll be rich. I pray, Lord, that's the third generation. I want all of them to prophesy.

That's what I pray. You pray for your children, grandchildren. That's what I pray.

Honestly, so many mornings I get up and pray that. What else to pray for? I don't care if they live in a small house. It doesn't interest me.

I'm thinking of eternity. I'm thinking of they're doing something for Jesus who died for them, gave his life for them. If God provides them with other things, that's extra.

Praise the Lord, but that's not the main thing. That there'll be witnesses in their generation. Pray for that.

My brothers and sisters, I'll tell you something. God does not listen to the words we speak from our mouth. I can say the most spiritual things.

You heard me say this. You can say the most spiritual things to God with your mouth, but he looks at the heart. And deep down in your heart, that is not what you desire and that deep down in your heart for your children may be something else.

Then that's what you'll get. But if deep down in your heart your desire is that your children and if you have grandchildren start praying for them from the time they are small. They'll grow up to be witnesses to the Lord, a godly generation for him, generation after generation wherever they live on the face of the earth.

I can tell you in Jesus' name God will answer your prayer. He said, a man can bring a child to Jesus when he was on earth, a desperate need and say, Lord, I can do nothing for my son. Your disciples can do nothing.

Can you do something? And Jesus said in another passage, if you can believe, don't say to me if I can, if you can believe, it'll be done. Sometimes we say that to the Lord. Lord, if you can, it's very interesting in Mark Gospel, same passage, he came to Jesus and said, if you can do something, and Jesus said, if you can believe.

And that's what the Lord says. If you can believe, all things are possible. I believe that with all my heart.

We live in a generation where they use that verse only to make money. Oh, if I can believe, I can get a better house, a better car and healthy. I'll tell you honestly, I'm not interested in house, car or even health.

I want to spend my days. If I live to be a hundred years old, I want to be a witness for Christ till my dying day or till the Lord calls me home. I'm raptured.

And exactly the same thing I desire for all my children and grandchildren. I urge you, if you have been gripped by the message in CFC, that should be your desire for your children. That they will come under the government of God in their lives.

May it be so. May none of our children, I'm not just interested that our children should not go to hell. That our children should be baptized.

I'm not at all happy that these children are baptized. So what? Simon the magician was baptized and he went to hell. They must be bold, flaming witnesses, spiritual witnesses for Christ in their generation.

Let's make them the burden of our heart. We know you're a sincere Christian if that is the burden of your heart for your children. Then you know you're a sincere Christian.

I've often said, what you desire for your children deep down in your heart, that shows what you really desire. If you desire that they should be great in the world, that is really your desire even though you may have this religious Christian whitewash. And if it is like that, ask God to change your heart and show you the things that are eternal, valuable.

To me, when I say this is what I see for my children and other people are seeing something great in the earth, it's like in an earthly sense it's like I'm collecting real money and those people are collecting you know, the games they have with paper money. This is the real thing to live for God so that for millions of years in eternity you and your children and grandchildren will be able to rejoice that you live for the right thing instead of wasting your lives on earth. May God bless you.

So we're going to pray for two children the closest to heaven that we see on earth is what you just saw on the pulpit. Not me, those children. The closest to heaven you can see on this earth.

Praise the Lord that we can see such examples on earth that we can follow. Those who have no high thoughts about themselves. Those who don't pretend to be something they are not.

They are just themselves. It's easy to fellowship with brothers and sisters who don't pretend to be spiritual who are just themselves. If they are 5 years old they don't pretend to be 25.

Isn't it good? Brothers and sisters who don't pretend to be up here spiritually when they are here spiritually. I always tell people don't pretend to be spiritual just be yourself and we'll get along fine. It's very difficult to fellowship with anybody who is pretending using language words praying in a certain way to impress.

I shrink away from such people. It's almost impossible for me to fellowship with them. That's one of the great things we can learn from children.

Be natural. Be yourself. We cannot become great men and women of God overnight.

It takes time and the child understands. It's not a grown man. It's a little baby.

It'll grow up and little by little it grows and we see it's growing. That's how it is to be spiritually. Don't ever try to impress if you want to grow spiritually if you want to be part of God's kingdom.

Okay, now we are going to go through the verses that we memorized. We won't be doing all the verses every time but for a couple of months we'll go through all the verses and then we'll just do the new ones. So today we'll go through all of them.

First, we started on the 8th of March. Sin shall not be master over you. Let's say it together.

Sin shall not be master over you for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6, 14. Make it personal.

Sin shall not be master over me for I am not under law but under grace. Romans 6, 14. Okay, the next verse.

That was a promise. Now we go to commandments. Say it together.

Jesus said, He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me and the one who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him. John 14, 21. Okay, we'll go to the next verse.

Let's say it together. It's a promise again. God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8, 28. Let's claim that promise. It's God's promise for all those who love Him.

The next one, a commandment. Let's say it together. Jesus said, Every careless word that people speak they shall give an account for it in the day of judgment for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.

Are you going to be justified or condemned by the words that you spoke last week at home to your husband to your wife? Will you be justified or will you be condemned? Every word. Okay. Let's take it seriously this week and in the weeks to come.

I believe these words. This is one of the verses which is one of the least least believed by Christians around the world. I'm absolutely convinced 99.9% of Christians do not believe that every careless word they speak God is going to make them account for it.

No. The amount of careless words I've heard Christians speak. It's obvious they don't believe this verse at all.

We want to be different in CFC. Dear brothers and sisters believe it. It's true.

I often tell people you will thank me in the day of judgment that I told you the whole truth. The whole truth is every careless word you'll be justified or condemned by what you speak. Ask God for power.

I know you can control every part of your body except your tongue. The Bible says that. Ask God for power.

It says in James it's easier to tame a lion than to tame the tongue. Only God can do it. But he can.

I sought for this for years. I said Lord I will never give up till I can control my tongue. It's not enough even to speak in unknown tongues.

I want to control my mother tongue. I can tell you if you seek God earnestly he will do it. Don't say this giant of Canaan is too strong.

No. God can bring him down. Put him under your feet.

That you can be more than a conqueror. OK. Next verse.

A promise. It's a good promise for what we just considered. Say it together.

The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? There are three separate statements.

Say it again. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What will man do to me? You know this is the verse I like people to speak just like it says in Hebrews 13.6 we must boldly say it. It's the only verse in the Bible where it says we must boldly say this. You look through the Bible and see if there's any other verse where the Holy Spirit says we must boldly say it.

I think this is the only one. So let's say it boldly which means loudly. OK.

The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? I'm past 75.

I can say it like that. All of you fellows should be shouting it. We should be able to shake this roof.

OK. Hebrews 13.6. The next verse. This is a commandment.

We go alternately promise, commandment, promise, commandment like the two legs we walk on. If you let's say it together. If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you your Father in Heaven will also forgive you but if you do not forgive others then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.

Another verse that I think more than at least more than 90% of Christians do not believe. They think you can ignore it. You know there are some people who do something wrong to somebody.

Now examine your own heart. See if it's true and then they feel it's too humbling to go and apologize maybe to your wife. How can you apologize? So instead of that they just act nice and say isn't it great and everything is going nice and they act like that the matter is not settled because there's an act that you did that you never asked forgiveness for.

You can act nice and behave and talk about nice things and say we have wonderful fellowship but there remains there in history a record something you have not settled. You know it's like if you borrowed ten thousand rupees from somebody and then you haven't done anything about it for a number of months and one day you say hi isn't it great that we're great friends and never talk about the debt. You think that's right? It's exactly like that.

What about that? Debt. So trying to make up for some wrong that I did by just being nice. The Bible teaches you can't do that with sin.

That is a false teaching of many religions that you've done a lot of sins, no need to ask forgiveness, just do a lot of good things. It's a weighing balance, the good things outweigh the bad things. God will take you to heaven.

That is a lie. The same thing applies in our relationships. You've done one thing wrong.

You cannot rectify it by 10,000 good things. That wrong must be apologized for. You think all Christians believe that? I wish they did.

We'd have a better quality of life. We said we can't change the whole country, we can't change all the Christians in the world, we can't change all the Christians in Bangalore, we can't change all the Christians even in a small area, but at least a few, maybe a drop in an ocean, but we're going to make that one drop as pure as possible. So keep that in mind.

Matthew 6, 14 and 15. Okay, we'll go to the next verse. A promise.

Let's say it together. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation will also provide a way of escape so that you'll be able to endure it, which means overcome it. So we can look forward to the future and say for the next and till the end of my life.

Till the end of my life. Tomorrow, next week, next year, however long I live, I will never face even one trial or one temptation that is too strong for me to overcome. No trial that'll be too heavy for me, that'll make me collapse and grumble and complain.

Impossible. Every trial I'll be able to overcome and say, praise the Lord, God is on the throne. My sins are all forgiven, the devil's been defeated, Christ is coming back.

Hallelujah. That's what we'll be able to say in whatever situation. Even when you're sick or dying or imprisoned or persecuted or about to be beheaded, Jesus Christ is Lord.

I tell you, it's a wonderful life. There's nothing like the Christian faith on the face of the earth. There's absolutely nothing to equal it.

There's nothing like God's word, the fantastic promises, the fantastic commandments. I've been reading the Bible for 55 years. I get excited reading it even now.

I mean, when I read these verses, I say, wow, it's exciting. Does it excite you? You know, if God's word excites you, you'll be able to stir other people with it. Many preachers are not able to stir others because they themselves are not excited by God's word.

It's a profession for them. They have to get up and say something and preach something. It may never be for anybody who stands in this pulpit.

I pray that anybody who stands here will, even if he can't speak English properly, at least he'll be excited about God's word. That's the main thing. Okay, now a new verse for today.

This is a promise, sorry, a commandment. We had a promise last time. The commandment is, is that easy or difficult? In everything give thanks.

Give thanks is easy, but when you have the word everything, that's tough. But if the previous verse is true, that God will never allow me to be tested beyond my ability to be tried, then we can be absolutely sure we can give thanks for everything. And if the other verse we read earlier, that God causes everything to work for my good, if something's working for your good, can you give thanks for it or not? If your boss called you to the office and said, hey, I've just decided to double your salary, what are you going to do? Your thanks or not? That was something good.

You look at everything that God will cause everything to work for your good. I believe it. I believe it.

I'll tell you something, when you serve the Lord like I've tried to, I mean, I've been serving the Lord full time for nearly half a century, 50 years, and many people, I've been a target of the devil for years, and my family too, and many people have tried to do me harm, but nobody has succeeded in doing harm to me in all my life. Everything has worked for my good. I can testify to that at the age of 75, every single thing that's happened in my life, every evil thing that people try to do to me, worked for my good, and will continue to work for my good till Jesus comes.

I hope that'll be your testimony, and that as you look back over your past and see the evil things that people did to you, and see the good that God brought out of it, that gives you hope for the future. That should be our testimony, everybody. I'm not happy with just 10, 20 people here believing that.

Every single one of us, just like I wanted all my children to be disciples of Jesus, I want all of us to believe this, and to live like this. Let's say it together. In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you, in Christ Jesus, 1 Thessalonians 5, 18.

Say it again. In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you, in Christ Jesus, 1 Thessalonians 5, 18. There are many areas where we don't know God's will.

This is about the only verse in the Bible where it specifically says, this is God's will for you, in Christ Jesus. You know, you search the Bible, you may not find another verse like this where it says, this is God's will for you. I mean, everything in the Bible is God's will for us, but here's a particular thing that says, this is God's will for you, because some people say, that's impossible.

What do you mean give thanks and everything? This is God's will for you. So next time, you know, some people come to me and say, Brother Jack, can you please help me find God's will in this area? And I say, hang on, shall we start with doing God's will in the areas where He's already shown you what His will is, then move on to other areas? Number one, in everything, give thanks. This is God's will, there's no doubt about it.

So, even if I don't know God's will in 10,000 areas, there's one area I do know God's will. Sometimes when you're confused about something, Lord, I don't know whom to marry, which job to take, where shall I go in this particular situation, I don't know God's will, but Lord, I know one area where I know God's will, and I'll do that, in everything, give thanks. Why not act like that in future? Instead of hanging your head and saying, oh, I don't know, brother, what is God's will? Let's lift up our heads.

God is the lifter of our head. It's a wonderful verse in the Old Testament where it says, oh, Lord, you're the lifter of my head. I believe that.

We must always have our head lifted up. Okay. Thank God for these verses.

Let's just bow for a moment of silence and think about this verse, in everything, give thanks. What are you thinking about? In everything, give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Just think for a moment and see if there's any area right now that you can remember, any matter for which you're not giving thanks, but you've got a spirit of complaining.

Even if it's a difficult area, a problem, say, Lord, I want to give thanks. Thank you, Lord, we believe your promises are true. We want to live by your commandments and claim your promises.

In Jesus' name, Amen. OK? It's wonderful that we are going to scripture first every Sunday because there's nothing to beat God's word. Man's word can never equal God's word.

I hope you will learn to appreciate God's words more than my words. Many people write to me, saying, Brother Jank, your words are such a blessing. You see, I hope God's word is a greater blessing.

Never put a man's word above God's word. I never do it. I've been blessed by many godly men whom I've heard and many godly men whom I've read, but never do I put any of those writings above God's word.

They help me. And any brother who helped me to find God's word and understand it better, that's the one I appreciate. So today I wanted you to turn to Mark's gospel in chapter 9. Mark chapter 9. I want to speak to you a little bit about the kingdom of God.

I've spoken about it before, but I want to make it clear to everyone here, especially those who are new. It's an expression that comes many hundred times, many times anyway, in the scriptures. And here in Mark 9.1, Jesus said some amazing words to people who were standing there in front of him.

He said truly I say to you. Why does he say truly? Because he knew some people wouldn't believe it. Some of those who are standing here right now will not taste death, that means they will not die until they see the kingdom of God coming with power.

Now many Christians have tried to interpret that verse and say well the kingdom of God is still to come, Jesus hasn't come, so what does that verse mean? Maybe he's talking about spiritual death. You think all those people standing there were doing all that analysis? No. They were simple Jewish people and they heard Jesus say some of you standing here will not die until the kingdom of God comes with power.

If you were standing there, what would you believe? I'd say great, I'm not going to die. Maybe some here will die, some of the older people, but I won't die until I see the kingdom of God come. That's exactly the meaning.

That's how I would understand it and Jesus wasn't talking in riddles and parables. Some of you will not die until you see the kingdom of God come with power. I believe it.

I believe a number of people who were listening to Jesus at that time did not die until they saw the kingdom of God come with power and we know that none of them are living today. They all died long ago. So what did this kingdom of God coming with power mean? It does not refer to that day when Jesus comes and sets up his kingdom on earth and the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord and the kingdom of God will cover the whole earth.

It's not referring to that day. It must be something else. See, kingdom is a word which is in the first century.

Every country was a kingdom because every country had a king. Today, the kingdoms in the world are just a few. Most countries in the world don't have a king.

So the word today is government. We don't say the kingdom of India, the government of India. So it is the government of God.

When the Bible says seek the kingdom of God first. I used to think for years that that meant missionary work or preaching the gospel. But when I understood that kingdom today means government, that means I must have the government of God in my life.

That means I must let God govern my life. Kingdom of God is righteousness. That means when I work, when I am at home, I must let the principles of God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven run everything in my life.

If you go to work in the midst of so many unbelievers in your office or factory, you are under the government of God. You do things in a way. You don't fight or quarrel and stand on people's shoulders, push them down to get a promotion.

No, no, no. You don't do all that. You live by the principles of God's kingdom.

You are upright. You won't tell lies. You won't cheat.

You won't try to make money in wrong ways. You don't have any black money. Everything is white.

You are upright. You are clear about everything in your life. Because God is ruling and controlling you, not only outwardly, but even in your thoughts.

This is the government of God. When it says the government of God coming with power, and when I hear that word power, I am reminded of Acts 1. Power. In Acts 1, Jesus said, Acts 1 and verse 8. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come.

And earlier than that, after the resurrection, Acts 1 verse 3, He presented himself the life after His suffering on the cross, by many convincing proofs, and appeared to His disciples for 40 days. And what did He speak in those 40 days? The government of God. That was His subject.

40 days, telling them about the kingdom or the government of God. And then He said, now that I have told you for 40 days about the government of God, don't leave Jerusalem. Wait for what the Father has promised.

What is that? The power. Verse 8. That will come upon you. The kingdom of God coming with power.

So you see the connection. So the kingdom of God came with power onto this earth on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled those 120 waiting people. And the external manifestations of wind and fire were only a little indication of something that was happening in the hearts of these 120.

The government of God came upon them. All their differences and fighting with each other disappeared. They were like 120 pieces of iron, all separate pieces of iron.

and came out as one solid piece of iron. That is the church. And the fire of God melts our individual ambitions and desires and aims and makes us one.

And Christ is the head. It's interesting if you turn back in Matthew chapter 3, you know John the Baptist was the one who came as a forerunner for Christ. And God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way.

You know, when they asked him, Are you the Messiah? He said, No, no, no, no, I'm not the Messiah. Verse 3, Matthew 3, I am the one referred to in Isaiah the prophet who said, someone who is preaching, make ready the way of the Lord. Make his path straight.

I have come to prepare the way for someone greater than me who is coming, that is Jesus Christ. And if you accept me, I've just come to prepare the road for the Messiah to come into your lives. And Israel rejected him.

A lot of people like to listen to him. We read about Herod in Mark 6 and verse 20. Herod liked to listen to John the Baptist.

Herod enjoyed listening to him. The last part of Mark 6, 20. He enjoyed listening to John the Baptist.

He enjoyed listening to this fiery preacher who says turn from your sins, make the path straight, make all the crooked places straight and bring the mountains down and lift the valleys up, make the rough places

smooth and Herod said, wow, he's not like these boring Pharisees. It's good to listen to this guy. Did it change him? No.

Because two verses later, it says in verse 22, when Salome, the daughter of Herodias, came in a skimpy thin dress and danced seductively, she pleased Herod too. You see how Herod could listen to John the Baptist in the morning and watch this filthy dance in the evening and both he enjoyed it, just like people who come and listen to Zak Poonen in a meeting or in the TV or in the internet and then in the evening they're watching some filthy movie. Enjoy both.

It's happening. Is it happening to you? That you can enjoy this message and then you can enjoy some filthy thing on computers or television? You're like Herod. You may not know it.

I'm not excited when people say, Brother Zak, I just enjoy your messages. I remember Mark 620 and I also remember Mark 622. So I'm not excited because I say I want to know what he did after that.

I know what Herod did after that. But I'll give you another example of a man who enjoyed John the Baptist. Turn to John's Gospel chapter 1. John 1 and verse 35.

This is again John the Baptist. John was standing with two of his disciples and he was preaching. And he looked at Jesus as Jesus walked and said, Look there, the Lamb of God.

And the two disciples heard John the Baptist speak and they followed Jesus. You know, this is a wonderful verse for me. I don't know whether I'll live till Jesus comes.

I want to. Like all of you. But my times are in God's hands.

He has numbered my days. He wrote that in a book before I was born. So, I don't know.

But if the Lord calls me home before He comes. Now, I don't want any of you to get disturbed. I'm not sick or anything.

I'm just telling you what I believed for the last 50 years. If the Lord calls me home before He comes. This is what I want written on my tombstone.

They heard Him speak and they followed Jesus. What beautiful words. They heard Him speak and they did not follow Him.

They followed Jesus. That's John the Baptist. You don't have to be a preacher like me.

You talk to people, don't you? If it can be said about you. They heard her speak. They followed Jesus.

What a wonderful thing. Is there anything better than that? They never admired Him. They heard Him speak and they followed Jesus.

And one of them, we read his name, one of them who followed verse 40 was Andrew who became an apostle, Simon Peter's brother. So I see these contrasts. Herod heard John the Baptist speak, enjoyed it and went and watched Salome dance.

Andrew heard John the Baptist speak and enjoyed it and followed Jesus. And there are these two types of people in every congregation. They both enjoy the message.

They both enjoy hearing a man who is anointed, but the result is very different after the meeting is over, the rest of the day, the rest of the week, the rest of the year. I hope all of you will follow Andrew and not Herod. Not only he followed Jesus, he went and called his relatives.

He said, come and see. He called Peter. He wanted others to get the blessing.

I hope you will do that too. That is how CFC has grown through the years. One person heard a man of God speak and followed Jesus and he said, this is not enough for me.

I must get somebody else also. You know, that's how we have grown. We have not had these big evangelistic meetings in Bangalore.

We have never had it. No, never. It is not the way we grow.

We have grown by personal evangelism. One person telling another, hey, come and listen. That is how later on it says, Philip found Nathaniel.

You will read later on in the same chapter. That is continuing for generations. That is how we have grown.

What did John the Baptist preach? Turn back again to Matthew chapter 3. In Matthew chapter 3, he said, how did he prepare the way for Jesus? Matthew 3, verse 2. Repent. That was his first word. That is what all the prophets in the Old Testament preached.

Every prophet in the Old Testament, his fundamental message was repent. Turn back to God. But John added one more thing which nobody preached until then.

Right from Moses onward, nobody preached this second part. The kingdom of heaven is near. That nobody said.

So when John was saying, turn around for the kingdom of heaven has now come, what he was saying is, 1,500 years you Israelites from the time of Moses till now, you have heard the gospel to Israel, which is Deuteronomy 28. God will make you prosperous. God will defeat your enemies.

Enemies meaning not the lusts in our flesh but the Syrians and the Moabites and Ammonites and Egypt and all that. God will defeat your enemies and you will be the head of all the nations on the earth and you won't be the tail. This is all in Deuteronomy 28.

And you will be healthy, you won't be sick. It's all earthly blessings. Every blessing was earthly.

And if you disobey God, every curse was earthly. No mention of heaven or hell in the promises or the curses in the Old Testament. It was only earthly.

God had blessed them with every earthly blessing, with every material blessing in earthly places in Moses. We could say that. New Testament, Ephesians 1.3, God says, He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

The Old Testament, He blessed them with every material blessing, physical blessing in earthly places in Moses. For 1500 years, they had that and they really found that if they honored God, they became rich, they were healthy and whenever they honored God, their enemies were defeated. God himself would send angels to fight their enemies.

It was amazing. But not one word about heaven. Not one word about being an inner partaking of divine nature.

Nothing. But now John the Baptist said, turn from that preoccupation with earthly things. That is repentance today.

And that message is almost not preached in Christendom. Even where people speak about repent, it is repent from your smoking and drinking and gambling and worldly friends and cinemas and pornography and all that is good. But I want to say there are people here who have given up all those things, but you may be still preoccupied with earthly things.

So you may say if I don't think about earthly things, how will I live? God doesn't say you shouldn't think about it, but let the government of God control you as you do your earthly work. When Jesus was a carpenter, he wasn't reading the Bible or praying all the time on his knees. No.

If he had to make stools and benches, he had to concentrate to make sure it's all right. But the principles that governed his carpentry work were the principles of God's kingdom. I will not cheat anybody.

My aim is not to become the richest carpenter in Nazareth. No. My aim is to earn my living, to take care of my family.

I've got four younger brothers, two younger sisters, and a widowed mother at home. I have to work hard, concentrate on my work, try and get as many orders as possible. And if I meet some poor helpless widow, make a chair for her and don't charge her for it.

And if some little child comes into my carpentry shop and breaks something, don't get upset with the child, just pick up the child and say, it's okay, my child, don't worry. I can make that again. I love you.

That type of carpenter will never become the richest carpenter in Nazareth. But he'll be the most blessed carpenter. He'll be the greatest blessing to Nazareth than any other human being.

And I want to say to you, that is what God has called you to be. Where you live, to your relatives. It's a wonderful thing to have the principles of heaven governing our life.

We will live upright, we will not cheat, we will not be crooked. We've operated like that in this church for 40 years. People take advantage of us and they take their money from us, we can't do anything about it, but we don't cheat anybody.

Never. In 40 years, we have never cheated anyone. We have never cheated the government, we have never cheated human beings.

If people cheat us, let them do that, but we don't cheat anyone. That's our principle. It's our principle in our personal life.

I can say that before God today. I have not cheated anyone in my life. My unconverted days, I did and I restored it all, I gave it all back, but not now.

The principles of God's kingdom seek the government of God in every area of our life. Turn from this preoccupation with worldly things to become great and big and all, earn your living, but be a witness for Christ. That's our calling.

And that will be the happiest person, that will be the happiest family, that will be a really godly family. And that's what we are trying to raise in CFC. But John the Baptist, you know the devil hates that type of message.

And we read that Herod imprisoned him, Matthew 4 verse 12. Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody. You know, there are many things that God does, which I tell you honestly, I cannot understand.

Just like you experience things in your life that you can't understand. As soon as I open the gospel of Matthew, there are things I can't understand. And then I say, Lord, that's because I'm human.

My way of thinking is so human. God is God who sees the overall picture, sees the end from the beginning, sees 6,000 years of man's history, sees all the millions of people in the world, he thinks in a different way. Just like my little children, when they are small, 2-3 years old, they don't think like I think.

I see a broader picture, they see a small thing. The same way I see with God. I'm like a little baby.

God sees the whole picture. I'll give you one example. Why should John be taken into custody? A man who is preaching such a fiery message, can't God kill Herod and keep John preaching? That's what I do.

And God says, no. I'll let Herod live and let Herod kill John. That's crazy to me.

Doesn't it sound crazy to you? But it's not crazy. It's because I don't have the wisdom of God. You see how there are so there are certain things we cannot explain.

I'll give you another example. You know in Matthew chapter 2 it says the wise men went to, Herod told the wise men, when you go to Bethlehem and you find Jesus, come and tell me I also want to worship him. He wanted to kill him.

The wise men were warned by an angel, don't go back to Herod. And they disappeared and Herod was waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting for nearly a number of months anyway. And when he discovered that they duped him and there's some child born who is going to be a king, is going to replace me as king of the Jews, you know what he did? It says in Matthew chapter 2 that he sent, you know the story, he sent soldiers to kill all the children in Bethlehem that were below two years old.

Imagine a little town where every child below the age of two was killed. I said, Lord, why? What would I have done if I were there? I would have killed Herod. What would you have done? Tell me.

Would you have killed Herod or would you have allowed all these babies to be killed? I said, Lord, my ways are not your ways. I'm a stupid man. Your ways are far superior to my ways but I can't kill I can't understand it.

I'll tell you today, even today I can't understand why God did not kill Herod but all those little babies to die and all those mothers. I don't know how many hundreds of mothers crying and weeping but I say, Lord, your ways are perfect. I just say that.

This is just the beginning of Matthew. Two thousand years of church history. Why was James the apostle killed when he was thirty years old? Was it because there were hundreds of apostles? No.

There were only eleven and one of them was killed. I can't understand. A few days later, Peter, the angel comes and releases Peter.

Why didn't the angel come three days earlier and release James? I would have done it but God doesn't do it. God says, no, James' time is over. He's going to die.

I'm just giving you these examples, my brothers and sisters, because some things can happen in your life like that. And you may say, I wouldn't have done it like that. Agreed.

But if you have honestly tried to live in the will of God and trusting him and honoring him, there are many things that can happen in your life which you may not be able to understand. Maybe you have a sick child and you don't know why. Why has God given me? And so many others, even ungodly people, terrorists have healthy children.

Why a true disciple of Jesus should have a sick child? I don't know. There are a thousand things I don't know. Because my mind is like a little cup in the ocean of God's wisdom.

It doesn't fit into this cup. You know what I do? I humble myself and say, Lord, I don't know. Teach me your ways.

Teach me the principles of your government. I want to learn it. And if you're humble, God will teach you.

And I'll tell you, I've learned a lot more in these 55 years than I knew at the beginning. And if I remain humble, I will learn more in the next few years. I've learned a lot about God's ways.

But not everything still. I want to encourage you. Never grumble or complain.

Because you grumble and complain because you think your wisdom is superior to God's. It's not. If you prayed for a child and God took away that child in death, I don't know why he did it.

I can comfort you, but I can't give you an explanation. But I can say this. God's ways are not our ways.

But his ways are far better. As much better as heaven is above earth, as much higher as heaven is above earth. That is our confession of faith.

Think of Christians who were tortured in prisons for so many years. Why didn't God release them? Even in this last hundred years? Even right now, in places like China, and probably a day coming in India, why should that man who sacrificed his job and gone to North India to preach the gospel, why should he be killed by anti-Christian people? Now, in the last one year, why should his house be burned? Why should his children be made fatherless when he went there sacrificing a good job he had to preach the gospel out there? Why does God allow that? I say, Lord, I don't know. But I still say, your ways are best.

That I will never change. I will have no complaints. Now, I want to say this, my brothers and sisters, if you ever have a doubt about that, you're going to have serious problems in the days to come in following Jesus because you'll be putting your puny little mind against the almighty wisdom of God and thinking you know more.

That is the height of stupidity. That's what I'm trying to say, the government of God, the primary requirement is humility. Turn with me to, I was talking about Matthew 4, when Jesus saw that Herod locked up John, what did Jesus do? It says here in verse 23, Jesus began to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of God's government over our life. The gospel of humble submission to God's wisdom even if I can't understand anything about it.

That's the government of God. I can't understand your wisdom, Lord, but I submit to it. Jesus preached it because John the Baptist was tied down, Jesus preached it.

When Jesus rose up from the dead as we saw, again he was preaching about God's kingdom and when Jesus went up to heaven, he preached God's kingdom. See Acts of the Apostles? See Acts of the Apostles in chapter, let's go to the last chapter, Acts 28. How does the gospel of Acts of the Apostles end? Acts 28.

Verse 30, Paul lived two years in his own rented house, welcomed all who came to him, and what did he preach? The kingdom of God. The government of God. That's what John the Baptist preached, that's what Jesus preached, and he went away, the apostles preached it, and the end of the Acts of the Apostles, Acts 28, they continued preaching God's kingdom, and we are now in a long chapter called Acts 29, which has been going on for 2,000 years.

What should we be preaching? The government of God in every area of our life. Let God govern you the way you live, the way you speak, the way you behave. That is the government of God in every area of our life.

And, yes, there will be persecution. You read about Acts chapter 14. In Acts chapter 14, he said, Paul said, how to strengthen the souls of the disciples? This is it by just giving comforting promises.

The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid what man can do to me. More than that, Acts 14, 22, Paul strengthened the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, even if you have to die for it, saying, how do you enter the kingdom of God? Through many tribulations, we will enter the kingdom of God.

So when you have tribulation, you know, you must see a sign post there saying, this is the way to the kingdom of God. Don't run away from there in some other direction. Through many tribulations, and this is the one you already faced is not the last one.

Encourage the souls. I mean, are you encouraged if I tell you you're going to have many tribulations in this year? Brother Zach, please don't preach such messages. I don't like to hear it.

But here it says, they strengthen the souls of the disciples. I want to tell you reality, man. Supposing I send my child to school and say, hey, listen, school's going to be very easy.

I know you've got to study calculus and physics and all. That's easy, man. Relax.

You don't have to study so much. It's all easy. You think he's going to pass? No.

I remember how my children used to sit up till midnight because it's just so tough. So I don't, we don't tell children, it's all going to be easy, man, just a cakewalk, just walk through it. No.

It's tough. But we go through tough courses to get a good education. This is what Paul is saying.

Isn't that an encouragement? Through many tribulations you'll get the kingdom of God. Oh, is that what I'm going to get? Wonderful. We enter God's kingdom where God's rule covers my life and I'm a blessing to

other people.

I'm willing to face any tribulation for that. You must be willing. We must prepare the church for that.

And how do we know that we are going in the right direction? I'll give you one guideline and finish with this. Romans 14, 17. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.

In fact, it's not anything earthly. It's not marrying and giving in marriage, planting and building, all these things that Jesus said people will do in the last days. Eat and drink and marry and give in marriage and plant and build and all that.

No, the kingdom of God is not all that. We do all that because we live on this earth. But the kingdom of God is righteousness.

And let me explain righteousness. Righteousness is a big word. But in very simple terms, it means to love God with all your heart and to love others as you love yourself.

That is righteousness. Sometimes we think righteousness is paying the taxes and standing up for what is right. That's all there.

But primarily, in very simple terms, to love Jesus more than anything on earth. That's righteousness. And to love others, to treat them exactly like you want to be treated.

Treat the brothers and sisters here the way you want to be treated. Do you want people to gossip about you behind your back? No, then don't gossip about them. Treat the servant in your home, the servant that one lowers in society the way you like to be treated by your boss in your place of work.

How do you want your boss to treat you? Treat your poor servant at home the same way. Do you like your boss to give you a bonus once in a while, at least once a year? Ever thought of not being so legalistic with your servant and doing something good? Unexpected. Because you're a Christian.

Because you follow Jesus. I want to tell you, God's been very good to me. God will treat you like you treat other people.

You treat other people well, God will treat you well. You treat other people's children well, God will bless your children. It's like that.

It's a law. We reap what we sow. So, the kingdom of God is righteousness.

I want to live loving Jesus with all my heart. I want to treat everybody in the world exactly like I want to be treated myself. I don't want to be legalistic and strict.

I want to be strict for hygiene. We don't want rats and cockroaches running around our house. We want to be clean.

Same way, spiritually, I want to be clean, but not legalistic. I want to be good. It's easy to fellowship with a good man.

It's very difficult to fellowship with a legalistic man who goes exactly according to the rules. We follow the rules, but with goodness. And, how do I know that I'm going the right way? That I'm not fooling myself.

It says here, by peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's our assurance. You know, I can say I love Jesus with all my heart.

Really? You can say I treat everybody like I want to be treated, but if it is true, if it is true, you will always have joy in your heart. And you'll always have peace in your heart. You'll not be tense and anxious and worried and complaining.

Then you're not following righteousness. The righteousness from the Holy Spirit always brings peace and joy. In the Old Testament, they had just righteousness.

The word righteousness comes many times in the Old Testament. But it was never coupled with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is the wonderful thing about New Covenant righteousness.

The Kingdom of God, that which John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus to bring, which we experience today, is loving Jesus with all our heart, treating others the way I want to be treated myself. And the proof of it is I have 24 hours peace in my heart. No conscience bothering me about this, that or the other when I go to bed at night.

Always joy. Like a spring bubbling up, not just when I sing songs about joy, but all the time. You say that's impossible in this earth.

OK, according to your faith, be it unto you, it will be impossible for you. But I don't believe it will be impossible for me because I believe God's word says. And do you know the Bible says that, I must show you this verse as well, what Jesus said about the last days in Matthew 24.

Before Jesus comes, Matthew 24. The disciples asked him, Lord, what will be the sign of the end? What will be the sign of your coming? In Matthew 24, verse 3, Jesus said, here's the answer, among many things, verse 14, Matthew 24, 14, this gospel of the kingdom of God will be preached in the whole world as a testimony, and then the end will come. I believe God has raised up CFC, among other churches, to preach this gospel of the kingdom, of righteousness, not of money making and health, but of righteousness, of loving Jesus with all our heart.

And treating others the way we want to be treated, which results in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This good news will be preached in all the nations, it's being preached in India. Thank God for it.

And then, the end will come. We are doing a tremendous work for God, and you can do it, brother, sister. If you can't preach yourself, you can give somebody a book, that you can pick up from the bookstore, or a CD, or a DVD, or direct him to one of our CFC videos.

There are many ways in which we can spread the kingdom of God, if we use our mind a little bit. Like businessmen think, how can I open another store somewhere? Think, how can I spread this? There are ways in which I can. There's a good friend of mine, I'm a bit embarrassed to talk to him, but I can give him a book, I can give him a CD, a DVD, this gospel of the kingdom has to be preached.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Please think about what we have heard, dear brothers and sisters, and think particularly about any specific area that God spoke to you today. Maybe one particular thing.

Say, Lord, I want to obey you there, and I believe that you'll give me the power to obey you. According to your faith, be it unto you. Heavenly Father, make these truths real for every single one of us.

Time is near, your coming is near. We want to live for the things of eternity. Help us, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/uZZapLTid9o.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/principles-of-gods-kingdom/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net