

Pursue Peace With All People

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of pursuing peace with all men and sanctification, highlighting the dangers of neglecting one's spiritual birthright for temporary earthly gains, drawing lessons from the stories of Esau and Gehazi. It calls for a deep repentance and a commitment to forgive, pursue holiness, and avoid bitterness in order to experience God's grace and blessings.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:14, Hebrews 12:16, Luke 2:14, Hebrews 12:15, Hebrews 12:17, 1 Peter 3:11, Romans 12:17, Genesis 25:29, 2 Timothy 4:14

Topics: "Pursuing Peace", "Spiritual Birthright"

Description

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Transcript

I want to turn to Hebrews and chapter 12. Hebrews has got some very strong exhortations. And that's the reason why many Christians don't like the book.

But it's one of the most important books of the New Testament. In my series of 70 hours through the Bible, I took four hours out of 70 for Hebrews. That's a little disproportionate compared to the number of books or even compared to the number of pages.

But, you know, I felt that was the burden the Lord laid on my heart. And particularly since I felt my calling was to emphasize what other Christians were not emphasizing, I felt that burden for Hebrews. And we read here in, it's written to, first of all, let me tell you that it's written to God-fearing believers.

See this in chapter 3, verse 1. Hebrews 3, verse 1. You know, to whom this letter is written. There are people who don't know the Bible, who try to teach others, who say the book of Hebrews is not for believers. In fact, there was somebody from here who went to some other places in our CFC churches and told young people Hebrews is not for believers.

Can you imagine that someone in CFC, an older person, could say such a crazy, stupid thing as to say that the book of Hebrews is not for believers? That is blasphemy. It's like canceling the scripture. It says if you remove something from this book, the last words in the Bible in Revelation are if you remove

something from this book, God will remove your portion from the tree of life.

But obviously that person was not scared of saying that. Hebrews chapter 3, for whom is it written? Chapter 3, verse 1. Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, for whom Jesus is the apostle and high priest of our confession. Very clear to whom it is written.

And to such people it is written in chapter 2, verse 3. How will you escape if you neglect such a great salvation? He's not talking about rejecting it. Holy brethren in Christ do not reject this great salvation, but they can neglect it. Do you know the difference between rejecting your child and neglecting your child? There are many parents who do not reject their children.

They don't send them out of the house, but they neglect them. That means you don't feed them, you don't care for them, you don't let them get the proper education, you don't feed them, clothe them. That's neglecting.

So born again believers don't reject the salvation, but they can neglect it. They can neglect the Bible. I don't think any of you reject the Bible, but it's quite likely that some of you neglect it.

And they don't reject the salvation. They want to go to heaven, but they neglect it. The salvation which is meant to save us from our sins here on earth.

So it is to such brethren, he says in chapter 3 verse 12, Brethren, please take care that in you, in you, you don't have an evil unbelieving heart that makes you fall away from the living God. Can a holy brother who's got Jesus as a high priest develop an evil unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God? Yes. Definitely.

I've seen it happen. I've seen it happen to people who are in CFC, young people who were born and brought up here. They've neglected, rejected and developed an arrogance and a pride which has developed an evil unbelieving heart that makes them fall away from the living God.

The proof that they have fallen away from the living God is they become so arrogant and proud. You can't live with the living God and be an arrogant, proud person. That's impossible.

It's those who don't dwell with God who become arrogant and proud. We've seen young people like that. They don't even realize they've fallen away from the living God.

So to save us from that, it says in verse 13, but encourage one another every day as long as it is called today. Because one of these days it will no longer be called today. There will be no longer today.

It will be yesterday. Because the Lord has come. But as long as it is called today, encourage one another.

Because, verse 14, we become partakers of Christ, not because we just accepted the Lord once, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end. I mean, how many times does the Holy Spirit have to emphasize something? And so, today if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart. And then he takes the example of those who came out of Egypt led by Moses, verse 16.

You know that when they came out of Egypt, they were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb they put on the door. Not everybody did it. I think there were some Israelites who said, what rubbish, put the Lamb's blood on the door as if that's going to protect.

And they neglected it, and their eldest son died, even though they were Israelites. But some Egyptians, Egyptians, put the blood outside the door and they escaped. But the Israelites who did not believe, their eldest son died.

But they came out of Egypt, because they put the blood on the door, and they were baptized in the Red Sea, and came out, and the cloud came upon them, picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were like today's saved people, saved, baptized, and baptized in the Holy Spirit. But, in spite of that, verse 17, God was angry with them for 40 years.

That's a warning for us. And God said, you will never enter into my rest, verse 18, even though he saved them from Egypt. They were not able to enter, in verse 19, because of their unbelief.

So what? Therefore, chapter 4, verse 1, let us fear, lest we also have a promise of entering into his rest, and you don't reach there. It's not enough to have the good news preached to us, verse 2, they also heard it, but they were not united in faith with those who heard. But if we believe and hold on to our faith, we will enter into rest.

So we want to just skip over to chapter 12. Chapter 12, verse 14. Pursue peace with all men, and sanctification, that is holiness, that means progressively getting holier and holier.

Pursue it, without which no one will see the Lord. We don't get sanctified in a moment. We are forgiven in a moment.

Forgiveness is not a process. When God says, I have forgiven your sins, that's it, it's forgiven. When God says, I will not remember your past sins anymore, that's it.

But sanctification, which is becoming like Christ, that's a process, it's like climbing a mountain, it's like running a race. It says here, pursue that sanctification, without which nobody will see the Lord, whoever you are. You will not see the Lord, if you don't pursue sanctification.

Forget about going to heaven, you won't even see the Lord. And if you don't pursue peace with all men, very important. That means, it doesn't mean that we have to be in peace with everybody, we have to pursue it.

But we are told in Romans chapter 12, a comforting verse, so that we don't get condemned. Romans 12, verse 17 and 18. Romans 12, verse 17 and 18.

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Never means never. If somebody shouts at you, don't shout back at him.

If somebody slaps you, don't slap him back. If somebody throws garbage into your compound, don't throw garbage into his compound. Don't pay back evil for evil to anyone.

Believer, unbeliever, if they take you to court, you don't take them to court. If they spread false stories about you or your children, please don't spread false stories about them or their children. Leave it to God.

I know when people have trouble, you know I've been serving the Lord more than 50 years now, so you know I'm a target of Satan. That doesn't disturb me. It's an honor to be a target of Satan.

But God has often told me, don't deal with that person. Leave him alone. I'll deal with him.

You want to deal with him or let me deal with him? I say, no Lord, you deal with him. You know when there was a man called Alexander the Coppersmith who troubled Paul, Paul said, the Lord will deal with him. I will not deal with him.

Because it says here, so don't pay back evil for evil. Respect what is right. And then it says, if possible, verse 18, do you know that this is almost the only command in the New Testament, the only command in the New Testament, which begins with the words, if possible.

You never read any other command like that. If possible, don't get angry. If possible, don't lust after women.

If possible, speak the truth. Never, never, never, because those things you can do. You can overcome anger.

You can overcome dirty thoughts. You can overcome telling lies. But when it comes to peace with all men, it says, if possible, because it depends on the other party as well.

That's why. All those other things like anger and dirty thoughts and telling lies and all that depends entirely on you. It's got nothing to do with another person.

Or most sins got only to do with me, my attitude. But peace with all men depends on, is he willing to have peace with me? That's why it says, if possible, as much as it depends on you. That means from your side, you always want peace with everybody.

But if that guy does not want peace, you can't do anything about it. You're not going to fight with him, but if he wants to fight with you, what do you do? So, sometimes the best way to pursue peace with all men is by never meeting them. Never visiting their home.

I give that advice to people. I say, don't visit that home, because the Bible says, pursue peace with all men. Some people think, pursue peace with all men, means I must go and visit that person and try and build fellowship with him.

No, no, no, no. The Pharisees who called Jesus Prince of Devils, Jesus didn't go visiting their home and saying, hey, let me explain to you, I'm not a Prince of Devils. He couldn't care less what they thought.

He forgave them. But he warned them, be careful what you speak. You have to give an account in the day of judgment.

He was very faithful there. But from his side, he pursued peace. And one of the classic examples of that to me is, it always speaks to my heart, when those evil people came to catch Jesus, and I think it was the high priest's servant, Malchus.

The high priest was furious with Jesus, and his servant must have been mad at Jesus, because he was a servant of the high priest. And they go to kill Jesus, they go to capture him. And when Peter takes a sword and swipes off that high priest's servant's ear, look at Jesus' attitude.

He healed it. He picked it up from the ground and attached it back. I don't think that Malchus served that high priest anymore after that.

He said, you can't ask me to kill a man like this. I have a feeling I'll see Malchus in heaven, and he'll thank Peter and say, because you cut off my ear earlier, I'm here. Thank you.

You know, the good, the evil that other people do. What spoke to me is the attitude of Jesus. Put your sword back, Peter.

This is a cup which my father has given me to drink. Malchus is only bringing it. He's the postman.

Don't get angry with the postman. It's a cup from my heavenly father. I want to drink it.

Jesus' attitude was, if other people are not at peace with me, they come to capture me, kill me, I'm going to be at peace with them. I'm going to do good to them. I'm going to do good to those who hate me.

I'm going to pray for those who persecute me. I'm going to bless those who curse me. And I praise God for the opportunities I've had in my life to do that.

How can you obey those verses if nobody curses you? Then how will you bless those who curse you? Thank God for those who curse you. You get a chance to obey God's word. Thank God for those who spitefully use you, because you get a chance to pray for them.

Thank God for enemies, because you get a chance to obey the word which says, love your enemies. So don't say, I have so many problems. This person troubling me, that person troubling me.

Brothers, sisters, you got a chance to obey God's word. As much it lies in you, be at peace with all men. And never, verse 19, never, never, never, just like it says in verse 17, never pay back evil, never take your own revenge.

Revenge must never be found in a believer. You did this to me, I'm going to teach you a lesson. That's for unbelievers.

The children of the devil can do that, but we will never say that and we will never talk like that. We won't have that attitude. As long as you live in the world, if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are going to face a lot of problems from others, but we have a tremendous comfort, which we all know from 1 Corinthians 10, 13, that God is in control of everything.

He will not allow anything to come to me, which is beyond my ability to bear. And till my hour comes, like in Jesus' case, I cannot die. Jesus died only when his hour came.

It can't happen if you are a wholehearted disciple of Jesus. You can't die before your hour comes. No way.

And so, coupled with Romans 8, 28, which comes earlier in this book, all things work together for good, then why should I take revenge? That person has done evil to me, God is going to make it work for my good. It's like getting a promotion in my job. I'm not angry with somebody who gives me a promotion in my job.

But that's what happens. If you can see the tremendous power of your Heavenly Father, that's why I say all sin comes from unbelief. It's when we don't believe that God is in control, that we try to fight back, and we can't be at peace with people from our side.

Never take your own revenge. That doesn't mean nothing will happen. God will deal with him, but you don't know how to deal with him.

Vengeance is mine. God does not say, I might repay him. No.

I believe what scripture says. Did that guy hurt you? Don't take revenge. Don't wish evil for him.

Wish the best for him. Pray for him. Bless him.

But if he does not repent, God says, one day I will pay him back for what he did to you. And you cannot hold God's hand and say, no, no, no, don't do that. He will repay.

That's for sure. And I don't try to be more spiritual than the Holy Spirit and say, God, don't repay him. See what the Apostle Paul, who was such a godly man, said in 2 Timothy 4 verse 14.

There was a person, I don't know which town he was in, 2 Timothy 4 verse 14. I don't know whether he was a Jew or a backslidden Christian. His name was Alexander.

2 Timothy 4 verse 14. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. Now Paul was a man who had been beaten, hammered, imprisoned.

So it was not something small. Not once. He did me much harm.

I'm sure Paul forgave him. He forgave him completely from his heart. 100%.

But, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul says, one day the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. But you say, hey Paul, aren't you supposed to forgive him? Oh yeah, I've forgiven him. Aren't you supposed not to take revenge? No, I'm not going to take revenge.

But why do you say the Lord will repay him? Because the Lord will repay him. That's a fact. That has got nothing to do with my forgiving him.

Jesus forgave people when he was hanging on the cross. Father forgave them. They were forgiven.

But the Lord is still going to repay those people who killed Jesus. One day when he comes back, they'll all be punished. They won't go to heaven just because Jesus forgave them.

Because Jesus, as I've often said, forgave only the horizontal part. The human part. You hurt me, I forgive you.

But you also hurt God. If you want him to forgive you, you better repent. Such sins have got two dimensions.

So, coming to Hebrews 12. It says, pursue peace with all men, as much as it lies in you, and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord. But I want to emphasize this.

Basically, we must have a reputation, brothers and sisters, that we are men and women of peace. We don't seek to fight with anybody. We will not fight with auto rickshaw drivers.

If they... I mean, I'm not saying you should pay them more than what is deserved, but don't get into a fight, or with porters in the railway stations. You see all the arguments, or somebody who collides with us on the

road. We're not going to go for a fight.

There's a more peaceful way of doing all these things. We pursue peace, and holiness, without which nobody will see the Lord. I mean, my great passion is to see Jesus.

One day. And it says here, if you want to see Jesus, you better pursue peace with all men. And sanctification.

If somebody doesn't forgive you, that's his business. But you make sure your heart is open to him. And again, let me emphasize.

It does not mean that you have to visit them. It does not mean that you have to go and have fellowship with them. Because forgiveness is different from fellowship.

Jesus forgave everybody. He had fellowship with very few. Jesus had fellowship with very few people on the earth.

But he forgave everybody on the face of the earth. That's my attitude. I also have fellowship with very few people, really.

Those who are wholehearted disciples of Jesus. But forgiveness, I've forgiven everybody. To the best of my knowledge, I can stand before God and say my conscience is clear.

I have nothing in my heart. I do not wish any evil to anyone who has ever done me any type of harm in all my life. My conscience, I'll keep it clear till Jesus comes.

Not because I want to see the Lord. Because it's the right thing to do. Supposing it was written, well, even if you don't have peace with all men, you'll still see the Lord.

I say, I still want to have peace with all men. I'm not doing it because I want to see the Lord. I'm doing it because that is the nature of God He has put inside me.

To forgive people. And I'll tell you this. I don't forgive people so that God will forgive me.

No, no, no. I want God to forgive me because I'm such a wretched sinner. I've grieved the Lord so much in my life.

And because Jesus shed his blood for me, I ask the Lord to forgive me. It's got nothing to do with forgiving others. That is a separate thing.

I will forgive others. But it is a condition. The Lord has said, if you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you.

So, this is very important. And then in this connection it says, verse 15, Make sure that no one comes short of the grace of God. There are many Christians who say this is not for believers.

Foolish deceivers. Deceivers. Who say this is not for believers.

And who is it for? Holy Brethren, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our Confession, Jesus Christ. I'm telling you, he says, don't come short of the grace of God. Can a believer come short of the grace of God? Yes.

Otherwise, what is the need of such an exhortation? See that no root of bitterness spring up. Can a root of bitterness come up in your heart? You tell me. You tell me from your past experience.

Hasn't bitterness come up in your heart even after being born again? Against different people? Can you say it never came? Who can say it never came? And make sure, when you get rid of that bitterness which you had some time ago against somebody, maybe your mother-in-law, or neighbor, or your family member who cheated you of the property, or somebody who did some evil to you, or somebody who took you to court, or something like that. When you've got rid of the bitterness, you say, okay, I forgive him. Make sure it says, there's no root of it still lying there inside your heart.

Ask God to show you if there's a root. I remember, I asked the Lord to show me once. And I found there was a root.

I had forgiven somebody. I had completely forgiven someone. And I said to the Lord, Lord, I've forgiven.

But one day when I heard that something bad happened to him, I was happy. I really was happy. I said, ah, God is judging him.

And the Lord said, you did not forgive him from your heart. I said, thank you, Lord. I forgive him from my heart.

You're dealing with him as a separate matter. I'm not God. God's judgment is another thing.

God resists the proud, and he'll resist the proud when they're on earth. He'll resist the proud in eternity also. But my business is to forgive, and forgive from the heart.

And so now I've discovered that whenever I forgive someone, I must also sincerely be able to say, Lord, I wish good for that person. I really want good to happen to that person. I don't wish any evil for that person.

You've heard me say that before. I know. But has it worked in your life? You say, oh, Brother Zak, I've heard that before.

I know. You'll hear it from me again a hundred times till you come to that life where it will never come up in your heart, wishing evil for another person, but that you'll wish good. Did you learn multiplication and division just with one lesson your teacher taught you? No.

Did you understand calculus with one lesson? We don't understand anything with one lesson. So we need to hear it again and again. Don't come short of the grace of God.

That no bitterness spring up there. You're forgiven outside. The root is still there.

And that will cause a lot of trouble to you. And one day you will mention something to someone and others are defiled. And you mention something to another person and it says, like that many are defiled.

I pray that we will not have brothers and sisters like that in CFC who defile others with some root of bitterness that has not been pulled out and thrown away. What sort of forgiveness do you want God to give you? Do you want Him to say to you, I will not remember your sins and iniquities. Say that about other people also.

Lord, I don't have control over my memory. There are a lot of things stored in my memory. I can't take it out.

So you will naturally remember in that sense things that happened. God also remembers your sin and mine. But when He says, I will not remember, it doesn't mean He has forgotten.

There is a lot of difference between saying, I have forgotten all your sins. God doesn't say that. Hebrews 8.12 says, I will not remember.

Read the Bible exactly. God does not say, I have forgotten your sins. He has not forgotten.

Because Jesus told a story of a king who forgave a slave and the slave went out and didn't forgive somebody else. The king called the slave back and said, I have not forgotten what you owe me paid back. He unforgave the forgiveness he gave.

He cancelled it. God can cancel a forgiveness. How does He do that? Because He remembers the sin.

But Hebrews 8.12 says, I will not remember. Which means I choose not to remember your sins. It's a choice God makes.

And that's all I have to do. If you ask me, I do remember the evil things that other people have done to me. But I choose not to remember when it comes up to me.

I say, I'm not going to remember it. I'm not going to remember. I choose, I exercise my will.

As you heard me often say, I live in my will. I don't live in my mind or my emotions. My emotions can fool me.

My mind also I cannot control. But my will, I choose to forgive. I choose not to remember.

When it comes to my mind, I say, No, I don't want to remember that. It may come to my mind a hundred times in the next few years. I choose not to remember.

After some time it will slowly stop coming. But it may come once in a while. I choose not to remember.

So that way I ensure there's no root of bitterness in our heart. Very, very important. Because you can defile many people.

You defile yourself, and you defile a lot of others. One of the first people you will defile is your husband or your wife. With that root of bitterness against somebody, family member or whatever it is.

Be very careful my brothers. See how that sentence begins. Don't come short of the grace of God.

By a root of bitterness remaining in your heart. It doesn't matter what evil other people do to you. I'll tell you what helps me in this battle.

It's not a battle anymore. Initially when you fight against it, it is a battle. But once you fight it, the giant is down.

It's no longer a battle. You cut off his head. But I'll tell you what helped me was to remember what a lot of evil I did against God.

What a lot of evil I did in my unconverted days. And even after I got converted the sins I committed against my Heavenly Father and He doesn't hold anything against me. He doesn't look at me and say yeah, I know, you're the guy who did all this 25 years ago or 50 years ago.

Not even, I know what you said yesterday. No. It's forgiven.

I praise God that I have a father like that. I want to be like that to other people. I want to treat them the way God has treated me.

He says, forgive others the way God has forgiven you. It's very important. You know, when Jesus was born, the angels came singing peace on earth and goodwill towards all men with whom God is pleased.

There are certain people on earth with whom God is pleased. That's what it says in Luke chapter 2. Peace on earth and goodwill towards all men with whom He is pleased. It's a little different in different translations but that's what it says.

And I say, here I am a representative of this God. The song the angels sang must be true in my life. I want to have peace with all men and goodwill towards people.

God knows who pleases Him and who doesn't. That's not my business. I'm not God.

My job is to have goodwill towards all people and to promote peace and before it comes on the earth it must be seen in our church. In this church we must have peace and goodwill towards everyone. And if that is not true in your heart today I'm commanding you in Jesus' name to repent.

Yes, I'm commanding you in Jesus' name as a servant of the Lord repent. If you don't want to have goodwill towards everyone in this church. Forget about the rest of the world.

Let's start with this church. Goodwill and peace. Peace to all and goodwill.

You know this word pursue is a word in the original which the picture I get in my mind is you want to catch that last bus to your home and it's already left the bus stop. How will you run after it? How will you run after that bus? It's moving. You're not going to lazily walk towards it.

You'll run because it's the last bus to your home. Pursue peace like that. Are you seeking to pursue peace like that? In your heart I mean.

Don't worry about visiting the other person you never have to visit that person but make sure in your heart I say Lord I'm going to run after peace and not wait for it to come. That bus is not going to stop. If I don't run after it I won't get it.

I want to pursue peace with all men. That's a word that comes even in other pieces of scripture and 1 Peter also it says to pursue that type of peace because that's the type of peace we need. And then it gives us the example of Esau.

Verse 16 that there should be no godless person like Esau. See when you think of Esau Esau came from a very God fearing family. His father was Isaac.

His grandfather was Abraham. Abraham's grandson. What an inheritance.

Some of you children growing up in this church what an inheritance you have with a God fearing father. And what an inheritance all of you have with God fearing leadership, elders. But Esau became godless and immoral and he gave up his spiritual birthright just for some temporary gain.

There are people who do that. Oh I can make a little money here. I know it's a little unrighteous.

But everybody does it. But then everybody is going to hell. Do you want to go there? So don't use the word everybody does it.

You can't say that to God in the final day of judgment. Lord everybody did it. God will say I'll send you where everybody is gone.

So never use that expression. Everybody is doing it. In the office everybody is doing it.

Let them do it. Where are they headed? Let there be no immoral or godless person who sold his spiritual birthright for some temporary earthly gain. The birthright was future.

Many years in the future. It was spiritual, invisible. This food that was offered to him was now.

It satisfied his body. So many people lose their spiritual birthright for a little bit of pleasure. How long do you think Esau enjoyed himself by eating that soup which Jacob made? Maybe he enjoyed it for one hour and relished the taste of it for some time.

Then it was over. I mean by the next morning there was nothing there. There was no enjoyment of the soup he drank last night or ate last night.

It was over. And that little bit of indulgence you have in some sin, how long are you going to enjoy it? For a little while. By the morning it's gone.

And yet, what have you sacrificed? You've given up your birthright for that little earthly sensual pleasure. Be careful brothers and sisters. Sometimes it can be pornography.

Sometimes it can be just I want to vent my anger against this person. Sometimes it can be just stealing a little, taking a little extra money which you don't deserve. It's a little pleasure for a temporary time.

If you have a few thousand rupees extra in your bank account which you did not righteously earn, okay, you can buy a few things with it which you could not afford. But imagine the curse that you bring to yourself and your children. You guys should read 2 Kings 5. 2 Kings 5 how Gehazi ran after Naaman, told a lie, got some money, got some nice clothes, and Elisha told him, is this the time to go and get money like this? I often think of that word of Elisha which many Christians need to hear.

Is this the time to get money unrighteously like this? The leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and to your children. Poor Gehazi, he went out as a leper. Ten years later his little boy says, Dad, what's this patch on my hand? Somebody told me it's leprosy.

How did I get it? What can the father tell him? Son, you got it because of me. Don't let that happen to your children. The seed of the righteous will be blessed.

The righteous man is blessed that his children and grandchildren will never look for a job. You don't have to worry. If you honor God, He'll honor you.

Believe me, He'll honor your children as well. Honor God. Don't be like Esau who sold his birthright for a single meal.

Because you know verse 17, afterwards, when he wanted it, when he realized one day, years later, boy, what did I do that day? Foolish man that I was, for a temporary pleasure, for a little while, one hour, I enjoyed something and I've lost something eternally. Always remember Esau who sold his entire birthright for a single meal. You know, we ask the question, why did God choose Jacob? I'll tell you, because he saw the future.

God has got no partiality. All are the same. But when he sees the future and he knows the choices different people are making, he chooses us.

Why did he choose me or you? Because he saw the future. He saw one day you were going to choose him. And so please remember this, not because we have weaknesses.

Jacob had many weaknesses till God chose him. But Esau made a crucial choice. I would rather have this temporary earthly blessing, even if it means I lose my eternal birthright.

Ah, forget it. Or he thought it will come to me at that time. It won't.

A lot of Christians like that, who play the fool with sin now, and say, no, no, no, I can always be forgiven. Let me tell you something. Every time you sin, you're making yourself a little weaker against that particular sin.

And you keep on, keep on, keep on, keep on like that. You're going into dangerous territory. But if you battle it, and battle it, and battle it, and battle it, that's how we become strong.

You may slip up and fall. Get up and battle it, and battle it. Never give up.

Yeah, I feel like, I feel so hungry now. I want this meal. If Esau had said, no, I've got to deny myself.

It's alright if I don't eat. It doesn't matter if I fast from this. But I'm not going to lose my birthright.

He didn't have that attitude. And I'm sorry to say, many Christians don't have that attitude. So, it's that connection, it says in verse 15, don't come short of the grace of God.

Don't take advantage of God's goodness, like Esau did. Because afterwards, when he wanted the blessing, he could not get it. And he cried, verse 17, and he repented.

But it was too late. Too late. We are called to pursue peace, and good will towards all.

Let's build a church like that, where in our personal life, we never sell the birthright for any temporary pleasure. And in our relationship with others, that is sanctification. Pursue sanctification.

That means I will never sell my heavenly birthright for any earthly gain or temporary pleasure. And that's why I need the power of the Holy Spirit. I can't do this.

Because the pull of the world is so strong, I want to fight the devil in my flesh. Lord, I need the power of the Holy Spirit. I want the weapons you can give me.

And at the same time, I want to pursue peace with all men, whether they have peace with me or not. I'm going to pursue peace and forgive everyone and pray for those who spitefully use me or persecute me. Love those who are my enemies and bless those who curse me.

I tell you, you will have an abundant entrance into God's kingdom. And before you enter God's kingdom, God will be able to use you as a blessing to multitudes of people on this earth. Let's pursue that way.

And build this church as a strong witness to the glory of Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are such forgetful people.

We forget how much you have been merciful to us. Roll back the curtain of memory now and then. We are human and humans forget.

Roll back the curtain of memory and show me where you picked me up from. Where you picked us up from. What we could have been today.

And because you picked us up, we did not end up like that. Have mercy on us. And help us to be merciful to others.

Help us from our side to pursue peace with all. To make sure that by your grace we will never come short of your grace. Give us a great thirst to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day.

To walk the way Jesus walked who always said I will not do what pleases myself. I will only do what pleases my Father. Give us that strength of determination by the Holy Spirit.

We feel it right now. Help us to feel it throughout this week, every day. And the next week, and the next week, and the next week, till you come back.

Help us each one. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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