

Repentance and a Heavenly Kingdom

by Zac Poonen

The New Covenant is about living in dependence on God, not just having knowledge of the Bible.

Duration: 56:32

Scripture: Malachi 4:6, Matthew 1:21, Matthew 3:2, Matthew 6:33, Mark 4:12, Mark 9:1, Acts 2:1-4

Topics: "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having the right goal in life. He advises young people to prioritize seeking God and His kingdom above worldly pursuits. The speaker warns against drifting through life without a sense of direction, using the analogy of a piece of wood floating aimlessly in the sea. He highlights the significance of putting God first in all areas of life, including finances, and emphasizes that those who enter into the new covenant are those who prioritize God above all else. The sermon concludes with a cautionary tale about the dangers of greed and the pursuit of material possessions.

Transcript

Last Wednesday, we considered something about the New Covenant and since I'm going to be here for a few weeks, I thought I'd take a series about the New Covenant. So I'll continue today and then on this Wednesday and next Sunday and so on. The reason is because my observation in the last 32 years that we've been operating as a church is I've traveled to many parts of India and been in many churches in many countries.

This is my personal observation. I haven't been to every church in the world. I've not met every Christian in the world.

But among those I have met, 95% of born-again believers don't have a clue about what the New Covenant is. And even some who understand it in their heads do not live in it. I'll give you one example.

If you lived in it, you'd never be depressed. It's true. Never.

There's a command in the Bible called, Rejoice in the Lord always. Always means, in today's language, 24-7. There was no such command under the Old Covenant.

You never find that in the Old Testament because nobody could obey it. Where is it found? It is found in the New Testament. How many Christians have you met in your life who can say, that is true in my life?

There is my proof.

95% of Christians do not live in the New Covenant at all. They know a lot of truth. Their head is filled with knowledge.

But it's like these babies who've got hydrocephalus, a huge head and small body. They don't live long. I want to warn you, the New Covenant is not about knowledge.

It's about life. Many have knowledge, but few find the way to life. Many who have knowledge are on the broad way.

The two trees in the Garden of Eden symbolize the two covenants, the law and grace. Who gave the law? God. Who planted the tree of knowledge of good and evil? God.

Who planted the tree of life? God. Who gives grace? God. Who gave the law? God.

And yet he said, if you live by it, you'll die. Who planted the tree of knowledge of good and evil? God. And he said, if you eat of it, you'll die.

Exactly the same. Those two trees symbolize two principles by which you can live your life. And many people say, how can God send good people to hell? The point is not whether they were good or not.

The point is according to God's standard, did they have life? In other words, did they live a life of faith and dependence upon God? Or were they good according to their own knowledge of good and evil? When some people say, think that they are good, it's because they got two percent in mathematics in a class where everybody else got zero or one. They're good. Not good according to God's standards.

Not at all. That's why the Bible says those who compare themselves with each other are spiritual idiots. That's a paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 10 verse 12.

Those who compare themselves with each other. Absolutely foolish. If you want to compare yourself, my dear brothers and sisters, let me give you one bit of advice.

It'll save you from all pride for the rest of your life. If you want to compare yourself, compare yourself with Jesus. Full stop.

That's it. And with nobody else. Many problems in our lives are solved when we compare ourselves with Jesus.

We never get discouraged. Because when you look at him, he never discourages anybody. So, Adam reached for knowledge and all the children of Adam reached for knowledge.

Adam didn't die because he killed Eve or spat on her face or called her some bad name. You know why he died? Because he wanted to have the knowledge of good and evil himself. Decide himself what is good and evil.

And when you decide yourself what is good and evil, you die. That is the old covenant. Have you understood the meaning of the tree of knowledge of good and evil now? When you choose to decide yourself what is good and what is evil, you die.

When you decide yourself what television program is good and what is evil, according to your understanding, you die. And unfortunately, your children die too. Because you make them watch it.

When you decide yourself what books are good to read and what are not good to read, you die. And your children die too. And you're the cause of their death.

When you decide yourself what type of conversation is good and what type is bad, you'll die. That was Adam's problem. He wanted, that's what the devil wanted him to do.

The devil didn't tempt him to murder Eve. No. The devil didn't tempt him to tell a lie to Eve.

The devil is so sharp and so clever. He told him something which looked so innocent. Just like he tells you.

What's wrong in knowing good and evil? What's wrong in yourself deciding what is good and evil? Oh, how plausible that argument sounds to clever people. And Adam was very clever. He said, yeah, that sounds reasonable.

Just like you say, and Adam died and you die. The law never brings life. And that's what the Old Testament law did.

It told people, this is good, this is evil. Honor your father and mother, good. Committing murder, evil.

Don't take the name of the Lord in vain. If you don't take the Lord's name in vain, that's good. If you commit adultery, that's evil.

The whole Ten Commandments is just a list of good and evil. It's a tree of knowledge of good and evil. What did it bring? Death.

Then why did God give it? For a number of reasons. One, to show man his sin. To show man that he was incapable of ever reaching God's standards.

And to show man that you can never save yourself, no matter how hard you try. So it is a preparation for grace. You know, they say when these people who are lifeguards on the seaside, they are taught, when you see a man who doesn't know swimming, drowning, don't go to help him when he's struggling initially.

No, he will drag you down. Let him struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle and give up and begin to sink. That's the time to go and catch him because he's exhausted.

Otherwise, he'll drag you down. It's true. You have to wait till the guy has struggled and struggled and struggled and struggled and said, given up, then you go and save him.

It's exactly like that, that the Lord saves us too. We try to keep the law. We try to keep the law.

We struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle. And those are honest. There are very few.

Those who are honest say, I can't make it, Lord. I give up. And the Lord saves them by grace.

But those who are not honest and the vast majority are like that. They struggle, struggle, struggle, fail, but they will not admit that they are failing. They become hypocrites.

They were the Pharisees who never got saved. There are multitudes of them in today's churches, multitudes. In fact, the vast majority.

There are no Pharisees out in the world who don't go to the churches. No, you'll never find a worldly Pharisee. You'll find worldly Christians, but not worldly Pharisees.

Pharisees are the ones who are knowledge of the Bible and all that. But you haven't got a contact with God. What is the tree of life? The tree of life is a life of dependence on God, where his life flows into you.

Like Jesus said, the branch in a tree, where the sap, the Holy Spirit flows into you. It's not something you produce. It's not something that you're determined to have.

It's something God gives. And God gives it to those who are humble enough to say, Lord, I can't make it. I depend on you exactly like that branch in the tree.

And there's no guarantee that you'll be like that forever. After five, ten years, you may think, I've got enough experience now. I can pull out from the tree and decide what's good and evil on my own.

And that's how many believers backslide and die again. It's a feat if you remain in the tree till the end of your life. If we endure until the end, we will be saved.

We can. Isn't it much easier to live in helpless dependence on God than to try and run your own life? Isn't it much easier to be a one-year-old child whose father cares for you than for you to run your own life? That's why Jesus said we must be like children, dependent on the father, humble enough to acknowledge that we know nothing. You find many believers like that? Very few.

But those are the ones who found life. Humble dependence on God as a loving father. That is the new covenant.

And God had to prepare people for many years to come to that place, particularly through the tenth commandment. You know, man could keep all the nine commandments, but he couldn't keep the tenth. Because the tenth commandment was you shall not lust in your heart, and nobody could keep it.

That's why when Jesus spoke to the rich young ruler, he listed all the commandments but left out the tenth. Have you noticed that in Mark 10? And the rich ruler said, what shall I do to have eternal life? He said, you know what the law says, you must honor your father and mother, you must keep the Sabbath, you must honor your father and mother, don't kill, don't commit adultery, all the commandments related to man, five of them. He said, I kept all of these.

And Jesus purposely left out the tenth. And when he said, I've kept all of these, then Jesus said, okay, now I'll tell you about the tenth. Give your money away.

He said, no. That's where they failed. And that's where you and I fail.

Where we have a lust for something which God does not want us to have a lust for. Could be a woman, could be money, could be property, could be anything. Could be your job.

And the only thing we should have a strong desire for is God himself. Who keeps the tenth commandment? Nobody. And those who are honest enough to acknowledge that enter into the new covenant.

Nobody else. Those who pretend that they are keeping it will live forever under that delusion and fool everybody else and may end up in hell. But those who are humble enough to say, Lord, I can't keep it.

I failed. No matter how hard I try, I'll still fail. I'll be better than others.

I may be better than people in other churches. And I may be pretty good compared to what I was in the past, but I'll never rise up to your standard. I give up.

Lord, I want to humbly depend on you. He forgives us, cleanses us, and leads us into the new covenant. So, that's why God allows all of us to go through a period of struggling under the law and being defeated, depressed, discouraged, losing our temper, lusting with our eyes, watching internet pornography.

All this is evil. Getting addicted to these things, behaving well in the church and behaving badly at home. That's the mark of a hypocrite.

That's the definition of a Pharisee. One who behaves well in the church and behaves badly at home. So, if that definition fits you, you're a Pharisee.

But the Lord came to save Pharisees if they acknowledge their need. Not if they don't. If you don't acknowledge your need, he doesn't save anybody.

He doesn't ask you to be perfect, but he asks you to be honest. To say, Lord, I'm a hypocrite. You know that no Pharisee would have been lost if they had just said, Lord, I'm a hypocrite.

But it's so difficult to say it. I mean, do you find it easy to say that? Would you get up in the presence of those who respect you and say, I have to acknowledge I've been a hypocrite. Boy, that'll deflate you, but it'll probably save you too.

That is God's way of salvation. He doesn't save those who are high up in their own thinking, but those who come down to earth and acknowledge their failure and their sin. And that's why in preparation for this message of the new covenant, God sent a prophet called John the Baptist.

You know, as soon as the pages of the Old Testament are over and you come to the pages of the New Testament, you see this prophet coming straight away. And this prophet was to prepare people for receiving Christ and to enter into the new covenant. And the message of this prophet is the message that we need as a preparation to enter into the new covenant.

So that's why it's very important to understand the message of John the Baptist, because that was the preparation for Christ. And that is the preparation for us also to enter into the new covenant. So let's turn to Matthew's Gospel in chapter 3, where we read of the ministry of this man called John the Baptist.

For nearly 350 years, Israel did not have a prophet, or perhaps 400 years approximately. Malachi was the last one. And you know, he said that the last word he spoke in his prophecy was curse.

I'll smite the land with a curse. That was the last word God spoke for 400 years. So that's why they had something to meditate on for 400 years.

It was this. I'll smite the land with a curse. That's how the Old Testament ends.

And then comes this prophet, John the Baptist. And he says, repent. Verse 2, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

I want you to notice two things there, which you may not have noticed before. Repent is a 180 degree turn. It's turning right around from your old direction.

It's not 25 degrees. It's not giving up, just gambling and drinking and dancing and things like that. Okay, that's good.

That's not repentance. Repentance is a 180 degree turn. There are a lot of things you can give up and not fully repent.

There are a lot of things you give up. You give up smoking. Well, that's bad for you in any case.

Good thing you give it up. Drinking, that's bad for you in any case. Good sin is basically wanting your own way.

That's one definition of sin. My will. My will.

And if you want to know what God thinks of your will. You know, our personality consists of our intelligence, our feelings and our will. But our will is what we really are.

Because it's with our will we choose to do certain things. And if you want to know what God thinks of this thing called my will, the Bible calls it the old man, by the way. God killed it on the cross.

The old man that was crucified with Christ on the cross. If you never got a revelation on it till today, here it is. It is your self-will.

You're wanting your own way. When it says in Romans 6, our old man was crucified with him, wanting your own way was crucified with Christ. God condemned it to death, telling you what he thinks of your will.

All you got to do is agree with him. Romans 6, 11 says, reckon yourself to be dead. That means, let me paraphrase those words for you in Romans 6, the whole of Romans 6. You can take time to read it sometime.

Because that's the secret of the new covenant. You're wanting your own way. God thinks it's good for nothing, must be put to death.

Lord, I agree with it. I accept it. That is to be crucified with Christ.

Then what do we do then? Lord, I want your will in my life. That is repentance. That is why John the Baptist says, I baptize you unto repentance.

And that's why in Romans 6, crucifying the old man and burying it is called, is testified to in baptism. There's a close connection. Many people go through baptism without knowing what it means.

It's just a ritual for them. You are testifying there that your old man was buried, that you don't want your own will. I mean, you think, go to the cemetery and see how many people are doing their own will over there.

Not even one. They're finished with doing their own will. They're finished with wanting their own way.

Once they died, other people decided where they would be buried, how they would be buried and whatever. They're finished. My question is, have you died? In the Old Testament, you didn't have to die.

All you had to do is listen to some preacher and go and try and improve your life a little bit after that. And you can come to CFC and listen to some preacher and improve your life after that. You'll just be an old covenant Christian.

But if you die to your will, you'll be a new covenant Christian. So, repentance means a death to your will because it's our will with which we chose to fight with people, to argue with people, to shout at people, to shout at your husband, to shout at your wife and whatever you do, and to be nasty and bitter and gossip. It's all your will.

You choose your will. I'm going to do that. Even people take advantage of the blood of Christ.

Oh, well, I can always go to God and ask him to forgive me afterwards. Amazing. They treat the blood of Christ like tap water.

I can always wash my hands. It's so. Can you imagine a greater insult than treating the blood of Christ like soap? Ah, it doesn't matter.

I can always wash my hands. Would you dirty your hands if soap cost 100,000 rupees a little bar? No, you'd be more careful. When we value the blood of Christ, we are more careful with sin.

It's easy to repent. It's easy to repent when you see the price that Jesus paid to save you from your sin. The fundamental problem with the vast majority of Christians, and I say even here in CFC, is you have not valued the blood of Christ and seen what price he paid to save you from your sin.

I didn't see it for many years after I was born again. I was careless with my words. I used to be angry at home with other people.

Rude. Oh, how it has changed since I saw the price Jesus paid for my sin. There is a verse of a hymn, a poem, that I repeat to myself many times, which goes like this.

Ever when tempted, make me see. Beneath the olive's moon-pierced shade, my God alone, outstretched and bruised and bleeding on the earth He made, and make me feel it was my sin, as though no other sins were there. That was to Him who bears the world, a load that He could scarcely bear.

That was to my sin, that was to Him who bears the world, a load that He could scarcely bear. Lord, make me see that. That was written by Frederick Faber, the man who wrote, My God, How Wonderful Thou Art.

You know, if there's anything that's helped me to repent, it is seeing the price that Jesus paid for my sin. When I was born again, one of the first things I did frequently was meditate on the cross of Calvary, because that's where God manifested His love. There was no such thing that people could meditate on in the Old Testament.

They could only meditate on the law. Wonderful things in the law, but nothing like the cross of Calvary. Think what we can meditate on.

It changed my life to meditate on God's love for me, and as I meditated through the years, I began to get revelations on what Jesus suffered there, which I never heard or read in my whole life. I mean, I never

knew that Jesus suffered three hours of hell on the cross when He was forsaken by God. It became a revelation to me.

What do you think that made my attitude to sin? When I realized that I crucified Him. Like they sing in that chorus or song, I hear my voice among the mockers saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him, and I hear my voice there. Have you heard your voice saying, Crucify Him? Have you heard it? It will really change your attitude to sin.

The New Covenant has all got to do with sin. And in that connection, let me turn you to Matthew chapter 1. As soon as you finish the pages of the Old Testament, and you come into the pages of the New Testament, the very first promise, which is never found in the Old Testament. Three quarters of your Bible is the Old Testament, but you don't find this promise there.

It could not be found because nobody could do it. Matthew 1.21, You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. First promise in the New Testament.

Now today, there are many preachers, Christian preachers, who are telling you, come to Jesus and He'll make you rich, He'll give you a house, He'll give you a car, He'll give you a job, He'll give you this, that, and the other. Well, you won't hear that from me, because I'm not interested in enlarging my congregation. I'm interested in getting people to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

I'm trying to show people the narrow gate that leads to life. Not to increase the size of my church. It's all honor-seeking.

And so, I preach what the New Testament says. Come to Jesus and die to your self-will. And He will save you from your sins.

Which is the most important thing to be saved from. It's good to be saved from poverty, but it's not the most important thing. I can live with poverty, I'll tell you honestly.

I have done it also, the early days of our marriage. But I can't live with sin. I can live with sickness, but I can't live with sin.

Health and wealth are not the most important thing to me. Holiness is. Because Jesus didn't come to make me healthy or wealthy, He came to make me holy.

That's why the first promise in the New Testament has got nothing to do with health, nothing to do with wealth, nothing to do with comfort, nothing to do with your getting a job, nothing to do with healing your backache, but with saving you from your sin. And I'll tell you something else. God is so good.

When we seek His kingdom first, that's in Matthew 6.33, and His righteousness, that means His holiness. I say, Lord, I want to be holy as You are. Some of these other things that the Gentiles eagerly seek after get added Enough money to live.

That's all I want in any case. Enough health to live and move around. That's all I want in any case.

I never pray, Lord, make me as strong as I was when I was 30 years old. Give me the same clear vision I had when I was 10 years old. No, I never pray such things.

I pray, Lord, give me enough money to live, and give me enough health to do Your work. If I have a few aches and pains, and I get a little weaker in my body, that's okay. But save me from sin.

There should be no smell of sin in my life. There should be no smell of selfishness or pride, or the love of money or bitterness in my life. Nobody should ever see me in a bad mood 24 hours of the day.

I never want to be in a bad mood. I want to be a blessing to other people. How can you be a blessing to other people if you are in a bad mood sometimes? You think you could ever catch Jesus in a bad mood? Do you believe the Bible says in 1 John 2.6, you can walk as Jesus walked? That is the New Covenant.

If you want a definition of the New Covenant, life, it is 1 John 2.6, walking as Jesus walked. If that's not your goal in life, I want to say to you right now, you will understand everything I say, but you will never in a hundred years enter the New Covenant. But I can tell you another thing.

All those here, it doesn't matter who you are, even if you have converted yesterday. If your goal in life is to walk as Jesus walked, you will understand and live in the New Covenant pretty soon. It may take time, but you will enter it.

For the rest, you will just increase in knowledge. Because God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. And the Bible has told us what we are to seek Him for.

His name is Jesus, who came to save us from our sins. And the Bible says, every prayer we pray, we must pray in the name of Jesus. Right? So imagine praying a prayer like this.

Father, in the name of Jesus who came to save me from my sin, please give me money. Let's have a prayer like that. In the name of Jesus who came to save me from my sin, give me a bigger house.

I'll tell you what you should pray in the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus who came to save you from your sin, Lord, save me from my sin. The other things will be added.

And I'm not telling you theory. I've experienced that for 40 years. Shall I tell you boldly, with Jesus Christ standing right in front of me as a witness.

For 40 years, I have never gone after money. Not once. Not in my secular work.

Not in my Christian work. And Lord, you're a witness to what I say right now. I've never starved.

My children have never starved. I pursued holiness and I found God has added all the other things. The same thing we found in our church.

We don't send reports anywhere. We don't send photographs of our work. So many people ask me when I travel different places.

Brother Zach, do you have some needs in your church? I say no needs. Absolutely none. God meets all our needs.

Won't you tell us? No, I won't tell you. Sorry. People have asked me, Brother, if you want to give me some money.

Well, that's up to you, but send it to the church. But I'm not going to tell you what our need is. I say that only to God, because I've said it only to God for the last 41 years.

I mean, if your father is the richest man in the world, can you imagine some beggar on the street asking you, do you want some money? And you say, can you give me those two pies from your tin can? This is how a lot of Christian workers are. I'll tell you why. Because God is not their father.

Some imaginary God is their father. My God is the real God who rules heaven and earth, who says all the silver and the gold is mine. My dear brothers and sisters, the new covenant is the reality.

If you're eager, you got to repent of your old way of life. The old things you pursued. And say, Lord, I don't want to pursue them anymore.

I want to turn around from that and seek your kingdom and your righteousness all my days. You will not be a loser. I tell you that.

You'll be a loser if you seek after other things. Never get into debt. I can stand today and say, in 67 years, I've never been in debt a single day of my life.

I've never bought things on credit. If I can afford it, I buy it. If I can't afford it, I don't buy it.

That's it. And I'm a very happy man. You tell me all of you fellows who are in debt for this, that and the other, whether you are happy, whether you can sleep peacefully at night.

You can't. Because you crave for things you did not have enough money for. Ah, little more there, little more there.

Oh, it's tragic. Have you heard that old Russian story of one of those Russian kings who one day said, I'm going to have a competition here that all those who start at sunrise and start running and cover a huge circle of land by sunset, they can have that land freely. Boy, wouldn't you like to take part in that race? And that was this guy who started running at sunrise to get as much property as he can.

Ran and came pretty close to sunset. And there was that other bit of property also he wanted to get. I mean, he had already got square miles.

He wasn't satisfied. He wanted that other bit of property. He was exhausted about to fall, drop down.

He said, I've got to get that other bit. And he got that other bit just before sunset and dropped dead. And they say, how much land does a man need when he's dead? Six feet by about two and a half feet.

That's what he got. I've seen people like that. That little bit more.

That little bit more. You know what regret you're going to have when you reach heaven? Because you did not put God first. You did not put his kingdom first.

Who are the ones who enter into the new covenant? Those who say, God, you're going to be first in my life. You're going to be first in my life. There's a verse in Deuteronomy which is paraphrased in the Living Bible as God teaches you to tithe your income to teach you to put God first.

To put him first in money matters. A man who has not put God first in money matters, let me say to anyone of you, has not put God first anywhere. Don't fool yourself.

Don't fool yourself that God is first in your life if God is not first in money matters. God is not the one who determines every area of money matters in your life. You're fooling yourself when you say, but I go to

church.

So did the Pharisees. But I read the Bible. So did the Pharisees.

But I fast and pray. So did the Pharisees. And they all went to hell.

There's nothing that tests our devotion to God like our attitude to money. There was no verse in the Old Testament that said you could not love God and money. That is a New Testament verse.

It's a New Covenant verse. You can't enter into half the New Covenant and neglect other parts of the New Covenant. That's what Jesus said about people who've taken a new patch of cotton cloth not shrunk.

You know how cotton cloth has to be put in water and shrunk. You don't do that and stitch it to an old washed cotton pant or something and then you wash it, it tears. Because a new cloth shrinks.

What Jesus is saying, you can't take... I like this part of the New Covenant. I like that in my life. And this other thing and I get four or five patches of the New Covenant and try to patch it to my life which loves money and wants things of the world.

It doesn't work. Jesus said you've got to throw away the whole old garment and get a new one. I'll tell you, you won't be the loser.

Your children won't be the loser either. No, you must be a living testimony at the end of your life that those who seek the Kingdom of God first have all other things added to them. That was my longing years ago.

I said, Lord, I want to end my life demonstrating to an unbelieving generation that those who seek the Kingdom of God first and His righteousness have all other things added to them. And then as time went on, I had one more goal. I said, Lord, not only that.

I want to raise up at least a few other people in my life before I die who also have that testimony. Not just me. Who also can say, I sought God's Kingdom first and His righteousness and things went well in my life and my family.

I began to see a little bit of it. I say to all of you young people, make that your goal. Don't make it your goal to be the biggest person in the world or the richest person or any such stupid thing.

But that at the end of your life and you are beginning your life now. And if you don't have the right goal now, you'll go astray like some of the older people you see around you. Don't just drift along in life.

When I was in the Navy, you know, there used to be strong currents and winds in the sea. We used to see sometimes a big piece of wood lying in the sea. It had no sense of direction, but it was moving.

Sometimes it would move in this direction. And then the waves would change and move in the other direction. And that reminds me of a lot of Christians.

They are moving, but there is no sense of direction in them. It's like a bit of driftwood. Here, there, everywhere.

You don't know where they'll be tomorrow. You don't know which shore they will land on. I don't know.

But our ships were not like that. We didn't let the ship drift here, there, everywhere. No, we'd be in a collision.

We determined, I've got to get there and I've got to get there by tomorrow evening at 4 o'clock. That's it. And we got there by the next evening at 4 o'clock.

Because we decided, we are going to fight these winds and waves and get where we want to go. The new covenant is for people like that. Not those who are just drifting along with the currents of the world.

You know, whatever people say and all. No. You must have a sense of purpose in your life.

Repent means you turn around from that selfish, self-centered way of life and say, Lord, You are first in my life. The other thing I want to show you in Matthew chapter 3. There are two things I want you to see in that verse 2. One is repent. Repent means turn around.

You see, unfortunately, this word repent, it's not understood properly in English because we don't use that word much. Most people don't know what repentance means. You ask the average Christian what repentance means.

Oh, I should feel sorry for my sin. I must weep a little. I must feel bad.

No, no, no. That's all the extras. But what is real repentance? What is at the heart of it? What is at the core of it? Even the Malayalam translation is not good.

The Hindi translation is not good. The best translation I found is in Tamil. Manan Tirambal which means your mind must turn around.

That is repentance. You have a different direction your mind is thinking. You think in a different way now about sin, about God.

It's a 180 degree turn. That's repentance. And if we, you know words like this, repentance, baptism and all.

We don't understand what it means because it doesn't, we don't use those words in regular language. Do you understand the word immersion? You all understand that? That is baptism. They should have translated it like that.

But they didn't. That's another story of religious deception practiced from the 17th century onwards to promote sprinkling of children. I won't go into that now.

But these are words, repent. It's another word like baptism. Most people don't understand.

What does repent mean? Have you seen it? See it today as an about turn. 180 degrees not 90 degrees, 180 degrees. Lord my all those values I had are changed.

Now how do you know what your values were? Your values are the values of the world. Look at any worldly person and see what he is eagerly seeking after. You know I like that phrase in Matthew 6. The phrase that Jesus uses, Matthew 6 it helps me.

Verse 32, Matthew 6 32. The Gentiles means the non-Christians eagerly seek for these things. It's not just the 2-3 things listed there.

There are many things that non-Christians the world eagerly seeks. I've tried to make a mental list you can write it down also if you like. Of all the things which the world non-Christians eagerly seek.

You don't need me to tell you. You know what people in the world seek. Money sex comfort pleasure sinful or otherwise position power to have a name even after one is dead that one was a great man.

Is there anybody in the world who doesn't seek for these things? I mean even a beggar he would have the opportunity to seek for these things. Bigger house better car, more cars etc. They seek after these things.

Some of these things are sinful some of them are not. But the world eagerly seeks after these things and the Lord said don't do it. Let these be added to you as you spend your time eagerly seeking verse 33 kingdom of God and holiness.

See there's a law in God's dealings with man that it's only those who seek Him with all their heart. Jeremiah 29 verse 13. Who seek Him with all their heart who will find Him.

The others won't find Him. So if you didn't find Him it's because you didn't seek with all your heart and you didn't seek with all your heart because you didn't think it was so important. You know people who don't seek for the fullness of the Holy Spirit with all their heart chances are they'll never be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Do you think God's going to fill somebody with the Holy Spirit who doesn't value the Holy Spirit? Do you think God's going to lead somebody into the new covenant who doesn't value the new covenant? You've heard me use this example. If you lost 50 paise a coin I used to say 5 paise now 50 paise is just about the same value. If you lost 50 paise a coin in the night when you're walking along the grass somewhere and you discover it 5 minutes later how long will you spend looking for that 50 paise a coin in the grass in the dark? What do you say? 5 hours? 1 hour? 15 minutes? I doubt even 5 minutes.

Why? After all it's only 50 paise. I can't spend all my time looking for that. But supposing your office had entrusted you with 200,000 rupees in cash which you have to take somewhere else tomorrow and in your hurry you misplaced it somewhere how long would you spend looking for that? 15 minutes? Say oh it's only 200,000 rupees it's ok.

You see the difference? You take leave the next day from work. You won't sleep the night. You shall seek me and find me says the Lord when you search for me with all your heart.

When you treat God like a 50 paise a coin, no wonder you don't find him. When you seek for the fullness of the Holy Spirit like a 50 paise a coin, no wonder you don't get filled with the Holy Spirit even after 20-30 years of praying for it. I tell you, you won't find it in the next 20-30 years.

You don't understand and enter into the new covenant life even after listening to it for 20 years, well you won't enter it for the next 20 years because you're treated like a 50 paise a coin. When it becomes everything to you. You know why Sadhu Sundar Singh had a vision of Jesus when he was 14 or 15 years old that turned him from his religion to Christ because he was so desperate to find God.

So desperate. His mother used to take him to a little guru as a young person and he wanted to know about God God and his mother died and he didn't know which is the true God and he said I'm so desperate, I've got to find you before 5 o'clock this morning otherwise I'm going to put my head on the rails now, don't say things like that because we've got more light than he had in his day but he was not one who knew the

Bible suicide is not the answer I'm just trying to say how desperate he was and I've asked myself, have I ever sought God so desperately that I'd rather die than not get to know him Boy! If I did, maybe I'll also be having visions like Sadhu Sundar Singh and you will too You see how weak our longing for God is and we wonder how these great men of God lived the life they lived accomplished what they accomplished why God gave them gifts to serve him which he never gives you and you always excuse yourself by saying, ah, but I don't have that gift well, that's because God didn't feel you were worthy enough to give it to that's all you can excuse yourself all your life like that but you may discover in heaven that God wanted to give you some gifts but you never sought him wholeheartedly for it. The Bible says, earnestly desire the spiritual gifts that's the verse 1 Corinthians 14 verse 1, earnestly desire the spiritual gifts.

A person who is earnestly desiring something else not surprising he doesn't get spiritual gifts because he's not so passionate to serve God How passionate are you to serve God?

Lord, I can't serve you without the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit I remember when I started preaching I'd never, I was scared to stand in public, I was never took part in public speaking competitions in my life I was just shy and reserved and withdrawn you think I'm bluffing, it's true ask people who knew me when I was 15, 16, 17 and I was so reserved and shy and timid and when I got selected to the National Defense Academy, my classmates said, hey you going to defend our country? that's what they said, that's what they thought of me but when God filled me with the Holy Spirit, it was completely different it changed me, it says, you'll be turned into another man that's the answer I would not dream of trying to live on this earth a single day now without being filled with the Holy

Spirit I'd never dream of getting into a pulpit to speak for even 5 minutes without being filled with the Holy Spirit, I'd waste people's time and I'd waste God's time and I'd waste my time and I don't want to do that it's serious business you think a surgeon who's doing a delicate brain operation in a theater is doing a more important job than I'm doing here you got to be crazy to believe that the maximum he can do is kill that man, if I don't preach the true truth I can send people to hell that man may die and go to heaven if I don't preach the truth up here, clearly people can go to hell, believing me I'll make sure nobody goes there unless he chooses to go there himself, dear brothers and sisters, the new covenant is a wonderful life you can enter into it, there's no partiality with

God, and you don't need to be educated, Peter didn't come first in his class, he probably failed in a few classes, he was a fisherman but he entered into the new covenant, and you can it's not how clever you are it's got nothing to do with clever, you can be clever like Paul, he came first in his class he can be a child of God too, you can be clever or stupid, it makes no difference, you got to have a heart that longs for God it doesn't matter what your head is like the second thing I want to show you here is repent and the kingdom of heaven that's the second thing I want to say about the new covenant the new covenant is about the kingdom of heaven and not the kingdom of earth so when John the Baptist got up and said, turn around he was talking to people who for 1500 years from the days

of Moses had heard about a kingdom of earth you got it? 1500 years, every preacher they ever heard, every prophet they ever heard, had told them if you follow God, you'll get a land for yourself I know you were all slaves in Egypt, but you'll get a land, and when you get into that land, God will give you plenty in your fields you'll prosper in your fields and you'll get plenty of money, and all your earthly enemies will be killed whoever they are and you'll have these are the things people want, all my earthly enemies should be killed or they should suffer at least and I should have plenty of money and a land and a house that's what they said, you'll have all this and you'll also have plenty of children, because people don't ask for that

nowadays, but that was also part of the promise

many things like this earthly, earthly, earthly, earthly and then John the Baptist comes in, a new prophet with a new message turn around from this kingdom of earth pursuit for the kingdom of heaven it hasn't yet come, but it is near it is near it hasn't come they locked up John the Baptist they usually lock up people who preach like that it says in chapter 4 verse 12, people don't like that type of preaching if John the Baptist had gone to Herod and said God will make you rich brother Herod, God will give you health and bless you do you think Herod would have locked him up? he preached against his sin it's not popular to preach against sin, neither then nor now so when he got locked up, you know what Jesus did?

Jesus said, ok verse 17, I'm going to preach the same thing verse 17, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand as soon as one voice is silenced there's another voice all these 2,000 years it's been like that every voice that tells people to seek God's kingdom is silenced, either by death, because nobody lives forever somebody preaches it for many years and dies, God raises up another voice, somewhere maybe just one voice saying turn around from the kingdom of earth everybody's preaching the kingdom of earth, kingdom of earth kingdom of earth we have floods of voices today they're telling us about earthly experiences and earthly blessings and earthly things, Christendom has got no shortage of it, if you don't believe it go and turn on Christian television and see every single preacher

is preaching that or they're asking you for your money, one of the two where are the people who are telling you to turn from that and seek holiness first where are the John the Baptists but God will always have a voice, I'll tell you that in every generation you can silence it or it may be silenced by death but God will raise up somebody else it'll always be true, God has never left himself without a witness in two thousand years and those who have ears to hear will respond to that voice so remember these two things about the new covenant and they're both linked to each other and we'll think more about it further this week in the coming weeks, it's a turning around from the earth and having my own way to seeking God's will and seeking the kingdom of God first and His holiness and those

who were interested in it responded, there were very few remember at the end of the preaching of the greatest preacher that ever walked on this earth Jesus Christ, he did not have a mega church of thirty thousand people he had a hundred and twenty people waiting for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, that was the coming of the kingdom of God the kingdom of God came on the day of Pentecost Jesus said that, let me show you that verse, in Mark chapter 9, we'll close with that Mark chapter 9 verse 1 Jesus said truly I say to you there are some people standing here not everybody some will die, but some who are standing here will not die until they have seen the kingdom of God after it has come with power that's not referring to the day when the kingdom of God floods the whole earth no,

it was the day when the kingdom of God first came to earth and some of those people standing there did not die till the day of Pentecost came couple of years later within those two years some people died, but not everyone, that's what he was saying that came on the day of Pentecost that power, which is mentioned here, is the same power that Jesus spoke about in Acts 1.8, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will receive power when you connect it with Mark 9.1, you realize it is power to live for the kingdom of God, power to seek the kingdom of God, not power to get a name for myself as a preacher or a healer or any such thing no, but to enter God's kingdom and to lead others into God's kingdom do you want this life?

I hope you do well, you are all invited if you are willing to pay the price let's bow our heads for a moment of prayer please be reverent in God's presence and if God has spoken to you I want to invite you to respond to what you have heard respond to what you have heard we shut our eyes only to avoid being distracted so that you can concentrate on things that God wants you to deal with in your life Lord I want to live a worthwhile life on this earth I have only one life and a lot of that life is already over at least of the years that are left to me Lord help me to live for the things that are eternal we pray in Jesus name Amen

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