

Repentance From Unchristlikeness

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing the Scriptures, repenting from unchristlikeness, and judging ourselves in order to avoid deception and spiritual blindness.

Duration: 57:11

Scripture: Job 42:5, Mark 8:22

Topics: "Repentance", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the critical need for repentance in the Christian life, highlighting the importance of continuous repentance to see Jesus more clearly, distinguish between eternal and temporal things, and experience true spiritual growth. It warns against the deception of believing without repentance and calls for a humble and honest heart that is willing to turn from sin and seek God's cleansing and transformation.

Transcript

The reason we want to look at the messages that are missing in today's Christianity is because all of us are influenced by today's Christianity. Some years ago, I think we could say that many of us were influenced only by the messages we heard in the church. It was easier.

But now, a lot of us are influenced by what you watch on Christian television. A lot of those messages are coming into many of your homes, some good, some bad, some compromising the truth. And I have discovered that the vast majority of Christians don't have discernment discern between what is good and what is not good.

What is the reason for that? They don't know their Bibles. There are many Christians today who watch Christian television more than they read the Bible. How do you think God should, what do you think God should do for them? I'll tell you what I think God should do for them.

God should allow them to believe a lie because they value the words of men more than the words of God. It would be perfectly righteous for God to allow such believers to go totally astray because they listen to Christian preachers more than they read the Bible. And I fear that a number of you are in that danger.

It's a special danger that has come up in the last few years. I believe it's a work of the devil. You see, there's good in it.

And I think the good is that a number of people are being reached with some amount of truth. But the sad thing is that a lot of Christians are being deceived because they are being bombarded with a number of messages. It's there now in books and CDs and all types of things with something that sounds nice and looks scriptural because a Bible is being taught.

It's not that, it's not from the Bible. It's like that keyboard that you see. The notes are there.

It's the missing notes that cause the problem. And when certain notes are missing, the tune that you are listening to is not the correct tune. You've just got to remove a few notes from a keyboard and then the tune that you hear is not the correct tune.

And then you sing to a wrong tune. And that is what is happening with a lot of Christians today. But because all the other keys are on the keyboard, they say it's from the Bible.

It's the passages that are missing that prevent you from understanding the balance of truth. Remember, the devil preached even to Jesus from Scripture. He told Jesus, do you think the devil won't preach to you from Scripture? He preached to Jesus saying, it is written.

Let me give you a promise Jesus. Jump off the temple and here is the promise of God. He will give his angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways and keep you so that you don't dash your foot against a stone.

Now if Jesus was ignorant of Scripture, like many of us are, he would have jumped off. I think many of you would have jumped off. Because you see, that's the promise of Scripture.

I claim it. But Jesus knew the Scriptures and said, no, I'm not going to jump off because it's also written something else. And it's the also written part which has been torn out of the Bible there.

In our minds, we don't know what is also written. We know what's written, but we don't know what's also written. And then you can be led astray by Satan.

God's Word is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path. God has given us his Word in completion, in completeness. If we know it, we cannot go astray.

And that is why I want to encourage all of you in these days as we approach the end. And Jesus said so clearly the last days are going to be days of tremendous deception. The Holy Spirit says there are going to be deceiving spirits all over, false signs and wonders.

And in the midst of it all, I'll tell you, your only protection, if you value it, is the knowledge of the Scriptures. And I have seen in our CFC, you know, on Wednesdays we have people sharing sometimes from the Scriptures. And there are some brothers who have been here for so many years who have got nothing to say.

Their ignorance of Scripture is amazing. These are brothers who have been in the Church for so many years who should have been teachers of the Word by now. So I presume it is the same problem everywhere.

That people are downright lazy to read the Scriptures and seriously study it. Well, I would say they deserve to be deceived. Because God has given them the Scriptures, they ignore it, they don't value it, and they read all these other things and watch all these other things and then they deserve to be

deceived.

Sure. So it is very important in the time in which we live to know the messages that are missing in Christendom. What is also written? We hear of many things that are written, mostly in the Old Testament.

What is also written? As I said earlier in the morning that one of the main messages that are missing today is the message of repentance. And that is so fundamental because the Apostles preached that. The very first Gospel sermon when the Apostle Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and it says a number of people were convicted and came to Peter and said, what shall we do? The very first word that Peter said to them was repent.

Remember this, in the first Gospel message ever preached, when people came to Peter and said what shall we do? The first thing he said to them was repent. Turn from your sin. And the same thing, he does not believe.

He said repent. The same thing when we saw that earlier in the morning when we were looking at Acts 20, Paul says everywhere I have gone, I have preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are like the two wires that when they connect, a light comes on and any electrical gadget requires two wires that touch.

When you put on a switch the two wires touch. Repentance and faith are like that. If you have one of them alone, there's no light.

Repentance alone is not enough. Faith alone is not enough. For example, we have a very well known song which says to God be the glory, great things he had done.

And you know some of these songs, if you're not careful, we can sing them and get a theology from those songs which is not scriptural. I don't know how many of you have noticed there, that's a very popular song. In all the Billy Graham crusades they would sing it and all over the world it's been sung for many, many years.

And what it says there is the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. This is not the modern faith movement that is teaching it. This is the old time people who preached evangelism, who did evangelism without this modern faith movement and miracles.

What is their message? The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Is there any apostle who preached that? No. The apostles preached who truly repents and then believes.

It's a very small thing. That's how the devil is. Isn't it written that you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved? It's also written that you must repent.

So if you don't know what is also written and you just take one part of truth, you can be preaching a wrong gospel. And the Bible says in the last days people will preach another gospel. It's not what is said that's wrong, it's what's missing that prevents the two wires from touching.

And then there is darkness. So that's the devil's aim, to keep believers in darkness. You keep on believing because something is in scripture.

You take that, take that, take that and don't realize there is something else there that is also needed to balance it out and to give you light and you don't have it and you wonder why darkness remains there.

Why don't we get more light? See repentance is very closely connected to getting light. And I want to show you this in a number of places.

Let's turn first of all to Matthew's Gospel chapter 7. Matthew's Gospel chapter 7. You know this very well known passage where it says, do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will also be judged. By your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

The people who judge others the most are the ones who repent the least. Those who repent the most, they hardly ever judge anybody else because they have got plenty to do repenting themselves about things in their own life. So I want to say to all of you who are sitting here, it's very easy to find out whether you are the repenting type and that is by asking yourself how critical are you of others? Particularly about small things that you see in other people.

You know what Jesus called a speck in the eye. A speck in an eye is almost the smallest little thing that can be wrong with somebody. You know, but a speck is like a speck of dust in the eye is so small.

Jesus is speaking about people who see little things in other people and criticize them and speak evil of them. You know what happens to such people? They keep on doing that. They find one speck in that person's eye and one speck in that person's eye and one speck in that person's eye.

Ultimately, this attitude produces a log in their own eye. How does the log come? God doesn't create us with logs in our own eye, but when you think you have got very sharp vision to see things that are wrong in other people and you criticize, criticize, criticize, criticize, ultimately you become so blind. There is a log in your eye and the God says you have got to see the log in your own eye.

It comes pretty quickly. But he says if you can get rid of this log from your eye, see what it says in verse 5, you hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, then what will happen? You will see clearly. You see how vision is dependent on not having a critical attitude towards others.

In other words, judging yourself. That is what we have preached in the church for 31 years. See the log in your own eye.

And if you were to ask me, can you give me one reason why many in our churches who have heard so much of truth have not grown spiritually and overcome sin, I would say one, there may be many reasons, but number one reason is they have a critical attitude towards others and they don't judge themselves. So there is a huge log in their eye and they don't see clearly. There are so many things which God wants us to see so clearly, but they are not able to see clearly because there is a log in their eye.

Why does the log come? Because they don't judge themselves, they spend all their time judging other people. You know you can sit at home, husband and wife and different members of your family and sit and talk about this family and that family and the other family. I will tell you something, you are just increasing the size of the log in all of your eyes and especially in your children's eyes.

Imagine what evil parents do to their children by building logs in the eyes of those poor children who never had anything. Why do you want to destroy your children like that? Will you stop with it now? Will you stop pointing out specks in other people around your dining table? Leave them alone. God can take care of them.

You are not helping them in any way. You just sit and talk about it to your children and put logs in their eyes unless the children are wise enough to resist what you say inwardly. I would say to all of you children, if your parents, even if they are supposed to be wonderful members of your church, sit around the table and speak evil inwardly, you say, Lord I don't accept that.

I am a child here, I have got to submit to my parents, I won't say anything, they will get upset with me if I say anything because they think they are much more spiritual than me. But I resist it Lord inwardly. I resist it.

I resist what mummy is saying. I reject it. Say that quietly to God.

I reject what daddy is saying. I reject what mummy is saying. Keep your eye clear.

I am really telling you that seriously. You will grow up to be a man or a woman of God even though your parents missed it. Don't follow your parents when they are going astray.

Don't follow elders who are going astray. Remove the log and you will see clearly. And you know what will happen when you see clearly? Your brother will come to you and say, brother, there is a speck in my eye, can you just blow it out? What a ministry you can have.

When they come to you, you don't have to even go to them even. People come to you for help. But you won't get that ministry if you go around with this log.

And the only way to get rid of this log is by a spirit of repentance. Do not judge others but judge yourself. There is a close connection between judging yourself and this repentant spirit.

Now keeping that in mind, let's turn to Luke chapter 11. Now we understand this verse a little better. Luke chapter 11 verse 34 which is a very well known verse.

The eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is clear, that means you got rid of your log, your whole body is full of light. But when it is bad, when it is bad that means you got a log in your eye, your whole body is full of darkness.

Now listen to this. Watch out that the light in you doesn't become darkness. How can the light in you become darkness? I'll tell you how.

Think of the first day you came to the church when you were a nobody, you were a sinner, you were defeated, you were frustrated. The first day you came to the church, nobody bothered about you, you were just there, you came and sat and you didn't even bother that somebody didn't greet you, you were happy to just come and sit there and go. In that day when you came the first day to the church, you criticized nobody.

You were so thankful that you could come to a place where you could hear such a wonderful message. That day your eye was clear. You didn't have so much knowledge that day but your eye was clear.

But you've sat in the church now 15-20 years and your knowledge has increased like anything and so has the size of your log. The light has become darkness even though knowledge has increased. And that is the reason for spiritual blindness in a lot of people.

The message of judge yourself is missing today. Where do you hear a message which says judge yourself? And yet the Bible says, before I go there, verse 36, if your whole body is full of light with no dark part in it, that means you're not here to judge a single person in the world. You leave that judgment to God.

If you're a father, of course you've got to judge your children. If you're an elder, you've got to judge the people in your congregation. But if you're not an elder and you're not a father, you've got nothing to do.

Your life is so wonderful. You don't have to judge nobody. If you're a supervisor in an office, you've got to judge the people who work under you.

You know, judgment is to be in the circle of your responsibility. If you're a supervisor in the office, you have to judge between, if two of your employees have a conflict, you have to sort it out as a judge. If you're a father and two of your sons or daughters have a conflict, you have to be a judge there.

If you're an elder brother and there are people in your church who are under your care, you have to be a judge for them. But if you're none of these, you're a very happy person. Why do you waste your time? You're not an elder, you're not a father, you're not a supervisor.

These are the people who mostly judge. The people who are not elders are the ones who usually judge the most. And they remain in darkness.

It's a tremendous tactic of the devil to destroy a Christian when he sees that his eye is clear. He sees this repentant sinner has come to this church with such a clear eye and he says, I've got to destroy this fellow's vision. And he points out this and he points out that and he points out this and the other person and this person and the other person and you become a busybody in the affairs of so many people.

At the end of twenty years, you've got such a lot of knowledge but no vision. It's a very sad state of affairs. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

But it says here, if you have no part dark, your whole body can be so full of light that a lot of people can come to you for help. And that light will get brighter and brighter. People from many places will come to you for help because you're help.

Because what you say blesses them. I mean Jesus' eye was so clear, he wouldn't even judge a woman caught in adultery. He wanted to forgive her.

The Pharisees, their eyes had become so full of logs, they would even judge a person for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day, forgetting the fact that the fellow was healed. And that didn't bother them. You know, they were so nitpicking about little, little things.

We've had cases like that in our church where some new visitor comes, some lady who was wearing ornaments, one of the first things some foolish, stupid sister will go to her and say, why are you wearing ornaments? These are the people who got logs in their eyes. All they can see is some little thing to find fault in others. Yeah? Unfortunately there'll always be such stumbling blocks.

Jesus once said, it is inevitable that there will be stumbling blocks. I read that in Matthew 18, so I realized that every church will have some people like this who are a nuisance. God says, well, woe unto those stumbling blocks.

I want to say to you, brothers and sisters, make sure you're not a stumbling block. And you'll never be one if you decide that from now on you're only going to judge yourself. It's not your business.

God has not appointed you as an elder. You don't have to steady the ark like Uzzah. Uzzah tried to steady the ark with a good attitude, but he didn't realize his boundary, and God killed him.

A lot of people get spiritually dead because they try to steady something God has not asked them to steady at all. God says, I can take care of it. I don't need your dirty hands to be put into my work.

And so, it says in 1 Peter chapter 4, in 1 Peter chapter 4 we read, that the mark of the house of God is in verse 17, it is a place where judgment of self comes first. Here it says, judgment must begin in the household of God. And if it begins with us first, so the church is the household of God, and that is a place where judgment of self begins first.

And I want to say a word also to those who are elder brothers, it's very easy for you, because you have responsibility for so many people, to stop judging yourself. And gradually you become blind also. A lot of elders become blind because they don't judge themselves.

And logs come in their eye. They don't see clearly. They don't see what other people can see very clearly.

And if people in your church don't have confidence in you, don't get upset with them. I want to give a little bit of advice to all of you who are elder brothers. If people in your church don't have confidence in you, don't get upset with them.

Ask yourself, why is it they don't have confidence in you? The problem, it could be with you. You can look at a speck in their eye, saying they are not submissive, like the Bible teaches. Jesus never went around saying, you got to submit to me, you got to submit to me.

No. People spontaneously had confidence in Jesus. And that's how it must be with you.

If your children don't have confidence in you as a father or mother, the problem is probably not with your children. The problem is with you. I would say that to almost any father and mother.

Don't assume that the problem is with your children. See all brothers act, they don't have any respect for me. Why? Why don't they have any respect for you? Have you ever considered the possibility that the fault could be with you? Or do you automatically assume? Daddy is always right.

Children are always wrong. Not necessarily. Elders are always right.

The people are always wrong. Not necessarily. No, no, no.

I know numerous instances where daddy and mommy are wrong. I know instances where I've been wrong as a father. I've been wrong as an elder.

It's good for us to humble ourselves and say, hey, I'm not perfect. The only one who is perfectly right always is God. So I need to live in a judgment of myself all the time, because I don't even want the beginning of a log in my eye.

I don't even want a splinter in my eye. Leave alone a log. I mean, if you take what I say seriously, I believe you'll find a difference in your life.

You'll begin to see clearly. You'll begin to see things when you read the Bible very clearly. You'll begin to see spiritual truth more clearly.

You'll begin to see yourself more clearly. It's all dependent on repentance. Judging yourself.

And it says here that when we judge ourselves first, that is the mark of the household of God. So if you want to build a church which is the household of God, beginning with the elder brother, you must judge himself. How often? Every day.

When should he stop judging himself? When he has become like Christ totally. And that's a long way off for all of us. It's certainly a long way off for me.

And God is my witness. There's no day that doesn't go by in my life without my judging myself. I don't need another person to point out something to me, because the Holy Spirit's pointing it out all the time.

Many times a day. Your life must be a life of continuous repentance. And the devil will say, hey, then your life will be very gloomy.

It's not. There's a close connection between a life of constant repentance and continuous joy. Let me ask yourself, if you're very dirty, and you go and have a shower, a bath, do you feel gloomy after that? Or do you feel fresh? But supposing you got dirty five times a day, because you're working in some type of job where you perspire all the time, and you take five showers, do you get depressed because of that? I've never heard anybody coming out of a shower depressed.

They sing in the showers. They're so happy, becoming clean. You see, taking a bath or taking a shower is the exact equivalent of cleansing yourself.

And we feel so happy when all the perspiration and dirt has gone off from our body, and if it got back again because my work makes me perspire in a hot climate, take another bath, take another shower. Take it a third time. Take it a fourth time.

And each time we are fresh. It's the secret of freshness. Cleanse yourself.

Repent. Repent. See, ask the Spirit of Truth to show you things in yourself.

You've seen enough things in other people. Show, ask God to show you things in yourself. Dear brother, sister, this is something I've spoken for so many years, and God is my witness.

I've practiced it, and I can tell you, God has shown me amazing things from scripture. When I've cleansed myself, my eyes become clear. I've seen amazing things about myself.

Inside areas, little, little areas which are unlike Christ, that I could cleanse myself. I mean, isn't it like discovering, hey, there's a dark patch on my hand. Let me get some soap and wipe it off.

It's great to discover it. It's exactly like that. You feel fresh.

So don't let the devil tell you that this life of always judging yourself and repentance is a gloomy life. It's not. It's the exact opposite.

All the gloominess and discouragement comes to people who don't cleanse themselves. It comes to people who judge others and criticize them. That's why you're gloomy.

I don't believe I'm going to be gloomy a single day of my life, because I've decided long, long ago that I will judge myself when I see things wrong in other people. Of course we will see things wrong in other people. We can't go around with our eyes and ears shut in the world.

Don't you think Jesus saw things wrong in other people? Where he encountered them, he said something. If it was none of his business, he left them alone. There was a man ruling in Rome called Caesar in Jesus' time.

There were probably a thousand things wrong with Caesar, but Jesus never said a word about him. It was none of his business. Do you ever find Jesus saying something about Caesar? He only once said, give Caesar what belongs to him.

He never criticized Caesar. Was it because nothing was wrong with Caesar? No. That was none of his business, how Caesar was behaving and how he was ruling all the countries, including Palestine.

It was none of his business. Whom did he rebuke? Peter, get behind me, Satan. You are interested in the things of man, not the things of God.

That was one of his closest co-workers. Did he see things wrong in Peter? He certainly did. What are we to do? We are not to go around the world imagining that we see nothing wrong.

Did Paul see things wrong in the Corinthian Christians? Sure. He saw so many things wrong and he corrected it because they were part of his responsibility. Do you ever find him correcting the Roman Christians? Read the book of Romans and see how much correction Paul gives them.

Zero. Why? Is it because the church in Rome was a perfect church? No. Because the church in Rome was not part of his responsibility.

Somebody else planted it. So that was that person's responsibility. It was like somebody else's children.

You may talk to them, advise them, but you don't correct them because they are somebody else's children. Paul knew his boundaries very clearly. You read his letter to the Colossians.

Does he write anything to correct them? Zero. Because he didn't plant the church in Colossia. They weren't children.

But look how he writes to the Corinthians and the Galatians. Boy, he speaks very hard. So I am not saying that we go around this world with our eyes shut and suddenly you see things wrong in your children.

I am not saying you shouldn't correct them, but recognize the sphere of your responsibility. Ask yourself, are you the father of this group or not? If they are your children, of course you have a responsibility to correct them. Whether physical children or spiritual children.

But if they are not your children, leave them to their father. If they are under the eldership of some other person in some other church, leave them alone. Don't go studying that art like Uzzah.

This is the principle. We judge within the sphere of our responsibility. The rest of the time we have only got to judge ourselves.

This is being realistic. You may have an opinion about a person and you say, well, it's my opinion, but it doesn't matter to me. I don't have to tell him anything because it's outside my sphere.

You may have an opinion about various people, various things in the world, but we don't have to go around concentrating on that and speaking about that because it's none of our business. We have to judge ourselves. So this is being realistic.

We'll have opinions, but we don't judge people. We don't have to go around passing judgment on them, but we do judge ourselves. Repent continuously.

So I want to show you another passage of scripture. In Mark's Gospel, Chapter 8. In Mark's Gospel, Chapter 8, we see a very interesting case. You know, Jesus didn't always have a standard method for healing people.

In Mark, Chapter 8, it says here, and they came to Bethsaida. Now, you have to read something about Bethsaida before we proceed. Let's turn, I'm going to come back to Mark, but I want you to turn to Matthew, Chapter 11, and verse 20.

In Matthew, Chapter 11, and verse 20 to 22, Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles were done because they did not, what? Repent. It's not because they didn't believe. It's because they did not repent.

So what is the purpose of the miracles to lead them to? Today, people say the purpose of miracles is to lead people to faith. But Jesus did miracles to lead people to repentance. And I'll tell you this, there are very few miracles done today to lead people to repentance.

I'm sure a lot of people there believe, but they didn't repent. And Jesus denounced them for not repenting. Now, which were some of the cities where he did most of the miracles? He said, Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! Aha! So Bethsaida is one of the places where a lot of miracles were done and they did not repent.

And he said, if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, which had occurred in you, they would have repented long ago. That's what he was looking for. If these miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon 500 years ago, they would have repented.

But you guys haven't repented. Now turn back to Mark 8. They came to Bethsaida. This is the village where people didn't repent.

And they brought a blind man to Jesus and pleaded with him to touch him. Now listen to what he does. He took the blind man and brought him outside the village and he healed him.

And after healing him, he said to him in verse 26, don't enter that village again. Imagine if the Lord took you somewhere and took you out of the place where you always lived and said, don't ever go back to that village again. But Lord, should I pick up my things from there? My suitcase is lying there.

Things are lying there. Tell somebody to send it. Don't ever enter that village again.

Do you know that Jesus told somebody never to go back to a village? You know why? Because there were a bunch of people who did not repent. And I would say to you, don't ever go to a church where they don't preach repentance on the basis of this passage. I would pull a person out of that church where they

don't repent and say, don't ever go to that church again.

I have no hesitation to say that. Because Jesus did it. You know, there are people even in our churches who say, oh, we're all one.

Everybody's preaching the same thing. You really think everybody's preaching the same thing? You're going to get a big surprise when Christ comes. I want to have nothing to do with preaching that does not include repentance.

I don't care how impressive a man is on the platform or on a television screen or what wonderful things he says. I want to listen, is he preaching repentance? If he's not preaching repentance, I'll pull people away from that. At least I'll tell them, don't waste your time listening to that man.

Oh, brother, but he's reaching hundreds of thousands. With what? With a message without repentance. That is another gospel.

Are you excited that hundreds of, that millions of people go to the Kumbh Mela and get their sins washed in the river Ganga? Are you excited because you see such crowds? What gospel is that? And what gospel is this without repentance? It is another gospel. Even if you take the name of Jesus, it is more deceptive because Christians will not be deceived by the Kumbh Mela, but they will be deceived by preaching in the name of Jesus. But they don't know.

There's a certain portion of the Bible torn out. Repentance is missing. Jesus pulled such a person away from Bethsaida and told him, I don't care what belongings you have there, ask somebody to send it somewhere else, but shift your residence immediately.

Don't go back to the village again. Go and find some other place. Now we want to look at this spiritually.

He took the blind man, verse 23, brought him outside the village. Why couldn't he heal him there? Is it because Jesus had no power? He could have healed people anywhere. That's a principle here.

He took him outside the village because these are the places where he did his maximum miracles. They believed but they didn't repent. They didn't repent.

Today a lot of people are seeing miracles and they are believing in Jesus. What is missing? Repentance. It's exactly the same as Bethsaida today and Chorazin.

They believe, oh Jesus can do wonderful things. He heals our sicknesses. Yes, but have you repented? The purpose of the miracles was to lead you to repentance and he denounced those places, those churches which saw miracles but didn't repent.

Where are the preachers today who will denounce believers who have seen miracles and have believed but don't repent? It's not popular. It's never been popular to follow Jesus. The missing message in Christendom.

Without repentance it's a great deception to think that you've understood anything of the gospel. And so, we see here, he spat on his eyes and said, do you see anything? He said, I don't see. It's the only case, the only case in the entire gospels where Jesus prayed and the fellow could not see.

Isn't that amazing? Is there any other case in scripture like that in the gospels where Jesus prayed and the fellow couldn't see still? That case was so bad. His condition was so bad because he lived in the midst of people who didn't repent. Like I said in the beginning, there's a very close connection between repentance and vision.

We saw that in Matthew 7. We saw that in Luke 11 and we see it here. Clear vision depends on continuous repentance. And if you see a miracle, have you experienced a miracle in your life? I hope it led you to repentance.

Then it accomplished something. If it didn't, the Lord will denounce you. You saw a miracle and you didn't repent.

Oh, but Lord, I believed. This is the deception going on in Christendom today. And the Lord would like to pull people out of there.

He didn't pull the whole village out. Why didn't he preach there in the village? All of you, let's get out of this village. No.

It's only the one who wants to see whom he pulls out. We don't go around telling people to leave churches. No, it's not our business.

But one individual may say, I want to see more clearly. And I say, you better leave that church where they don't preach repentance. Otherwise you'll die there spiritually.

You come here for an occasional conference to hear something because you say, oh, it's a good message Brother Zach preaches. I want to hear that. You can be blind as a bat all your life because the rest of the time you're listening to things which are not leading you to repentance.

And once in a while you come and hear something, it just stirs your mind and intellectually you're stimulated. You won't become spiritual. You got to live in a place where they're always preaching repentance.

I want to live in a church where they're always pointing out sin. Because I'll tell you this, there are multitudes of areas in my life where I'm not Christ-like. And I want brothers and sisters to get up in the anointing of the Holy Spirit and show Jesus to me.

I want to see Jesus in the church so that I can see myself more clearly and repent. I want to be in such a church. I long to see brothers and sisters who will get up in the pulpit and show me Jesus so that I can repent in my life and become a little more like Him.

They don't have to be great preachers. No. They just got to lift up Jesus in two minutes and I can get light on myself.

That's the place I want to be always. I don't want to be in any bedside up. No.

And it says here, Jesus asked him, do you see anything? He says, no. I see men and trees similar. Now you know that a man's really blind if he thinks a tree is a man or a man is a tree.

See, this is a picture of believers who cannot distinguish between an eternal soul and material things. A tree is a material thing. A human being is an eternal soul.

There are lots of believers today who cannot distinguish between an eternal soul and material things. And that's why they love material things so much and don't value eternal souls. They are in exactly the same condition as this half-healed blind man.

Yeah. They hear so many things in the Bible and meetings but they still love material things because men and trees are the same. Eternal souls and material things are just the same to them.

They've got a lot of knowledge. It's pathetic. You know what they need? A second touch.

But they need to be honest. Supposing this man had pretended, oh yeah, yeah, I can see Lord. I can see everything.

My preacher said that I must confess that I can see even when I can't see. The preacher told me to confess that I'm healed when I'm not healed. Jesus said, okay, you're healed, okay, go.

Thank God he was honest. I'll tell you something, whatever any preacher may tell you, when you can't see, just say you can't see. Jesus will love you for that.

When you're sick, just say you're sick. You prayed for me but I'm still sick. Okay, fine, we'll pray for you again.

Pray for you ten times. When Paul prayed for a thorn in the flesh, he didn't claim, oh, I'm healed. No.

He prayed, nothing happened. Lord, nothing happened. The Lord didn't say, come on, believe that it's taken place.

No. He prayed a second time. Still nothing happened.

He prayed a third time. Still nothing happened. He was down to earth honest and he said I never got rid of it.

Then the Lord told me, you need to keep that because that's good for you. It'll humble you. There are great dangers in testifying to a lie.

Misquoting scripture, a lot of preachers will tell you, say you're healed when you're not healed. Here is the clearest evidence that we don't have to do that. And you've got to come to Jesus and say, Lord, I have to admit that material things are more precious to me than eternal souls.

Lord, will you touch me again a second time so that I can clearly see the difference between things that are eternal and things that are temporal. A tree is a temporal thing. A human being is an eternal thing.

How many of you can say that you see clearly between things that are eternal and things that are only temporal? If you did see the difference, you'd live for the things that are eternal. What you need is a second touch. And that second touch will come when you repent.

When you honestly acknowledge, Lord, I have to admit, material things mean so much to me. They are not as precious as the eternal things. And if you're honest, the Lord will touch you again.

And you will see clearly. And you will say, oh, that's a man and that's a tree. This is eternal.

This is only temporal. It'll be as black and white. Isn't that wonderful when that day comes in your life? But you've got to be honest.

That's all you've got to be. You've just got to admit. Don't pretend that you're living for the things of eternity when you're living for the things of time.

We have to repent of it. Then again, the Lord touched him and he was restored and he began to see everything, verse 25, everything clearly. I say, Lord, touch me a hundred times if necessary, but I want to see everything clearly.

And if I'm not healed by a second touch, I want a third one. And I want a fourth one. Maybe I need a little more than this blind man.

Maybe I need a hundredth touch till I see everything clearly. That is material, temporal. This is eternal.

And this is what I'm going to live for. That is earthly. This is heavenly.

This is what I'm going to live for. That'll be true in your life if you stop fellowshiping with people who don't repent. And the Lord said, if you want to be blind again, go back there.

Don't ever go back there. Otherwise what little light you've got now, you'll lose it by the time you go and spend another six months there in Bethsaida. You'll lose whatever light you've got here.

I'm sure this blind man listened and it changed his life. There are many others who don't listen and they don't get healed. I want to show you the word that Job said in the book of Job.

You know, Job was arguing back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. And I've seen believers like that who'll argue back and forth and back and forth and back and forth and after some time I give up. I say it's no use telling them anything because they just don't get light on themselves.

Job just did not get light on himself. Elihu finally said, okay, I give up. I'll tell you honestly, I've given up with some people because they don't get light on themselves.

Then God was merciful to Job and God revealed himself to Job. And you know what happened? Job says in chapter 42, Lord, verse 5, till now I only heard about you from other people, from other preachers, but now my eye sees you. I see you Lord.

And what happens when I see the Lord? I repent. That's what Job said. Oh Lord, all these sins this fellow was trying to convict me, convict me about, convict me about.

Oh, I couldn't see it. Now I see you Lord. And I take back everything I said.

I know I'm such a terrible sinner and such a self-righteous person. I repent. I put my hand on my mouth.

He says in chapter 40, verse 4, I put my hand on my mouth and I'll never say anything again. Chapter 40, verse 5, 4 and 5. I've spoken. I will not answer anything.

I've got nothing more to say. Lord, I am a sinner. I repent.

No preacher, could make Job see that he was a sinner. When he saw the Lord, it happened in a moment. What hours and hours and hours of preaching could not do.

And that is why I believe the great need in our life is to see Jesus more clearly. That's why it says let us run the race looking unto Jesus. I'll tell you honestly, in my life through many, many years now, it is the vision of Jesus that has made me repent more than anything else.

The sermon, yeah, you get a little light on it. It's like somebody pointing out something. You know, there are some people who are specialists in this.

They think about some clever thing to say, very subtle, and hope to expose sin in people by, you know, there are people with very clever brains like Eliphaz and Zophar and Bildad, all these clever preachers you read of in the book of Job. They bring out some very subtle thing, very often what they don't practice themselves and bring out some sin, preachers, elders, to expose in the congregation. And if you know, people feel they got convicted by this thing I gave light, temporary.

It'll disappear in a few days. But if you lift up Jesus, which is much more difficult, and you don't have to be clever. You have to see Jesus in your heart and lift up his, the way he lived, his pure, unselfish, humble way he lived.

That, when people see Jesus, the change in them will be permanent. That's what we see in the book of Job. True repentance comes not through a lot of preaching, but through seeing Jesus more clearly.

Oh Lord, I see, clearly I see. And I repent. I repent in dust and ashes.

Dust and ashes. That's what Job said. And when he did that, it says here in verse 10, the Lord restored the fortunes of Job and increased all that he had two-fold.

I want the Lord to increase what I have spiritually two-fold. I'll tell you what I want more than anything two-fold. A double portion of his spirit like Elisha asked for.

Two-fold. Double of what I have, the anointing and the power. Where does it come from? Repentance.

Repentance. I want to show you another passage. In Revelation in chapter 2 and 3, five times, five of the churches were not in a good condition, and the elders were not in a good condition.

And the Lord says to those churches, repent, repent, repent. To the elders, He says, repent. And these letters were read out publicly in the church.

Can you imagine if you're an elder brother sitting in a church and some messenger comes from John the Apostle, and he reads out to the elder of the church in Ephesus, the Lord says, repent. And the guy says, hey listen, why can't you tell me that privately? I don't know, the Lord told me to read it out in the church. It's an arrogant attitude that makes us feel, oh, I must be given a little respect.

That's what Saul said to Samuel. Hey, don't say anything publicly. It's privately, tell me, I'm going to repent, I'll do it privately.

Samuel said, nothing doing. When David was not like that, when Nathan told him to repent, he said, I don't care if everybody knows about it, I have to repent. If you have a sense of, hey, hey, why are they exposing me publicly? You need to repent more than anybody else.

The Lord said, read it out in the churches, and not only in this church, go and read it out in that church in Thyatira, that this fellow in Ephesus needs to repent. It's amazing when you read those, it was repent,

repent, repent, repent. And if you read through the whole book of Revelation, you read seven times it says repent, and five times it says they did not repent, they did not repent, they did not repent.

That's how the message of the Bible ends, with a call to repentance, and many did not repent. That means they did not turn from what they knew to be wrong. Repentance is gradual and progressive because at each stage, for example, twenty years ago I did not know that certain things were wrong, which I know today.

One year ago, I'm honest now, one year ago, I did not know certain things were wrong, which I now discover was wrong. So my life is progressing, because I see certain things which I'm getting rid of, mostly in secret, mostly things which nobody else knows about, we're not talking about public sins, those we see right at the beginning of our Christian life, but little little areas which are not exactly the way Jesus would do it. I hope you're discovering such things in your life.

Our life is to be a continuous cleansing, till the day Jesus comes again. You hardly hear this message anywhere today. And that's why so many Christians are defeated by sin, they don't have clear vision, they're backslidden, so many elders backslide, do so many wrong things, because they're not living in continuous repentance.

And I want to say to all of you, walk on this path of continuous repentance from today. Let's bow our heads before God. You only receive the message in your mind, whether it sinks to your heart, whether you've seen Jesus speaking to the church saying repent or not, I don't know.

But if you've seen it, it'll change your life. Humble yourself. Don't worry if somebody corrected you publicly, is your humiliation more serious than sin? What humiliation is worse than sin? Absolutely nothing.

You're worried about being humiliated, not worried about sin. No wonder you never get free from your sin. Say, Lord, humiliate me anywhere, I'm not bothered.

I want to be free from sin in my life. I want to turn, I want to see you more clearly, Lord Jesus. Help me.

I believe the Lord will help us, because He hates sin. And He'll certainly help you if He sees that you want to hate it too. Heavenly Father, help us to walk in the light, and to get light on ourselves.

We know that you will cleanse us in the blood of Jesus, and make us a little more like Jesus every day. Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

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