

Security In God As Our Loving Father

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a secure relationship with God as the foundation for healthy relationships with others. It highlights the need to view God as a loving father, to seek forgiveness and repentance, and to avoid insecurity, murmuring, and complaining. The speaker encourages calling God 'Dad' to foster a deeper sense of security and love.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9, Romans 8:15, Genesis 40:6, Philippians 2:14, John 20:22

Topics: "Secure Relationship with God", "Healthy Relationships with Others"

Description

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Transcript

As I've observed believers through many years, I've seen a lot of problems that there are in relationships between people which prevents us from living like a happy family either at home or in the church is because in that vertical relationship with God there is an insecurity and where there is insecurity it leads to a lot of problems on the horizontal level jealousy, strife, competition. The problem is not there. The problem is an insecure relationship with God.

That means I'm not so sure that God really loves me. I'm not so sure that God is a loving father. I'm not so sure that God has forgiven me all the blunders and mistakes I made in my life.

If you feel like that you may think that's only a vertical problem. I'm not so sure that God's forgiven me everything but it leads to a lot of problems in the horizontal relationship with other people. So to build a good relationship at home and in the church it's very important that we make sure the vertical relationship with God, our fellowship with God is clear.

For example, how many times do I have to confess a sin to God before he forgives me? Supposing I told a small lie. Okay, confess it once. What if you committed adultery? Do you have to confess it 500 times before he forgives you? More important than how many times you confess it is whether you have repented of it.

Repentance is more important than confession. If you have really repented, really truly broken over your sin, you have to confess your sin to God only once. He's got good hearing.

He hears you. But you know this is the feeling we have that the more we confess it serious sins must be confessed numerous times. Smaller sins just once is due.

We have so many ideas from false religions. These are the teaching of false religions and there's a lot of teaching of false religions in Christianity among Christians because we have our own ideas of what God is like. And the other thing you know in the olden days I've heard of Roman Catholic monks who used to do a thing called flagellation, self-flagellation.

That means they would take a whip and hit themselves. You know I spoke yesterday about judging oneself. That's not judging yourself.

You know to hit yourself and make your body suffer because you did something wrong or to show God you're sorry. I say no. Jesus suffered enough.

There's no need for you to go over all over that again. And it's a false teaching. It's a wrong concept that I can take a little bit of the punishment for my sin.

You know it's not enough that Jesus died on the cross. I gotta whip myself. And we may not take a rope to or a leather whip to whip ourselves.

We can whip ourselves in our mind. You know keep on saying you're good for nothing. You're good for nothing.

You're good for nothing. You know I've heard of parents and fathers who tell their children you're good for nothing. You're good for nothing.

You're good for nothing. They turn out good for nothing. You must never tell your children that.

I mean you yourself may be good for nothing but don't tell your children that. They may turn out better than you. We're not here to condemn others.

We must not condemn ourselves. There's a great verse in John 3 17 which says God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world. But the world through him might be saved.

That has many applications. If we confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive us. And I don't have to keep condemning myself.

If I recognize that in my flesh there is nothing good and I slipped up and I ask God to forgive me and if I repented properly I need to confess only once like I said. Of course if you haven't repented then even a thousand confessions won't do the job. The important thing is not whether I have spoken a word saying Lord I did something wrong but have I turned around from.

Turned around doesn't mean I've overcome sin. There's a difference between repenting of a sin and overcoming sin. Overcoming sin may take time but repentance is an act of a moment.

Repentance is just like in the military. There's a command called about turn. You're facing one way and you turn around.

That's repentance. A change of mind towards sin and God accepts that. If I haven't repented then any amount of confession doesn't solve the problem.

But if I have repented I confess once and I shouldn't keep on condemning myself. And there is a lot of that because of insecurity that I'm not so sure whether God really heard me when I said that. If he was sincere he did hear you.

God is a loving father. He there's no you know this it's a heathen idea that God loves to torture us and make us suffer and you know weep and cry and all types of things. No amount of tears will cleanse my sin.

You've got to remember that. I mean tears may come because I'm sorry for what I did but any number of tears won't cleanse one sin of mine. It's only the blood of Jesus that cleanses sin.

Don't ever forget that. And any amount of sorrow doesn't confer and doesn't cleanse sin. Sorrow is natural if it comes naturally because I did something wrong it's okay but I it's very very important to have a secure relationship with our heavenly father.

It makes a lot of difference in our horizontal relationship with other people. A lot of hitting out at other people with words and all is because of an insecure relationship with our heavenly father. There's a verse in the Psalms which says those who worship idols become like them.

You become like the God you worship. I've discovered that through the years. If you think God is a policeman who is just waiting to catch you having violated some law and you always picture God as coming behind you with his light shining to make you stop and pull you over.

You're going to treat other people like that. You're going to treat your children like that. You're going to treat other believers like that who you have any authority over because the authority you are working under you think he's like that.

He's not. You know in the old covenant we read there was a veil that blocked off the most holy place of the tabernacle. The tabernacle had three parts and the most holy place was blocked off with a veil or a curtain and that by God was saying you can't come into my presence.

Nobody could come into God's presence because sins were not cleansed until Jesus shed his blood. All the blood of bulls and goats were only symbolic. The actual cleansing of humanity's sins took place on Calvary.

Till that happened everything was really a picture of what would happen and until Jesus shed his blood and rose again our sins were not forgiven and so man could not enter into God's presence. That was the meaning of that blocked veil and when Jesus died it says that veil was torn when he said it is finished. Then the door was open but because there was that veil people didn't know what God was like.

Was it a strict policeman sitting inside that veil? Was it a very severe judge? When Jesus came he rent that veil and showed people that it was a loving father and even though he did so much to try and convince his disciples, he used examples like if your son asks you for bread, will you give him a stone? If he asks you for an egg, will you give him a scorpion? And if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children and what he meant by that was the best of you fathers is evil compared to God. Now we're not evil fathers and many of us are very good fathers but it's been a great... I think I've tried to be a very good father to my sons but I read that verse and I say Lord I who have tried to be good I'm evil compared

to you. That means God's goodness is so much more than the best father on the earth.

I don't know whether you believe that. Some of you have had good fathers who cared for you, provided for you, did so much for you, sacrificed for you. Multiply that by a billion or trillion and you get an understanding what God is like and never never lose that concept.

God is a loving father and if I lose that I should never lose that understanding. Jesus tried so much to convince people your heavenly father cares for you. Your heavenly father wants to give you the kingdom and I found in my own life that even victory over sin came only after I realized that.

I'll tell you a verse that I discovered after 16 years of reading the bible. You think is that some verse hidden somewhere which is not in the most translation. No it's not hidden anywhere but I never noticed it.

It's John's gospel chapter 17. For myself it may not be the verse that transformed your life but for my life it transformed my life completely. For 16 years I lived as an up and down defeated Christian you know like a child learning to walk, wanting to walk definitely but always stumbling and falling, stumbling and falling and getting up.

I never lay down permanently. If I would fall I'd confess it, get up and walk, get up and walk and I'd get discouraged so often because of those frequent failures. But when I understood and then I realized it was because this truth I hadn't been gripped by.

John 17 23 one of the things that Jesus prayed was this is a prayer of Jesus to the father. Father I want these people whom I want them to be I in them and you in me and in the middle of that verse is I want the world to know one that you sent me and that you love them even as you have loved me. Now there are many verses in the entire bible that tell us God loves us many verses but this is the only verse that I have discovered in the whole bible and there are more than 31 000 verses in the bible and this is the only verse I discovered which tells us how much God loves us.

If you find another one like that let me know. I haven't found it. That God loves me as much as he loved Jesus and that's a fantastic statement.

When you look at the love the father had for Jesus there was never a moment when he didn't love him and he didn't care for him. He didn't provide for him. He protected him when he was a helpless baby from Herod's soldiers.

He protected him when he the people in the synagogue got furious with him in Nazareth and wanted to throw him over the cliff and so many times when soldiers came to capture him they couldn't capture him and the only reason given in the bible was his hour had not yet come. It's amazing. They couldn't touch him just because God's time for him to die had not come and Herod's soldiers couldn't kill him.

Nobody could throw him over a cliff. He couldn't die of cancer. You think there was cancer in those days in the first century? Sure.

I believe all diseases were there. Jesus couldn't. He never got any infection that killed him.

He lived on earth as a man because his hour had not come. Always the answer is his hour had not come and when I understand, when I understood that God loves me as he loved Jesus, I said well that applies to me as well. That means he cares for me as he cared for Jesus.

It's very difficult for us to believe that because you know it we think that we have to come to a certain level before God loves us. When are you ever going to reach a level where you feel worthy for God to love you? I don't think I'll ever reach that at any time on this earth. He loves me as I love Jesus and when you think of those about whom he was talking about here, he wasn't talking about you and me.

It applies to you and me but at that time he was referring to those disciples. Those 11 disciples he had. Father, the whole prayer is related to those 11 disciples.

Father, I want the world to know that you love these 11 disciples of mine just like you love me and ask yourself this question. Are you better than at least those 11 disciples? Have you denied the Lord sometime? Are you fighting with others to see who's the leader? These are the things they fought about and the father loved them. It's not because they were perfect.

It's because the father is a God of love. For example, that verse which says, it's challenged me many times. In Matthew 5 it says, you must be like your father and what does he say there about him? Look at that verse if you're not familiar with it.

Matthew chapter 5, verse 44, I'll say love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. So that, why should you do that? So that you can be sons of your father in heaven. He makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

You know those days people were farmers and you know farmlands need sun and rain. So here are two people who got farms. One's a God-fearing farmer who prays every day with his family in the morning and prays concerning his crops and prays when he sows the seed and he's regular in the synagogue and God-fearing man next door to him is an atheist who says, I don't believe there's a God.

And you know the rain falls equally on both farms? Isn't that amazing? Would you do that if you were God? Or would you think you should teach that fellow a lesson by not sending any rain on his farm? Don't let the sun shine on his. God's not like that. Do you believe in a God like this? Who is good to evil people.

He makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good person equally. And he makes the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous equally. And the Lord says be like that.

It's quite a challenge. And he says in verse 46, if you only love those who love you, what reward do you have? That's not a great thing because even the sinners love those who love them. The communists love those who love them.

You're not better than them if you love only those who love you. And if you greet only your brothers, you're not better than others. But even the heathen people greet those who greet them.

Try greeting someone who doesn't want to greet you. Then you see whether you really want to be like Jesus or not. See, in our human nature, one of the things that's found very deeply in us, which can cause a lot of problems, is the desire for revenge.

Now I want you to see Romans 12, which tells us something about what our attitude should be towards somebody who has really harmed us. Romans chapter 12 says in verse 19, never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it's written, vengeance is mine, I will repay it, says the Lord. See, vengeance is the act of a judge.

And we are not the judge. God is the judge of the whole universe. I have no right to judge people.

I have no right to pass judgment on people. I can discern. Discernment is different.

We must discern. The world is full, I mean, Christendom is full of a lot of crooked people and if you don't have discernment, they'll fool you outright. So we need discernment, but we don't judge.

God is a judge. And therefore, it says here, I must never take revenge. I must not wish evil on someone who's done evil to me.

In fact, it says here in verse 20, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him a drink. So not only I don't take revenge, you know, someone can read this verse like this, well God has said, verse 19, it's written there, vengeance is mine, I will reap this as the Lord, and our attitude can be say, yeah Lord, reap him.

Really let him have it. But that's not, you know, that's the spirit of vengeance too. You may not want to do it yourself and say, God, just let him have it.

Teach him a lesson for the way he treated me. That attitude will destroy you. And to correct that, he says, if your enemy is hungry, don't wish that God, God will take care of what he has to do.

He will judge. But our attitude is to forgive. You know, for example, let me give you an example.

When Jesus hung on the cross, it's the worst possible thing that, the worst crime that any human being did to another human being on the face of this earth. What is it? The crucifixion of Jesus Christ. I remember once when a brother came and told me about all the evil things people are doing to him.

I said, have they crucified you yet? They said, no. I said, then you've got a long way to go. Don't complain about people doing things to you.

They haven't crucified you yet, man. You've got a long way to go before you become like Jesus. They crucified him and he said, Father, forgive them.

Now, those people who were, who crucified him, did Jesus forgive them or not? Absolutely. 100%. But in the day of judgment, those fellows are going to be judged by God for killing Jesus.

They're not going to escape that. Because there are, sin is in two directions. See, there are certain sins which are only in the vertical direction.

For example, if I have a dirty thought, I'm not harming you. I'm only, it's only between me and God. That's only one direction sin.

But if I've hurt you in any way, for example, not just crucified you, if I've gossiped against you behind your back, I think a lot of believers don't think that is a sin. It is. It's sinning against somebody.

It's not killing him. It's killing his reputation. It's killing a person's reputation.

Isn't it some type of murder? It is. You're murdering his reputation by speaking evil about him. And that horizontal sin, it's a sin.

That I have to confess to God and if I hurt you, I have to confess it to you. Now, if you don't know about it, then it's better I don't confess to you because that'll cause more problems. You know that.

But if I, if you know that I hurt you, I have to confess it to you as well. Otherwise, I can't be forgiven. So, when Jesus said, Father, forgive them, He was forgiving that horizontal aspect of sin, forgiven.

But the vertical aspect, they were still guilty. They were still guilty before God for killing Jesus Christ. And that could never be forgiven till they repented.

And they did not repent. And the Lord gave the Jews 40 years after that because, you know, they cried out there saying, His blood be on us and on our children, they said. And it happened like that.

40 years later, God gave them 40 years to repent. They didn't. And He scattered them for 2,000 years.

He scattered them all over the world. So, God does judge. It's not my business.

But I'm not here waiting for God to judge. My duty, as long as I live on the earth, is to be good to the people who are evil to me. To wish the best.

Never to wish that some calamity will come on them or their children or they lose their job or they get some sickness. No, that's unbecoming of a Christian. And why do we have those attitudes? Because we think that we're so good.

You know, if God had dealt with us like that, we'd have been dead long ago. Think of all the wretched attitudes we had in our life and the wretched things we've committed. And God's been so merciful to us and forgiven us.

That's why Jesus said you must forgive others exactly like God forgave you. Forgive us our sins as we forgive them that trespass against us. Because God's forgiven us so much.

The Bible says, be imitators of God and forgive us. God has forgiven you. So, that's why if we want to forgive others, we have to meditate on how much God has forgiven us.

I don't know whether we ever take any time. I take time frequently in my life to think back and to think of how much God has forgiven me. Two results come from that.

Jesus said, he who is forgiven much, loves much. He who is forgiven little, loves little. Now, I don't believe there's a human being on earth who's been forgiven little.

But there are people who think they've been forgiven little and so they love little. But people who recognize that they love much. I would translate those words of Jesus like this.

He who recognizes that he's been forgiven much, will love much. But he who thinks he's been forgiven little, will love little. So, whenever you say, Lord, you've forgiven me so much, you're obligated to love the Lord more than others.

If you think you've been forgiven more than others, you love the Lord more than others. When Paul said, I believe I'm the chief of sinners. He said that towards the end of his life.

He said, I'm the chief of all the sinners in the world. I think there's no sinner greater than me in the world. Really, Paul? Well, you better love the Lord better than everybody else.

And he did. He showed by his love of life of sacrifice, how much he loved the Lord. How much he is willing to give up for the Lord.

Because he felt, God's forgiven me so much. He felt, I don't think there's a man on earth who's been forgiven as much as me. So, I see there that the more we realize how much God has forgiven us, the more we respond in love saying, Lord, I want to live a life of sacrifice for you.

And it will translate into our relationship with others as well. That'd be very, very merciful towards others. So, in our security, in our relationship with God, is the secret of being free from jealousy, strife and the spirit of revenge.

We've got to be very careful and if you find something of that in your heart, you need to cleanse yourself. Think of somebody who harmed you. You can think of him right now, him or her.

Somebody who really did something bad to you. I'm sure all of us, anybody who's more than four years old, somebody on the other world has hurt him. I'm sure a lot of people in your life have hurt you.

What is your attitude towards them? People have hurt you or hurt your children or spread stories about you or spread stories about your daughter or son or something. And what do you think of them today? I've been serving the Lord for many years and you serve the Lord, you're the target of the devil all along. Many people have harmed me and I've always checked myself.

Lord, what is my attitude towards them? Do I wish even the slightest evil towards any of them? Do I wish calamity or sickness or judgment or death on them or their children or any such thing? I want to be free from that because if I have that, I'm evil. Then I don't have the attitude towards them that God has towards me. And that can happen even in a church.

So it's very important to always remember how much God has forgiven me. I must never feel condemned about my past because I've been cleansed completely. The blood of Jesus has cleansed me and it's very important to remember, you know, to have a secure relationship with God.

It's very important to remember what it says in Hebrews 8 and verse 12 that the Lord says, There's sins and iniquities I will remember no more. I didn't know that the day I was converted. And I used to condemn myself a lot because the early years after my conversion because I was aware of my sins.

I was aware of my failures. I'd asked the Lord to forgive me and I believe He'd forgiven me. But I always felt that when I came before God, He'd be looking at me and say, yeah, I know what you did 10 years ago.

And it's made my relationship with God insecure because I always felt He was looking at me like that. And I remember once, it's so vivid to me, I was standing on the deck of my ship. I was in the navy those days and I remember that day when I was standing on the deck on the ship and suddenly this verse came to my heart which I'd read in scripture.

I will not remember your sins anymore. And my life was different from that day as far as assurance and God would not hold my past against me. Do you have that assurance? Are you absolutely sure? I mean 100% sure that God says, I will not remember your past against you.

If you're sure on that, I tell you it'll change your horizontal relationship with people as well. Because when God is so good to you, you will learn to be good to others. I believe that's the secret and whenever I see

people hitting out at others, I know this guy is not secure in his relationship with God.

That's the problem. So it's very, very important that this, like I was saying yesterday, the horizontal relationship is very dependent on the vertical. You must be 100% sure and I never get tired of emphasizing this, that God says, I will not remember your sins anymore.

That means I look back over the past and there's not one sin that God remembers. And I'll tell you something, it's not, he doesn't say, we must read it carefully, I read it exactly. Has God forgotten my sins? No, that's not what he says.

He says, I will not remember. I mean, how can God forget my sins and I myself don't forget it? Is his memory worse than mine? And I'll tell you another reason. There's a story Jesus said about a man who was forgiven something like 10 billion dollars, if I'd converted into this currency.

A king forgave somebody a debt of 10 billion dollars and said, okay, forgiven, you don't have to go to jail. And that fellow went out and caught somebody by the throat who owed him some 10-20 dollars or something and said, pay up. And got him imprisoned for not paying his debt.

And when the king heard it, he said, get that servant back here. He said, how much did I forgive you? Oh, 10 trillion or whatever it is. And you couldn't forgive that guy 10-20 dollars? Okay, I put all this debt back upon your head.

You got to pay up. Go to jail until you can pay up. Where would he be impossible for him to pay up? He was in jail for the rest of his life.

You read that in Matthew chapter 18. At the end of that parable, Jesus said these words. At the end of that parable, he said, in the last verse of Matthew 18, he said, so will my heavenly father do to you if you don't forgive others from your heart.

Got it? So will my heavenly father do to you if you don't forgive people from your heart for that trivial thing. And everything a human being does to you is trivial compared to the trillions of sins. God's forgiven you.

That's the meaning of that parable. That whole parable is there from verse 21 onwards. And what is it that, how did the Lord, the Lord did, the king did not just put him in jail.

I want you to see here. I mean, initially he was just going to jail for the crime. But when he didn't forgive someone, he was not only going to be put in jail.

It says, in the jail, the Lord appointed, verse 34, the king appointed torturers, torturers to torture him in the jail. And it's in that connection the Lord says, verse next verse, so will my heavenly father do to you. That means God will allow the demons to harass you, to trouble you at night in your dreams, and to trouble you during the day with all types of fears and threats.

And the demons will harass you in your mind. And why? Because you wouldn't forgive somebody. So in our horizontal relationships, it's very, very, very important to forgive.

Even if you're only interested in yourself, I'd say forgive is the best thing you can do for yourself. So then Jesus spoke such strong warnings against an unforgiving attitude. Let me show you Matthew 6 and verse 14 and 15.

If you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly father will forgive you. But if you don't forgive others, Matthew 6, 15, your father will not forgive your sins, your transgressions. Now he's not talking about God.

He doesn't say God will not forgive. Your father, your father. So what are you? A child of God.

He's not talking about unbelievers here. Jesus would never refer to an unbeliever and say your father. There he would say God will not forgive you.

But here he's talking about, I told you earlier that the Sermon on the Mount was spoken to the disciples. And he looks at his disciples, those 12 of them, and says your father will not forgive you if you don't forgive somebody else. Now my question is, can you go to heaven if your sin is not forgiven? Supposing you die without your sins being forgiven, is there a second chance somewhere after death, like the Roman Catholics say in purgatory or someplace where before you go to hell God gives you one more chance to repent and ask forgiveness? There isn't.

Hebrews 9.27 says it's appointed unto men once to die and after that judgment. That's all. There's nothing in between.

So let me take an example now. Supposing you lived a very good life, say for 40 years as a believer, good life. And then in the last year of your life you become so bitter against somebody who treated you really badly.

And you don't forgive him. And you die. Tell me, where will you go? Most believers will say, well you lived 40 years of good lives so God will take him to heaven.

Ah, that is the religion of the heathen. That in the final day God will take a balance and put all your good deeds on one side and all your bad deeds on the other side. And the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds.

You go to heaven. The bad deeds outweigh the good deeds. You go to hell.

Which teaching is that? Do you find that anywhere in the Bible? That's heathenism. And yet you may be believing that unconsciously. That if I've lived a good life for 40 years and just I happen to die without having forgiven somebody, somehow the other God will take me to heaven because I lived a good life for 40 years.

And you don't realize how heathen your concept is. I believe with all my heart, and I've taught this to people, that if you don't forgive others, brother, it doesn't matter how long you lived a good life. You will not be forgiven.

It's absolute and clear. And I had a living example of that with a man who came to India as a missionary. He was an Indian man who came from another country.

A Hindu convert who was a missionary in India for 20 years serving the Lord. He was very famous in India. And we were a small group, a big unknown despised group as a church in our home.

And one day, lo and behold, this famous man came to our church. Now we're wondering why in the world he came. He says, no brother Zach, I heard some of your messages and I felt God wanted me to come here.

And he came regularly off and on, off and on for all our meetings and for two years. And then he became seriously sick and he was about to die. And he called me over and I went to his hospital bed where he was dying.

And he said, brother Zach, I want to tell you something. I served the Lord for 20 years in India sincerely. But so many pastors in this country told lies about me and spread all types of false stories about me and I had such bitterness against them for 20 years.

And it's only when I came to your church two years ago that I heard for the first time, for the first time that if I don't forgive those people, God will not forgive me. And he says, I took it seriously. And he said to me, I'm on my deathbed now.

But I wanted to call you to tell you, thank you for teaching me that. I have forgiven everybody. I'm ready to meet my savior.

And he died. I'll never forget that. Then I knew why God brought him to our church.

It was to hear one message which he had never heard in any other church he went to for 20 years. And yet it was written plainly in scripture. And he went into the kingdom of God.

And he took it seriously. He knew that all his fame and all his service for God wouldn't count for anything if he hadn't forgiven someone. It's a very serious thing, dear brothers and sisters.

I find that a lot of preachers don't tell you the truth because they don't want to hurt you. I'd rather hurt you and send you to heaven than keep you happy and send you to hell any day. So our security in our heavenly, in our relationship with our heavenly father is very very important.

If you want to build good relationships with each other at home and if you have tension with your wife, don't think the problem is there. The problem is in your insecure relationship with your heavenly father. If you have tension with your husband, the problem is an insecure relationship with your heavenly father.

The more secure you are in your relationship with your heavenly father, it will not disturb you if people think less about you. Are you disturbed if people think you're a nobody, you're good for nothing? It won't disturb you because your security is in your heavenly father. Do you go to a church expecting people to esteem you and respect you? What if nobody esteems you or respects you in your church? What if people treat you like dirt? It doesn't make a difference to me because I'm secure in my heavenly father.

So that verse, John 17 23 made a tremendous difference in my life that God loves me as he loved Jesus. Jesus was so secure in his life because he knew his father loved him. It didn't matter if nobody else in the world loved him and I can honestly say I've come to that place.

I don't care one bit if nobody in the world loves me. I can say that before God because through the years the security and the love of God has become so real to me that I realize the only thing that matters is that God loves me. That's all.

So I don't have any demands on others. Do you have a demand that other people should love you? That other people should be considerate towards you and you know not act in an inconsiderate way towards you? I have no such demand. Everybody is welcome to treat me without any consideration and ignore me or despise me or push me down and put me last in the list.

It's perfectly okay. It will not change my attitude towards you one bit. I'll tell you honestly because I'm secure in my heavenly father and therefore I can have a very good relationship with good people, bad people, everybody, then people in the church who are different, different types.

It makes absolutely no difference. It is the answer and the psychology won't teach you this. It's not by techniques that we build up relationships.

It's security in our heavenly father's love for us. So remember what I taught yesterday as well that that vertical arm of the cross is always bigger than the horizontal arm. Our relationship with one another, fellowship with one another is very dependent on our clear relationship with God.

That means I keep my conscience always clear. I rejoice in God's complete forgiveness. I never condemn myself, condemn myself because I fail.

I say, Lord, you've forgiven me and I'm not going to hit myself and hit myself because I did something wrong. Jesus took enough for me on the cross. I don't have to judge and punish myself anymore.

Now the reason I repeat this is because I'm absolutely convinced even though I preached on this for so many years that people somehow don't get it. They still remain insecure in their relationship with their father and that is the cause of a lot of problems in their family life, with their children, a lot of problems in their relationships with others in the church. You find it difficult to forgive somebody, wish evil for someone.

Everything is because that vertical relationship is faulty. So I'll never get tired of repeating it. I'll keep repeating it till the end of my life because I know it'll help somebody to come into a right relationship with people because they have a right relationship with God.

So total forgiveness, the way God forgave us, we are told to forgive others the way God forgave us. I told you yesterday that in the relationship that Jesus had with me there was a cross on which he died so that he could have fellowship with me and that applies the other way too. I cannot love Jesus really if there is no cross on which I die to myself and my relationship with him and the same way horizontally.

I cannot have fellowship with another person. I can't have fellowship with my wife. I can have friendship without paying any price but if I want fellowship with my wife, what the Bible calls fellowship, there has to be a cross on which I die and it's not a once for all thing, it's every day and vice versa.

She's got to have a cross on which he dies and the same with me with every person in the church. If I want to have a right relationship with anybody there has to be a cross between me and him on which I die and I don't have a demand that he should also die on that. No, the moment you have a demand, you know you haven't died.

Do dead persons have any demands on anyone? No, you may have had demands as long as you're alive but the moment he dies demands are gone and if you have demands on others that other people should behave like this towards you or treat you like this or treat you with respect, you know particularly as I find a lot of preachers particularly after they get a little famous and a little big in their own eyes, they begin to expect that others should treat them in a certain way and care for them in a certain way, provide for them in various ways and so many ideas that many many preachers, most preachers in the world are like that and the moment you get any crazy idea like that, you'll never be able to be a servant of God. Jesus never had any such demand on others that you must care for me or provide for me and it's wonderful to see examples in the Bible where he didn't expect that. That's why he was so much at rest.

I love to show this one example. In John chapter 7, we read about Jesus preaching in the temple. He had traveled all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, which is about 70 miles, which means he must have walked about three days.

Sometimes you read in the Bible, Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem but remember it was 70 miles. It took three days for him to walk there and he went there and he preached in the temple, the whole of John chapter 7. He speaks about, it says in verse 37, he stood and cried out, if any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Now at the end of that preaching, we read here in the last verse of John chapter 7, verse 53, everybody went to their own house and nobody invited Jesus home.

There was a visiting preacher who had come from 70 miles away whose home was in Capernaum, 70 miles away and nobody said, hey Lord Jesus, where are you staying tonight? Come and stay with me. No one. And you know what Jesus did? Well, he went to the Mount of Olives, it says in the next verse.

He said, well thank you Father, it's not raining, I can go and sleep under the trees. No demands, no expectation. I'm sure in his mind he was not thinking, look at these ungrateful people.

Do you ever feel like that about some people whom you have served and served and served and served and served and they don't care for you? Do you ever think what ungrateful people they are? That was not such a thought in Jesus' mind at all. You want to be like Jesus? Here's where you can follow him. It's a wonderful life where you don't have any demands on anyone.

You don't have any expectations. All misery and unhappiness is because you have expectations. You expect people to treat you like this and respect you like this.

Even husband and wife, she must respect me, he must respect me. Garbage! You be a disciple of Jesus, you won't have any expectations. You'll be a very happy person.

And he was quite happy and he didn't lie down there under the trees in the Mount of Olives and wonder why people didn't care for him. He was just rejoicing in his Heavenly Father's love. And he came back next morning, it says in verse 2, John 8 2, that he sat down and again started teaching.

And, you know, he didn't throw any hints saying, you know, last night when I was sleeping under the Mount of Olives and make people feel bad that nobody invited him. All these subtle things that sometimes preachers say to make people feel bad. None of all that.

He just continued to teach them. I say, Lord Jesus, you're my example. I want to be like you all my life, every day of my life.

Never to make another person feel bad because they didn't do something they were supposed to do for me. So what? I will not complain. I remember once when I was, this is many many years ago, I think 40 years ago or so.

I was to travel to another place in India for a weekend conference and we traveled by train. And, you know, in India those days anyway and even now it's like that. If you want to get a seat in a train or a berth to sleep in a third-class compartment, you have to book 60 days earlier.

Now it is even more. And if you don't book well in advance, you don't get a seat. So I had written to these people much earlier, 60 days earlier, please book a berth for me so that on my way back I can sleep in the

train.

And then I went to the conference and I said, I hope you guys have booked my seats. Oh, we forgot. And I have to travel the day after tomorrow.

I said, well, that's okay. Just go to the station and see if you can at least get a seat for me. I may not be able to get a berth to sleep.

So the the trains in those days were like this where you had four seats underneath where you have four people sat and one berth on top of one of them to sleep and somebody would sleep on the floor. So I said, fine. The meetings were over.

We had a wonderful conference. And I got back into the train and I found I had only a seat. And I said, after such a wonderful conference, I am not going to sit here and complain about these people that they were so thoughtless even though I'd written to them 60 days earlier to get my seat.

I said, I'm going to praise God. The Bible says give thanks and everything. So I was very happy there.

And there was an old lady, a nun who was sitting next to me and she was quite big built and she said, can you do me a favor? She said, I've got a berth upstairs but I can't climb. It's too difficult for me. Can you sleep there so that I can use this part of your seat? I said, sure.

I'm glad to help. I'm always glad to help people. And I lay there in that bed that night and I said, what would I have gained by complaining? God takes care of his servants.

Now, I'm not saying I always got that. There are times when God tells me to go the rough way also where I have to sit in a seat all night. You know, God decides that.

But my point is, whether you sit in a seat or sleep, I say, I decided in my life, I will never complain. The Bible says, be finished with murmuring and complaining. How can you do that? You know, there's a command like that in Philippians in chapter two.

We're talking about the type of things that prevent us from being a happy family in your home or in the church. Murmuring and complaining. Can you think what will happen in your home if nobody murmurs or complains? If husband and wife never murmur or complain with each other, your children will learn that and grow up that way.

I remember a brother, one of our brothers in one of our churches saying once that he saw one of his children speaking in a very crude, rude way to his younger sibling. And he asked this child, where did you learn to speak like that? He said, dad, I learned it from you. That's the way you speak to us.

And he says, he really got convicted. And I said, Lord, help me to change because children are learning from me how I speak. So, Philippians 2, it says here, do everything, verse 14, to do everything in life without ever grumbling or complaining.

That's the way you prove that you're a child of God. Next verse says, how do you prove you're a child of God? We say, well, I have a testimony that so many years ago I asked Jesus to come into my heart on so-and-so date. Is that how you prove you're a child of God? The Bible says you prove you're a child of God by never complaining or grumbling about anything.

To quote a date, that's good. But a man can be dying in a hospital and quote a date that is, what was the use of that? Are you healthy? Are you a healthy Christian? Do everything in life without murmuring or complaining. If you believe that God is sovereign and He loves you as you love Jesus, He cares for you.

And I tell you, I've been amazed to see the care that Jesus has for me and for you. He has for you as well, if you can believe that. And it's different, different circumstances.

I often think of when Jesus is a helpless baby and some of us may find ourselves in situations with difficult bosses or difficult work situations and all and you feel yourself helpless. What can I do? Lord, I'm dependent on the rules in this country. I need to get a visa to stay and I'm helpless here.

Jesus is more helpless than you as a baby. And God took care of him that the heretic could not kill him. He moved him away from Bethlehem before the soldiers came.

I remember when some religious people got some policemen to raid my house. God took me away from there before they came. They couldn't enter my house.

You can experience everything that Jesus went through if you're really eager to walk the way He walked. It's one of the prayers I pray to the Lord many times. I said, Lord, I want to experience many other things you experienced in your earthly life.

I want to overcome sin and not just overcome sin, these external circumstances. I want to be at rest in you no matter what happens. And that must, that will be a testimony to others.

I remember, you know, when I was in the Navy and I was an outspoken witness for Christ, all of my colleagues, my fellow officers knew that I was a Christian and I stood for the Lord and I believed in a God in heaven who loves me. And they knew that I quit my job as well to serve the Lord. About 30-40 years later, one of my colleagues who was a senior commodore in the Navy and retired, we were traveling in a plane together and I'd been serving the Lord for many years and he recognized me as a colleague of his.

And we sat next to each other. And on our way, this plane went through some really rough weather such I've never experienced in any flight in my life. It was just going up and down and up and down and we didn't know what was happening.

And everybody was scared. And he held me a hand and said, he said, Zach, I know as long as you're here nothing will happen to this plane. I was amazed this guy remembered my witness from 40 years earlier.

People don't forget, you know, when you stood for the Lord you may think that they did not respond to you but they'll remember. In times of trouble, they'll remember. I remember meeting a man 30 years ago who trusted God.

He believed in Jesus Christ and that can be a witness to a person who you haven't met for 30 years. Live for the Lord, be secure in God's love for you and you won't, you don't want to realize the effect your life has on other people. They may not always tell you immediately.

In your place of work, if you're upright and they see that you don't cheat and you don't tell lies and you're considerate, tremendous things can happen. I'll give you one example of that in the Old Testament. In Genesis, we read about Joseph being locked up in jail and you know the story.

He was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. He had already been treated badly by his 10 brothers, sold into slavery and then falsely accused. He had enough to complain about if at all.

He wanted to complain against his brothers and Potiphar's wife. All false accusations. And here he is in jail and you read about in Genesis chapter 40.

Joseph is in jail and there he finds Pharaoh, verse 2, was furious with his two officials, the cupbearer and the shepherd and put them in the jail as well. And they were sitting there discouraged and dejected. Verse 6, Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them.

Genesis 40, verse 6, they were dejected. And you know he could have ignored them. He said, I've got enough problems of my own.

I don't know what problem these have people. I can't worry about that. I've got enough problems of my own and I tell you he had many more problems.

His parents were far away, hundreds of miles away. Here he was in a strange land, falsely accused, not knowing what's going to happen. He sees two people sitting sadly there.

He says, I don't have time to worry about their problems. I've got enough for you. But he didn't do that.

You know that whole future of Joseph depended on this one kind action. Verse 7, he went to them and said, why, verse 7, why are your faces so sad today? The whole story, the rest of Joseph's life hinges on that one question. It turned around because when he asked that question, they explained their dream.

And he then interpreted that dream and two years later when Pharaoh had a dream, this cupbearer says, hey I remember there was a guy in prison who interpreted my dream. He would never have got that interpretation of that dream if Joseph had not gone to him and said, why are you guys looking so sad today? Have you ever thought of showing that type of consideration to somebody in your office or some friend of yours or someone who you see looking sad or discouraged or in some problem? Your life could go in a different direction. These are the examples I see in scripture that challenge me and I tell you Joseph didn't have the Holy Spirit.

He didn't have a Bible. He didn't have any church to encourage him. He had no conference where he went to to hear these things.

But he had God. Even when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife and Potiphar's wife looks around and says, nobody in the room? He says, oh yes there is, God is here. That's what he said.

He was so aware of God's presence and that's what kept him from adultery and that attitude is what made him considerate towards these people in and I say if you're like that, I believe that you will also be considerate towards people and you know I feel that so much can come out of one little kind action or kind word. Never hesitate to say it brothers and sisters. Even if you have not been like that, you say my personality is not like that.

I'm an introvert. I'm inward looking. No, I was inward looking when I grew up as a little boy and I grew up and I was like that as a young man.

I was like that when I first became a Christian when I said I cannot be an effective witness for Christ if I allow my temperament to sort of run my life. I'm not going to let my temperament control me. I'm going to

overcome it by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There's nothing the Holy Spirit cannot overcome. So don't blame your temperament and say I'm not the outgoing type like that person. Okay, the Holy Spirit will help you to overcome that weakness in your temperament.

The Holy Spirit has come to help us overcome all things that hinder us from being effective witnesses for Christ. So here's a little thing that can make a lot of difference in life. I'm secure in my relationship with God and I believe Joseph is amazing.

He must have, even though he didn't have the Holy Spirit or the Bible or any such thing, he was secure in his relationship with God. Where did he get that from? Here's something for fathers to learn. Jacob knew less about God than you and I but he taught Joseph about the God of Abraham and Isaac and the little bit he knew he taught Joseph and made such a difference in Joseph's life.

So parents, take time to teach your children about God as a loving father. It'll make a world of difference. One day when they're away from you like Joseph in some difficult situation, they'll stand up for the Lord because they learned something from you.

Very, very important and as I said everything depends on my knowing God as my father who cares for me. You know, I for many years in my early Christian life when I prayed to God, I'd say Lord or God, you know, I prayed to God and I said but I realized that Jesus said when you pray don't say God, don't say Lord, say our Father who art in heaven. Even though Jesus clearly said that, I found I was always praying, oh God, oh God.

I was playing like the Old Testament people. The Old Testament people, they prayed like that but you know in the new covenant you're not supposed to call him God. It's not that he isn't God, I mean it's like if one of my sons came to me and said Mr. Poonen, I'd like to talk to you today.

I said what happened, are you angry with me or something? He said isn't his name God? Yeah, but he's my father. My children call me dad and I go to God and say dad, I often think of myself as a little child sitting in my heavenly father's lap looking up and saying dad, I have a little problem or I need this. I'm a little insecure here, please help me.

So I want to encourage you, dear brothers and sisters, learn to talk to your heavenly father as dad, call him dad. Romans chapter 8, it says here when the Holy Spirit comes in and just by the way, when you're born again, as soon as you if you really receive Christ into your heart, the Holy Spirit will come into your heart. There's a lot of confusion concerning the teaching about the Holy Spirit.

I want to remove some of that confusion with one little thing here. It says here that in Romans 8 and verse 9, last part first of all, if you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you don't belong to him. In other words, if you belong to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is in you.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is another thing. Do you know when the disciples received the Holy Spirit? I don't know whether you know. John chapter 20, when Jesus breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit.

Did it happen or not? What do you think? Is there anything that Jesus said that didn't happen? When he said, Lazarus come out, he came out. When he told the wind to be still, it became still. What happened

when he looked, breathed on his, I think there were 10 disciples there.

Judas was in there, Thomas was also in there. They said, receive the Holy Spirit. Did you think it happened? I believe it did.

But they were not filled with the Holy Spirit. They received the Holy Spirit, they were not filled with the Holy Spirit. So I see that there's a difference between receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And so here it says about receiving the Holy Spirit. If you're born again, you know when you say, Lord Jesus come into my heart like I said 59 years ago, and like many of you have said sometime in your life, who actually comes in? Jesus is in heaven. He doesn't come into your heart.

He's in heaven still. You know who is on earth? The third person of the Trinity. The second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, was on earth for 33 and a half years in Israel.

He went up to heaven and the third person of the Trinity is just as much on earth here. The Holy Spirit is here just like Jesus was in Israel. And when I say Lord Jesus come into my heart, the Holy Spirit comes in.

He's a Spirit of Christ that comes into my heart. But He may not have filled me. See, there's a difference between receiving and being filled.

For example, if you think of your heart like a house with say 10 rooms and there may be light in one room, the other nine rooms may be dark. So you look at that house on a hill and say, is there light in that house? Yeah, there is. Is it filled with light? No.

Is the Holy Spirit in that person? Yes. But is He filled with the Holy Spirit? No. And what is the reason? Do we have to sort of convince God that I deserve the Holy Spirit? You'll never deserve Him.

It depends on whether you open the other rooms of your heart to Him or not. That's the only reason. Why do you have to wait to be filled with the Holy Spirit? You've got to wait to find out.

Do you want to open up the other rooms or not? God's already sent the Holy Spirit. And I believe the Holy Spirit is like sunlight waiting to come in wherever there's a window open. But if you put blinds on the window and lock the doors, He won't come in.

He says, I stand at the door and knock. And this is the main reason why many Christians who have received the Holy Spirit or born again are not filled with the Holy Spirit. And no matter how much they pray, they will not be filled with the Spirit because they don't allow the Holy Spirit to come into certain rooms of their life.

For example, He knocks at the one door and says, can I come into this television room and control what you watch on television? Can I get rid of some of your DVDs which you shouldn't be watching? And you say, Lord, just please leave me alone in that room. Please come into the guilt room and cleanse away my sin. That I want.

Okay. The Holy Spirit says, I won't come into your television room. Sit there and watch whatever you like.

He comes to another room. Can I come into your library and see the type of books you read, the magazines you look at, and the pictures you look at, and say, no, Lord, there are certain things you may

not like. Okay, I won't come in.

Can I come into your finances room and see how you're earning your money? Is it all upright and righteous way? And how are you, are you generous with your money? Are you giving your money also to God and His work and all? Lord, don't come. I'll be a bit ashamed if I, you see all those things, don't come in there. Door by door, you have closed to the Holy Spirit.

There could be many other doors like that. And you keep praying, oh God, fill me with the Holy Spirit. And you cry and you weep.

I tell you in a hundred years, nothing will happen. Don't waste your time. Go to sleep.

I really believe a lot of all-night prayer meetings are an absolute waste of time. Much more will happen if you spend just five minutes before God examining your heart and see what are the doors that are locked and just open it. And without your knowledge, the Holy Spirit will just come and fill you and you'll be another person.

Okay, so much for that. But when the Holy Spirit comes, it says in Romans 8, He comes within us in verse 15, cries out, Abba, Father. Abba is a Hebrew word which unfortunately they did not translate.

It's very sad that some words have not been translated. Like baptism. Baptism means immersion.

There would have been no child baptism in the history of Christianity if they just translated that one word. Immerse. Be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ.

How in the world can you sprinkle a child? It's amazing, you know. And Abba, if they had translated it, Dad. That's what it means.

Dad. That's what the Holy Spirit comes in. Has the Holy Spirit come to you and made you look at God and say, Dad? It took a long time for me to realize that.

But it made such, brought such security into my life when I started calling God, Dad. And it brought such a difference in my relationship with everybody around me. I became secure.

I could finish with murmuring and rumbling and complaining and expecting and no desire for revenge anymore and easy to forgive. Everything changed when I started calling God, Dad. Like Jesus taught us.

Look up and say, our Father, Dad, who is in heaven. Well, I hope you understood something which will help you in your horizontal relationships with one another. What we have heard today.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, remind us of the things that we need to be reminded of constantly. Write them deeply in our hearts so that we'll never forget them.

Help each one of us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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