

Seven Truths That Every Christian Must Know

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of knowing the truth, repentance, faith, and the Holy Spirit in order to have a deep and meaningful relationship with God.

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Scripture: Matthew 18:23-35, Luke 9:23, Luke 16:13, John 14:6, Acts 20:21, Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 2:28, 1 John 3:3, 1 John 4:20

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of key truths that every Christian must know. It covers the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the only way to God, the necessity of repentance alongside faith, the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, the requirement to deny oneself to follow Jesus, the warning against serving both God and money, the essentiality of loving and forgiving one another, and the preparation for Christ's second coming.

Transcript

It's a privilege and honor to speak to God's people and a tremendous responsibility. I often say that when I stand in the pulpit in my home church or any of the other churches God has planted through our ministry or here, I see myself as a heart surgeon dealing with something far more important than a physical heart, and I want to take my responsibility seriously. Even if a heart surgeon has operated for 50 years, he's still extremely careful when doing a heart surgery.

We can hurt people, we can kill people, and we don't want to do that. There's a lot of preaching that kills, and we don't want to be heart surgeons like that. Our calling is to remove the parts that cause disease and to bring life.

It can be painful. Heart surgery is always painful, but the result is life. So I want to do my fulfill my responsibility faithfully before God.

I always seek to remember that in our midst, though not visible, stands the Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to remember that word that where two or three are gathered together, there I am in the heart of the person. So he's here.

So I want you to remember that throughout this time and allow him to speak to you through his Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Trinity on earth, exactly like the second person of the Trinity was walking in

Israel nearly 2,000 years ago. He's here, and he can speak to you if you have a heart that's willing to listen. So my subject today is truths that every Christian must know.

Jesus said in John chapter 8 and verse 32, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. So freedom comes through knowing the truth. If you know very little of the truth, that's probably the reason why you're not fully free.

The more of the truth that you know, and God's word is the truth. Jesus said that in John 17, 17, your word is truth. The more you know the truth, the more you'll be free in your life, free from sin, free from discouragement, free from gloom, free from anger, free from all the problems that the devils put upon us.

The other verse which I want to show you before we begin is a verse that many Christians do not obey or do not take seriously. It's 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 15. 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 15 says in the middle of that verse, always being ready.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Listen to this, always, 24-7, being ready to make a defense think a war, a defense, the way you defend your country, to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet give it with gentleness, not with arrogance, and with reverence for what you're saying, because it's the word of God. Always ready to give an account, to give an answer to everyone who asks you, why do you believe this? Every one of us sitting here, if you say you're a Christian, you must obey that verse.

You must always be ready with gentleness and reverence to give an answer to anyone who asks you, why do you believe this? So that's where I want to begin. Number one, Jesus Christ is the only way to God. That's the first truth that we must recognize.

And people ask us, why do you believe he's the only way? In John 14 and verse 6, it says, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me. So when, you know, I work in a country where many, many are non-Christians, and you meet non-Christians, there are many in this country too.

And someone tells me, why do you say Jesus is the only way? There are many ways to God. I said, do you want me to call the Lord Jesus a liar? That's what you're asking you to do. Because he said in that verse, I am the way, no one comes to the Father, but by me.

And if I say, agree with you that there are many ways to God, I have to call Jesus Christ a liar. And I'm not prepared to do that. You see, that puts people on the spot, because they're not ready to call Jesus Christ a liar.

But this wrong idea that people have, there are many ways. Now I want to explain why Christianity is unique, and why Jesus Christ is the only way. When babies are born, nobody's a Hindu, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist, or a Christian.

They're all babies. But as they grow up in different families, they are brainwashed by their parents into a particular religion, and to believe certain things. They are taken to a temple, or a and they're forced to believe something, and brainwashed through the years, to believe those truths.

So this is how I would witness to a non-Christian, how I would give an answer to why I believe what I believe. And I say, but there's one thing common about all of us, whatever religion we are, I tell him, and

that is we have a conscience. It doesn't matter which religion you are, the conscience is exactly the same.

Every single child, whatever their religion, their conscience tells them, even at the age of two or three, when they tell a lie, that you're telling a lie. Any child, before they are brainwashed into being taught that a lie is not serious, every child in the world has a conscience that makes their face manifest, that they're telling a lie, when they have told a lie. They cannot hide it.

I mean, by the time you're 17 or 18, you can disguise your face and tell a lie with a straight face. But you can't do that when you're two or three years old. That is a proof that God has put his voice in everybody's heart.

And that through the years, however much we may suppress our conscience, that conscience tells us we have done many things wrong, whatever religion we may be. So I tell people, when I witness them, I say, I'm not preaching religion. I'm not preaching Christianity.

You may have met lots of Christians who cheated you and deceived you. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about our conscience that tells you that you've done many things wrong.

You may cover it up, you may hide it from people, but your conscience keeps telling you, you violated God's laws. And then the next thing I say is, I say, if your God is not absolutely holy, totally holy, whichever God you believe in, then the punishment for your sin would be something like sickness or poverty or some type of trial, earthly trial. But if your God is absolutely holy, and I believe that the God of this universe is absolutely holy, and I'm not talking about Christian, Muslim, anything.

I'm talking about God, the creator of this universe, absolutely holy. There has to be only one way that he can punish sin, that he cuts you off from himself, because sin breaks our connection with God. Even one sin, and think of all the sins you've committed, our connection with God is broken.

That's the first thing. It doesn't matter what religion you are. Remember, this is how I'm witnessing to a non-Christian.

And then I say, if God is also an absolutely righteous judge, like he is, and that justice of God is the foundation for all justice in the universe, he cannot be crooked. He cannot overlook something just because he loves us. If a judge's son comes there in the court, he cannot forgive him and overlook his crime just because it's his son.

And God cannot overlook our sin. Many people say, why can't God forgive me just like my mom forgives me if I broke a plate or something like that? I say, if sin was only something like breaking a plate, God would forgive you straight away. But it's much more serious than that.

Think of a judge who's sitting, judging his son who's committed a hundred murders. What's he going to tell him? Oh, you're my son. I overlook you.

Overlook it? No. Sin is like that. When you see the seriousness of sin, that every sin is worse than committing a hundred murders, in God's eyes, God cannot overlook it.

That punishment has to be taken. And to use an illustration, if, for example, the punishment for a crime is, say, a million dollars. Okay, my son, I fine you a million dollars.

That's what the judge says. And the son says, Dad, I don't have a cent. Well, you've got to go to jail then.

Having said that, he takes off his judge's robes, comes down, and takes out his checkbook, and writes out his entire life savings of a million dollars, and gives it to his son, and says, Son, go and pay the fine. He judged him as a judge, and punished him as a father, and paid the price as a father. I said, this is what God has done.

He came in the form of man, Jesus Christ. He had to punish, but he took that punishment himself, just like this father. Now, there's only one thing that son has to do, and he has to do it.

He's got to receive that check. If he's too proud to receive it, well, then the alternative is the punishment. And that's all that God asks you to do.

Receive that freely. Think of the price. Remember, this dad's giving his life savings, and God, when Jesus died, he was giving his life in order to save us.

And then I say, there's not a single religion in the world, first of all, where any leader even claims that he was born of a virgin. The virgin birth is very, very important. Jesus Christ came to earth without a human father.

God created the sperm, which produced Jesus' body. It united with Mary's egg, and there you have God in human form. And no one has ever, no religion, no religious leaders ever claimed that.

Secondly, no religious leader ever claimed that I'm coming here to die for the sins of the world. And thirdly, no religious leader ever rose from the dead on the third day. This is the foundation of Christianity.

Christianity is not founded on do good, be kind, help the poor, and don't tell lies, and be compassionate. No, no, no. That's the superstructure.

And that may look like what is taught in other religions, but there's a foundation underneath. And if you don't have this foundation, whatever religion you have, it's on sand. So what is it? The one who founded our Christian faith is born of a virgin, died for the sins of the whole world, and rose from the dead.

No one has ever done that. I said that is why I believe that Christianity is the only true way to God. That's point number one.

Then secondly, which we all, the truths that every Christian must know, we must not only believe, we must repent and believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. Not just believe. In many places, faith is emphasized.

A lot of evangelists emphasize faith, faith, faith. But repentance is essential. You must repent and believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.

And I want to read to you Acts of the Apostles in chapter 20 and verse 21. This is when the apostle preached to Jews and Gentiles. When he uses the word Jews and Gentiles, or Jews and Greeks, he's referring to the whole world--people cultured, uncultured, religious, non-religious.

He says, there's one message I preach everywhere. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Two things.

And what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. But many are putting asunder. And many people say, man is incapable of repentance.

It's a work, and salvation is not by works that God gives it freely. Salvation is free. But this is the picture I use.

When we are born in all our life, our face is towards the world and sin and ourself, and our back is towards God. And what happens is, if I want to receive the free gift that God is giving me, I don't know how to do anything. I don't know how to pay anything, but I've got to turn around.

And if anyone wants to give you a free gift sale, expensive gift, and he says, here, I've got a gift for you, and if I don't turn around, I can't get it. And if I turn around, I can't say, I did something in order to earn that gift. No! I'm just turning around to receive it.

So repentance is not a work, like some people teach. That's a falsehood. Repentance is just turning around and receiving the gift.

And what is faith? Faith is not a work either. Here's somebody giving me a gift. I have to stretch out my hand and take it.

That's faith. So repentance is turning around. Faith is stretching out my hand.

Now, if somebody gives me an expensive gift, and I've turned around, and I receive it with my hand, I can't say, well, I earned it because I turned around and I stretched out my hand. That is stupidity. And yet that's what many people say.

Man cannot repent. Man cannot believe everything God has to give it. Well, you can turn around.

If you don't turn around, you're not going to get it. If you don't stretch out your hand, you're not going to get it. God is willing even to help me to turn around and to help me to stretch out my hand.

What more can he do? But he's not going to force you. But remember this. Turning around from sin and the world is essential in order to be saved.

Now, that doesn't mean--I want to explain repentance. It's not saying, God, I will not sin again. No.

No one can say that. It's saying, I don't want to sin again. There's a difference between saying, I don't want to sin again, and I will not sin again.

Let me show you 1 John chapter 2 and verse 1. 1 John chapter 2 and verse 1. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. That's God's will. That you should not sin.

But, just remember, this is the apostle John writing at the age of 95. But if anyone sins, what does he say? You're not a child of God? No. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

So what does it mean to overcome sin, to get victory over sin? The best illustration I can use is a child has learned to walk. Well, now, every child when it's born does not know how to walk. It's always falling, getting up, falling, getting up.

And when a believer is born again, he's usually like that. Falling frequently, getting up. And, you know, the new birth is compared to the birth of a child.

And the child doesn't learn how to walk. It has to learn slowly, slowly, and it never gets discouraged. It's a wonderful thing about children.

Believers get discouraged when they don't get victory after some time. But a child never gets discouraged. He says, I'm going to walk one day.

I'm going to walk one day. It falls 100 times a day. It gets up.

That's how it must be. But it's determined to walk. And how excited a father or a mother is when they see their child taking their first steps.

That's how excited God is when he sees you overcoming your anger or your bitterness or your jealousy or whatever it is. You're beginning to learn to walk. And when that child is walking steadily, two years old, walking, running, that's a picture of victory over sin.

But can you say that this person will never fall? Is there anybody sitting here who says I can never stumble and fall? I can trip over a stone and fall today. But the difference is I've learned to walk. I'm not falling the way that child is falling.

So that's a picture of victory over sin. I've learned to walk, but I may still fall. But what is the first statement? The first statement is not in 1 John 2.1. Did you notice that? The first statement is not if anyone sins.

The first statement is don't sin. We shouldn't reverse that. When you reverse that, you're getting it in the wrong order.

It's not John doesn't say, well, I know you fellows will sin, of course. But that's the way it's being preached so often. No, you should not sin.

But if you do, that means if you do fall down, get up, repent, confess, ask God to forgive you. He'll do it immediately and press on. One more thing I want to say in relation to repentance and faith.

The Bible speaks about faith that justifies us. That's another word which many don't understand. Romans 5.1 says we are justified by faith.

Be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you. What is the difference between being forgiven and being justified? You know, I've been preaching for more than 50 years in Christian ministry, and I've discovered that there are many people, we think they know everything, but they don't. People have been Christians for many years, and that's why I need to explain something very simply.

Forgiveness is where God has blotted out our past. All forgiven. If you confess, you come to the Lord, He's forgiven everything.

But are you fit to stand before God now? No. Do you know that even after all your sins are forgiven, you're still not fit to stand before God? Because you've got a filthy nature that's called the flesh that hasn't gone. So God has to clothe me.

It's like my filthy dress. He's clothed me with the righteousness of Christ. My sins are forgiven, but my filthy nature is not gone.

So God clothes me with the righteousness of Christ. That's called justification. The first was forgiveness.

This is justification. I need to understand the difference. And when we receive Christ, we are not only forgiven, but justified.

That means I stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ. And that is the meaning, listen to this, of praying every prayer in the name of Jesus. Now, many haven't even understood that.

Why do I pray in the name of Jesus? I'm saying, Lord, I have no merit to come before you to ask for this prayer. But I'm asking clothed in the righteousness of Christ, in the name of Jesus. And it is like Jesus asking the Father for a request.

Think of it like that. It'll change your Christian life. When you understand these simple things, the tragedy is many people read scripture, they don't understand something, they go on to the next verse.

We shouldn't. We should press on until we understand. I remember when I was in the Navy, my senior captain asked me for something, about something, and I said, I don't know, sir.

He said, Lieutenant Poonen, never say I don't know, sir. Say I will find out, sir. I learned something that day.

Never say, I don't know, I'll find out. So, when you read something in scripture, which you don't understand, don't say, I don't know. Say, I'll find out.

I'm going to make every effort to find out what that verse means. It'll revolutionize your Christian life. This is what I started doing when I was 21 years old, 56 years ago.

Whenever I found something I didn't understand, I'd say, I'm going to find out that. What does it mean? And that's what changed my life. The third truth that every Christian should know, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5 and verse 18. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. It says here in Ephesians 5 and verse 18, do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation.

I want you to look at that verse carefully. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. There are two statements there, one negative and one positive.

Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. Now watch that and answer this question. Is it a sin to get drunk with wine? I believe it is.

It may not be a sin to take a sip of it, but to get drunk is definitely a sin. Okay, now my question is, is it a sin not to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Ah, there's some doubts. It's in the same verse.

The same God who commanded, do not get drunk with wine, said be filled with the Holy Spirit. What would you think of a man who walks into this Sunday morning service drunk with wine? Would you think he's coming here in a proper way? No. What would you think of a person coming here not filled with the Holy Spirit? We don't think that's so serious, right? We pick and choose in God's commandments truths that every Christian should know.

You must be filled with the Spirit, just like you must not be drunk with wine. Put it in the same category, that if I'm not, if I think drinking, getting drunk with wine and coming to the church service is okay, then it's okay to come without being filled with the Holy Spirit. Is it okay anytime to be drunk? Think of how you

misbehave when you're drunk.

Don't get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is very, very important. I want to explain this something about the Holy Spirit here, because there's a lot of confusion concerning that in the world today.

I've heard a lot of people say to me, and I want to be ready to give an answer. That's what I want to equip you to as well. There's so many counterfeits about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and about the operation of the Holy Spirit.

I agree, but what do people counterfeit? Do they counterfeit brown paper? Do you counterfeit toilet paper? No. What do people counterfeit? Gold, diamonds. Only valuable things are counterfeited.

So if the operations of the Holy Spirit are counterfeit, boy, the original must be really valuable. So I'm not turned off just because there are counterfeits. The counterfeit proves to me that the original must be really valuable and I must get it.

But also it teaches me I must be very careful. If someone's going to buy gold in the market, he's got to be very careful that he's not fooled. Or someone going to... I've heard, I've never seen it, but I've heard that there are glass pieces that look exactly like diamonds.

You can be fooled. You can be fooled about being filled with the Holy Spirit too. And so the only solution is to come to the Word of God.

I've been greatly helped by seeing that Jesus is an example for me as the perfect Spirit-filled person. So when I want to know, when I want a guideline, a benchmark, what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit, I look at Jesus. And that's why let me give you my honest testimony.

When I see somebody rolling on the ground and kicking their legs and saying it's the Holy Spirit, I'll tell you honestly, I cannot imagine Jesus rolling on the ground and kicking his legs. So I say that's not the Holy Spirit. And I'm not afraid to say that because I say, can you picture in your mind Jesus rolling on the floor and kicking his legs up in there and saying he's filled with the Holy Spirit? No, Jesus is my example.

Not these other people. I'm not here to criticize them. I'm not here to judge them, but I say I'm not here to follow them either.

And then there are others who say, well, you must speak in tongues, which is unknown languages. Now that is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said, I speak in tongues more than all of you.

He said that in 1 Corinthians 14. But before saying that, he said that in 1 Corinthians 12, not all speak in tongues. I don't have time to show you all those verses.

You read 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. You read there, are all apostles? No. Are all prophets? No.

Are all teachers? No. Do all speak in tongues? No. So what Paul said was, I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you.

But for some reason, God does not want everybody to have it. It's very important to understand this. And if you're doubtful about it, just go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and chapter 14.

It's all written there. My own personal experience is I thank God I speak in tongues. I've spoken in tongues for 42 years, but I also believe it's not necessary for everyone to speak in tongues.

I speak exactly like Paul said in the church. He said in 1 Corinthians 14, I would rather speak five words in a known language for us English than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. So simple mathematics shows me that speaking in English is 2000 times better than speaking in tongues in a church.

That's the word of God. So don't be, don't feel inferior if you cannot speak in tongues. If you can speak in English and witness for the Lord, you're okay.

So the other thing I want to show you is it says in Romans chapter 5, verse 5, I believe this is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Romans 5, 5, it says the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. So God is love, and our hearts do not have the love that God has, and we can never produce it.

You won't be able to produce it in a hundred years. So God says, I'll give it to you. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, one proof of it is you'll be able to love everybody.

You won't agree with everyone. You won't be able to work with everyone, but you will be able to love everyone, even those who hate you. That's the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And if you're not able to love everyone, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. And don't believe that you're filled with the Holy Spirit until you can love. That's my guideline anyway.

Truths that every Christian should know. And the other thing I want to show you is in Romans 8 and verse 15, the Holy Spirit cries out from within us to God saying, Abba, Father. The Holy Spirit shows you that God is your Father.

You have a Father in heaven. No one in the Old Testament could experience this, but we can. God is my Father.

He's my Dad. The word Abba really means Dad in English. So every one of us, if you're really born again, you should be able to look up to heaven and say, Dad, you're my Dad.

Think of folks who've never had a good father on earth. Isn't it a wonderful thing to have a loving father in heaven? This is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And one more thing I want to say the Holy Spirit does in Romans 8 and verse 13. The last part, it says, we must put to death the deeds of our body. The last part of that verse, by the Holy Spirit.

The deeds of our body are all the sins that come out of our body, anger, lusting with our eyes, and many, many other things we do with our body. And it's only, it says here, by the Spirit. Think of that last part of that verse.

By the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body. You cannot overcome these things without the power of the Holy Spirit. That's why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ask God, if you're being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. Luke 11 verse 13. If you're not being evil, Luke 11 verse 13, know how to give good gifts to your children.

How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? More than any earthly father wants to give bread to his children. Number four, we cannot follow Jesus without denying ourselves daily. Luke chapter 9 and verse 23.

Luke 9 verse 23. If anyone wishes to come after me, Luke 9 verse 23, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily. Anyone, anyone sitting here, you want to come after Jesus? Listen to what He Himself said.

You must deny your self-life. That self-life that wants to be prominent, that wants to sit on the throne of your life and decide what to do, decide how to reply to someone who's angry with you, decide how to treat someone. You must deny that.

If you cannot deny that, you can live as you like, but you can't follow Jesus. That is impossible. Anyone wants to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross.

Take up his cross means the same thing, to die to myself and follow Him. So the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the cross, and the Holy Spirit will lead us also along the way of the cross. But remember this.

This is the wonderful truth. The cross is not such a thing we have to dread, because there is a verse in 2nd Timothy in chapter 2. 2nd Timothy 2 verse 11. It's a great verse.

2nd Timothy 2 verse 11. It is a trustworthy statement. Listen to this.

If we die with Him, we will live with Him. You know, Paul speaks about the power of His resurrection. It's a wonderful power.

The resurrection power is that which lifts us up when we are down, and we all need that power to lift us up when we are down, and the way to get it is to die first. There is no resurrection without the cross. And so if I choose this way of dying to myself, what does it mean in practical terms? I'll tell you.

Romans 6 verse 11 says, reckon, consider yourself to be dead to sin. He's talking about overcoming sin in that chapter. Later on he says, sin will not rule over you.

Verse 14, but for sin not to rule over me, I have to consider myself dead. That means when somebody gets angry with me, I have to react like a dead man. That's why I need the power of the Holy Spirit.

I really want to give him a piece of my mind. That's what my nature says. But the Holy Spirit says, die.

Follow Jesus. And I bow my head, and I say, I die. That doesn't mean I'm just dead, because I'm not only dead to sin, but I'm alive unto Christ.

So I will respond to him as Jesus would. We read that verse in Proverbs, it says, a gentle answer turns away anger. It's a great verse.

It's more than keeping quiet when somebody's upset with me, but a gentle answer. That proves that Christ has taken over. And to do that again, and again, and again, after some time, it'll be easiest thing in the world to do it when people are upset with me.

To conquer anger completely. It's one of the miracles that God does in a person through the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But you have to be willing, you know.

God doesn't make us robots who automatically overcome anger in us. No. We have to choose at each point, otherwise we'll be robots.

God doesn't want robots in heaven, just like you don't want robots. You want children in your home. God wants children in heaven.

Okay, number five. We cannot serve both God and money. Now that's something which you don't hear preached much, but it is true.

Luke 16, 13. Luke 16, 13. No servant can serve two masters.

He will hate the one and love the other. And who are the two masters? Not God and Satan. Jesus said there, God and wealth.

So it's not a question of having wealth. It's a question of serving wealth and loving wealth. I can have wealth, but if I love it and I serve it, I can't serve God.

You cannot serve God and money. If God calls me and money calls me, I must choose to follow God. That's the point.

So the question is, now there are people who teach, there are two types of teachings I see in Christendom today. Some people who say that God wants everybody to be rich, and some people who say God wants nobody to be rich. And you know the answer is always wrong.

Both are wrong. Because there are people who have given up their riches, like the Apostle Paul. He was a son of a very rich businessman, and he gave up everything when he became a Christian.

And he was really poor, I have to say that. Because there were times when he didn't have enough to eat, he didn't have a blanket to cover himself with in the prison, and he had to ask Timothy for it. But at the same time, Paul writes to some rich Christians in 1 Timothy in chapter 6, which proves there were rich Christians in those days.

1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 18. 1 Timothy 6, verse 18. Paul tells Timothy, verse 17, sorry.

1 Timothy 6, 17. We begin at verse 17. Instruct those who are rich believers in this present world not to be... So if anybody here is rich, it's not a sin.

But take this verse seriously. Don't be conceited. There's a great tendency in rich people to become proud.

And don't fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches. That's the other thing a lot of people make a mistake. But fix their hope on God, who supplies us richly with everything.

And then verse 18. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share. So wealth is neutral, but I must make sure it's my servant.

Whether you have 25 servants or one servant, that's the difference between rich and poor. Make sure they're all your servants, that they don't take over the house. I mean, if you have a maid working in your house, and she takes over the house, that's pretty serious.

And that's what's happened when some Christians, money runs their life. But you can have 25 servants, and if they're all your servants, it's okay. You must be the boss.

You must be the master. So you cannot serve God in money. You have to make a choice.

Lord, you're the one I'm going to serve, and whatever you give me, I'm going to keep under my feet. Is it right to have a savings account? Jesus had a savings account. You know, Judas Iscariot was the banker.

He was not a very honest banker, but it was. He did. Jesus didn't spend all the money he, you know, he, Jesus received gifts.

But he didn't spend all those gifts on the same day. If he did, if he spent it all the same day, there was no need for a treasurer. But he kept it in the bank, because it probably would be needed tomorrow or next week.

So there's nothing wrong in having a savings account. The question is, whom do you serve? Do you serve God or money? Do you love God or love money? Number six, John 13, 34. We must love and forgive one another.

Very important. Truths that all Christians must know. John 13, 35 says, all men will know you're my disciples when you love one another.

Now, we need to understand this properly. It's not all men will know you're my disciples when you all meet in the same building. No.

You can meet in a hundred different buildings in the same city, but you love one another. He doesn't say all men will know you're my disciples when you all work together. No.

When you love one another. And how can people see me love others if it's not in the same area? For example, in this church. It's by loving others in this church that I've fulfilled that verse.

I mean, I can love the people out in China. You have any problem loving people in China? Not at all. I never see them.

Or the people in Argentina or Brazil. I think all of us love them tremendously. And those poor suffering people in the jungles of Africa have never heard the gospel.

Have you ever got any problem loving them? No. But it's this person who sits next to me in the church. That's the person who's difficult to love.

And Jesus said, the world will know you're my disciples. Not when you love those people 10,000 miles away. Right there next to you.

The brother whom you can see. Turn with me to 1 John chapter 4. 1 John chapter 4. It says verse 20. 1 John 4 20.

If someone says I love God and hates his brother, he's a liar. Now listen to this. The one who does not love the brother whom he can see.

That's very, very important, that phrase. The brother he sees, the sister you see. Who's the one you see every day? Your husband, your wife.

You cannot love God if you can't love your husband or wife. You cannot love, and the ones you see a little more, less frequently, but now and then, the folks in your own church. If you can't love these people whom you can see, you cannot love God.

It's an absolute statement. Truths that Christians must know. How do I do that? We go back to be filled with the Spirit.

The Spirit of God spreads the love of God in our hearts. One way we can prove that we love everyone is by forgiving them. Jesus said, you know the Lord's Prayer, forgive us our trespasses exactly as we have forgiven others.

Isn't that how he said it? Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven others. Means exactly as I have forgiven somebody. For example, if I say to somebody, well I've forgiven you, but I'll never forget what you did.

I say, Lord forgive me like that. Never forget what I did against you. Forgive me.

Is that the way you want God to forgive you? Or I'll forgive you, but I'll never talk to you again. Lord you can forgive me, but never talk to me again. You know that's what you're praying.

Forgive me exactly as I have forgiven somebody else. Why is God so distant from you? You asked him to be. You asked him to be, to forgive you exactly the way you forgave somebody.

God's just answering your prayer. Be serious when you talk to God. And I want to show you something very important about forgiveness here.

In Matthew 18 and verse 23 to 35, Jesus spoke a parable, a long parable. And you know the story. Matthew 18 verse 23 to 35.

You don't have to look it all up, but this parable is this. There was a man who owed the king 10 million dollars. That's what my margin of my bible says.

That was the value. 10 million dollars. Matthew 18 24.

Man who owed 10,000 talents. 10 million dollars. And the king when he saw he couldn't pay it.

Okay, you're forgiven. That man went out and met a fellow slave who owed him, it says here in verse 28, a hundred denarii. Let's say that's about a hundred dollars.

It's maybe those days one dollar was a day's wages way back 20 centuries ago. So a hundred denaries, a hundred days wages, a hundred dollars. Okay, here's I'm forgiven 10 million dollars and somebody owes me a hundred dollars.

Now a hundred dollars is not a small amount of money. It's quite a bit of money. But how much is I forgiven? 10 million.

Okay, I agree what that guy did against you was not something to be overlooked. It was pretty serious. But think how much God forgave you.

And so this man catches that person by the throat and said, I won't let you go until you pay up. And the other slaves went to the king and said, you know what that guy did whom you forgave 10 million dollars?

He caught somebody by the throat because he owed him a hundred dollars and he put him in jail. The king says call him back.

He called him back and he put upon his head. It says here all the debt that I forgave you is put back on your head. Question.

Once God has forgiven you, can he put all those sins back on your head? Yes. If you believe what Jesus said in this parable. When does he do it? Not when you commit adultery.

No, that can be forgiven if you repent. Not even when you commit murder. If you repent, that can be forgiven.

But when you don't forgive somebody, he will put all that back up on your head. This parable is very clear. That's how serious unforgiving forgiveness is.

Now I want you to stop a moment now. Think of someone you have not forgiven. And I tell you, you don't even have to think five seconds.

The name comes up into your mind immediately. And another one. And another one.

Relatives, people at work, other so-called Christians. Yeah, I know they did harm to you. No doubt.

But have you? Haven't you done anything against God? How freely God forgave you? God says forgive. And the best time to do it is right now while you sit in your seat. You don't have to go and meet him.

You don't have to visit his home. You don't even have to fellowship with him. Jesus forgave a lot of Pharisees, but he was not visiting their homes or having fellowship with them.

To forgive a person does not mean that you have fellowship with him because he may not be interested in it. From my heart I have to be at peace with all men, but they may not be willing to be at peace with me. What can I do? But forgiveness is important.

And here let me say, let me show you what Jesus said about man who doesn't forgive. Matthew 18 32. He's called wicked.

You wicked slave. A man who doesn't forgive others, a Christian who doesn't forgive others is a wicked person according to Jesus Christ. Secondly, verse 34.

The Lord is moved with anger. A person who does, a Christian who doesn't forgive others, God is angry with you. God is angry with you.

These are the words of Jesus. And thirdly, verse 34. He hands them over to the demons.

Those are the torturers. Three things. A person who doesn't forgive, and it applies to anybody sitting here, if you haven't forgiven somebody.

And God says you're wicked. God is angry with you. And he will hand you over to demons to torture your body or make you sick or whatever it is.

There's a lot of sicknesses in the world that are not healed because somebody is not forgiving somebody else. Jesus is very strict on this one particular sin. And I want to emphasize it because I find it's hardly

emphasized enough.

Take it seriously, my brothers and sisters, because it will liberate you. It will bring you into a higher level of the Christian life to fellowship with God that you've never experienced until now. And lastly, number seven.

We must prepare ourselves for Christ's second coming. That's the thing we're looking forward to. Jesus Christ is coming back soon.

1 John chapter 2, verse 28. 1 John 2, 28, it says, Now little children abide in Christ, so that when he appears, there'll be two types of people when he appears. Listen to this.

Two types of believers in 1 John 2, 28. Those who will have confidence. Say, Lord, I'm coming up to meet you.

And those who will shrink away. Lord, did you come so soon? I haven't settled certain things in my life. You see that in that verse? Abide in him.

So that when he appears, we are in category one who boldly come up to meet him and not in category two that shrinks away. There's going to be believers like that who shrink away in shame. Why should they shrink away in shame when Jesus comes? Because they haven't set things right in their life.

1 John 3, verse 3. Everyone who has this hope of the second coming of Christ, 1 John 3, 3, purifies himself until he reaches Christ's standard of purity. So let me repeat all seven truths that every Christian must know. Number one, Jesus Christ is the only way to God.

He's the only way of salvation. Number two, repentance must be added to faith if you want to be saved. Number three, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit, just like we shouldn't get drunk.

Number four, we cannot follow Jesus unless we are willing to deny ourselves and die to ourselves. Number five, we cannot serve both God and money. And number six, we must love and forgive one another.

And number seven, we must be ready for the second coming of Christ. He who has years to hear, let him hear. I pray all of us will have years to hear.

It's a wonderful message, the gospel message. And what the Lord is saying today to you is, my son, my daughter, you've heard my word. I invite you today to come up higher from the level at which you've been living so far.

Come up higher. Let's bow in prayer.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/-diNoQIzpW0.mp4>

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