

Sowing To Reap Eternal Life

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of kindness, forgiveness, and restoration in relationships, drawing inspiration from the story of David and Saul. It encourages fathers to restore their hearts to their children, children to their fathers, and advocates for a year of sowing seeds of forgiveness, encouragement, and kindness. The message highlights the need for humility, grace, and love in our interactions, urging everyone to be a little kinder, braver, and deeper in their relationships, striving for perfection in kindness and understanding.

Scripture: Psalm 18:24, Colossians 4:6, Malachi 4:5, Hebrews 12:5

Topics: "Kindness", "Restoration in Relationships"

Description

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Transcript

So that's a great verse for us to remember throughout this year. Turn in your Bible to that verse again, Zephaniah chapter 3 and verse 17. It's a good verse for all of you, all of us, to remember throughout this year and all our life.

It's been a great help to me, I must say, in many situations. Because it tells us a number of things, just in that one little verse, there's so much content in a single verse. First of all, you know, we have so many doubts whether God is really happy with us.

One of the great teachings of the devil is that God is slightly angry with you all the time. He's not mad at you because you've accepted Christ, but he's not really happy with you. And imagine if you had a father at home and you always feel he's a little angry with you every day.

You're not going to have a very happy relationship with him in the home. And I feel that a lot of people are like that. How do I know? Because I had that type of relationship with God for years.

And I was miserable. And nobody was there to tell me that God's happy with you, man. He's not always looking at you with a frown.

And the reason I felt like that was because I said, well, I'm not completely like Christ. I mean, I'm not going to be like Christ completely till he comes again. So does that mean God's going to be angry with me right until that day? Rubbish.

And the other thing is, the devil gives us doubts whether God is really with us. Is he really with you? Is he in your home? So many things wrong in your home. How can God be there? Well, if God's only going to be with perfect people and perfect marriages and perfect homes, then he'll only be in heaven.

He won't be on earth with anybody. He wouldn't even have been with the Apostle Paul. You remember the time when the Apostle Paul yelled at the judge who was judging him, who commanded somebody to slap him? You read in Acts 23.

Because Paul said, I've always kept a good conscience. And the judge said, slap that guy. And Paul got so upset and said, you whitewashed wall.

That's not the way Jesus spoke when somebody slapped him. Paul was not like Christ at that moment. But he immediately apologized.

Was God with Paul? You see, from there he went almost straight to jail. And God was with Paul in jail. So God's not the type of person who jumps on you just because you made one mistake.

Very important to remember this verse. The Lord your God is in your midst. And as we look back, CFC, over the last year, there are many situations which you may not know, which the elders know.

There are many situations in many other churches, which only I know. Many, many churches. Problems with people, with elders.

But I can say one thing. In every situation, in every single situation, the Lord our God has been in our midst. We have survived, not just survived, we have triumphantly survived till today.

So that's the first thing to remember. The Lord your God is in your midst. And the next thing to remember is the next sentence there.

He's in your midst as a victorious warrior. See, our entire life on earth is a battle. And the moment you become born again, the battle increases.

I mean, the devil is after unbelievers too. But they are his children. He still harasses them, troubles them in so many ways.

But the moment you leave his kingdom and become a child of God, he's after you. And then you become serious and you want to be a disciple. You come to some church like CFC and say, I want to be a disciple.

He's more after you. And you begin to take some responsibility in the church. He is even more.

You begin to serve the Lord. You're a target of Satan. What's that? Are we going to get discouraged? No.

Because the Lord is a victorious warrior in our midst. He's not just a warrior. He's a victorious warrior.

And we know one thing, you know, unfortunately, when the gospel is preached very often, one part of what Jesus did on Calvary is not preached. Not just one part. A lot of people preach that Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

And some people preach he died to take away our sickness as well. Now we've got to be realistic. All our sins are not gone from our life just because Jesus died for our sins.

He died to forgive our sins. But being saved from sin, Jesus also died to save us from our sins. It's true.

Our old man was crucified with him. That's the second thing that happened on the cross. So that Romans 6 says, so that you should not serve sin.

So you know very well, but until we meet Jesus face to face, there is going to be some unconscious sin in us. And sometimes it pops up like it popped up in Paul's case in front of the judge, even though he was such a mature Christian at that time. But he immediately said it right.

What I'm trying to say is, there are occasionally sins that surface in us. But the more you walk with the Lord, it becomes less and less and less and less. And the serious ones disappear.

But it'll be there. In the same way with sickness. Jesus died for our sicknesses too.

But we're going to get the deliverance from that only when he comes. Till then, our body is going to perspire, have sickness. And the greatest proof is that all of us and all Christians from the beginning have died.

Jesus died on the cross to save us from death as well. But it's not going to happen till he comes again. So remember that.

Don't be unrealistic and think that all sickness will go right now. That's like saying death will go, I'll never die. It's as foolish to say I'll never get sick as to say I'll never die.

Did Jesus die that I might be delivered totally from death? Yes. The Bible says, Hebrews 2.14 is very clear. He took away the power of death from Satan through his death on the cross.

But we have to understand what becomes ours fully when he comes again and what is ours partially now. What we are having now is a foretaste of the future. And healing is a foretaste of the resurrection life I shall have in my body one day.

Need to understand that. But Satan has been defeated completely on the cross. That was not true in old covenant times.

He's a victorious warrior we read here. Warrior over whom? Over Satan. Satan has been defeated 100%.

Even if you're not free from sin 100% and you're not free from sickness 100% remember one thing. Satan has been defeated 100% on the cross. And the reason why the Lord allows us to come into that victory progressively is because that's how we become strong.

It's not that the Lord just gives us strength one day and suddenly we are strong. No. He fills us with the Holy Spirit and makes us exercise our will in different temptations and that's how we become stronger and stronger and stronger.

It's like the Christian life is like going through a gym. A gymnasium where we exercise, exercise and become stronger and stronger. Our muscles become stronger.

It doesn't happen overnight. But that's how it is. So that's the second thing it says here in this verse.

He's a victorious warrior. He will exalt over you with joy. Now exalt is a word which is more than rejoice.

It's not just that he will rejoice over you. Exalt is like the cricket fans in India rejoice when India wins. And the crackers go up.

In the middle of the night you hear crackers mean somewhere India won. In Australia or somewhere. They exalt.

It's not just joy. It's not just saying I'm happy. It's more than that.

It's exalting. Now we exalt in what Jesus has done for us. But to think that God exalts over us with joy.

If somebody tells you God is exalting over you with joy. You look around and say who is he talking to? Is he talking to me or somebody else? He's talking to you. God exalts over you with joy.

And you know who doesn't want you to believe it? The devil doesn't want you to believe it. He'll think it's somebody else. The person sitting next to you or behind you or something.

But not you. It is you. So that's the second thing.

Or the third thing there in that verse. Which we must remember that he's not just rejoicing. He's exalting.

I mean think of how a mother. I mean the best way I can describe it is. In Isaiah 49-15 God said he's like a mother.

He's a father. But God is also like a mother. He says even if a mother forgets her newborn child.

I will not forget you. Even that mother may forget. But you know think of a mother who's never had a kid for 10 years.

And suddenly gets a baby. Do you think that mother is going to forget that kid in the first week or so? No. All the time her mind is on that kid.

And it says even that mother may forget. I won't forget you. So that is how God exalts over us.

A mother picks up that child. And you know the child can't say anything in return. Can't do anything for the mother.

But a mother is so happy with a child. And that's a picture of how God exalts. Think of a mother exalting over her newborn baby.

And picture this throughout this year. In the moments when you're discouraged. With something that may happen.

We don't know what's going to happen the remaining 360 days of this year. But one thing we can be sure every single day. God will exalt over you with joy.

There's no doubt about it. Especially if you seek with all your heart like the Apostle Paul. To keep your conscience clear.

That's the only condition. Well I would say two conditions. One that you keep your conscience clear before God and men.

And the other is that you always choose the way of humility. I always tell people. If you want to remain filled with the spirit every single day.

In every single moment. You don't need 25 rules. You need only two things to bear in mind.

One. Keep your conscience clear always. And the other is choose the way of humility in every situation.

If somebody is coming into conflict with you. Go down. If you're having a problem with a group of people.

Go down. If somebody is coming to argue with you. Keep quiet.

Choose the way of humility. I always take this attitude. That when someone wants to argue with me and prove something.

I keep quiet. I say okay. Let him think he has won the argument.

Even doctrinally. Sometimes people have tried to come to my house and argue with me about some doctrine. I can prove him wrong from so many passages of scripture.

But it will only show that I know the Bible better than him. I don't want to prove to people that I know the Bible better than you. I want to pursue the path of love.

And I want to help him to see the truth. Not convince him that I know the Bible better than you. I want him to come into life.

So I know I won't lead him to life if I just prove to him that I know the Bible better than you. I can show you 25 verses or 100 verses that prove that you're wrong. So.

I keep quiet. No way thinking he has won the argument. Choose that way.

That's the way of peace. The way of humility. I'll never forget years ago.

When there was a Christian organization where I had some responsibility and I had to discipline someone. And someone else who heard about that. Who knew that brother.

Who did not know the circumstances under which I had to do that. Called me up on the phone. He knew me.

And yelled at me and shouted at me for minutes. Many minutes on the phone. I could have put the phone down.

But that's rude. And I don't do that to somebody I know. So I listened.

I didn't say one word. This is way back in 1973 or something like that. Anyway I heard and heard and heard and heard.

And finally finished. Ultimately all people run out of words. So I said brother have you finished? He said yes.

I said God bless you. I put the phone down. Six months later.

He called me again. He said brother Zach I'm really sorry. I did not know all the facts when I spoke to you six months ago.

Now that I know the facts. I know that your discipline was right. I'm sorry for what I spoke to you that day.

I said oh I ignored it and forgot it that day. So I got nothing against you. God bless you.

What would I have gained by arguing with him over the phone? Wasted another half an hour on the phone? No I wouldn't do it. So the Lord is the victorious warrior. And he exalts over us with joy.

And that's enough for us to know. And then the next phrase here is he will be quiet in his love. And I like the paraphrase of that which is not found in any of the well-known translations or paraphrases that I know.

But here is a paraphrase of that verse which is a legitimate paraphrase. Quiet means silent. And if you can add one word there you understand the meaning.

He is silently planning for you in love. What a wonderful truth to know for the rest of this year. I don't know what's going to happen to me or you the rest of this year.

But I rejoice in one thing that I have a father who is silently planning for me in love. You know like people who hate you are silently planning for you in hatred. There were a group of people once who silently planned to send the police to my house for some silly little thing.

But it didn't work. You know why? Because just like God took away Jesus before the soldiers of Herod came, God took me away from that house before the police came. So the house was empty when they came.

By the time I came back to my house in a couple of days, the problem had been solved. God is silently... I can tell you numerous cases like that in my life where I experienced God silently plans for me in love. I hope by the end of this year you'll have a few testimonies of the truth of this verse being fulfilled in 2019.

And I'll tell you something. You must keep a little notebook. If you have a computer, it's even easier.

Open a folder for 2019. The things God did for me or God silently planned for me. Folder.

And year by year, 2019. You may not have something to write every day. God's doing something every day but you may not realize it every day.

But when you realize it, something happened, jot it down. Tell your children about it. And tell those stories to your grandchildren years from now if the Lord tarries.

Because sometimes we forget these things. But when you have a date and a time, you know that it actually happened. God is silently planning for you in love.

Let a million people and all the demons of hell plan for you in hatred. They will not overcome because God is a victorious warrior. Remember this, my brothers and sisters.

It's a very good verse to begin the new year with. And it's almost as though God has to repeat again. Listen, I want to assure you again.

I'm rejoicing over you with shouts of joy. Can you imagine God shouting? We only think of somebody shouting means he's angry with me. Shouts of joy.

Have you ever heard anybody rejoice with shouts of joy? A shout is always radiated to anger, right? The guy yelled at me. What does that mean? He's upset with me. He yelled with joy when he saw me.

That's a rare expression. I've never heard it used of anybody. But God does that.

He rejoices with shouts of joy. Well, it's a very appropriate verse that was selected by those brothers in the churches in the U.S. It's funny to remember what I did when I was young. With a red pencil I would highlight these verses so that later on when I turned to cross the Bible I, oh, that's a verse.

I remember reading it one year ago. Boy, it's good to remind yourself of it. So some of these verses if you highlight in your Bible you'll find it much easier as you go along.

So I told you and choose the way of humility. Throughout this life, throughout this year in every situation I want to turn now to Galatians and chapter turn with me to Galatians and chapter 6. Galatians chapter 6 and verse 7. Don't be deceived. God is not mocked.

For whatever a man sows that he'll also reap. There is a good side to it and a bad side to it as the next verse tells us. The one who sows to his own flesh will from his flesh reap corruption.

The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Holy Spirit reap eternal life. You know, eternal life is used in a very broad way. It's not something I get like that.

It's not like a gift. Somebody gives you a hundred rupees and you got it. Eternal life is not like that.

Jesus defined eternal life in John 17 3 as knowing God. Knowing Jesus Christ. You can't get that in one moment.

You can't even get it in a lifetime. It's progressive. More and more and more and more.

That's why Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 6 17 lay hold of eternal life. Lay hold of it. That means it might go away.

Lay hold of it. Get more and more. And Timothy was 45 years old already a Christian for 25 years and he's telling him lay hold of eternal life.

He's not saying be born again. He's saying what you got when you were born again lay hold of it and progress more and more and more. It's like, you know, climbing up a rope going up and up and up and more.

You got a hold of the rope you got a hold of eternal life. If we sow to the spirit that's another good verse for us to remember throughout this year. Throughout this year you're going to be sowing seeds every day.

And one of the primary seeds you sow are going to be your thoughts and attitudes. Many thoughts pass through our mind. Thoughts into Jesus' mind.

You know that? Turn the stones into bread. Thought flashed into his mind. Jesus said no.

He quoted a word of God. Jump from the roof of the temple. God will protect you.

No. Bow down and worship me. No.

These are thoughts flashed into your mind. But Jesus didn't sin. So just because some horrible thought came into your mind don't condemn yourself.

Did you want it? Did you accept it? Or as soon as you're aware you say no I don't want that thought. Then you have not sinned. You were tempted.

But you didn't sin. Please remember throughout this year the distinction between temptation and sin. When a thought is flashed into your mind it's from your flesh from the lust in your flesh but it may be areas where you've indulged yourself for a lot.

Those thoughts will come or from the devil. What do you do? I'm not going to condemn myself because if I condemn myself I'm defeated already. I'll never overcome the devil.

I'm not going to condemn myself. I'm going to say I don't accept that. That's not my thought.

I reject it. In my flesh dwells no good thing. The flesh is sort of throwing up a thought into my heart or you're going to decide you can't stop people knocking.

You cannot stop people from knocking at the door of your heart. But you can reject it. Don't open the door.

Say I don't want that. So we have control over the door to our heart and mind. So don't get condemned if you hear a knock.

That's a thought. Say are you going to open the door if you open the door you're sowing something into your heart, into your mind. And if it is to the flesh it will finally bring corruption.

Not immediately. I mean if you sow a seed of a tree in your garden or anywhere it's not going to come up tomorrow. But many years later or months later you go by and say hey, there's a little plant come up there.

Because you sowed a seed some time ago. That works for good and for bad. So if you allow that seed to come in and you don't throw it out it will produce a plant which will become a tree one day.

It could be an attitude towards someone. Have you noticed in the past how you developed a wrong attitude towards somebody? Somebody you don't like too much? For some reason you don't like? You've got to be honest. There are certain people in this church you don't like for some reason.

It's not a good reason. Don't ever use this wrong expression that some people say I love you but I don't like you. Is that right? You'll say I love everybody in the church but I don't like some of them.

Supposing God were to tell you like that. I love you but I don't like you. Will you be happy? What if your husband tells your sisters I love you so much but I just don't like you.

Or you tell your husband I love you so much but I don't like you. How can that be? It's foolish. God doesn't say that to you.

God doesn't say I don't like you but I love you. It's a contradiction in terms. So let's not have that attitude.

Say you don't like somebody but I'm not saying you have to agree with all that they do. I don't agree with a lot of things that even some people do in the church. And certainly I don't agree with a lot of things that

other people do in other churches but that is not going to stop me from loving them.

And it's because I love them that I don't tell the truth to them. You may not love them enough and so you don't tell the truth to them because you love yourself. You love your reputation.

You say oh I don't want to spoil my reputation as a kind gentle type of person so I won't tell him the truth even though I know the truth about him. But I say I love the person enough to tell him the truth. But you may not be called to do fulfill my ministry so don't condemn yourself.

But loving a person does not mean that if your children misbehave or they behave badly if you don't correct them how in the world will they become better? So we are sowing seeds in our thoughts and attitudes that will reap strong trees one day and if you allow it to become so strong I've seen people here in CFC who have not been careful with their attitudes and thoughts towards others. And I see them a few years later and sometimes carelessly they say something of that person I can see this guy or this sister or this brother or sister has had a wrong attitude towards that person for years. And I've known it.

And I can see that in the way he or she speaks about that person now. It's never been judged. It's never been cleansed.

So it comes out in a moment of weakness Yeah What you sow you will reap one day and it's destroying you. You don't realize it and someone with more maturity than you can see through you that is destroying you. And you'll get a big surprise when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ and Jesus reveals all this to you who thought you were so spiritual and you suddenly discover the judgment seat of Christ that you were not spiritual at all.

With the type of thoughts and attitudes you are sowing in your heart towards people. And you have to be particularly careful about thoughts and attitudes towards those who have harmed you. Because it's very easy to develop very negative attitudes towards somebody who has harmed you even many years ago and you keep thinking about it.

Remove from your memory the harm somebody did to you. I mean I cannot remove from my memory the various harmful things people have done against me. But I'm not guilty because of that because memory is something I have no control over.

But my heart the door to my heart is not in my memory the door to my heart is in my will and I choose that I will not I choose that I will love that person and one way I can test that is I say Lord I want you to bless that person. It says bless those who curse you. And Lord I want you to bless his work and his family and his business and his children and if he's got grandchildren bless them all and say it sincerely from your heart with your will and you're okay.

But don't worry about thoughts. I'm not guilty because of that. But make sure your thoughts and attitudes that you're going to sow this year are going to be good loving thoughts and I'll tell you believe me if you take my word today you'll come to the end of this year more spiritual than you ever were in your entire life and more useful to God more used by God to bless others.

Do you know that it's God who can open doors in a way which the Lord tells a very faithful church a church in Philadelphia He says I've seen your works and I'm setting before you an open door and no one can shut it. Do you know that verse? Turn with me to Revelation and Revelation chapter 3 and verse 8. The Lord says I know your works. That means he's saying I know exactly what you've been faithful.

Okay. Here is my reward to you. I am opening a door before you of service for me which no one will be able to shut because you have sowed something.

You have very little ability. You're not a great preacher. You don't have the gifts that outstanding preachers have.

You have a very little power and with that little power you are true to my word and you are not ashamed of being known by my name. In your place of work you are not ashamed to be known as a disciple of Jesus. Even if you lost your promotion you say that's okay.

You made it known that you were a Christian. You see some of you have names which are very similar to non-Christian names and when you sit in the office you can say boy these guys don't know I am a Christian so my promotion chances will not be hindered by my boss who is a rabbit anti-Christian. That's the person to whom you make clear that though you have that name you are a Christian.

Don't deny the Lord for the sake of a promotion. Psalm 75 says I am a man. I believe that all my life promotion comes from the Lord.

Promotion in your job. I was in the Navy and I believe that promotion comes from the Lord. So I said well he will give me the promotion I need at the right time and God will give you the promotion you need at the right time if you honor him.

He is the one who opens doors. And if he sees that you are sowing good attitudes, good thoughts and you are not ashamed of his name it says here you have not denied my name verse 8 even though you have got very little ability you are not a very mature saint you converted two years ago you didn't deny my name I will open doors for you. I will give promotions to you.

Nobody can stop. I know in my own ministry when we when I was gripped by building the church and not just being a world famous preacher so many doors closed because people didn't want to hear the message of discipleship the message of leave the dead Babylonian denominations and come out and be a new covenant church people didn't want it. I mean today we have become popular unfortunately I say unfortunately we were safer in those days when CFC was despised and rejected as a heretical group and to be associated with Zak Poonen was terrible because I was considered a heretic so what? Paul was considered a heretic Jesus was considered a heretic and all the great saints throughout the greatest prophets after they died people recognized their prophets the heretics of today are recognized as prophets tomorrow it's like that so if you don't deny and I've seen in my own life as I've sought to be faithful to the truth God himself has opened door after door I didn't have to push I'll tell you honestly I didn't even have to push one door in one single place where the CFC church was planted I'll tell you I'll tell you my honest experience I'll tell you honestly my experience I'd walk up to a place and the door would open have you seen these automatic doors? you don't touch it it just opens that's exactly how every single CFC church has been planted in the last 43 years I never had to push in one place you go there, it opens because the Lord says push and shove and all that brother God's not opening that door and if God shut a door I've experienced that also door shut oh, God doesn't want me to go there I go somewhere else there's an open door there so he doesn't open doors everywhere partly because the people are not ready or in some places the Lord says that's not your ministry that's for somebody else oh, praise the Lord that's for somebody else but he's opened a door for me here it's a wonderful thing to live like that throughout this year you're not in competition with anybody you're seeking to be faithful to his name and whatever door it may be a door in your job or some other door for marriage do you believe God can open doors in

marriage? and he shuts certain doors and opens certain doors it's a wonderful thing to live by faith this year do not deny your name the little seed that you sow is confessing the name of Jesus so like I said our thoughts and attitudes towards people are seeds that we sow and the other very important seed that all of us are going to sow this year is in our words as you look back over last year you can probably see the very harmful poisonous plants that grew up in your life and in your relationships with others poisonous plants because of certain poisonous seeds words that you spoke ok pull out those plants love them bless them the way to pull it out is ask forgiveness if you have hurt somebody else go and pull that out don't say he also hurt me no no no that's his business he may not even be a Christian you hurt him does he have to ask your forgiveness? no even though he may have hurt you more he does not have to ask your forgiveness because he is not a Christian you hurt him 1% of how much he hurt you but you go to ask forgiveness because you are a Christian it's like saying he stole 1000 rupees from me and I stole 1 rupee from him you return the 1 rupee he may never return the 1000 rupees that's ok he is a heathen non-Christian why should I take anything from him but I am determined to do what's right so think of all the poisonous plants that have come up through words that you spoke foolishly perhaps to your husband or to your wife you can remember you'll never be able to get rid of that in your memory all the evil words or most of the evil words and actions that your partner did you remember that you got to forgive and say Lord I am going to sow a seed of forgiveness today and I know I'll get a good harvest from it in the days to come I am going to forgive and I am going to ask forgiveness and from that I believe I'll get a good crop this year really good that I'll have a great harvest during this year don't be afraid of going home and hugging your wife and husband do Indian husbands and wives do that I hope you do and say darling I'm sorry use some nice words it's not a sin to call your wife or husband darling or sweetheart or whatever you call don't say hey by the way I was told to ask your forgiveness today not like that be affectionate put your arm around and you know God's I mean if you have a difficulty with that go to scripture Solomon and read Song of Solomon you husbands and wives must read Song of Solomon and get some suggestions from the Holy Spirit how to speak to each other very important ask forgiveness for all that you have done and let's begin this year with sowing some good seeds it may not be perfect but when a bad seed drops out of your bag pick it up pick it up as soon as you're aware hey that's not a good seed pick it up and destroy it let's follow that rule I'm not saying it will be perfect this year I'm not going to give you an illusion that you're becoming like Jesus tomorrow no but I say let's progress press on lovely verse we have in front of our let's press on to perfection let's make that a little more so that's another thing be careful about the words you speak those are seeds that we sow you have to be very very careful make this verse your goal this year it won't happen in a day but make it a goal Colossians chapter 4 turn to Colossians in chapter 4 Colossians chapter 4 verse 6 I like that word always always means like they say 24-7 24 hours a day 7 days a week every week 24-7 let your speech be with grace what a verse gracious as though seasoned with salt what is the meaning of that seasoned with salt I thought about it and I picked it up like this if you put if you put one teaspoon of liquid or solid into your mouth you immediately know whether it's got salt or not you don't need to take 25 spoons to discover whether there is salt in it or not you know that very well one teaspoon of anything one small piece of a chapati or anything the moment it touches your tongue and you don't have to you don't take time within a second you know whether there is salt or not it's so immediate you recognize in your tongue and I'll tell you something you will know as soon as you speak whether there was grace in it or not you may not you may pretend that there was grace but you know the motive with which you said it you know there wasn't salt in it and you may think that the other person didn't know it but the other person also knew it they are not dumb sometimes you know there's an expression in English called hitting below the belt I don't know whether you know that expression it's a rule in boxing they wear shorts and they have a belt there and you are not allowed to hit below the belt that's a foul hitting below the belt in

words is saying something which is not according to the rules it's going underneath to hit someone in a hurtful way let's eliminate that from our conversation at home and between each other I mean if you have something think about it a little bit and decide what's the best way to communicate it don't be in a hurry so let your speech always be with grace seasoned with salt and if you feel as soon as the words came out of your mouth there was no salt there there was no grace in it you can't take back the words that you have spoken but you can add a little salt afterwards say something nice or say listen I'm sorry I'm sorry I said that I take back those words you can take it back very important it also says there in that verse that you can know how to respond to each person so that teaches me that it's not a standard way in which I speak to everybody in the world no I have to speak to this person in this way and I have to speak to this person in this way see Proverbs Proverbs is a great book and I hope all of you will read it many times in this year there are people who follow the rule of one chapter of Proverbs everyday there are 31 chapters so you may not read it every month but it's good to read Proverbs deeply this year I would encourage you to do it it's a wonderful book it's the closest to a new covenant book in the Old Testament ok I want to turn to Proverbs 26 answer each person according that you know how to respond to each person that's what we read in Colossians 4.6 so this is referring to that Colossians I mean Proverbs 26 and verse 4 it says don't answer a fool according to his folly that means don't speak to him just like he spoke to you because you'll be you'll become like him then if he spoke rudely to you and you speak rudely to him you'll become like him no don't do that but it says here answer a fool not according to his folly but as his folly deserves so that he doesn't become wise in his own eyes if he requires a response from you you're going to give him an answer in a way that he needs to hear maybe a word of correction or a word of rebuke so when you meet a fool you need to ask yourself is this fool A or fool B fool A means you've got to answer don't answer him if it's fool B then you've got to answer him there are two types of fools mentioned in verse four and five and a fool is one who does not speak according to the will of God or do things according to the will of God anyone who doesn't speak or do things is a fool in God's eyes and we don't call him a fool but God calls him a fool so as each person deserves to hear and I've often said that don't try to correct a person if you have never in the church for example if you have never appreciated him you have never spoken one word in all the years you have known him for anything good in him then you may not be the person to correct him maybe somebody else can correct him but not you because you've never said one good word or kind word to him in all your life and if you look around you will find many people here to whom you have never spoken a kind word in all the years you have known them that's sad you've known a person for so many years and it's always been business words or a good word a kind word I praise God for some very few outstanding examples I've seen in my life who know how to speak good words and kind words and I'll tell you if you do that one day when you have to speak a word of correction they will accept it even though they may get a little hurt in the beginning they'll accept it I have tried to follow that rule I mean if it's a stranger it's different but usually people I know well I first ask myself have I appreciated something good in that person have I prayed for that person then I can speak words of correction I mean if you see the example of Jesus in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 the way he corrected the elders in churches imagine an elder in a church the most responsible person in a church and Jesus speaks some strong words of rebuke to them and in every case there were five churches he corrected five elders in every case except one he always said something positive you read that in Revelation 2 and 3 the only one he had nothing positive to say was an elder in Laodicea he says you're just good for nothing but all the others you know before he corrects them he says some very good things about them that is wisdom they're more likely to accept your correction when you speak to your children you ask yourself this question how often do you encourage your children that's the reason if you don't that's the reason they don't accept your correction that's the reason they don't accept your I'm sorry to say that I've met many fathers in CFC who never

appreciate and encourage their children it's pathetic they belong to that great tribe of people who are so arrogant that they think they know everything and what is the result all the sowing of negative things to your children have increased the distance between you and your children till your child is so far away and I'll tell you something you may think because he's far away from you he's far away from God no he may be closer to God than you are because he knows how to speak kind words and you don't you know what you need you need to hear a prophetic word from an Elijah turn with me to Malachi chapter 4 and verse 5 and 6 Malachi 4 verse 5 it's speaking about the last days in the last days and we are living in those days I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet not Elijah himself but those who come in the spirit of Elijah for example John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah and there will be many people not many at least some in the church in the last days who will have the spirit of Elijah fearless not afraid of kings who will say I stand before God and will speak the truth against all the false prophets and against an Israel that's going away from God and there will be people like that in the last days in the body of Christ just before the Lord comes and what are they going to do? they are going to get the fathers verse 6 to reach out to their children the hearts of the fathers that have been distant from their children in their crazy idea that I'm being spiritual and my son or daughter is rebellious brother the problem is with you with many fathers do you know the Bible never says mothers discipline your children show me a verse like that fathers discipline your children instruct them not only discipline it says in Ephesians 6 verse 4 bring them up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord instruction and how does the Lord instruct us? he is silently planning for us in love I know many of you have silently planned in love for your children you have sacrificed you have you work hard and earn money to get your children education and brought them up to the place where they are employed or they are slowly coming up in their education you children be thankful for your father who works so hard but there is another aspect of your heavenly father which you don't have you fathers don't let your children know that you rejoice over them with shouts of joy do your children feel let me ask you fathers do your children ever feel that you really rejoice over them you say oh brothers they are not perfect how does God rejoice over you? is it because you are perfect? you are so thoroughly imperfect you know the distance between you and your son in perfection is about this much one inch do you know the distance between God and you in perfection millions of miles and God can rejoice over you even though you are millions of miles below him in perfection and you can't rejoice over your son or daughter who is half a centimeter below you in perfection shame on you my boys are not perfect I am not perfect myself but I rejoice over them and I let them know that I have corrected them through the years but if there is one little thing I can appreciate near them I say it immediately always not only my own sons I have thousands of sons now all over the world whenever I get a chance to promote them in some way or encourage them in some way I always take it do it this year fathers we are reaching the end time let the spirit of Elijah urge you to restore your heart to your children who have drifted from you not because of their fault but because you have not told them that you appreciate them you mean there is nothing good in them I will tell you how many fathers about mothers here in verse 6 but I think some mothers are also involved in this parents need to encourage their children the heart is not words please remember this don't be a hypocrite and say oh brother Zach said I got to go and encourage my children and you say some words which you don't even mean to your children today forget it go and repent before God and say Lord these are words he is not talking about words he is talking about your heart Malachi 4.6 being restored to your child and then what will happen the hearts of the children will be restored to their fathers so who is going to take the first step you are waiting for your child to humble himself or herself and come to you and say oh daddy I am sorry forget it you take the first step when almighty God takes the first step you are God you heard me often speak about that when a husband and wife have a tension and they want to restore the relationship both of them feel I want to restore the relationship always the problem is who will take the first step what's

the answer in all Indian culture it says the woman must humble herself I think in some western cultures where the woman is the boss it says the man must humble himself do you know how men propose to women in western countries shall I tell you they treat her as God we kneel down before God these men kneel down before the woman and say oh my God will you please marry me believe it or not in western marriages it's like that here comes the bride that's the song they sing no here comes the bride groom bride groom just walks and stands there somewhere quietly but here comes the bride in India it's different in India the bride groom comes on his horse here comes the bride groom and the wife is walking meekly behind on the road this is two different cultures it is not like that we value one another so when there is a tension between husband and wife who should take the first step here is my answer which I have repeated many times let's follow Jesus let's follow God when God had a problem with man who took the first step the answer is the one who was more spiritual that is God so if you and your partner have a tension who should take the first step not husband not wife I won't say that because I am not western or eastern I am Christian and so I say whoever is more spiritual and since both of you think you are more spiritual you should be just running into each other's arms why isn't that happening at least this year let's do that there is nothing wrong in running into each other's arms I will tell you that it is permitted in CFC restore the hearts let's do this restoration of hearts between husband and wife partners oh how sad it is whenever I hear tension between husband and wife CFC which is supposed to be where we put the flesh to death every day where we judge ourselves and don't judge the other person when are we going to learn dear brothers and sisters we can't glory oh we are a spiritual church I have always said the strength of this church is the strength of the families in this church if the families are not strong the church is not strong it is not the number of people sitting here not at all what is the quality of relationship in all the families in this church that is the strength of this church if there is some way we could assess it that is the strength of this church and what is the quality of your relationship with that brother whom you love but don't like or that sister whom you love but you don't like what is the quality of your relationship there that is the strength of this church please remember this so let's get into this business of restoring hearts in this year let's sow seeds of restoration starting from today not tomorrow starting from today we want to really make this 2019 this new year better than every year in our whole life I am not telling you words that I have not practiced I have sought to do that in the past years who are younger than my youngest son and said brother I am sorry I think I spoke a little hard to you the other day when I was correcting you in something please forgive me I want to be more careful next time or sometimes if I have crossed my boundary you know I have got boundaries too by the way all of us have got boundaries or if I have crossed my boundary in something I have told someone I quickly pull back and say I am sorry brother that is your territory go right ahead I will not interfere there I have followed that principle for years and I am a very happy man sometimes we make mistakes you can walk into another person's boundary and you don't give a freedom you know your children also have a boundary if you don't respect your children if you treat them like dogs or like some animals that you kick or something that is not the way to treat our children they are creatures of God they are created in the image of God and I can't kick God so I can't treat my children like that must be respectful to everyone always speak respectfully to your wife and never use words that are disrespectful we are sowing seeds and the other thing is we are going to sow seeds this year with our words sorry with our actions thoughts, attitudes, words and actions let us sow to the spirit and not to the flesh turn with me to psalm 18 psalm 18 we read here in verse 24 the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness according to the cleanness of my hands and his eyes he is not boasting about his righteousness I am sure he he says in other psalms I have no goodness apart from thee Lord this is David but he says in verse 25 with the kind you show yourself kind with the blameless you show yourself blameless with the pure you show yourself pure and with the crooked you show yourself twisted God acts

in a twisted way with you not because he is twisted but he deals with you in a twisted way he says you are a bit twisted in your attitude towards somebody else I really believe there are many fathers who have not grown spiritually because they are twisted in their attitude towards their children they don't realize it themselves but I can see through it clearly I have enough discernment to see that there is no progress in somebody's life now it is always good to read what is written at the top of a psalm it says here David wrote this psalm in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul and from his enemies you see at the head of psalm 18 so when I read something like that I go back to say how was that let me turn back to 1 Samuel this is how you can study the Bible too we read in 1 Samuel and how Saul was chasing after David in 1 Samuel 23 and verse 19 the enemies of David came to Saul 1 Samuel chapter 23 these Old Testament histories very interesting verse 19 the Ziphites came up to Saul and said hey by the way you are looking for David right David is hiding with us in our territory in the strongholds at Horesh we saw him on the hill of Aqilah I will tell you the exact location is south of Jashimon 1 Samuel 23 19 now then O king come a messenger came to Saul and said hurry so Saul stopped pursuing see how God protected David some Philistines came and attacked him that side ok he defeated the Philistines it is amazing how God protected David and then chapter 24 verse 1 Saul came back he said I am still going to hunt for David and somebody told him chapter 24 verse 1 he is in the wilderness of En Gedi so he took 3000 men and they came to the sheepfolds and listen to this verse 3 there was a cave there and Saul went into the cave to relieve himself alone and he didn't realize inside that cave David and his men were sitting there in the inner recesses of that cave and one of the men of David said to him hey David this is the day which the Lord said I will deliver your enemy into your hand there he is just take your spear and pierce it through him or take this dagger and finish him off and that will be the end of his reign and you can be the king and David said no but when Saul was resting there or whatever he was doing David went to a corner and just sliced off a small part of Saul's robe I mean such a small part that Saul didn't even wake up and just cutting off that robe David's conscience bothered him verse 5 see when we think of David and Jesus calling himself the son of David we say how in the world can Jesus call himself the son of a man who committed adultery and married there I'll tell you he slipped up there's no doubt David slipped up in moments of weakness he slipped up in that moment when he saw Bathsheba it wasn't a regular habit of his but he wasn't going around raping every woman he saw but he slipped up once and when he was caught in that situation he tried to cover it up by he didn't kill her husband himself but say okay told the general he would not basically this verse tells me he had a conscience he would not kill even if he is going to be a king thereby he was convicted when he cut a small part of Saul's robe and then he told his men verse 7 no no no don't kill him we can't touch the Lord's anointed and last part of verse 10 I will not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed there's a verse in the Old Testament it says the Lord says don't touch my anointed don't do my prophets any harm it's a very dangerous thing to raise your hand against the Lord's anointed or your words and so finally David decided Saul must know I could have killed him so he comes out of the cave and he stood before David he stood before Saul and said verse 9 why are you listening to the words of people who say I'm trying to harm you you see this piece of your robe I could have killed you right now when you came into my hands inside the cave and people told me to kill you but I didn't I said I will not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed and David himself verse 22 Saul went home it says here in verse 16 he even wept and we read later on another time again chapter 26 a second time and David was hiding chapter 26 verse 1 and Saul arose again and heard verse 4 that Saul was coming so David arose and came to the place where Saul had camped and they were all asleep it was at night and David said to one of his soldiers who will go down with me to Saul and they were all sleeping Saul's army there 3000 of them and David and Abishai verse 7 were laying sleeping inside the circle of the camp and Saul's spear was stuck in the ground near his head and Abner said today God has

delivered you if you don't want to kill him Abner said let me take this spear and strike it with one stroke and I will fix him to the ground he won't get up David said no again the same words be without guilt and be without guilt remember those words be very careful my brothers and sisters be careful who you speak against be careful who you stretch out your tongue against will you be without guilt that's what made David a man after God's own heart he made mistakes like all of us make mistakes but he had a sensitive conscience most of the time and God saw that he would not grab for himself and he says if the Lord wants me to kill him the Lord will strike him one day but I will not do it and so David took the spear verse 12 Saul's spear and the jug of water and went away and everybody was fast asleep and then David crossed over and he shouted out Abner aren't you supposed to take care of the king somebody came to kill your king see where his spear is see where his jug of water is it's with me here it is and Saul again recognized David's voice is that you David verse 17 David says yes it is me then Saul said verse 21 please return my son David I know one day you will be the king so when that happened that's when David wrote Psalm 18 and what did he read in Psalm 18 with the kind the Lord will show himself kind that guy tried to kill me but I let him go again he came after me I let him go take that example my brothers this year somebody is coming after you forgive him the Lord will protect you he is kind to those who are kind don't remember all the wrong things they did against you forgive let this be a year when we sow seeds of forgiveness that doesn't mean you shouldn't correct your children when they grow up if you don't correct them but it's a question of how you correct them in fact the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 12 Hebrews 12 which father is there who does not correct his children it's a clear word you read that whole section from Hebrews 12 verse 5 onwards verse 7 is what I quoted just now what son is there whom his father does not discipline if you don't discipline your son your son or daughter they will become wayward I hope you are strict with your children I was very strict with all my four sons I will tell you that more strict than I have been with any of my other thousands of sons that I have much more some of you think I have been strict with you you haven't seen how I have dealt with my own sons because a father must not only encourage he must also discipline but if you have disciplined them in the right way with kindness and I always used to pray with my children after disciplining them and if you do that and hug them and make sure that it's not just discipline discipline, discipline but encouragement as well you will find that your children are drawn to you and if you want to know how much to discipline that proportion also is written in scripture turn with me to Isaiah everything is in scripture if you know where to find it that's why I urge you brothers and sisters please read the Bible this year get to know the Bible this year better than you have ever known it read through the Bible there are people who read more than once that book look at all the Bible study resources we have in our CFC website 70 hours through the Bible and 28 studies on foundational truths 72 studies on basic Christian teachings and verse by verse through many number of important Old Testament books verse by verse through the New Testament every single verse and all of that comes to four or five hundred hours the only person who has told me that he has listened to every single minute of that is brother Ebenezer in our church you don't think much of him he has read through that more than all of you listened to it and that's what helped him to be a godly brother more than many others we are godly it says in Isaiah 61 that Jesus comes to proclaim verse 2 let me read verse 2 to you like this to proclaim 365 days of favor and one day of discipline you wanted to know the proportion how you should help and correct your children 365 days of encouragement one day of discipline that's the proportion 365 words of encouragement and one word of strong correction 365 days words of encouragement so if we are like that we will find God is kind to us when we are kind to others God is very strict to us when you are strict to others what about the servants who work in your home who are poorer than you that's why they work as servants in your home who serve you anybody who serves you in any way whether in your home or elsewhere they are below you socially be kind to them you are much below God in that God will be kind to you I've experienced that

I've experienced the amazing kindness of God in my life both my wife and I in our health in protection in travel in giving me words to speak when I don't know what to speak He's been exceptionally kind to me and I want to continue being kind to people but yet being strict as well God is very strict when it comes to myself I have nothing against anybody but when it comes to the church and the purity of the church I will have the same whip in my hand that Jesus my savior had when he went into the temple and spared nobody not everybody is called to use the whip I know God has called me to do it and I will do it faithfully if I don't do it I'll be unfaithful I will continue to use that till Jesus comes so but that's not perhaps your calling very few people one in a thousand perhaps is called to use a whip in the church your calling is more to encourage and speak words of encouragement not everybody is called to be like Brother Zach no I've often told my fellow elders please don't imitate my ministry it's not yours your ministry may be the ministry of Jesus putting his arm around the leper calling the adulterous woman go in peace your sins are forgiven that is one ministry of Jesus and that may be your calling please do it I think the Lord needs 365 to one he needs 365 people who will speak those words and maybe one person like me who takes the whip so you don't have to imitate me there but I will continue to use that whip because God has called me to do it and so to me that doesn't contradict so that the church will not be kept pure it's my responsibility thank you for listening patiently I want to show you a few pictures to encourage you first of all a picture blind man with a stick here it says depend on the Lord Jesus you remember this is the word that Santosh spoke at our conference as the blind man depends on his cane all the time you know when a blind man this is what Santosh said he can't see a thing what do you reach out for first thing in the morning most people a cell phone first thing in the morning the cell phone is useless to the blind man he needs a stick as soon as he gets up from bed and that's what Santosh was saying when you get up say Lord I want to walk with you I am a blind person I is it only just in the morning all the time gradually it will become a habit Lord I want you to guide me now I want you to lead me what do I do next and here is a place I am stuck gropes around it's amazing how these blind people over a period of time develop such a sense where I should turn and where I should go that's a great picture you know a two year old child trying to cross a busy road MG road or something when it's really busy and his dad holds his hand and he is perfectly safe I I want to think of always Jesus holding my hand and many often say that Lord I am a little two year old please hold my hand the world is a dangerous place so much temptation I cannot cross without getting hit but if I hold your hand I know you will take me weave me in and out of all those temptations and miss all that traffic and reach the other side safely do you believe that you can take your two year old across a busy road like that Jesus can make you avoid every temptation and take you through this whole year I want to note and every single person we don't want anybody to be left out we want fathers here sitting here to have their hearts restored to their children we want the initiative to come from the fathers and children's hearts restored to the fathers gaps between husband and wife gaps between parents and children to be closed up nobody becoming perfect but everyone pressing on to perfection make it a glorious year and throughout the year help us to know that you rejoice over us with shouts of joy and you are silently planning for the whole year for the whole future for us in love Lord let the blessing of the Lord rest upon every brother and every family here in the midst of the darkness of this world yes Lord make us a blessing we pray in Jesus name Amen there are two songs here which I want you to also remember this year the first one is he did not come to judge the world he did not come to blame the first verse referring to Jesus and then referring to us he did not come to judge the world he did not come to blame he did not only come to seek it was to save he came we called him by his name we do not have the right to judge we are not here to blame we're only called to bless and love and love in Jesus name then we glorify his name we glorify his name there is one more song which has got a message they sing it out in the world too but I think it's got a Christian message that I believe we can practice this year in relation to all that we've spoken also let me be a little kinder you're not

going to be perfect we read that with the kind the Lord shows himself kind Psalm 18 you're not going to be perfect in kindness this year but can we be a little kinder that means more every day pressing on to perfection and kindness and pressing on in perfection to blindness about the faults of others ok let me be a little kinder let me be a little kinder to the faults of those around me let me praise the Lord let me be when I'm weary just a little bit more cheery with a little more love and a little less of me let me be a little braver when the patience takes me away just try a little harder to be all that I can be let me be a little deeper with a brother who is sweet more of my neighbor and a little less of me let me be a little hero let me sing with him of the one who came to love me who died to set me free let me be when I'm weary just a little bit more cheery with a little more of my neighbor and a little less of me let me fly a little higher let me take a little joy let me help all those around me who are sorrowful and need me let me be a little closer to a brother who is loose let me climb a little higher in every word and deed it's probably a new song for many of you I think we should sing it again listen to those words carefully as we go along especially for those who are hearing it for the first time try and follow and make it a prayer to the Lord let me be a little kinder a little closer to brothers who are losers there are brothers and sisters in our midst who are not the warm, exuberant type they're introverted personalities they're always in, many of them have difficult think of the number of people here who are rejected by their parents from non-Christian homes who don't have friends let's learn to be a little closer to them this year ok let me be a little kinder let me be a little kinder to the thoughts of those around me let me raise a little more let me be a little kinder just a little bit more cherry raise a little more for others have a little taste of me too let me be a little braver have a taste of saintly favor strive a little harder to be all that I can be let me be a little deeper with a brother who is weaker anything more of my neighbor have a little taste of me let me be a little clearer let me speak a little bit of me of the one who came to love me who died to set me free let me be when I am weary just a little bit more cherry anything more of my neighbor have a little less of me let me climb a little higher let me think a little purer let me help all those around me who are so much in need let me be a little closer to a brother who is a loser let me climb a little higher give him timber and mead Amen

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