

# Submission and Godliness

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of submission to authority as the solution to pride and rebellion, and it provides practical examples from the Bible and real-life situations.*

**Duration:** 45:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:10

**Topics:** "Humility And Obedience", "Overcoming Sin"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the origins of sin in the universe, tracing it back to pride and rebellion against authority. It emphasizes the importance of humility and submission as key elements in overcoming sin, drawing parallels between the fall of Lucifer and the need for obedience in human relationships. The message highlights the significance of laying the axe to the root of sin, addressing the subtle dangers of pride and the necessity of following God's word even when it goes against societal norms.

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## Transcript

For those of you who don't know, I want to tell you how sin began in this universe. All the havoc and confusion in the world has come because of sin. Now you know there are many types of sins.

Some serious, some not so serious. But they all destroy us. You can be destroyed by murmuring and complaining just as much as by adultery and murder.

But sin did not begin with murder or adultery. It did not even begin with hypocrisy. What we see today is like a tree with many fruits of sin.

But if you go to the root, you see where it began. Like a tree begins with a small seed. So if you understand where sin began, you can hit the axe to the root.

Many of us are using scissors and cutting off different fruits of sin in our life. That's good. But it will come up in some other way.

Supposing you have a bad tree producing bad mangoes. Every mango is bad. And you don't want people walking down your road to see that what a bad mango tree this man has.

So everyday you go with a pair of scissors and cut off all the bad mangoes. This is what trying to get rid of certain sins is like. And to be a hypocrite is to buy some good mangoes from the market and tie it up here

so that people are impressed.

But it says in Matthew 3 that Jesus has come with an axe to the root of the tree so that a tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. Jesus has come with an axe to the root of the tree so that a tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. Matthew 12 verse 33 You make the tree good, then the fruit will be good.

If the tree is bad, then the fruit will be bad. If the tree is good, then the fruit will be good. If the tree is bad, then the fruit will be bad.

Matthew 7 verse 17 Every good tree bears good fruit. Bad tree bears bad fruit. Listen to this.

Matthew 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit. And a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit must be cut down and thrown into the fire.

And every tree that does not bear good fruit must be cut down and thrown into the fire. You can spend all your life with an axe to cut down all the bad fruits. And you will tie up some good mangoes to show people that you have a good tree.

But you know that the tree is not good. You have to take an axe, not scissors. Then law is only a pair of scissors.

Cut it off. Murder comes, cut it off. Adultery, cut it off.

Telling lies, cut it off. What about changing the tree? In the old covenant, they could not do it. All this strain of every day, cutting off, cutting off.

Somebody will see this bad fruit. It can all be eliminated if you put an axe to the root. What is the root? Where did sin begin? Where did sin begin? And it is written in two places where sin began.

Before that, we will see Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. And Jacob 1.17 says that whatever God has created, He has created it very well. Everything.

And God has not created anything imperfect. And in Genesis 1.2 it is written that the earth was empty. It became like that.

See, in the Hebrew language, this verse can be translated like this. The earth became formless, empty, dark. Something happened between verse 1 and 2 which is not written here.

And that is where an angel became a devil. That is not written here because this book is not written for angels, it is written for man. So it begins with the history of man.

What happened with that angel who became devil is written somewhere else. God made something perfect, beautiful heaven and earth. But it lost its shape.

And it became empty and dark. Just like when Adam sinned, the animals became wild. And thorns came up.

And sickness came and the curse came on the earth. God never created man like that. Here also, God made it perfect.

But there was an angel. We don't know his name. Nowhere in the Bible is his name given.

He was called the star of the morning. Which in Latin is called Lucifer. So some people call him Lucifer.

But that's not his name. The name is not mentioned anywhere. But we read about him in Ezekiel 28.

He is called here, verse 12, Ezekiel 28, 12, the king of Tyre. That means he was the real king behind the earthly king. So he is talking about the devil.

But he is telling him, when you were first created, you were perfect. You had the seal of perfection, you were full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. Verse 13, you were in the garden of Eden, the garden of God.

Before Adam came to the garden of Eden, somebody else was in the garden of Eden. That was this angel. Who was perfect.

Verse 14, he was the anointed cherub. Whom God placed in the garden of Eden. Who ruled everything.

And he walked, verse 14, on the holy mountain of God. That's not referring to the earthly king of Tyre, but the spirit being that controlled the earthly king. No, not the king of Tyre.

But the spirit that controlled him was once upon a time in Eden. One who was perfect. In beauty, wisdom, and position.

And then we read verse 17. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty. It corrupted his wisdom.

So a pride came into the heart of this head of the angels. We're talking about a perfect heaven and earth now. No sin anywhere in the universe.

God and millions of angels and a beautiful universe. No sin anywhere. But these angels had free will.

They were not like the planets that rotate automatically. They were given a free will. And this head of the angels became proud of his beauty.

Proud of his wisdom. And proud of his position. And the Lord just cast him down.

It says, I've consumed you. It says in verse 18. The sin consumed that angel.

Verse 17, I cast you to the ground. That is how sin came. Pride.

Ego. That was the first sin in the universe. So remember, that is more dangerous than murder and adultery.

The Pharisees who killed Jesus were not murderers and adulterers. They had the poison of pride in them. And the Lord said, you generation of vipers.

How will you escape hell? You're a whitewashed grave. They had the poison of Satan in them, even though they were not committing murder and adultery. Many of you may be quite satisfied that you're not committing gross sins.

But you may be having the biggest of all in your heart. Worse than murder and adultery. Pride.

Of your beauty. You look at the mirror and say, thank God I'm a good looking person. Thank God my color is fair, not dark.

Or of your cleverness. Thank God I'm clever. I'm not stupid like these other people.

I did well in school and college. So I've got a good job, unlike these people who are just cleaning latrines and toilets. Yeah, you're clever, you're smart.

And you don't realize that that pride is destroying you. That's exactly what the devil wants you to have. You think you're not sinning, but you've got the worst sin of all.

Or it can be your position. I've got a good position in my job. I've got so many people working under me.

Or your position in a church. I'm an elder, not just an ordinary brother. You think elders can't become proud? I have seen so many elders who became proud.

Even in CFC churches. Who became proud. And who fell away.

Just like God removed that head of the angels, he's removed people who were elders. You can be proud of anything. You can be proud of the way you preach.

Or proud of the way you sing. Or the way you play some musical instrument. Pride is such a subtle thing that comes in without even your knowing it.

So that is the origin of sin. And from that pride comes something else. Which is part of it.

It's like two sides of one coin. You get a coin, you see pride on one side. You turn around and you see something else, which is part of the same coin.

And that's mentioned in Isaiah 14. Where also we are told about this head of the angels. Verse 12, Isaiah 14.

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, sun of the dawn. This is what in the Latin the word is Lucifer. That's not his name.

It's just a description of what he is. What he was. What he was once.

Star of the morning, sun of the dawn. Now you have been cut down to the earth. Why? Because verse 13, you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven.

I will raise my throne above the stars of God. Verse 14, I will ascend the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high God.

But you will be thrust down to hell. And people will gaze at you and wonder what happened. So, this is the other side of pride.

Rebellion against authority. It's not different. It's just the other side of the same coin.

You know, he was the leader of the angels getting everybody to worship God. And all these millions of angels. Here was this person who was leading them in the worship of God.

He thought, why should we get them all to worship God? I want to get them to worship me. So, I will make myself like, I'll get into that throne. Of God and get people to worship me.

It happens even today. In churches. Where a song leader.

Is leading people to worship God. And he does it in such a way that people admire him. See how well I can sing.

See how well I can lead the singing. I've seen musicians trying to show how well they can play something. Especially those who play drums.

I had to go to somebody in our church and say, Are you getting people to worship you or to worship Jesus? It's very subtle. You do something in front to get people to admire you. You know where that began? It began with the head of these angels.

That was the origin of sin. And it is found in many, many churches today. Wherever people get people to admire a man or a woman.

So, sin began with rebellion against the authority. So, how do we get rid of this tree? You have to lay an axe to pride and to the spirit of rebellion. That's why the Lord said, Children, obey your parents.

Honor your father and mother. Ephesians 6 and verse 2 and 3. Then it will go well with you. Why does God put children under parents? Why does he tell them to obey their parents? Not because your parents are perfect.

There is no perfect parent in the world. But Jesus gave us an example. He was perfect.

Yet, for 30 years, he obeyed a father and mother who were imperfect. Yet, for 30 years, he obeyed a father and mother who were imperfect. For 30 years, he obeyed his mother.

Maybe Joseph died when he was 18 or so. At least the first 18 years, he obeyed Joseph and Mary. And who was he obeying? A so-called father and mother who he would see sometimes fighting with each other.

And he was perfect. Do you think Joseph and Mary fought with each other? Any Roman Catholics here? Who believe that Joseph and Mary never fought with each other? I have seen new covenant husband and wife fighting with each other. Where is the question of an old covenant husband and wife not fighting? They fought with each other.

They argued with each other. And the perfect Jesus was watching that. And he did not despise them.

And when they told him to do something, he did it. Maybe that is the time when he wanted to go and play. 12 year old Jesus.

When they are playing some game like cricket. Not cricket, something like cricket those days. And it has come time for Jesus to bat.

And his mother says, Jesus come. Go and get some water for me from the well. What did Jesus do? What do children do today? Mummy just 5 minutes, I will come.

5 minutes means 45 minutes. You know what Jesus did? He dropped his bat. People made fun of him.

What are you mumma's boy? Come on bat man. He was not bothered. He obeyed because he knew God had commanded.

Children must obey their parents. Not children must obey perfect parents. Imperfect parents.

The Bible says obey your elders. Not perfect elders because there are no perfect elders in the world. The Bible says in Ephesians 5. Wives, Ephesians 5.22 To be subject to your husbands.

As unto the Lord. That means just like you listen to Jesus, you listen to your husband. So the wives, verse 24 Must be subject to their husbands in everything.

Why? Because that is how Jesus brought salvation to this world. How did Jesus lay the axe to the root? This head of the angels, call him Lucifer Wanted to go up and up and up and up. How to solve that problem? How to lay the axe to the root of that sin? Jesus came down and down and down and down.

He was God. He became a man. He became a man.

He came down and became a slave, a servant, washing people's feet. What is lower than a slave? A criminal whom the Romans crucified. So God became man.

That was humility. You read that in Philippians 2. Though he was God, verse 6, he became a man. Second step, verse 7 As a man, he became a servant, verse 7 And verse 8, the third step, he became as a criminal, being crucified on the cross.

This is the secret of the Christian life. Three secrets. Humility Humility Humility And you can read that in verse 6, 7, 8 That is how he laid the axe to the root of this tree of pride that the devil had.

What is the other side of that pride? Rebellion Satan, Lucifer could not even submit to a perfect God. So Jesus came and laid an axe to that tree by submitting to an imperfect mother and father. That is how he laid an axe to the root.

Submission. Submission to authority. That's why if you don't teach your children submission to parents, you are allowing the poison of the devil to spread in them.

In a home, before the children are born, there is a wife. And that wife has to first show submission, then only the children can learn it. It says in Proverbs 14 verse 1, a wise woman builds her home, the foolish woman tears it down.

Why doesn't it say a wise man builds his house? Do you know that it is a woman who builds the home? By the spirit of submission. How can the husband show submission in the house? He may be submitting to God in his private life, but it's not so visible. In a home, the children see the mother submitting to the father, even to an imperfect father, just like Jesus did.

That is how a home is built. That is how a church is built. Hebrews 13 verse 17 says, submit to your elders.

The church also, it's through submission that the axe is laid to the root of the tree. So, what would you think of a wife who commits adultery every day with different men, women, with different men? You say, what a horrible wife. I'll tell you a more horrible wife than that.

One who does not submit to her husband every day. But we are more horrified if this wife is committing adultery every day. But this one who argues and fights with her husband every day and say, oh, that's normal.

All marriages are like that. And the children acquire that habit from the mother. And where do you think such people are sitting? In Christian churches, bringing the poison of rebellion into the church.

And most churches, they don't even have an understanding on this. What does the Bible say? 1 Corinthians 11. 1 Corinthians 11 is divided into two parts.

The first 16 verses are referring to covering the head. Women covering their head. The remaining 18 verses are about breaking of bread.

Arrogant men and women, they decide to remove something from God's word and say, we decide what to take, what not to take. We will take the breaking of bread. But we will not take the first part of that chapter.

You don't do that with the government. You will not go around with old 500 rupee, 1000 rupee notes because the government has banned it. But some of you are more afraid of the government than you are afraid of God's word.

You don't say, I don't care what the government says, I'm going to use 500,000 rupee notes. But when God's word says a woman must cover her head, you say, no, I don't bother about that. Why does the Bible ask a woman to cover her head when she prays or prophesies? A woman can pray, she can prophesy, but in submission to the man, because it says here in verse 3, just like God is the head of Christ, man is the head of woman.

Christ is the head of man. So a man is the head of the woman. Just like the father was above Jesus when he was on earth.

How many of you sisters believe that? That God has made man the head of the woman, that the husband is the head of the wife. How many of you believe it? I'm asking you whether you believe the Bible is the word of God or the word of man. That's all.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean upon your own reason. Then God will direct your paths. And therefore it says in verse 10, a woman must have the symbol of authority on her head because of the angels.

Why the angels? Because this rebellion against authority started with the angels. The angels in heaven know what happened millions of years ago. How the head of the angels rebelled and says, woman, cover your head, acknowledge that the But do you know the devil has infiltrated many women around the world.

The Hindu women in the villages know this, they all cover their heads. Did you see that in India? Even they have more understanding than many Christian women. A hundred years ago in America, every church women covered their head during the church service.

Every church. But after the second world war, in the around 1950, a new movement started around the world. Women's liberation.

A lot of these bad things that begin in the West finally come to India also. And women said, we're equal to men, why should we allow them to be above us? And slowly that spirit came into the church. And after

1950, women started removing their covering.

And now you go to American churches, almost no woman covers her head. I've been to a church with 2000 people, my wife will be the only one sitting there covering her head. My third son, Sandeep, he started a church in his house in California some years ago.

A lot of American families and all gathered together. So mixed church, Americans, Mexicans, different, different people. And after some time, he began to preach, women must cover their head when they pray.

It was a small church. Half the people left. Because the women said, we're not going to do that.

And in those homes, the woman is the boss of the house, so they dragged their husband and went. So when they did not cover their head, they were speaking the truth. I'm the head of this house, I'll take my husband and take him wherever I go.

And when I saw that, I said, Sandeep, I'm proud of you. You're a son after my own heart. You stand for the word of God even if everybody leaves.

That's how we started CFC 41 years ago. The Lord said to me, if everybody leaves you for the truth you stand for, will you still stand for me? I said, Lord, if my wife and I have to stand alone here, we'll stand alone here. So I told Sandeep, this is the best thing that has happened to you.

Now you can establish this church on 100% obedience to God's word, not 90%. That you preach everything in the New Testament, not pick and choose what you like and what you don't like. And now God has built a wonderful church with many many people, Americans, Mexicans, Chinese, all types of people.

God was testing him in the beginning. Will you like other preachers preach to please people or will you preach my word? God has enabled him to build a wonderful church with wonderful elders. And I have seen through the years in many countries, any woman who has got the spirit of rebellion in her heart, will teach removing the head cover.

And will teach her daughters to also not wear the head cover. That is all over the world. Now I'm not saying that everyone who covers their head is submitting to their husband.

It can be an empty form for many people. But the thing is, just like everybody who breaks bread is not saying I want to die with Jesus Christ and follow him. That's the real meaning.

I take this bread and cup to show that I want to die with Jesus to myself. Everybody doesn't mean it. Let them not mean it, but we will mean it.

So, the same way every woman who covers her head is not submitting to her husband. We will do what is right. So what I'm trying to say is, Submission to authority is a very important part of the Christian life.

That is how a home is built in a godly way. A wise woman builds her house. A foolish woman tears it down.

We want wise wives in our church. Let the foolish women tear down their houses. Learn a lesson from them.

Don't follow their bad example. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, We pray that the truth of your word will sink into our hearts.

In Jesus name.

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