

The Blessings Of Living Now

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the privilege and blessing of having access to the Bible and knowing God as our Father. It highlights the importance of reading the Bible daily, seeking guidance from God's Word, and understanding that God gives good gifts to His children. The speaker encourages a close, intimate relationship with God, addressing the fear of the devil, the significance of God's Word as a light for our path, and the assurance of God's love and guidance in our lives.

Scripture: Matthew 13:16, Psalms 119:105, 1 Peter 2:2, 1 John 2:14, Matthew 7:11, 1 John 4:4, Matthew 7:12, Romans 8:15

Topics: "Access to God's Word", "Intimacy with God"

Description

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Transcript

From the time of Adam to the time of Jesus Christ, there were millions of people living in the world for 4000 years. But they did not know God like we can know Him. Even in the time before Jesus Christ came to earth, in the land of Israel that you read about in the Old Testament, even the great prophets could not know God like we know Him.

Let me show you a verse in Matthew's Gospel chapter 13. And I want you to read, think of these two verses in Matthew 13 and verses 16 and 17. You know, dear brothers and sisters, you are very fortunate that you can read.

And you are very fortunate that you have a Bible in your language. And you have to be very fortunate that you are living at this time. If you had lived in Tamil Nadu 150 years ago, you would not have had a Bible.

You may not have known about Jesus Christ. You may have lived and died in your sins. Not only you.

If I lived in India 150 years ago, I would not have known about Jesus. I may have lived and died in my sins. I'm also very thankful that I'm living at this time.

And that I have a Bible in my language. We must be thankful. Because there may be many other difficulties you have in your life.

All of us have. Sometimes you think only poor people have difficulties. Many rich people also have difficulties.

They have children who got sicknesses that cannot be healed. There are problems for everybody on this earth. But we have to be very thankful that we have the Bible.

It's the only book God has written. And you have got a copy of that. Out of all the crores of books in the world, one book God has written, you got a copy.

Imagine how lucky you are. There are so many people in Tamil Nadu who don't have a copy of the one book God has written. I had a Bible in my home from the time I was a small boy.

But I never took it seriously. I was about 20 years old before I started taking this book seriously. Then I began to take it seriously because I realized there's only one book in the world God has written.

I began to read the whole thing from one cover to the other cover. Again and again and again and again. So I want to ask you a question.

There's a lot of work you have to do. You have to go to the fields and different places. You have to go to work.

At home you have a lot of work. Looking after the house, cooking the food, looking after children. But all of us still have at least one hour a day that we can spare.

But all of us still have at least one hour a day that we can spare. Maybe after the children have gone to sleep. In 24 hours I'm sure we can get one hour.

I want to encourage you to read the Bible. The only book God has written which you have a copy. All other books are written by men.

This book changed my life, it will change your life. So let's read Matthew 13 verse 16 and 17. So let's read Matthew 13 verse 16 and 17.

Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. Do you believe that you are blessed because you can hear some things? And do you believe your eyes are blessed because you can read the scriptures? Then he tells us in the olden days many prophets and many righteous men desired to see these things but did not see it. Imagine an old testament prophet wanting to hear what you are hearing but he could not hear it.

You read in the old testament about Moses and Elijah. How many of you believe that you are more blessed than Moses and Elijah? We must teach our little children that they are more blessed than all these old testament prophets. We must teach our children that they are more blessed than all these old testament prophets.

Because the devil makes us think about all the things that we do not have. He is always telling you, you don't have this, you don't have this because those people have got it. In the beginning he may just say, you don't have a bicycle, those people have got a bicycle.

In the beginning he may just say, you don't have a bicycle, those people have got a bicycle. Then the devil will say, they have got a scooter, you have only got a cycle. He is always trying to make you unhappy with somebody who has something more.

He is always trying to make you unhappy with somebody who has something more. Do you know that Jesus never had a scooter? He never even had a cycle. How did he go from one place to another? He didn't have a horse or a bullock cart.

Do you know how he went? He walked. Not one or two kilometers. Sometimes one hundred kilometers.

He had to walk. Imagine if he had to walk from here just to Thiruvapur. That is a very small distance.

Jesus walked much bigger distances than that. Many of you came here by bus. If you were living two thousand years ago in Israel, you would have to walk.

Jesus walked. Jesus walked. I am mentioning this to say that we have so many privileges and blessings today, even people did not have in Jesus' time.

Do you know that Jesus never had a Bible in his house? Do you know that Jesus never had a Bible in his house? This type of Bible came after printing was invented about six hundred years ago. All these pages had to be printed in a machine. There was no such machine before 600 years.

There was no such machine before 600 years. In Jesus' time, there were big scrolls made of leather. The Bible was written in those scrolls.

It would take many years to write the Old Testament. To buy a copy of the Bible, it would cost a lot of money. Today, if I want to buy a Bible, I can get it for a very low price.

In those days, if the price was very high, there would be only one copy of the Bible in a big temple. We read that Jesus, when he was twelve years old, he went to the temple and he could discuss the Bible with all the priests there. We wonder, how did a twelve-year-old boy know about the Bible? He did not have a Bible at home.

The only time he can hear the Bible is when he comes to the meeting. Or, in the other days of the week, you go to the synagogue and ask the rabbi, the teacher there, to show you something. Or, in the other days of the week, you go to the synagogue and ask the rabbi, the teacher there, to show you something.

Today, there is only one Bible in Nanila. There is only one Bible on this pulpit. And, on Sunday, when you come, you can hear it.

And, other days, if you want, you can come here and ask whoever is here to show you something and read it. Now, if you were a little five-year-old boy like that, where you can only hear it on Sunday, or during the week, come to the synagogue and ask somebody to show you different pages in the Bible. Can you imagine how difficult it would be to know the Bible in seven years? How wholehearted Jesus was in the Bible by the time he was twelve.

That is the thing that gripped my heart when I was converted, when I was nineteen and a half. And, I worked for seven years after that in the Navy. And, during those seven years, I studied the Bible.

All the time, all the time, all the time. When I was not working, I used to work. If I come to the room, I would open the Bible and read it.

And, in seven years, I also learned the Bible. That is what has made my life strong. That's what's helped me to overcome Satan.

Think of this verse. You are more blessed than the Old Testament prophets. I would say to you, you are even more blessed than the Christians who lived 700 years ago.

Because, they didn't have a Bible. You can read God's Word in your home. Then, why is it so many Christians who have a Bible at home, don't read it? Sometimes, when I go to a home, I ask the children there, do you read the Bible every day? They are honest.

Children are more honest than parents sometimes. They say, no, Uncle Zach, not every day. I say, one thing I appreciate about you, you are honest.

That's a good thing. But, you must now start reading the Bible every day. Even if you read only four or five verses, even if you spend only five minutes, do you have five minutes every day? Some of you here are so busy, you don't even have five minutes.

They say, I forgot. Then, I ask them, do you forget to eat your lunch? Morning, you may forget sometimes, you have to rush for work. Do you forget to eat your lunch? Does anybody say, oh, I forgot to eat my lunch today? Never happens.

Because, our stomach says, eat. You don't have to be educated for that. Do you know how many times a baby cries for milk in one day? We had babies 40 years ago in our house, I have forgotten now.

But, many times a day, crying, but you tell the child, two hours ago only you drank. Child cannot speak, but it's saying, no, I'm still hungry. That is how we must desire the word of God.

See, 1 Peter, and chapter 2, see, when we are born again, it is like a spiritually, a child coming into the world. I want to ask you, what is the difference between you, and all the other Christians around you, in other churches? We don't say, we are better than any church. God is the one to judge that.

But, we believe, that you cannot become a Christian, by being born in a Christian family. When my children were born, four of them, my children, my wife and I were already born again children of God. None of my four children came into the world as children of God.

No. I had to tell them, you are sinners. Parents are born again, but the children are sinners.

They have to accept Christ. Just like I accepted Christ when I was 19. They also, slowly as they grew up, a time came when they had to accept Christ.

When you accepted Jesus into your heart, that's the time you really became a child. That is the difference between you and other Christians. Before that, there is no difference, whether you are Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Atheist, no difference.

We are not children of God. But, when we receive Jesus into our heart, we say, Lord, thank you for dying for me. Come into my heart.

Then we become born again. Born again, spiritually, is like a baby. You know how the babies start crying for milk every day, as soon as they are born.

You don't have to teach the child, you must cry, you must cry, you must cry for milk. Nobody teaches the child anything. The child can't understand what you say in any case.

But, it's crying out. Because, but if it is a sick child, some children are born itself, they are so sick and weak, maybe they are born before the time. Six or seven months in the womb, they are born.

And they never cry for milk. They are so weak. They never cry for milk.

Then you have to force and feed them, otherwise they will die. But a normal child, born after nine months in the womb, as soon as it comes out, first day itself, it's crying out so many times for milk. That is a healthy child.

Healthy child cries, for milk every day. The sick child will just lie there and say, I don't want any milk. If you leave it, it will go days without milk.

And it will die. Now 1 Peter 2, says in verse 2, Like newborn babies, you must long for the pure milk of the word of God, because then only you will grow into salvation. Like a newborn baby, this is the milk for us.

The milk is the pure milk, is the word of God. This is the milk. So if you don't cry for this every day, you tell me the answer.

Are you sick, or you are healthy? What is the answer? You are sick. Only a sick child will never cry for milk. So now, we want to make you all healthy.

Showing you how important it is to drink from this milk every day. Then, I want to tell you something else. Many times in our life, we don't know whether we should do this or do that.

And we are confused. Then we have to go to elder brothers, what shall I do? Some situation in the office, is this right or is it wrong? I don't know whether I should do it or not. We are like people in the darkness, saying I don't know which is the right way.

How to find the right way? Let me show you a verse. Psalm 119, verse 105. Psalm 119, verse 105.

Here it says, Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. If you go on a road and there is no light, it's very easy to fall down. To fall into some manhole or some ditch.

How good it is when there is a light on the road. You know, this is the street, the name is there, I can read it, I can turn here. So it says, the light, God's word is like a light for my road.

And also it says, first it is like a lamp, like a torch light for my feet. At night, there can be snakes and all types of things on the road. It says, God's word is like a torch light that shows me what I have to do immediately and also shows me on the road what I have to do in the future.

God's word is like a torch light and like a road lamp. I have been a Christian now 54 years. So many times in my life, I wanted to know what to do, I had this light.

Whom I should marry, I got it from the word of God. What should I do in my life, I used to live in Vellore. God showed me I must go to Bangalore.

There is no word called Bangalore in the Bible. But when you read the Bible, God speaks to you in your heart through some decisions. I did not know in 1972 why God is telling me to go to Bangalore.

I did not know anybody there. Not one person who is today in CFC, I did not know any of them. After I went there, then also I did not know what is God's plan for my life.

Three years after I went, God started a little church in my house. That is how CFC started. But three years earlier, if I had not heard God and moved to Bangalore, there would have been no CFC there.

Do you know that God can guide you? In the time of my marriage, I just looked at some pretty face and married her. Without finding out if the person is spiritual, you must first find whether the person is spiritual and then only look at the face. So many people make mistakes in this.

So many, many things in life we have to take a decision. Why not? Isn't it good to have this torch light and the lamp, road lamp to show us how to go? So many situations and the last forty years, I must have preached thousands of sermons also. Those of you who are elder brothers, do you think it is easy to know what I should speak, what you should speak even once a week on a Sunday? It's not at all easy.

All of you who sit and listen, don't criticize elder brothers. It's not easy to get up in the pulpit and have always a word to speak according to the need of the people. It is easy to sit there and criticize.

You must pray for your elder brothers. Every Sunday when you go to the church, you go with a prayer. I'm telling you all in Jesus' name from now on.

Whenever you go to church on a Sunday, you go with a prayer. Lord, please give my elder brother a word from heaven according to the need of the people. Maybe you have never done that till today.

Then you will only criticize. So, before you criticize, you ask yourself, did I pray for him today? It's not easy. From my own experience, it is not at all easy to get up and preach God's word.

I mean, just to get up and speak on anything, I can speak on anything. When you have a burden, I want to give the particular medicine which this person's sickness needs. See, that is a doctor, good doctors like that.

They don't just give any medicine for any sickness. One medicine for this sickness, another medicine for that sickness. So, each Sunday, a brother has to get up and share something for people with many problems.

You really need the wisdom of God. To really ask God to give us light on his word. So, in many things, God's word is not only like milk to make us strong as children.

You know many things in your life, God's word can guide you. And it can save you from so many problems. If you let God's word guide you, God's word can show you where to go and where not to go.

Save you from many sins. And see many of us are afraid of the devil. See what God's word says in 1 John chapter 2. First episode of John chapter 2. 1 John chapter 2 verse 14.

Have you all found it? Page 326. In the New Testament. 1 John chapter 2 verse 14.

The last part. I have written unto you young men because the word of God abides in you and therefore you have overcome the evil one. This is the reason why you are defeated.

You are not allowing the word of God to live in you. Then you will be defeated. Then Satan will make you frightened of him.

I want to tell all of you, you have given your life to Jesus Christ. You don't have to be afraid of Satan. You don't have to be afraid of witchcraft.

Thousand people can do witchcraft on you it will not even touch you. You know why? Because it says in 1 John 4. Verse 4. Little children, you are from God, you have overcome them. Greater is the one who is living in you than the one who is in the world.

So this is the thing you must understand. The one who is living in you is greater than the one who is in the world. That's a wonderful truth.

Satan has got a lot of power and he can overcome us. But if Jesus is living inside me then I am not afraid of Satan. It's like you know there are some dogs that are very fierce.

Some people in their houses they keep some fierce dogs. They are afraid to go there, that dog. Supposing the dog is outside the gate and you don't want to go anywhere near the house.

We see that dog and we run away. I think there are ten dogs like that. We will really be scared.

The devil is like that. But supposing I have a pet lion in my house. Not a little lion but a big lion.

And that is my pet. Wherever I go this lion comes with me. Then there are these ten dogs there.

Will I be afraid? Tell me. I will just tell the lion just give one roar. They will all put that tail behind them.

And I walk without any fear. That is a picture. All the demons will run away and you realize Jesus is with you.

The bible calls Jesus the Lion of Judah. He is like a lion on our side. You must believe that.

He will always protect you. You need never be afraid. Some people think Jesus is against me.

Never, never, never, never. He is against the devil. You fathers and mothers tell me this question.

When you punish your children, are you against them? Yes or no? No, you love them. That is why you punish them. So when God corrects us and punishes us, He loves us.

He is not against us. A good father can never be against his children. You must believe that God is on your side against the devil.

Even if you made some mistakes, God will forgive you. He will be on your side against the devil always. Don't think, Oh, I made some mistake today so God will be against me.

I got angry with my husband this I got angry with my wife. Today God is against me. He is not against you.

He doesn't like the anger because the anger is a sickness. Supposing your child has got some sickness. You love the child but you hate the sickness.

That fever. You hate that fever but you love the child. So when there is some sin in your life, God doesn't hate you.

He hates the sin. Don't let the devil ever tell you that God hates you. So many people condemn themselves, Oh, God hates me because I did something wrong.

I was like a child saying, Oh, I got a fever today. Today my mummy will hate me. My daddy will hate me because I got a cough today.

You love your child more that day when it is sick. You don't like the sickness. You may even give an injection to the child to get rid of the sickness.

Yeah, but you love the child. Please remember this. Even when you fall into sin, God loves you but he hates that sin because he knows that sin will destroy you.

Why do you hate the fever in your child? If your child has got a stomachache, why do you hate that stomachache? Because you love the child. You know that fever can kill your child. So you give medicine, you spend so much money, because you love your child.

That is why in the church we always preach against sin. We are not against people. We are against sin.

We hate all sin just like you hate every disease in your child. I want to be a good spiritual father to all my spiritual children. How shall I be a good spiritual father? By hating everything that I see in anybody.

Small sin, big sin. Supposing one small thorn gets into the foot of your little child, that is not a big thing. Not like tuberculosis or fever or anything.

Small thorn. What do you say? It's a small thorn, let it be there. Do you say that? No.

Even a small thorn, you pull it out immediately. That is how we hate sin. That is how we hate sin in the So don't think that if the elders are preaching against sin that they hate you.

If they are good fathers, only a useless father will say, ah it doesn't matter if you got a thorn or you got a fever, it's okay. A good father will be worried about every little pain or sickness for the child. A good mother will be like that.

That is how God is towards us. God is like a father and a mother to us. See what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7. This is one of the greatest truths that Jesus came to reveal.

What is it that we can experience which the Old Testament prophets could not experience? It says in Matthew 7 and verse 12. Matthew 7 verse 11. Have you all got it? Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7 verse 11.

If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good what is due? So, what does God give to his children? According to this verse, good gifts. See, God never gives evil gifts. Never, never, never.

You may give sometimes some bad gifts to your children. If you allow your children to watch some of these cinemas on television, what are you giving your children? An evil gift that is going to go into their mind and it is going to spoil the mind of the children. I am not against television.

What you see there there are lot of things that can come through that that can spoil your mind. So, if you have a television in your home, please make sure that you control what your children are watching. It is alright if they watch news or cricket or something like that.

But even that, don't let them watch it so much that they fail in their examination. There was one brother in our church in Bangalore. He bought a television for him.

I said, okay, I am not against it. Make sure you don't allow your children to see anything bad. Or, and even if they are watching something good like cricket, make sure they don't keep on watching it so many hours they don't study.

After you get television, you must keep on checking your children's marks in the school. You see the marks are going down from what it was before. And you know the reason.

So, and he did not listen to me. And his child failed in the school. So, it means something may look good, but finally they harm you.

So, God the Father never gives us anything evil. You evil people may sometimes foolishly give evil things to your children. God, even if you ask him for something, he will say no.

Supposing your 3 year old child comes to you. Say, Daddy, Mummy, please give me 500 rupees. Is 500 rupees a good thing or not? Very good thing.

Why don't you give it to your 3 year old child? He'll tear it up. Or he'll put some colored ink on that. So, what do you say? No.

He cries and cries. You can cry as much as you like. No.

Sometimes we wonder, why doesn't God give us something we ask? Then you remember what I told you just now. Why don't you allow that 1 year old child to play with that knife? Isn't the knife a very useful thing in the kitchen? You cannot even make a meal without a knife. Why don't you give it to your 1 year old child? Or 2 year old child? Why don't you take it away? He cries and cries and cries.

You don't give it. That is how God does not answer your prayer for something. We may think like that child, oh God doesn't give me what is good.

I want this knife, he doesn't give it to me. He loves us so much that some things will harm us. You know, even too much money can harm us.

Just like too little money also can harm us. And we will be sitting on the streets like the beggars. That is also bad.

Too much also can harm us. Because very often too much money, we don't think about God then. There is one story of one businessman.

Every meeting he came to the church. What a shop he had. He had enough time to come Wednesday meeting, Sunday meeting, all meeting.

As he honored God, God blessed his business and opened another shop. And more. Another.

And gradually his business became so much. He canceled Wednesday meeting, no time. Because business is so important.

After sometime, Sunday meeting also canceled. I have to go here, I have to go there. For six months he never came to the meeting.

Elder brother went to see him. Every month. He said, yeah, I will come, I will come.

Never came. He had three children. One day, one very poisonous snake bit.

They rushed him to the hospital. The doctor said, no hope. Very serious.

Your child will die. Then, what to do? Then he called the elder brother. Brother, brother, please come, come and pray for my child.

So the elder brother came and he prayed. Lord, thank you for sending this snake. Thank you for sending the snake.

What I could not do in six months, this snake has done in one minute. I tried to make them think about you, they would not listen to me. Now the snake has made them think about you.

Then he prayed for them. I want to ask you, do you think a lot of money is a good thing? Do you think a lot of money and improved business helped this man? You know what helped him? One snake bite. Is a snake bite a good gift? Tell me, is a snake bite a good gift? I don't want any snake bites.

I don't want any snake bites to bite my children. Nobody will say a snake bite is a very good thing. But for this man who was running after money, a snake bite was the best thing that happened in his life.

Because it made him think about God. In the Old Testament also you read among the Israelites in the wilderness, they began to think about God when the snakes bit them. God was merciful, he healed them.

Sometimes God allows some painful thing to happen which is a good gift. You must remember one thing, always God is a loving father. He is the best father in the world.

He is your father and my father. And we must always talk to him like you talk to your daddy. What is the most intimate word that you use to speak to your father? In English it is daddy.

In Tamil you may be calling your father a different name. But the same word you must use when you talk to God. That's what Jesus said.

When you pray don't say oh almighty God. You can say that, there is nothing wrong in that. But you must call him father.

Call him daddy. Then you come close to him. Then you know that you can ask him for anything.

If it is good for you, he will give it to you. He knows what you need. He still wants you to ask him.

That is what Jesus said the old time prophets did not have. One day you will go to heaven. We will meet Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? But you ask them, when you were living on earth could you call God daddy? never. Isaiah, what did you call God? Oh God. I will tell Isaiah, do you know what I used to call God? I called him daddy.

What a privilege we have, which Isaiah didn't have. You are going to meet Habakkuk in heaven. And he is going to ask you, did you read the book I wrote? What will you say? Did you write a book? Habakkuk.

Yeah, I wrote only two pages. And you still didn't read it. You are going to meet Zephaniah.

He will ask you, I wrote three, four pages, did you read it? You are going to meet all these authors when you go to heaven. Please read those pages before you go. So that you can tell them, I am serious.

We must learn to read the whole Bible. In your spare time, spend a few minutes every day to read the Bible. When the word of God is in you, you can overcome Satan.

You can talk to God as your father. What a wonderful privilege. We are so blessed.

Don't spend your time complaining, I don't have this, I don't have that, I don't have the other. The devil tells you that. you don't have that.

You got this sickness, you got that sickness. Tell the devil, but I've got a daddy in heaven. That is the best thing I have.

What does it matter if I don't have some of these other things? You know, if you believe that, you will be a very happy person. Even when you have pain and sickness and anything, I have, as I get older, I also have some pains and weaknesses in my body. But, I'm never unhappy.

Sometimes I ask God to take it away, but God doesn't take it away. But I say, okay, Father, praise the Lord. You know what's good for me.

I never complain. I never murmur about anything. I know that my daddy in heaven knows what's good for me.

Believe that, you'll always be happy. If you're a happy Christian, you'll be a blessing to other people. So, remember, there's only one book in the whole world written by God.

Please read a little bit every day. You must make a rule in your life. No Bible, no food today.

Ah, what a wonderful thing that'll be. I won't read the Bible today. I won't eat my food today.

God bless you all. Heavenly Father, I pray that every one of us here will learn to love your word. That we can be strong.

Be fearless against Satan. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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