

The Inner Life

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living for eternal things and overcoming the world system by being faithful in the inner life and treating others with kindness and honesty.

Duration: 58:10

Scripture: Matthew 4:8

Topics: "Inner Life", "Overcoming the World", "Inner Life in Christ"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the significance of the inner life in the New Covenant, contrasting it with the Old Covenant's external standards. He explains that overcoming the world, which is ruled by the devil, is a key aspect of the New Covenant, and that true victory comes from living in the world without being influenced by it. Poonen highlights Jesus as the ultimate example of this, who lived among people yet remained untainted by worldly desires. He encourages believers to recognize their spiritual poverty and dependence on God, urging them to seek the Holy Spirit's power to live a life that reflects the teachings of Jesus, particularly as outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon concludes with a call to action for Christians to embody these principles in their daily lives.

Transcript

So we've been looking at the truths of the New Covenant the last few sessions and we've seen how in the early chapters of the New Testament there is such an emphasis on different aspects of the New Covenant. We were looking at the temptation of Jesus in Matthew chapter 4 in our last study and here we see in the last temptation the devil showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world Matthew 4 verse 8 and their glory and saying I'll give you this if you fall down and worship me and if you turn to the parallel passage in Luke chapter 4 you find he says there in Luke 4 verse 6 I'll give you this because it has been handed over to me and I give it to whomever I wish. So if you worship me I'll give it to you.

So what we learn from that is that there is a glory in this world of the world which is very attractive so attractive that it's a temptation and it's all in the hands of the devil. He says there it's been handed over to me that's by Adam when Adam sinned he gave it all to the devil and the devil says now that it's mine I give this glory of the world to whomever I wish and you can have it Jesus if you bow down to me. So what we learn from that is to get the glory of this world you have to bow down to Satan somewhere or the other to some extent.

You don't have to be a worshipper of Satan but you gotta bow the knee somewhere to get it. The glory of the world is wealth, honor, position and this is where Jesus overcame. Now in the old covenant you never read of anybody having to overcome the world.

He had to avoid sin but the world was something to be enjoyed. I mean David and Solomon all these people in the old covenant they didn't try to conquer the world. So we see here that in the new covenant there is something higher the Lord leads us to which he could not lead people in the old covenant to and that is to overcome the attractions of this world.

We can use the world but not be overcome by it. When we talk about the world we are not talking about this physical earth but there is a system called the world which the New Testament calls the world. The whole system the ruler of which is the devil and it's that system we have to overcome and it's a tremendous exercise to live in the midst of that system and overcome it.

Now when you get to heaven to say we have overcome the world means nothing because you are not in the system you can't overcome it and nobody in the Old Testament had to overcome it. You couldn't overcome it in the old covenant you didn't even know what the world was. One of the marks of a new covenant Christian is that he knows what this world system is and he is determined not to let it rule him.

I want to show you a few verses. You know Jesus was the first one who was offered that and refused it, overcame it. And he said that in John 16.

No human being ever walked this earth who had overcome the world like Jesus. It is not what we read in many religions of being detached from the world and living like a pilgrim or a hermit in some forest. Jesus was not living like a hermit in some forest.

He lived right in the middle of the world, worked in that world, lived in that world, ate the food and dressed like everybody else and overcame. That's what he's called us to. He's not called us to live in a monastery or a convent, lock ourselves up in sometimes Christian sort of you know confine themselves to a little ghetto separated from the rest of humanity and say we've overcome.

No Jesus lived right in the middle of the world and overcame it. It's like a ship in the middle of the sea, but not one drop of the sea gets into the ship because you know what happens if the sea gets into the ship and the ship drowns. So that's how we're to be in the world.

We're not to be like a ship kept in a dry dock. You know what a dry dock is, it's a dock where they repair ships, there's no water there. So for a ship kept in a dry dock to say I'm watertight means nothing.

So God hasn't called us to live like ships in dry docks, but ships right in the middle of the sea. That's why he wants us to work in a secular world and I think people in full time Christian work who are pastors and preachers should have had some experience of the secular world if they are to preach about it. You see that's the tragedy with a lot of Christendom today is that a lot of preachers and pastors have come straight out of a Bible school into a pulpit, they've never had one day's experience of living in a secular world surrounded by the pressures of this world so they'll never overcome it.

So what are they going to preach from the pulpit? A whole lot of theories. That's why Jesus never called an apostle who was not doing a secular job. Every apostle he called was someone who had been doing a secular job, he knew that and he called them out to serve him.

So it's very important. You know some of you may be finding it difficult in your place of work and say I'd like to run away from all this and serve the Lord. Well you're not going to be able to serve the Lord if you don't serve the Lord right where you are.

It's like saying I'd like to get away from the sea and get into a dry dock so the water doesn't come into me. Well then you don't conquer anything. You've got to conquer it and Jesus is our example there.

And he said in John 16 verse 33 on the last part of that he said take courage I have overcome the world. No human being ever said those words before Jesus said it. It's a distinctively new covenant to overcome the world and when a person has no understanding of the new covenant then he's taken up by the world.

Even preachers. This whole prosperity gospel that we hear being proclaimed today is 100% of the world. Preachers and everybody else.

You know Jesus said don't seek after those things which the Gentiles eagerly seek for. What do the Gentiles eagerly seek for? A lot of money, position, power, better house, better car. When you seek for all those things instead of the kingdom of God then you know that you're seeking what the Gentiles are seeking.

And what a clever thing the devil has done to get preachers to encourage Christians to seek what the Gentiles are seeking for eagerly. Jesus overcame the world and he says in Revelation chapter 3 and verse 21 he says if you overcome then you can sit with me on my throne exactly as I overcame and sat down with my father on his throne. So we see here that Jesus overcame something.

We know from John 16 33 that what he overcame was the world and he overcame the ruler of this world. He said in John 14 verse 30 the ruler of this world comes and he's got nothing in me. That means when Satan comes he can find nothing of the spirit of the world in him.

No love of money, no love of honor, no love of position, no love of the praise of men or for power or glory or anything on the earth. Once they wanted to make him a king he ran away and said no I'm here to be a servant. Now I want to say brothers and sisters if you're not serious about this you'll never enter the new covenant.

The Apostle John says in 1 John chapter 5 and verse 4 this is whatever is born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. What does that mean? Let's take an example from Noah. How do we overcome the world by our faith? It's important to understand that.

In Hebrews 11 we read about Noah in chapter 11 of Hebrews and verse 7. By faith, so here's talking about Noah's faith, by faith being warned by God. What did God warn him? That the whole world is going to be destroyed. Now that has an application for us because the Lord has told us that everything in the world is going to pass away, but he who does the will of God will remain forever.

That's 1 John chapter 2 verse 15, 16, 17 and it says here by faith Noah being warned of God by things which he had not yet seen. Now we haven't seen the world passing away, it doesn't look as if the world is passing away which we see around us. Noah didn't, it didn't look in Noah's eyes that the world is passing away but he believed God.

God said it's passing away, so I'm not going to live for it. What did he live for? It says here in reverence he prepared an ark, he spent his whole, all his energies building one thing, the ark, because he knew that's

the only thing that's going to survive the flood. So he had faith, nobody else had faith, that's why they lived for the things of the world and your faith is tested here, because we live surrounded by the world and it's a question of whether you believe that all that you see around you is going to pass away and you're going to spend all your energies towards building that which will last forever.

I mean it's a sensible thing to do, would you go and put your money into a bank which you know is going to crash in one week or would you go and put your money in a bank which you know is going to last for a long, long time. There's nothing very great about going and putting your money in a bank that's going to remain. That's the true Christian, he's got some sense.

He knows that everything around him is going to pass away and so he's going to spend his life and energy in something that's going to last forever. People in the old covenant didn't have light on that. What did David know about the world? Even great prophets like Moses and Elijah, you ask them what is this world system? They say we don't have a clue.

It's only when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost that he gave light to people saying there is a world system run by a ruler and you're living in the midst of it. And if you're not careful, that water is going to get inside the ship and sink you. I'll tell you it has sunk many Christians, many preachers, because there are many things in this world that attract us.

But it says here, Noah condemned the world, it says in Hebrews 11.7, notice that expression? He condemned the world by preparing an ark. That means every time he put a plank in the ark and nailed the ark in, he was saying, I'm condemning the world by spending my life. He spent his money on building the ark.

He spent his time building the ark. He spent his energy building the ark. That is the main thing.

It didn't mean that he was a full-time worker. He had to work because there was nobody to support him financially. He worked and supported his family, he had a wife and three sons and their daughters.

He had a vineyard and he had to support his family, he was a gardener. But in addition to supporting his family, he spent his time building the ark. And that's a good example for all of us to follow, that we earn our living, take care of our families, and spend our time building that which will last forever, after the world is destroyed.

So I need to ask myself, am I spending my time in something that will last forever? And I'm not saying that you shouldn't have any relaxation or... Because we are living in the world, in a world full of tension, we need sometimes relaxation. We need to go for a picnic, we need to go for a vacation, we need things like that. But that's just to refresh us or take our tired minds away from something.

That's part of just refreshing ourselves, like having a shower. And it's like other things we do to relax, like sleeping. We need to sleep, we need to take a shower, we need to have some form of relaxation, etc.

in different ways, people do it in different ways. But our whole goal is to live and labor for the things that will remain forever. And our job and everything else is just a means of, like they say, keeping body and soul together.

It's not a thing we live for, we live for the things that are eternal. So that's how, when John says we overcome the world by our faith, it means, I live in such a way that other people around me say, how is this

guy not so interested in the things we're interested in? He seems to be living for something that I can't see. That's right, he can't see it.

But we've seen it by faith. That's how Jesus lived. He overcame the world.

So remember this, this is a very major part of the New Covenant. To overcome the world, and we can follow Jesus here. If you looked at his life, you found that he sometimes didn't have time to eat, because he was ministering to somebody, helping somebody.

Now, I mean, if this world were everything, that would be a waste of time, to go and help somebody spiritually. What's the use of that? I've got to take care of myself, I've got to eat food. But Jesus felt that that was more important.

You remember when he spoke to the woman of Samaria, and he was hungry like his disciples, and they went and ate food and came back, and he said, I've already eaten. They said, how did you eat? And he said in John chapter 4, verse 34 and 35, my food is to do the will of him who sent me, to finish his work. That was his food.

In the New Covenant, our food is to do the will of our Father, and to finish the work he has given us to do. And if in the process of finishing his work, sometimes I have to skip a few meals, or skip a night's sleep, that's fine. Or lose a little bit of my money, or spend a lot of my money, that's fine.

I want to finish the work the Father gave me. Do you see, when you look at these principles of the New Covenant, how few Christians really are living by New Covenant principles, even though, even many who understand it, like in our midst. So, I want to show you another verse now in Luke chapter 4. I told you in the Old Testament, your ministry did not come out of your life.

You just had a ministry, whether you had a life behind it or not. But that's not true in the New Covenant. In the New Covenant, our ministry is an overflow of our life.

You know, it's like you fill up a jug with water, and the water flows out of the jug. That's an overflow. So, that's different from water being poured from outside, just flows outside the jug and flows out.

In the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit came upon people and gave them a ministry. But in the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit works inside our heart first. And Jesus said in John 7, verse 37 to 39, Out of our innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

And then it goes on to say there, in this way the Spirit was not yet given. That means all the Old Covenant experiences that people had of the Holy Spirit was not like this, because it never came from the inside. There were many people who were anointed in the Old Testament.

Some of them had such an anointing even to raise the dead, like Elijah and Elisha. But it did not come from within. Whereas in the New Covenant, John 7, verse 38, From the innermost being.

Now many people when they read John 7, verse 38, they think of rivers of living water. That's good. But the main thing is not the rivers.

The main thing is it must come from the innermost being. If it doesn't come from the innermost being, it's not New Covenant. So in the New Covenant, the inside is important.

And that's why God kept Jesus for 30 years with no ministry. He never healed the sick, never preached a sermon. Now you'd think that's a tremendous waste of time.

You know that God has to prepare a man before he gives him a ministry. And the reason why he cannot give a ministry to many people is they fail in the time of preparation. That's really the reason.

I believe God has wanted to prepare many, many people for his service. But they fail in the time of preparation. So they can never get the ministry that God wanted them to have.

I asked the Lord once. I said, Lord, there are more than 1,000 million people in India. 1,000 million.

It's one of the biggest countries in the world. Why are there so few prophets in this land? There should be hundreds and thousands of prophets in this land when the country decides. And this is what the Lord told me.

I called many people to be my prophets. But most of them, somewhere along the way as they are being prepared for their ministry, fall by the wayside. Someone goes after money.

Someone marries the wrong person. Somebody goes after something else. Somebody joins some organization because they give them a bigger salary and completely give up the ministry God has for them.

Some people are too lazy to study the Word of God. There are many reasons. It's not that God didn't prepare people, but he can't force them.

They fail in the time of preparation. So God's not going to, I mean, there are a few people like Samuel and Jeremiah whom God said, okay, I'll call you to be a prophet. But with most of us, he's not going to tell you necessarily, you're going to be my prophet.

I think it'll swell our heads if God said that to you when you were a 16-year-old young man. But maybe that is what he has in mind for you. But he sees whether you're faithful.

And as he sees over a period of 10-15 years, he'll train you through all types of trials and difficulties and problems and see whether you overcome the world, whether the world has no power to over touch you. And he sees whether you're a student of the Word. And then that's how it was with Jesus.

It's not going to be any different for us. And Jesus was so faithful in those 30 years overcoming temptation, so faithful in those 30 years studying the Word, that he could go out and be anointed and have a ministry as a prophet. Is it possible that some of you, God had such a ministry for you, but you went after other things, or you were not faithful in temptation, or you didn't spend time studying his Word, you didn't seek for the anointing of the Holy Spirit? And you know how we have the tendency to blame God? Adam had that tendency.

This woman whom you gave me, we blame God and say, God hasn't given me a gift. You know that that's a way of blaming God? Oh God, why don't you do that? God hasn't given me that gift. Of course, I'm perfect, I've done everything perfectly, but God didn't give me the gift.

You'll discover when you stand before the Lord that that was not true. That God probably wanted to give you a gift, but he saw you were unfaithful. He saw that you were not diligent.

He's not going to reward lazy people. He's not going to tell you when you're 15 years old, I'm going to make you a prophet or any such thing. He's just going to see whether you're faithful.

Maybe he'll tell you that after you're 35, but he'll see between the ages of 20 and 35 whether you're going to be faithful or not. I believe there are many, many people who have missed out because they're waiting for some day when God will say to them, I'm going to give you this gift. It won't happen.

It didn't happen with Jesus, how is it going to happen with us? From our innermost being, if it has to flow, then God has to work in the innermost being first. Then the rivers will flow out from us. So I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, don't be discouraged if you don't have a great ministry.

That may come in a few years. But right now, be faithful in the inner life, in your thoughts, in the words you speak, in the way you live at home, the way you work in your office. Be upright, honest, Christian.

Treat others the way you want to be treated. These are the temptations we face. Don't run after the things the heathen run after.

Remember like Noah, you're called to condemn the world because you know that everything around you is going to pass away. You're only here to earn your living and build a church. Luke chapter 4, notice this.

I don't know whether you've noticed this expression. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and he returned from Jordan and was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days, tempted by the devil. And at the end of the temptation, notice in verse 1, he was full of the Holy Spirit.

And at the end of the temptation, it says in verse 14, he returned in the power of the Holy Spirit. Have you noticed that? Full of the Holy Spirit, in the power of the Holy Spirit. What was it that happened between verse 1 and 14? Temptation.

It's not enough to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Holy Spirit in verse 1, but he was not ready for his ministry till he had fasted and prayed and overcome temptation. A lot of people today think, well I've been filled with the Holy Spirit, I believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I've been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Wonderful brother! Have you been faithful in temptation? That's the next step. Then you can come in the power of the Holy Spirit and minister the Word of God. It was like that with Jesus, and it's like that with everyone who is a disciple, a follower of Jesus.

And this is what the devil has blinded the Christian world to, they say, baptism in the Holy Spirit, baptism in the Holy Spirit, that's the main thing, that's the main thing, you got it, you got everything. You haven't got everything. Now you have to be faithful in temptation for that power to flow out from you.

So we see that so clearly here. So remember that, this is distinctive in the New Covenant, in the Old Covenant it was not like that, the day a man was anointed, he went out into his ministry. It isn't like that in the New Testament, we have to conquer our bodily passions with the power of the Holy Spirit, for the first temptation that Jesus was tempted by was the desires of the body, and the second temptation was to overcome the honor of men.

Jump off the temple and you will land unhurt and people will receive you as the Messiah. You have got to overcome the passions of your body that hinder you from doing God's will, to overcome seeking the honor

of men, and the third as we saw was to overcome the glory of this world. And then we come forth in the power of the Spirit to go out into a ministry.

It was not like that under the Old Covenant. Then I want to move on to Matthew chapter 5, Matthew chapter 5, 6 and 7. We could say is the New Covenant standard of life. The Old Covenant standard of life was described in Exodus 20 in the Ten Commandments.

You ask any Israelite, what is the standard of life? Ten Commandments. I must honor my father and mother, I mustn't steal, mustn't kill, you know, then the rich young ruler came to Jesus, those are the things that Jesus told him. And he said, I've done all these things.

The Old Covenant standard of life was purely external. This, this, this, this, this, this. It's all external.

Don't kill, don't steal, don't commit adultery, don't bear false witness in the court. But what the Ten Commandments were to the Old Covenant saints, Matthew 5, 6 and 7 is for the New Covenant believer. So if you want to know what standard of life you are supposed to live under, don't go to the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments is for the whole world. Whole world. They have laws in the world.

Every country in the world has got laws based on the Ten Commandments against bearing false witness in court, telling lies, murdering, stealing, etc., committing adultery. But in the New Covenant, that's not our standard. We are not living under the law, but led by the Holy Spirit.

And the leading of the Holy Spirit, as I said, is something inside. So, in Matthew 5, when Jesus saw the crowds, verse 1, he went up to the mountain and began to teach his disciples. Notice that the Sermon on the Mount is not for the multitude.

It is for the disciples of Jesus. It's for those who have decided to follow him. And he taught them.

Now compare these nine blessed, or called Beatitudes, with the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. There were Ten Commandments there, and here are nine Beatitudes. As I told you in an earlier study, nobody could keep the Tenth Commandment, which is Thou shalt not lust.

So, really, they had only nine commandments that they could keep. And here you have nine Beatitudes. And, you see, they are completely different.

None of these things are listed in the Ten Commandments. Blessed are the poor in spirit. You know, that is the very first step to entering the New Covenant standard of life, described in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. If you understand what it means to be poor in spirit, it says here, verse 3, The whole kingdom of heaven is yours.

Remember, another phrase for New Covenant life is the kingdom of heaven. We saw that in an earlier study. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.

It hasn't yet come, but it's near. And it came on the day of Pentecost. And if you want that kingdom in your life, if you want that life in your life, then, you've got to be poor in spirit.

And if you see how important the kingdom of heaven is, and the New Covenant is all about the kingdom of heaven, you will desperately want to know what it means to be poor in spirit. Are you? Have you been, till today, have you really sought God and said, Lord, if this is the gateway to the kingdom of heaven. I look at

it like this.

The kingdom of heaven is like a huge building with a thousand rooms, palace. Each room has got many treasures that nobody under the old covenant could have. And there is one master key that opens every room in this palace.

And the name of that key is poverty of spirit. So it's important to get this master key, because if you have it, you can open room after room after room after room and possess the whole kingdom of heaven. That's what Jesus said.

So let me explain to you what poverty of spirit is. Let's look at it from an example. Jesus always used earthly examples.

Now we are not, we look at an earthly example to learn a spiritual truth. Like Jesus spoke about salt and light and birds and flowers. He was always trying to get a spiritual truth, parables that he spoke.

There is a spiritual truth behind it. So to understand what poor in spirit means, let's look at what it means to be poor materially. To be poor in the kingdom of earth.

Let's look at it that way and then we will understand what it means to enter the kingdom of heaven. To be poor on earth means to have no money. And the best example of that in India is a beggar.

Not a poor man who's got a house, he's got money. The really poor person in India is a beggar. Who doesn't have a house to live in, who sleeps on the streets, sidewalks.

And that beggar comes to your gate and knocks there and says, Sir, can you give me some money? And you give him food or money, whatever it is. And he goes away and he comes back again next day. And you tell him, well, what about the food and money I gave you yesterday? Oh, that's over.

That was just for yesterday. I want to come again. And he's not ashamed to come again.

And if you give him again, he'll come back the next day. Because you're probably the only kind soul in the street. And he'll come back the next day.

And he's never ashamed to come back. I've seen people, beggars whom I saw 20 years ago. They're still begging.

Now from that, we can learn and get an example or an illustration of what it means to be poor in spirit. We don't beg for money. God provides our need.

Why does that beggar beg? Because he doesn't have. And every morning he gets up realizing, I don't have money for today. I don't have money for food.

I need to go somewhere and get some money. So to be poor in spirit is to live every day, wake up every morning and say, I don't have what it takes. To go through this day spiritually.

I don't have it. I have to go to God, wait at his gate and beg. Another word for beg is pray.

When we pray, we're actually begging God for something. Asking him for something. For many people, prayer is a ritual.

And that's why they never get anything out of their prayer life. I've seen a lot of people who spend hours on their knees. They don't pray.

They're going through a ritual, just like non-Christians pray, go through a ritual. But real prayer can only come out of a sense of need. This is not a man acting like a beggar.

You know, in some Hollywood movies sometimes, some rich man. We have some Indian film stars like that who became very famous. Millionaires who acted like poor rickshaw pullers or beggars in the movies.

This is not acting. This is a real thing. Beggars are not acting.

They're real. A lot of people, when they pray, they're just acting. Oh Lord, I'm nothing.

I'm nobody. They don't really believe it. They say so many lies to God.

But if they're really aware of it. I mean, have you ever come to God and said like this, Lord, I'm good for nothing. I'm wretched.

What if one day you hear somebody said the same thing about you behind your back. That guy is good for nothing. He's wretched.

Oh, you'll get all worked up. Why do you get worked up? Isn't that what you told God yesterday in prayer? Ah, that is only just biased language. You see, there's a lot of hypocrisy in prayer.

But when that beggar comes to your gate, he's not acting. He really knows he's got nothing. And I tell you something, it's the people who go to God like that, who get answers from Him.

Who get the kingdom of heaven. Who are poor in spirit, recognize every day. I don't have what it takes to go through this day and be an overcomer.

Of course, you can go through this day and be defeated in all types of sins and come to the end of the day and confess your sins. I'm not talking about that type of Christianity. I'm talking about a type of Christianity where you come to the end of the day and you have overcome throughout the day.

You come to the end of your life and you're an overcomer. You've got to live one day at a time. But if you want to be an overcomer during the day, you have to start the day by recognizing, I don't have what it takes.

Like that beggar who comes early morning, acknowledging he needs money. I don't have what it takes to go through this day. That is the meaning of poverty of spirit.

And if a man is poor in spirit, the whole kingdom of heaven is his. Now the tragedy is, very often, many people who start poor in spirit, after a while, when God blesses them and they become rich spiritually, they become like the Laodicean elder. Who say, well, I'm rich and increased with goods, even spiritual goods perhaps.

I'm not made of nothing. I've got Bible knowledge. I'm a spiritual man.

I know so much. God's used me here and there. People have a lot of respect for me.

I'm conducting a little Bible study here, etc., etc. They're no longer poor in spirit. They're full of themselves.

But it's a wonderful thing. If you can remain poor in spirit, no matter how much God has blessed you, no matter how much God has used you, you recognize that apart from God, you're nothing. Just like a branch in a tree.

When it's cut off, it's nothing. Even if it's been a branch for 20, 30 years. I can't live a single day without the tree.

You know, Jesus wants us to live like that. That's the meaning of faith. So, a branch in a tree is a perfect example of being poor in spirit.

What can that branch do, even if it's produced fruit for 25 years? Nothing. Its attitude is, I can do nothing. Without me, Jesus said, you can do nothing.

That's the meaning, same thing. So, I want to emphasize that. And then it goes on to, I don't have time to go through all those beatitudes, but you'll see that everything is inward.

You know, mourning for sin, a gentle attitude towards others, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and being merciful in our heart, and pure in our heart, and an attitude of peacefulness towards others, etc. It's all inward. And he went on to say in Matthew 5, I have not come to abolish the law, verse 17, but to fulfill.

So, what does he mean? What does it mean when it says we are free from the law? What Jesus was saying there was, I have come to fulfill the true meaning of the law, and I will explain what that means. He was saying, the true meaning of the law was not just, don't commit murder, but get rid of the seed in your heart that produces murder on the outside. I haven't come here just to say don't commit adultery, but deal with the seed in the heart that produces that adultery.

That's what he meant. I've come to fulfill, not abolish. And he explains that later on in verse 20, when he says, Matthew 5, 20, If your righteousness does not surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven.

What did that mean? Pharisees fasted twice a week. Do we have to fast four times a week? They prayed three times a day. Do we have to pray six times a day? They paid their tithes.

Do we have to give 20%? What did he mean by surpass? See, our way of thinking is always in terms of quantity. Quantity, quantity. More in terms of quantity.

But as Jesus' emphasis is always on quality. The quality of your righteousness must be superior to the quality of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In other words, their righteousness was only external.

Yours must be inward. That's what he was saying. And then, after having given that introduction in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, he explained what that meant.

He says, for example, I'll explain what that means, he says. The Pharisees, verse 21, they were told, don't commit murder. Your righteousness must be more than that.

You must not just overcome murder. You must overcome, verse 22, anger. And if you got angry with somebody and yelled at somebody and lost your head, and after that, verse 23, you go to the altar to pray, you can't pray.

God won't accept your prayer. How many of you know that? How many of you know that if you lost your temper at somebody, you can't pray after that until that one matter is settled? He said that. You go and say to your brother, you fool, or you say to your wife or your husband something because you're upset, and then you go and pray.

God won't accept your prayer. Go and settle matters with your wife first. You know that most Christians don't even bother to read these chapters, because they don't understand the new covenant.

Leave your offering, verse 24, go first and be reconciled to your brother, wife, husband, and then come and pray. God won't accept your money. He won't accept your prayer.

He won't accept a single thing that you do for the rest of your life, if you haven't settled that one matter. There's no use saying, well, that happened 20 years ago. So what? For 20 years He didn't accept your offerings.

You may not have known it, but He didn't accept it. Okay. The righteousness of the Pharisees, verse 27, you shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you, don't lust in your heart. That which is outward for the Pharisees has got to be inward for you. And like that with all the other ones.

He went on to say, you know, the Old Testament law was, you know, when you swear, don't tell a lie. I say unto you, never tell a lie. Let your yes always be yes, verse 37.

And your no must be no. That's it. In other words, you don't have to give a signed document to somebody.

You know how people say, well, I signed that document and I can't go back on it. Because it is a court document. A Christian says, I never gave a signed document.

I just said I would do it. I can't go back on it. I said I would pay that much for that item.

I can't go back on it. And the worldly man says, but did you give it in writing? No, I didn't give it in writing. But I'm a Christian.

Where do you find Christians like that? Those who are New Covenant Christians. There's a wonderful verse in Psalm 15, which says, Who shall dwell in the Holy Hill? Who shall dwell in the tabernacle of the Lord and ascend to the Holy Hill? And the Living Bible says, one, many conditions there, and one of the things mentioned there, is one who keeps a promise, even if it ruins him. Have you ever made a promise to somebody, which you went back on, because you say, I didn't give it in writing.

I didn't sign it. Well, you're probably a good Pharisee, but you're not a Christian. That's all I can say.

Jesus said, it's not like that for a Christian. Is yes, is yes. Is no, is no.

And the only way I can go back on a promise, is if the man whom I made the promise to, releases me from it. If I go back to him and say, I'm sorry I said that in haste, I'd like to, permit me to withdraw from it. He says, okay, then I'm released.

Otherwise, my yes is yes. I followed that, myself, for many years. And I want to say, I'm a very happy man today.

Maybe I would have had more money, if I broke my promises somewhere, but I lost my soul. I prefer my soul to money. I don't know about you.

So, the other thing he said, I don't have time to say all the parishes, he said you should love, verse 43, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, you've got to love your enemies too. You see, if God has given you his nature, which is love, you can't turn it on and turn it off.

How can you do that? In the Old Testament, they didn't have anything inside. So they look at the person, oh that's my friend, I can love him. Look at another person, that's my enemy, I don't love him.

But in the New Testament, it's not like that. God gives you his nature, and it flows out. It flows out whether it's an enemy, it flows out whether it's a friend.

It's love. You don't have to manufacture it, by the way. God gives it to you.

God's nature is a gift. In the Old Testament, you had to manufacture it. You had to manufacture purity in the Old Testament.

What a job it is. I praise God, that in the New Covenant, we are not in the manufacturing business, we are in the distribution business. Isn't it easier to distribute than to manufacture? You tell me, is it easier to sell a car or to make a car? Or take a small thing, is it easier to sell a pressure cooker or to make a pressure cooker? Thank God, he doesn't want us to manufacture his nature, because we cannot.

I can try and manufacture a good life, but I cannot manufacture God's nature. That is impossible. This is the wonderful thing about the New Covenant.

I don't have to manufacture it. So, when you read the Sermon on the Mount, you say, boy, this standard is so impossible. That's exactly what he wants you to recognize.

And we have only finished chapter 5. In chapter 6, he goes on to say, in the Old Covenant, it didn't matter how you prayed or with what motive you prayed, they could stand in the street corners and pray, they could give and let everybody know they're giving. The Pharisees, they'd give, they'd do righteousness to be noticed. You know, that means when they gave a gift, they'd make sure that a little plaque was written with their name.

This thing was donated by so-and-so. This building was donated for Christian work by so-and-so. But he says, in true Christianity, you shouldn't do that.

Nobody should know your name. Who gave it? You must give secretly. That's why we never pass a collection bag here.

We've never done it in all our life. Because when you pass a collection bag, somebody sees you. I mean, even if you put one rupee in, somebody's seeing that you're doing it.

And they're not supposed to see you. That's what Jesus said. Do it secretly.

Whether you give a thousand rupees or one rupee, it must be secret. That's the important thing. Everything we do for the Lord is your righteousness, something good you've done.

Make sure, as far as possible, nobody knows. Do you find a secret delight when somebody discovers the good that you did secretly? Work on your salvation, brother. It's good.

To work on our salvation until that secret delight disappears. When somebody accidentally discovered. Or perhaps we do things and we hope somebody will accidentally discover that it was I who did it.

Our nature is so corrupt to the core. Jesus said, if that is your motive, you've already got your reward. It's not that people praise you.

You cannot avoid people praising you. If, you know, people appreciated Jesus too. In fact, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, it says, the people were absolutely excited when they heard such preaching from Jesus.

The last verse of Matthew 7. Did Jesus lose the reward because of that? No. He didn't do it for their honor. That's the point.

It's not a question of whether people get up and appreciate you. But do you do it for their appreciation? Do you do it for their honor? So Jesus said, when you give, when you pray, don't let anybody know about your private prayer life. Have you read these stories about people who prayed for two hours and four hours and you wished you could pray like that? How do they know? Jesus said, when you pray, nobody should know.

When you fast, nobody should know. That's how it should be. Never talk about it.

Everything in your life must be secret, inward, before the Father. Your father who sees in secret, verse 4, will reward you openly. Verse 6, your father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

And verse 18, your father who sees in secret will reward you openly three times. In secret, in secret, in secret. Then he went on to say about treasure on earth, verse 18, and treasure in heaven.

And he said in verse 24, you can't serve two masters. Now in the Old Testament, you could serve two masters. Do you know that? At least, that was their level.

You know, it's like in the kindergarten. You're permitted to do a lot of things in kindergarten. You're not permitted to do in the 10th standard.

So Solomon could accumulate all the wealth and go after gold and go after silver and go after all this and David could go after all those things and also be a man after God's own heart. But in the New Covenant, you cannot serve two masters. You got to make a choice.

You can use money, but you got to live for it. You got to live for God. And money becomes your servant under your feet.

You can use it as much as you like, but it must be your servant. It's not a question of how much money you have. A lot of people think if somebody's got a lot of money, he loves money.

This is a wrong understanding of many Christians. And if somebody is poor, he doesn't love money. I can disprove it in a moment.

Have you ever met a beggar who doesn't love money? Anybody met a beggar who doesn't love money? They are the poorest people. So poverty means you don't love money. It's a deception.

It's usually people who don't have much money who think that those who have much must be loving money. It's not true. Love of money is an attitude.

You know, it's like having 25 servants but keeping them as servants. Another person's got one servant, but he runs the house. So it's not a question of how much you have.

Make money your servant. If you have 25 of them, keep them all as servants. That's the point.

I don't live for it. I don't love it. And at the end of this tremendous teaching of not living for this world, etc., not judging other people, he finally says in Matthew 7, verse 13, this is a narrow gate.

It's not easy to go through this. In verse 15, Beware of the false prophets who don't teach you this narrow gate in this narrow way. Who are the false prophets? I can find out very easily.

Those who don't preach the Sermon on the Mount. Whenever you see a verse in its context, where did he speak about false prophets first? The first time in the New Testament that you read about false prophets is in the end of the Sermon on the Mount. He's saying this way is very narrow, which I've been describing to you in the last three chapters.

Now beware of false prophets who come and try to make this way broader and say, no, no, no, we don't have to do that. When I listen to a man over a period of time and I never hear him preaching against the love of money. I never hear him preaching against anger.

I never hear him preaching against lusting after women. I say, I have a question in my mind whether that guy is a false prophet. I don't care what else he preaches because I follow what Jesus said.

Somebody asked me once, Brother Zach, why do you preach so much against anger and lusting with the eyes? I'll tell you why, I said. Because in the Sermon on the Mount those are the only two sins that Jesus mentioned that will take a man to hell. Do you know that Jesus mentioned hell only twice in the Sermon on the Mount? Only twice.

That means they were pretty serious sins and he said it in relation to anger and in relation to lusting with the eyes. You read that, Matthew 5, 22-30. I said, that's because Jesus emphasized it.

That's why I emphasize it. It's pretty serious. Then he concludes with saying it's like two men who built two houses.

All of us heard these words today. The wise man and the foolish man both heard the words of Jesus. One man did it, another man didn't do it.

That's all the difference. So just because we heard it and understood it doesn't mean we are wise. We heard, understood, excited about it, and do it.

That is the new covenant. And that building is the church built on a rock. Jesus said, go into all the world and teach them to do everything I commanded you.

That's what we seek to preach in this church. Teach people to do everything that Jesus commanded. And he also said that very few would find it.

Verse 14. You're not going to have a mega church if you preach the Sermon on the Mount. I'll tell you that.

No. Because he said in Matthew 5, 14, very few find it. He himself, after a lifetime of preaching, could gather only 120 on the upper room to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Imagine a lifetime of preaching. The greatest preacher that walked the earth. All across Israel with all the miracles he did.

Only 120 waited for the new covenant. That wasn't a big church. But they were the people who turned the world upside down.

So it's all a question of what we want. You know, there's one thing Jesus left out in the Sermon on the Mount, let me say that in closing, and that is he never told us how we can live this life. For that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that's what happened on the day of Pentecost. Let's pray. The purpose of the Sermon on the Mount was to bring us to a sense of need in our life.

And when we have a need, we turn to God and seek him for the power of the Holy Spirit to live this life. We can't live without that power. So if you found a need created in your heart, that's the right thing that the Lord intended.

So that you seek him for the power of the Holy Spirit so that you can live this life. Thank you Father for your word. Help us to seek after you that we live the life you want us to live.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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