

The New Covenant Life and Church - Part 4

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's ways, the role of the Holy Spirit in changing our ways, and the need for testing and overcoming to become like Christ.

Duration: 1:26:08

Scripture: Matthew 4:1

Topics: "Overcoming Temptation", "Godly Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus' example in overcoming temptation and living a godly life. It highlights the need to choose God over worldly desires, be honest in confession, and seek to live with a clear conscience. The speaker encourages listeners to have the same authority over the enemy as Jesus did by living a clean life and seeking to follow Christ's example in every stage of life.

Transcript

I have always wondered how Jesus spoke to 5000 people without a mic. What a crowd 5000 people must be. He was a very strong man.

We are all weaklings today compared to him. As I have 55, verse 8 and 9, if you understand and believe this verse, you will know something about God. Very important to understand.

See, we try to understand God with our intelligence. But listen to this verse. God says, my thoughts are not your thoughts.

What he is saying is, my way of thinking is not your way of thinking. And my way of doing things is not your way of doing things. There are so many questions we have when we look around at the world and see the problems there are.

I am sure all intelligent Christians have asked, why doesn't God do this and why doesn't God do that? Why doesn't he heal people who are sick? At least among his children. Why doesn't he just destroy all these wicked people who are harming others? God says, my way of doing things is not your way. So, we say, Lord, is there, how much difference is there between my ways and yours? Verse 9, God says, as the heaven is above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways.

And my way of thinking is different from your way of thinking with that much difference. That will humble us. I have heard so many people come and say, why does the Bible say this, why does the Bible say that?

I say, you have to become more like God in your life to understand his ways.

Is that possible? Jesus came to make it possible. The reason he gives us the Holy Spirit is to change our way of thinking. Then only he can change our life.

See Romans chapter 12. Unlike many other preachers, you may see me quoting a lot of scriptures. I will tell you why.

Because I don't want your faith to rest on my cleverness, but on the word of God. If I convince you with my cleverness, one day somebody cleverer than me will come and tell you something else. But if your faith is based on God's word, it doesn't matter who comes and says something else.

See in Romans 12, it teaches us how we can be changed in the likeness of Christ. Do you know that God's ultimate goal for you and me is to make us like Jesus Christ? So, before we get there, let's look at Romans 8.29. Everybody knows this verse Romans 8.28. God makes everything work together for our good. But what is that good? It's not to get more money.

If you are disappointed in something, it doesn't mean God will give you something better, humanly speaking. See, supposing a boy wants to marry a girl and she marries somebody else. So, he says, Romans 8.28, God is making it work for my good.

Because God wants me to marry a prettier girl. No, it may be an uglier girl, who is more spiritual. That is how God works.

So, what is the good that God is trying to do for us? You didn't get a job. God makes it work for your good. Not by giving you a job with a better salary, but maybe a lower salary.

Because it's a lower job, you don't have to compromise your conscience. It's better to earn a lower salary with a clear conscience. Work in a place where you have to do so many wrong things and you get more money.

The way we think is, more money means better. The way we think is, more money means better. God says, no, clearer conscience is better.

That's just one example. So, the good is mentioned in the next verse. That God's purpose is that we might be conformed to the image of his son or become like Jesus Christ.

That God's purpose is that we might be conformed to the image of his son or become like Jesus Christ. This is a big word that lot of Bible scholars dispute. Predestined.

Romans 8.29. For many people, predestined means, predestined to go to heaven or predestined to go to hell. For many people, predestined means, predestined to go to heaven or predestined to go to hell. Nobody is predestined to go to heaven or hell.

You make that choice yourself. Do you know that God does not send anybody to hell? Do you know that God does not send anybody to hell? Really? Absolutely. They choose to go there themselves.

God is trying his best to stop people. But they go around and say, I want to go there. It's not God sending them there.

They themselves are doing the things that will make them fall over the pit. God tries to warn them with sickness and accidents in so many ways. God tries to warn them with sickness and accidents in so many ways.

But they bypass all that and say, I'm going. And when they go there, they can't say, God sent me here. They will discover that God tried every possible way to stop them, but they wouldn't listen.

They will discover that God tried every possible way to stop them, but they wouldn't listen. God doesn't catch people by the neck and say, come on to heaven. We make our choice freely.

So, predestined means, God has made a predestination for his children. See, if you get a plane ticket, it will be written on that. See, if you get a plane ticket, it will be written on that.

So, if I'm going to Bangalore, where I come from, I get a ticket. So, if I'm going to Bangalore, where I come from, I get a ticket. Which gate is the plane going to Bangalore? So, here is a destination on my ticket, becoming like Jesus Christ.

Just like in an airport, there are so many gates. In every city, there are so many churches. Which one shall I go to? I'll tell you.

The one that will take you to the destination you want to go to. If your destination is to make more money in the world, there are some churches that will take you there. You may end up in hell after making that money.

They won't tell you that. But the destination God has for you is not to make more money. The ticket God writes is predestined, not even to go to heaven.

To become like Jesus Christ. So, if I get into the right plane, every minute I am getting closer and closer to my destiny. That's how I know I am in the right plane.

Now some planes have a map showing how the plane is moving. I can see I am getting closer and closer to Bangalore. So, when I see that my destination is to become like Jesus Christ, as pure as He was, as loving as He was, as forgiving as He was, as humble as He was, as completely free from complaining as He was, willing to wash people's feet and do dirty jobs for them, that type of leadership, not seeking some title that I am the director of some Christian organization.

Jesus didn't look for titles. He was not interested in titles. He was not interested in money.

That's the difference between Jesus and a lot of today's Christian leaders. They are looking for titles and money. Jesus was seeking to serve people.

To become like Christ, it is very difficult to see people who are seeking to become like Christ. There are a lot of churches doing evangelism. Which is good.

We need to give the gospel to other people. But when a person accepts Christ as his saviour, that is the foundation. The Bible says, there is no other foundation other than Christ.

But Jesus spoke in Luke 14 about some people who lay a foundation and don't complete the house. There are a lot of Christians like that. They have accepted Christ.

Very good foundation. No house. 20 years later, no house.

They are simply satisfied with the foundation. No wonder it says, such people are foolish. People laugh at them.

Many of you have accepted Christ. What have you built on it? Is it only a foundation you need? This building is becoming more and more like Christ. That's the building.

Every year, little more like Jesus Christ. Till one day, it says in 1 John chapter 3 verse 2, When he comes, we shall be like him. When he comes, we shall be like him.

We have reached our destination. Now, how do you know we are going in the right direction? Because there are so many churches teaching so many different things. Unfortunately, most churches today are just interested in a person's money.

There are so many techniques they develop to get money out of people. Even deceiving people. But here we read about those who have this hope that one day I will be like Christ.

What is the mark of that person? It says in the next verse, 1 John 3 verse 3 He purifies himself till he reaches the standard of Christ's purity. Everyone who has this hope purifies himself. If I were to ask you here, you are born again Christian.

What is your hope for the future? My hope is that Jesus Christ is coming back. And what will happen when he comes back? He will take you to heaven. That's not what the Bible says.

The Bible says, he will make you like him. Taking you to heaven is the second thing. Making you like him is the most important thing.

And if you have this hope, you won't just sit back and say, I am going to be like him one day. That's how a lot of Christians are living. Yeah, I have the hope.

Christ is coming back and I will be like him. What are you doing about it brother? Oh, I am just waiting for him to make me like him. Then I have to say to him, according to 1 John 3 verse 3, you don't have this hope.

It's not a living hope. It's a dead information in your mind. How do you know it's a living hope? It's here you will purify yourself regularly until you reach his standard of purity.

I mean, forget about a plane flight. Suppose you are driving in a car to go to a destination. It's like some of you had a destination to come here this evening.

If you did not know the route here, or you did not know the shortest way here, We have this wonderful thing called a GPS. That will show you and lead you here. It will show you the shortest route.

The same way God wants to show us how to become like Christ. That's our destination. The Holy Spirit wants to show you.

You don't just stay where you started. You would never have reached here if you just stuck out stuck there. You start in one place and there is a route and a destination.

Christian life is like that. You start, you are born again and there is a journey and the destination is you become like Christ. So, I say GPS is, you can't translate it into Tamil, God's plan of salvation.

God's plan of salvation. GPS. So, this is God's plan of salvation.

Not salvation from hell. Salvation from all the unchristlike attitudes that you have received from Adam. Here is God's plan.

Little by little by little he will deliver you from every wretched habit and attitude you got from Adam. You are getting closer and closer to your destination. One day you reached it.

You become like Christ. So, if you are not on that journey, I have to say, you are not really serious about reaching your destination. A man who is serious gets started and moves on.

Are you doing that? Purifying yourself as Christ is pure. Or do you sit back and say, well I am defeated, I will always be defeated, but one day Jesus will make me like him. Or do you sit back and say, well I am defeated, I will always be defeated, but one day Jesus will make me like him.

That's like saying, well I am sitting here, one day I will reach my destination. It doesn't work like that. What is the route through which God takes us to that place? Throughout the Bible you read this.

Through the path of testing. You know, as soon as God created Adam and Eve, they were not perfect. They were innocent.

The closest you can think of Adam and Eve on earth today is a little baby. Why do I say that? A baby has no knowledge of good and evil. Adam had no knowledge of good and evil.

When he ate from the tree, he got knowledge of good and evil. But before that, what was he? Innocent. Which is different from holy.

Lot of people think God made Adam holy. You know that God can never make a man holy. He can become holy if he makes a choice.

Then God can make him holy. Otherwise God has to make you like a robot. You know what a robot is? Programmed to do the right thing.

Robots don't make mistakes because they are programmed by the computer. If God had made Adam holy, it would be like that. He would move like a robot to the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And the program will say not here. So he turns around. God didn't make Adam like that.

And he doesn't want you to be like that. God wanted children. Those of you who are fathers, mothers, let me ask you a question.

Would you prefer to have a 3-4 year old naughty disobedient child? Or a small little robot that comes to you and says, Hello daddy, I love you so much. Hello mummy, here is your slippers. I love you so much.

Loving robot. Programmed always to obey you. Would you prefer that or a naughty child? Give me a naughty child.

Because when that naughty child says daddy I love you, my heart melts. But when the robot says I love you, it doesn't mean anything. You see the value of free will? People say, if God had not given man a free will, there would be no sin in the world.

Every man would have obeyed God completely. Like the planets, they would have obeyed God for thousands of years. Do you know the planets can never sin? The planets have never sinned, never disobeyed God for thousands of years.

Do you think God could have made Adam like that? Sure. Never sinned. But the other thing is, those planets cannot be children of God also.

If you don't have freedom of choice, you cannot be a sinner, you cannot be a child of God. That's why testing is important. That's why as soon as Adam and Eve were made, God wanted to make this innocent couple holy.

How to make them holy? Without making them into robots. Test them. Put them into a garden with a very simple test.

There are thousands of trees here, Adam. Pineapples, mangoes, so many other exotic fruits, kiwis. This one tree, don't go there.

Only that. Your knowledge is good and evil. But out of 10,000 trees, he was asked to avoid one tree.

Was that difficult? Supposing God had said, you must not touch 9999 trees. Only one tree you must eat. That would have been a really tough test.

But for Adam, it was a test to see one thing. Will you obey God or not? And immediately Adam goes there. You can see Adam's nature in children.

Supposing your daddy and mummy are going out of the house. And you tell your children, you can play, do anything, but don't open that cookie jar where the biscuits are. You can be absolutely sure, as soon as you go, that's what they are going to do for you.

That is proof. They are about Adam's nature. That's what Adam did.

Testing is so important. The devil was once an angel. He was the head of the angels.

Billions and billions of angels there. The devil rounded up one third of them. Read that in Revelation 12.

And rebelled against God. And the moment they did that, the leader became the devil. And all those wonderful angels became demons in a moment.

Rebellion is a terrible sin. It is the first sin in the universe. And Isaiah 14 says, it came out of pride.

Pride and rebellion are the root of sin. That's why the Bible says, teach your children obedience when they are small. It's the only way to deliver them from the spirit of rebellion.

So, when the devil fell, God could have destroyed him. That's easy. Let there be light and there was light.

Let the devil be destroyed. He doesn't exist. And let the demons be destroyed.

One word. Finished. Why didn't he do that? I remember two or three years ago, My seven-year-old grandson was reading the Bible.

He asked me, grandpa, if the devil is so bad, why didn't God kill him? I said, wow, when a seven-year-old asks me that question, I better answer that. I said, listen son, you know how you become strong? It's like subjecting your muscles to resistance. When you run, you subject your leg muscles to resistance, leg muscles become strong.

Even if you push your hand against the wall regularly, your muscles become strong. If you don't have resistance and don't do exercise, No matter how much food you eat, you won't be strong. You will be fat.

I said, do you know the difference between being fat and being strong? Oh, there is a lot of difference. A fat man you can just push down with one hand sometimes. But a strong person may be thinner, you won't be able to push him down.

God wants us to be strong. He is going to resist us. Angels won't resist us.

God won't resist us. So, God allows the devil to exist. So, he resists you.

And you resist him. You become strong spiritually. He understood that.

He said, thank you. I am going to resist the devil. I am going to listen to daddy and mummy.

He said, you understood it now. Have you understood it? That resisting the devil when he tempts you is the way to become holy. That is what will prevent you from being a fat Christian to become a strong Christian.

God's word is like food. If you keep on eating and don't do exercise, you will only be fat. A lot of people think, I must have bible knowledge, bible knowledge, bible knowledge.

They go to bible school. I have never been to bible school. I said, Jesus never sent his disciples to bible school.

So, he is not going to send me to a bible school. He taught them by the holy spirit. He taught me by the holy spirit.

So, once I was invited in India to speak in a bible school. And the principal of the college told me, I want these students to see how you can serve the lord without going to a bible school. I went there and there was prize distribution for all the students.

The graduating class. And the person who got the first prize, he said, I want to talk to you. He said, sure, come.

Then I, while I was talking, I asked him a question. He said, you spent four years here. You have studied greek, hebrew, so many things about the bible.

But when you go and preach in a church as a pastor, their problem is not that they don't know greek and hebrew. Their problem is primarily in the area of sex. They are tempted day and night with that.

I want to ask you that. Have you got victory in that area to tell as a pastor these people how to overcome? He said, no. What's the use? You are studying all the bible for four years.

He said, okay, let me ask you another question. In this sexual area, you are a young man, 24 years old, Are you in a better condition today, four years, than you were four years ago when you joined the college? He said, no brother, I have gone worse. I said, what have you learnt here then? You think it's just knowledge that we have to give to people? This is the deception of Christian ministry today.

So many fantastic teachings, very moving messages, very emotional music. But the poor young people sitting there are defeated. They haven't overcome anger.

They haven't overcome murmuring. They haven't overcome sexually dirty thoughts. They haven't overcome the love of money.

They can't forgive somebody who has hurt them. They have bitterness against people. And that bitterness causes sickness in their body.

They are anxious and worried about the future. They don't have faith in a loving father in heaven. But they hear so many fantastic messages and music in the Sunday morning.

The devil is fooling people. The most important thing, overcoming and testing, they are not getting. They are getting information.

They are getting music. They are taught by psychological teaching how to behave better. Their inner life is not changed.

One of the most important verses in the Old Testament is 1 Samuel chapter 16. Everybody must know this verse. I was preaching in one of our churches a few months ago.

And I said, if you have the habit of underlining in your Bible, underline this verse. I used to get a red pencil when I was a young Christian and underline, I mean highlight certain verses. Some verses I would underline with a pen.

Because there are 31,000 verses and I want to know the important ones. So if I underline it, I can find it more easily later on. So, 1 Samuel chapter 16, verse 7, the last part.

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. Meditate on it, remember it, underline it, never forget it. Remember all your life.

Man sees you on the outside. How you speak, how you look, how you behave. God doesn't look at any of that.

He looks at your heart. What are you thinking? Is there purity in your heart? Not purity on the outside. If you remember this one verse, you will not be concerned about man's opinion anymore.

Do you remember when Jesus spoke to the Pharisees? Do you know that the Pharisees didn't have all bad qualities? They had two good qualities. Matthew 23 is a great chapter on Jesus denouncing the Pharisees. But all the things are negative.

You are like this, you are like this, you are like this, he said. But the two good things are there. Do you remember what those two good things were? I am sure you have read Matthew 23.

But you haven't noticed it. I will show it to you today. Number one, that's in verse 2 and 3. Jesus said, the scribes and Pharisees are sitting in the chair of Moses.

And listen to this. Everything they tell you to do, do. About whom will Jesus say that today? Some non-Christian religion.

Everything they tell you to do, do. Will he say it? No. In Christendom also there are certain cults that don't believe that Jesus is God.

Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses. Will Jesus say? Whatever they tell you to do, do. No.

Even the Roman Catholic Church, they teach some good things, but they are not teaching the full truth. Will Jesus tell you, whatever the Roman Catholics tell you to do, do? They tell you to pray to Mary, pray to Mary. Will Jesus say it? No.

About whom can Jesus say, whatever they tell you to do, do? It must be a church that preaches the absolutely correct doctrine. And there are some churches like that. Not just one, many.

But what I am trying to say is, The Pharisees had all their doctrines right. So, that was one good quality. Jesus gave them a certificate.

Everything they teach is correct. They don't do it, but that's another thing. But what they teach is correct.

One good quality. Here is the second good quality. Matthew 23, verse 25 You clean the outside of the cup and the dish.

But the inside is full of robbery and self-indulgence. He was talking about the external life, the inner life. Inside you are all dirty.

But outside you are clean. Let me ask you. Isn't it good to be clean on the outside? Would you like a man who is a murderer, an adulterer and tells lies? He is not even clean on the outside.

The Lord won't tell such a person, your outside of your cup is clean. He will tell him, your outside is dirty and your inside is also dirty. But the Pharisees, your outside is really clean.

If the Lord were to say to a Christian today, Your external life is absolutely pure. Don't you think that's a good testimony? A lot of Christians like that testimony. My external life, my testimony in the church is very pure.

Another good quality in the Pharisees. One, perfect purity in doctrine. Second, very clean external life.

What did Jesus tell these people who had a pure doctrine and a good external life? Listen carefully. Pure doctrine, correct doctrine. Second, a good external life.

What Jesus tells them is this. Verse 33. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Now, I want to speak to all the people here who have these two good qualities.

Your doctrine is right. Your external life is really good. But your inside is dirty.

Tell me what Jesus will tell you. Think about it. You won't get another preacher who will tell you straight to your face what you need to hear.

If your inner life is dirty, I think Jesus will say to you, You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Devil will say, no, no, no, no, no. Why? The devil will say, no, he won't accept that. Why won't he tell you that? There is no partiality with God.

If he said that to the Pharisees, who had pure doctrine, good external life, the only problem was a dirty inner life. If the Lord spoke like that to the Pharisees, why won't he speak like that to you? He died for the Pharisees. And he died for you.

But if they didn't take their inner life seriously, that's what he says. Testing. God tests us.

If you turn to Genesis chapter 3, As soon as Adam and Eve were created, The Bible says, the very next thing, God sent them to be tested. By the devil. Just like I told my grandson, Why? So that they can become strong.

So that they won't remain innocent, they will become holy. We were all born as babies. God allows us to be tested.

And in that test you decide, You want God or you want what he has created? This is the temptation. Adam and Eve come to this tree of knowledge of good and evil. It's a very beautiful tree.

Very attractive. Makes their mouth water. But they know God has told you not to eat it.

Now the test is, Will I get so attracted by what God has created? Then I will disobey God. In other words, I choose the creation over the creator. In other words, I choose the creation over the creator.

This is a beautiful thing created by God. God has said, don't eat it. There is a choice.

Between the creator and this beautiful creation. That's how temptation comes to you. This beautiful girl.

God has created. But God says, that's not your wife. Don't look at her.

Now the choice comes to you. Shall I listen to God? Or this beautiful creation? What do men choose? Exactly the same thing as Adam faced in the garden of Eden. Or money.

What a beautiful thing God has created. Gold. God says, don't go after that.

Don't run after that. Do you go running after that? You choose that over God? Do you know the number of Christians who tell lies and cheat to get a little more money? Who cheat on their income tax returns? They make a little more money. What is the difference between that person and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver? This fellow has also betrayed Jesus in his income tax return.

For a little bit of money. These are Christians. Is their fate going to be any different from Judas Iscariot's? Why do they do it? Because it's so attractive.

God has made many created things attractive. If he had made all women ugly, there would be no temptation. Supposing this tree of knowledge of good and evil was stinking and smelling full of thorns.

And the Lord says, don't go there. Adam says, I don't want to go there in any case. You see why God has made temptation attractive.

Temptation was ugly. There is no temptation. There is a game called monopoly.

There is a game called monopoly. It's a game where you have paper money. You roll the dice and go to property.

You play it with children. 100 dollars, 50 dollars. Supposing I am an adult playing with a child.

For him it is like real money. And he is very keen. You came on my square dad, you better pay off your rent.

And if I say, no, no, no, the dice was to throw, I have to go to the next square, not here. No, no, no, don't cheat. You have got to pay rent here.

How long will I argue with him? For him it is life and death. I will say, okay, what do you want? Take it, take it. Take 100 dollars, sure.

Because I know in one hour we are going to fold the board and end the game. You know there is a big monopoly game going on in the world. Property, this, that, angels from heaven are watching men playing.

Fighting with each other, no, give me my money. Angels know, just a few more days and this board will be folded up and the game will be over. Maybe a few years and then God says, game up, we are going to fold the board now.

And you are counting all your paper money, worth nothing. God is using it to test you. He uses pretty women to test you.

Even if you are a married man, he uses money to test you. Different, different things in the world. Sinful pleasures, which are very attractive.

Sinful pleasures, nobody would choose it. Nobody is tempted to roll in the dirty gutter. There is no temptation there.

It's when you are attracted to something that you are tempted. That's why God made the tree of knowledge good and he was very attractive. What is the test? My son, my daughter, do you want what I created or do you want me? You know that in the Bible that Jesus is supposed to be our husband.

We are supposed to have a relationship with him like husband and wife. What would you think if your wife was more interested in your house than in you? That's not a very good marriage. And that is how, if you are more interested in the things God can give you but not in God himself.

Supposing your husband says, I am going to give away all money to a poor. We are going to live in a hut. Then I have got to divorce you, the wife says.

He is not interested in him. Interested in the house. I tell you, with many Christians, they are more interested in the gifts God can give them than in God himself.

If you don't believe it, check your prayers. How many of you pray, Lord Jesus, I want to know you better. When was the last time you prayed like that? Aren't most of your prayers like a shopping list, give me this, give me this, give me this? It's a shopping list.

You are not interested in a person. We have failed the test. And that's why God is disappointed and that's why we don't really grow spiritually.

This is the test. What I have created for me. Like a husband.

Asking his wife. Darling, are you interested in my money or are you interested in me? Do you think that will be a happy marriage if she is more interested in his money than in him? That's the reason why many Christians have a very sad, unhappy relationship with Christ. Jesus said, if you seek God's kingdom first, all the things you need in life, God will add to you.

So, if we have failed, we have all failed, we have sinned. Next thing we must learn, is to be honest about our confession, honestly confess that we failed. So, Adam sinned and God comes to him.

Here is another test really. Did you eat verse 11 from the tree I commanded you not to eat? There is only two answers to that. Yes or no? Did you eat from the tree I commanded you not to eat? Like sometimes you have examinations, tick the box, yes or no? Choose the best answer.

But Adam doesn't tick yes or no. Underneath he writes a third point. My wife gave me this fruit.

And then I ate it. In small letters, I ate it. In big letters, my wife gave me this fruit.

Don't laugh at him. Have you ever blamed your wife? Have you ever blamed your husband? My husband did this, my wife did this. All marriage counselors hear this all the time.

The wife will come and say in big letters what her husband did. Did you do anything wrong? Small letters, yes, I also did little. This is the reason why we live such a miserable life.

See the contrast with the thief on the cross. Lord, I am guilty. I don't blame my parents for bringing me up badly.

No. I don't blame my teenage friends who led me in the wrong path. I don't blame the police who caught me.

I don't blame the judge who condemned me to be crucified. Lord, I don't blame anybody. I alone am guilty.

Lord says, really? You deserve to be in paradise. Paradise is made for people who take the blame themselves and don't blame anybody else. Jesus says, I died for you.

But you got to take the blame first. I want to ask you my brothers and sisters. Do you have this habit of acknowledging your fault immediately? Have you finished with this business of blaming other people? Lord, I am guilty.

How do you apologize to people when you do something wrong? I know how I have heard most people apologize. If I have hurt you, please forgive me. That sounds very spiritual.

But the real meaning is, I don't believe I have hurt you. But if you are so stupid to think I have hurt you, forgive me. That's not asking forgiveness.

You are putting more blame on that fellow. But that is exactly how people ask forgiveness. I want to teach you how to ask forgiveness.

First law, never use the word if. I have hurt you. Say, I am sorry I hurt you.

Please forgive me. How can I set it right now? Very few people confess like this. You want a satisfying Christian life? First of all, learn to discern between creator and created.

Say, Lord Jesus, I am going to choose you over every created thing. Jesus said, you must love me more than your father, mother, brother. Those are also created beings.

He said, if you want to be my disciple, choose me above everything. And he said, choose me above your possessions. He must be more important to me than everything I possess on earth.

He must be more important to me than everything I possess on earth. Then I will reach my destination of becoming like Christ. This is God's way.

And the other is, to be honest in our confession. First, choose the creator above all created things. Second, when you confess, don't put the blame on anybody else.

Don't make excuses. No excuses. Don't say, this happened, that happened, that happened.

Lord, I am guilty. You will overcome sin much quicker. You know, it's not only Adam and Eve that was tested.

When God sent his son to the earth, he allowed him to be tested. And in much more difficult way. You read in Matthew chapter 4, Adam was tested in pretty convenient circumstances.

Adam was tested in pretty convenient circumstances. In a beautiful garden. Everything so pleasant.

Jesus was tested, not in a garden. He was tested in the desert, in the wilderness. But the test was the same.

You see, does Jesus have to be tested? The Bible says, he was made like us in all things. This is one of the greatest truths in the new testament. Many people haven't understood it.

They know Jesus died for their sin. But let me tell you something. God sent his son on earth for two purposes.

One, to die for our sins and defeat the devil on the cross. Second, to live 33 years to show us how man should live. If it was only to die, God could have sent Jesus to earth as a full grown man.

He made Adam, not as a baby, as a full grown man. He could have sent Jesus as a full grown man, okay, die for the sins of the human race. But Jesus did not send him as a full grown man.

Why did he send him as a baby? So that he can be an example. An example to little children. How you should obey your parents.

Jesus can say, follow me, you little child. You 6 year old. I was also 6 year old Jesus.

And I heard some difficult things that Mary and Joseph told me to do. I obeyed them. You 12 year old.

Follow my example. I was also playing with a bat and ball outside. It wasn't cricket those days, but some bat and ball anyway.

I mean, every game in the world is with a bat and a ball. And while my turn came to bat, mummy called me saying, come. Jesus, come here.

Go to the well and draw some water for me. And Jesus says, I was tremendously tempted. Like all 12 year olds.

Especially when the time comes to bat. Wait mummy, just 5 minutes. 5 minutes means 45 minutes.

I was tempted. But I dropped my bat. Went and brought water for my mother.

Follow me. That's why he came as a baby. He can tell the 18 year old.

Hebrews 4.15 says, he was tempted in all points as we are. Have you read that verse? Hebrews 4.15 He was tempted in every point as we are. So he looks at this 18 year old boy.

I was also 18 years old. Are you tempted with pretty girls? There were pretty girls in Nazareth. I was tempted.

Brother Zach, what are you saying? Jesus was tempted by pretty girls? I believe Hebrews 4.15. That's what I say. You may not believe it. Hebrews 4.15, he was tempted in every point as we are.

Supposing he was tempted in every point except sex. Except sexual attraction. Then we have to say, Lord, you escaped the toughest temptation.

You took all the easy ones. You make us face all the tough ones. He is a leader who can say, follow me.

He was tempted and he never sinned once even in his thought. You say, Lord Jesus, but that's because you were God. Have you read Philippians 2.5? He emptied himself of the power he had as God when he came to earth.

If he lived on earth as God, when somebody slapped him, when he was being tried in the high priest court, that man's hand would have withered up immediately. When somebody spat on him, he would have died immediately. When somebody called him Bilzibul, prince of devils, he would have become dumb that moment.

Why didn't it happen? Let me tell you an example. If you know the Old Testament, There was a time in Numbers chapter 12, When Miriam questioned her brother Moses, Why did you marry that non-Israelite? Have you read that story? Yes or no? You are all Bible scholars, right? Read it in Numbers 12. You know what Miriam got? Leprosy.

Just for saying, why did you marry that non-Israelite? And the Pharisees said to Jesus, you Bilzibul, prince of devils. You know what they got? Forgiveness. If he lived here as God.

Have you read the story in the Old Testament, where some young men made fun of Elisha, the prophet? Elisha was a bald man. I think a lot of prophets were bald. Paul was a bald man, you know.

But they made fun of this bald man. You bald man, you also go up like Elijah. And some bears came from the air and ate them up.

But what all they did to Jesus? Nothing happened. He lived on earth as a man. He did not exercise his power as God.

So clear. He was tempted exactly like us. And okay, now we go to a higher age, 25 years old.

Now you started working. You are tempted to do unrighteousness in your job. And Jesus says, I have been tempted like you.

There were crooked carpenters in Nazareth who were cheating with their work. Using third rate wood and polishing it up to make it look like teak wood. And making money.

How can you compete with such people if you are going to be honest? And Jesus said, if I give a teak table, it will be a teak table 100%. Because he did not want to make money. He wanted to please his father.

He did not become the richest carpenter in Nazareth. It is very difficult if you are going to be absolutely honest in business to become the richest person in town. Jesus certainly could not do it.

Because not only he would not cheat, sometimes he would make a gift of something for some poor widows. If you live like that, how will you become a millionaire? So he can say, I have been tempted in every area that you were. And then now he comes to full time workers, preachers.

And Jesus says, I was a full time worker too. I was a preacher for three and half years. I needed money.

How do I live? I was not working as a carpenter for three and half years. And I was having a fantastic ministry. Healing not one or two, but hundreds and thousands.

I could have sent letters. Brothers and sisters, thousands are being healed in my ministry. Send your donations to this bank in Capernaum.

If you want to share in God's work, And if you give me thousand dollars, I will pray especially for you. Can you imagine Jesus trying all these tricks? And God will reward you. Don't forget.

Pay your tithes. Otherwise God will curse you. Is there another greater man of God than me in Israel? That is not how he served his father.

Never once in his life did he ask anybody for money. Never once in his life did he send a report of his work to anyone. Sometimes we read in the Bible, Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem.

You just read it and read on. You know what I do? I turn to the back of my Bible. Where is Galilee? Where is Jerusalem? Wow! It is a hundred and twenty kilometers.

We just read one sentence. He went from Galilee to Jerusalem. How long does it take for you to walk a hundred and twenty kilometers? Probably a couple of days.

So once in a meeting with thousands of people, Judas Iscariot is the treasurer. He gets up and says, Have you been blessed by the ministry of Jesus? You know that he walks from Capernaum to Galilee. Two forty kilometers up and down.

How many of you will make a donation to buy a chariot for Jesus so that he doesn't have to walk anymore? Jesus would have pulled him down and said, Go and sit down Judas. Have you seen today's preachers? Advertising a jet plane on the television. My ministry is so important, I don't have time to wait in the check-in and waiting in the airport.

My ministry is so important, I don't have time to wait in the check-in and waiting in the airport. You must help me to buy this fifteen million dollar airplane. Somebody asked one of these great TV evangelist.

Jesus never did all these things. You know what his reply was? Jesus never had a TV ministry like me. Jesus never had a TV ministry like me.

These are today's representatives of Jesus Christ. I am not surprised so much at them. I am surprised at all the foolish people who empty their purses and give the money to this man.

Whenever you look at a preacher, ask yourself, Is this how Jesus did it? What is his attitude to money? Number one test of whether a preacher is representing Jesus Christ. One of the earliest Christian books that was ever written after the Bible. It is a little booklet called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.

You can find it on the internet. It is less than twenty pages. It has got another name called the Didache.

Or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. It is the earliest Christian book after the Bible. You know what it says there? You take it and read it.

Any preacher who asks you for money is a false prophet. How many false prophets are there in the world today? How many foolish people go and give their money to these false prophets? Jesus said, follow me. If you are six years old, you can follow me.

If you are twelve years old, you can follow me. If you are nineteen years old with sexual passions, you can follow me. If you are a businessman, I was also doing business.

Follow me. You preacher, follow me. He has been an example for everybody.

Then he died on the cross. The cross was only six hours. Including the trial, maybe about fifteen, eighteen hours.

All the trials before the crucifixion. But his life, thirty three and a half years, to be an example, people in every stage of life, from small children to full time preachers, follow him. That is the way to a satisfying Christian life.

You can live such a wonderful life on earth. An overcoming life where the devil will be scared of you like he was scared of Jesus. When you live a successful life, the devil will be scared of you like he was scared of Jesus.

Let me show you this verse in closing. 1 John 4 I am sure you have read it, but whether it has struck you or not, I don't know. I am sure you have read it, but whether it has struck you or not, I don't know.

1 John 4 verse 17 The last sentence there. Wonderful verse. It gripped me so much, I made a big wall plaque of it and we put it in our church.

In our church. As Jesus is, so are we in this world. As Jesus is, so are we in this world.

Think of it for a moment. How am I to live in this world? As Jesus. And as Jesus is, the father has given me the same authority.

In this world. Was the devil scared of Jesus? He has got to be scared of me. Do you know that? If you live a clean life, If you seek to follow in Jesus' footsteps, Whether you are 6 years old, 12, 15, 25, 32 year old

preacher, If you really seek to follow Jesus' example, You will have the same authority that Jesus had.

He said to his disciples, Luke 10, 19 I give you authority over all the power of the enemy. I give you authority over the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you. Read carefully.

Authority and power, two different words. I give you authority over the power of the enemy and he cannot touch you. I will give you an illustration.

Nowadays we have traffic lights. In the olden days, before traffic lights were there, I am 76 years old, so I can remember those days. I am 76 years old, so I can remember those days.

At a junction, there would be a little box where a policeman would stand. We still have some places like that in the small villages and towns of India. He is a weak tiny policeman with a uniform.

He is a weak tiny policeman with a uniform. And here are these massive trucks coming down the road. And this policeman just lifts up his hand.

And that massive truck stops. Who has got more power? That truck. Who has got more authority? The policeman.

That is how we can stop the devil. If ten trucks come like that, all of them have got to stop. Jesus says, I give you authority over all the power of the enemy.

Nothing shall hurt you. You don't have to shout. I remember once in a room, I cast out a demon 30 feet away with a whisper.

I cast out a demon 30 feet away with a whisper. Many demons I have cast out. Always with one sentence.

No yelling. No screaming. No long half an hour prayer.

One sentence every single time. In Jesus name, get out. Gone.

We have authority over the power of the enemy. If your life is clean. But if your life is not clean, the devil says, I know what you are doing in your private life.

Jesus I know. Paul I know. I know all about you.

You don't have any power over me. We read about some people who tried to do that. When the devil jumped on them and tore up their clothes.

You know, God has given us such tremendous authority. Live a clean life. You may not make so much money.

But when you stand before the Lord, you will have great joy. The Lord will say, well done, good and faithful servant. Do you want to get to heaven like that? Or do you want the Lord to say, I never thought you would make it here, but somehow you made it.

Or do you want the Lord to say, I never thought you would make it here, but somehow you made it. I don't want to get into heaven crawling down on the ground. I want to get into heaven with my head lifted up high.

Because I sought to live with a clear conscience. Maybe I didn't make so much money. But my conscience is clear.

Jesus will say to me, well done, good and faithful servant. Not that I have never failed. Past years I have failed many times.

Those who had gone 40 years ago. I have sought to live before God's face. That's the only life worth living that you will realize when you stand before the Lord.

If you have wasted your past life, I will give you a promise. Acts 17.30. I promise you. This is my last verse.

Acts 17.30. God overlooks your times of ignorance. Isn't that wonderful? God says, all your years of ignorance till today. I forget about it.

You have done a lot of stupid things. You have committed a lot of sins. I am overlooking it.

But now, I am commanding you to repent. Give up those habits. Turn around.

Seek to follow Jesus Christ. God will help you. He will fill you with his Holy Spirit.

Let's pray. God is inviting you to respond to what you have heard. Say, Lord, I want to live this life.

I want to overcome in temptation. Heavenly Father. Please help us.

Everyone here who is seeking for a godly life. To follow in the footsteps of our savior who was tempted in all points as we are. And you say to us now.

If you overcome as I overcame, you will sit with me on my throne. Help us to overcome. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6INYW8dZ7PM.mp4>

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