

The Root of Sin

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of turning around from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of heaven, and living the new covenant life by depending on Christ and being rooted in him.

Duration: 55:59

Scripture: Luke 18:7

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing and understanding the true nature of God. He shares his own experience of living in condemnation and believing that God was angry with him. However, he came to realize that God's love and desire to bless and help him were far greater than he had imagined. The speaker highlights the significance of turning away from false beliefs and laying the axe to the root of the problem in order to fully embrace the New Covenant life. He encourages believers to seek a true knowledge of God and to cry out to Him day and night for holiness. The sermon draws from the book of Judges and the teachings of Jesus to emphasize God's willingness to do anything to help believers overcome sin and live a godly life.

Transcript

So in the last study, we were looking at Matthew chapter 3, trying to understand what the new covenant is all about. Matthew 3, we read, we saw these words, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And we saw how the preparation for entering into the new covenant was a turning around and a turning away from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of heaven.

So, turning around from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of heaven, and if we don't do that turn around and we try to receive the message of the new covenant, it will be exactly like putting a patch onto an old garment and the whole thing tears. And this is one of the main reasons why many Christians do not enter the new covenant. Because they are trying to receive it without turning around from the kingdom of earth.

So, I mean I have to make that very plain to you that as long as your mind is set on earthly things, I'm not saying that we shouldn't think about earthly things. Jesus thought about earthly things. What do you think he was thinking about when he was making chairs and tables in a carpenter shop? He had to earn his living and he was in a poor home, a lot poorer than most of us.

So he had to think on earthly things, but his mind was not set on earthly things. So when I say we have to turn around, I'm not saying that we should never think about earthly things. We have to for the sake of our work, for the sake of our home, family, so many things.

But it must not be set. And I have often used this example in that connection, which I think is one of the best examples I have found. And that is the example of a rubber band.

If these are earthly things down here and up here is the heavenly things, your rubber band must be tied here, the heavenly things on top. And whenever you need to think about earthly things, it may be 8 hours a day, it may be 12 hours a day, and in some cases maybe 15, 16 hours a day some days. We stretch it and it's there for 16 hours or 12 hours or 8 hours.

And once our work is over, we release it, it comes back here. But with many Christians it is exactly the opposite. The rubber band is tied and the earthly things stretched on Sunday morning, Wednesday evening for heavenly things and then back again.

When it's released, it's back again. In other words, their mind is set on earthly things. And occasionally we think about heavenly things.

Now there's a world of difference between such a brother and sister and another brother and sister whose mind is set on heavenly things and who stretches it for maybe many hours a day to earthly things. So if you can understand that, you can know where your mind is set. In other words, when you are released from the cares and burdens of earth, where does your mind go? We need to think about that.

What is your primary goal? Like someone said, the way to determine whether somebody is a sinner or a saint is to find out what your goal in life is. Not what you do every day. No.

A lot of things that sinners and saints do every day may look very alike. If you had gone to Nazareth and you'd seen the most sinful carpenter and Jesus, you'd be spending, you'd see both of them spending many, many hours on earthly things. But there's a world of difference between the two.

So, it's the goal for which you live, the goal for which you're living, is what determines whether you're a sinner or a saint. Not the church you go to, whether you read the Bible, whether you come to the meetings, but what is the goal for which you live. And if there is a difference between believers in the same church like this, it's because even though they do the same things, the goal is different.

See, it's not enough just to say, well, I don't commit certain sins. I think if you make a list of all the sins you don't commit, there'd probably be a few non-Christians at least, who don't commit those sins also. I'm sure.

And you may find some of those non-Christians that don't commit some sins that you commit. That's not what determines whether you're a sinner or a saint. It's a question of what is the goal for which you're living.

And I want to say this to those who want to rise up higher to a new covenant life. Decide that the goal for which you're living is going to change. Not just a few patches here and there.

And maybe this is the thing that's going to liberate you and explain why things have been going so slowly. So, that's what it means to turn around. The other thing that John the Baptist said here was in preparation

for the coming of Christ was in verse 10.

You know, they said, we've got Abraham for our father and John the Baptist said in verse 9, don't suppose that you can say, we have Abraham for our father. That means nothing. See, it's a very common mistake that a lot of Christians make to claim association with some respected man of God.

That's the point here. We are associated with Abraham or we are associated with so and so who is respected. And John the Baptist says that doesn't mean anything.

See, you can claim to be associated with a church which has some respect in society. That's the point here. It doesn't mean a thing.

Don't ever glory, John the Baptist is saying, in your associations. You know somebody, you're associated with somebody, you go to some church, you listen to some preacher, it means absolutely nothing. Even if your father is somebody.

We have Abraham for our father, so what? He said, you'll still go to hell because God can raise up children from the stones. So he said, what you need is verse 10, the axe to be laid to the root of the tree. There's a tree inside us which we can say, use another word, our nature.

What we have inherited from Adam. And all of us have it. And this flesh doesn't really go away when we are converted.

It's the old man that's gone away. The old man is the will to sin. That means I had a will to sin, to sin, to sin.

That is killed. You're born again, you don't really want to sin. But the flesh, which has all sort of desires to sin, temptations, those temptations still are there.

They don't change. So it's a conflict between this new man who has no desire to sin and those temptations from the flesh. And this new man is empowered by the Holy Spirit now when we are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit and that is in conflict with this flesh.

But this nature is there. And the Bible says that Jesus has come to lay the axe to the root. Now that's also something new.

There was no possibility of the axe being laid to the root under the old covenant. In the old covenant we can say all that God did was cut off the fruit. You know, here's a bad tree.

It's always producing bad fruit. As soon as it comes, snip it off. As soon as it's beginning to bud, snip it off.

It doesn't come out. That's what the law did, you see. The law said you know, the whole commandment, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal.

These are the fruits that would come out but the law was like a pair of scissors that immediately snipped it off as soon as it was coming out. But it could snip it off only when it came out. It couldn't change the nature of the tree.

That was the problem with the old covenant. And when the Bible says in Romans 8 verse 3 that there was something that the law could not do but which God did. What was it that the law could not do? The law

could cut off the fruit but it could not lay the axe to the root.

So John the Baptist in preparation for the new covenant says well now, Jesus is coming to lay the axe to the root of the tree. So if we don't understand what the root of the tree is we're still going to spend our life as Christians, even in this church just cutting off the fruit. And the thing is, if you're very careful in cutting off the fruit you'll have a very good testimony in the church people will think you're a very fine believer because there's no bad fruit coming out.

I think with many of us our lives are so good we are so careful to cut off all this bad fruit that nobody ever sees it that many of us have got a very good reputation in the church But when you look at the thoughts that go on in your heart and sometimes those thoughts come out in dreams at night you know that inside very little has changed you're careful to maintain a testimony on the outside but the inside is still the same and by great effort, by constant watchfulness you keep your scissors ready as soon as a fruit is coming out you snip it off and nobody ever sees when they come by your garden anything bad on that tree and they say, boy, what a spiritual brother what a spiritual sister not at all we can say a person who's got the righteousness of the old covenant, that's all you are

but because those other believers, 95% of them don't themselves have any discernment between old covenant and new covenant they think you're very spiritual but a spiritual man who's entered into the new covenant sees through all that he's not easily fooled because he can taste your spirit you know how if you've got a very sensitive nose you can pick up bad smells all over that's one reason not to have a very sensitive nose in the world otherwise you're picking up everything but spiritually we need that spiritually we're discerning our spirit can pick up bad influences bad spirit in a person etc. so what I want to say is avoiding the bad fruit is seeking the testimony of men now Paul said in Philippians 3 I want you to turn there for a moment Philippians 3, he's contrasting the

righteousness of the old covenant with the righteousness of the new covenant now many of us have not understood this many of us only know the difference between sin and righteousness you're either sinful or holy no you can be sinful or you can have the righteousness of the old covenant or you can be holy, there are three options and with many of us we may not be sinning but we may be having only the righteousness of the old covenant and I'll tell you something the righteousness of the old covenant is pretty good and it'll enable you to be accepted in most churches in the world, almost 100% of churches would accept you you can be a member in good standing you can even be an elder brother in almost every church in the world with the righteousness of the old covenant in other words, the

righteousness of the pharisees I think if a lot of pharisees were alive today they would become elders in many good Christian churches because the people in those churches would not have the discernment that Jesus had to see that this guy has only got an external righteousness that's all that a lot of churches look for that's not being spiritual that's old covenant righteousness so Philippians chapter 3 he says, according to the old covenant standard of righteousness verse 6, the last part I was absolutely blameless or as the message says, a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law imagine if you were a meticulous, meticulous means a very careful observer of every commandment of God don't you think you'd get a very good reputation in most churches I'd say, in almost every

church except with a truly spiritual man who'd see through you but that's only about 1% of Christians so you're lucky, most people won't be able to see through you so that's why I want to say don't ever be satisfied with the testimony of man it's fit for the trash can, throw it away so Paul says, all these things

which I counted gain is all lost for me and what does he call this righteousness of the old covenant in verse 8, last part it is rubbish have you ever thought of calling righteousness rubbish Isaiah 64 and verse 6 says that our righteousness are like filthy rags in God's sight and the original word for filthy rags is a type of rag that you never think of washing again and using you know there's some filthy rags you can wash and use again but this is one of those filthy things

which you just throw away, you don't want to touch it anymore it's that type of thing, what? not our sins, but our righteousness Paul got light on it and I'll tell you something you can't enter into the new covenant until you get light on this that my external righteousness is rubbish it only brings me honor before men and so he says I counted rubbish I want Christ and he says I'm willing to lose everything and I want to be found in Christ verse 9, now listen to this contrast not having a righteousness of the old covenant but the righteousness of the new covenant let me put it like that I do not want this righteousness which comes from the law I want the righteousness which comes by dependence upon Christ faith means dependence one of the best examples of faith is the one Jesus himself

gave of the branch in the tree you want a picture of faith? a number of pictures of faith Jesus gave, one he said was drink faith is to drink come to me, open your mouth and drink that's faith another example Jesus gave was the branch in the vine it doesn't do anything, it just depends on the vine the tree for all its supply and its producing fruit is effortless do you know that the Christian life in one sense is supposed to be effortless the production of fruit in our Christian life whether it's love, joy, peace, patience forgiveness, humility, self control faithfulness and even the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are supposed to be effortless it doesn't mean there's no wrestling we wrestle with Satan we have to discipline our bodies fight against the lust in our flesh, all that

is true but when God gives us something when it comes forth from us, it is effortless now in the beginning it isn't because you know we're in a transition stage it's like a brother said and I've never heard it put better than this a very godly brother once said he says when I was unconverted I could only tell lies very easy for me to tell lies but very difficult to tell the truth then I got converted, I came to stage 2 where with a great battle I would not tell a lie and I spoke the truth then he says I moved on to stage 3 where it became impossible to tell a lie just like it was so easy to tell a lie in the beginning now it's so easy to speak the truth and the same way he said when I was unconverted it was very difficult to love people very easy to hate them, get angry with them, get

upset no effort at all then I got converted, stage 2 where with a great battle I would control my tongue and not get angry, and with a great battle I would love people great battle I would forgive people but he says then I moved on to stage 3 I cannot hate anybody it's just love flowing out you see that is what I mean by the effortless stage now we don't get there overnight but that is the real new covenant life you remember how Jesus said I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly that's stage 3 there's death, which is stage 1, unconverted and there's life, stage 2 and then there's abundant life you see one is where you have a cup of water the other is where you have rivers of water flowing out and you know a river flowing is just sort of effortless there's no effort

at all in a river flowing out so that is the type of life it says here the righteousness which comes by my dependence upon Christ the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith the righteousness which comes from God giving me his nature you know a branch has got the same nature as the tree the tree is supplying its nature to the branch and that's why in a branch the nature of the tree comes forth if it's oranges, oranges, if it's apples, apples if it's grapes, grapes it doesn't produce some other fruit from the

nature of the tree so that's the meaning of faith he says when I'm rooted in Christ I'm dependent upon Christ his life flows into me and the righteousness which comes forth from me is the righteousness of God in other words it's from within the wonderful thing about

the new covenant is it's from within so that's the righteousness of God whereas the righteousness of the law is external please remember this that everything in the old covenant was external and everything in the new covenant is internal if it doesn't come from within it's not new covenant, it may be good but it's not new covenant if you smile at somebody who hates you and spoke evil of you is that good?

I think it's good but it's not necessarily new covenant if it doesn't come from within you know how easy it is to smile at someone just on the outside to appear to have forgiven somebody that's good you may hate his guts inside you so I'm not saying it's bad I'm just saying it's old covenant righteousness and God doesn't want us to live in the old covenant and that's why I say 95% of believers are living under the old covenant because they don't have a clue that there's a better life that God has provided for them a better life I always take the example of a father who is a multi-millionaire who has written a will for you, one of his sons or daughters to have a lot of big houses it's yours father built it, he's written it in his will for you but some lawyer in between has cheated you of

that and you live in a little hut in a rented hut, not even yours well you don't have to live there you just got to get your eyes open to see that there's an inheritance but you can't get it easily you remember the story of the widow Jesus said in Luke 18, whose inheritance was stolen by an enemy maybe her neighbor or somebody stole that inheritance or a lawyer or somebody and she went to the judge and said, hey I need my inheritance give me justice against my enemy the judge said, no I don't have time for you she went on and on and on and got it and Jesus said, think of that evil judge you think a loving father in heaven will not give you your inheritance if you cry day and night to him those are his words in Luke 18 verse 7 and 8 if you cry day and night to him but tell me, how many

people in the world how many Christians in the world do you think are crying out to God day and night, oh God make me holy make me holy like you are I think very few, if you were to go to heaven and listen to how many believers around the world are crying to God day and night God make me holy, make me holy I think there are very very few there are lots of people who sing songs and say wonderful things on Sunday morning but those who cry day and night like Jesus said in Luke 18 very very few, but no wonder they don't get their inheritance like that widow got it and she just pestered that judge till she got it because she knew that's mine that guy's got no right to have it do you know that there's something that's yours that your father has written a will for you and Jesus sealed it with

his blood why do you let the devil take it do you remember in India we had a some years ago Pakistan came and occupied a place called Kargil in the mountainous regions of Kashmir hardly anybody lives there it's just a mountain but do you know what the Indian government did they said we're not going to let that bit of mountain go to that enemy we're going to fight and they lost a lot of soldiers and they fought and got it back and as it were taught the enemy a lesson we're not going to let you take any bit of our property even if it's a little mountain I said boy I want to be like that towards the devil you're not going to take a single thing from me which my heavenly father has written in the will for me and I'll tell you something your heavenly father has written in his will for you 2nd

Peter chapter 1 in 2nd Peter chapter 1 we read like this God's power verse 3 divine power means the power of God has given us everything not in relation to money and property and comfort and ease

everything relating to life and godliness everything you need for eternal life and for a godly life on earth has been given by God's power it's in the will sealed by the blood of Jesus whether you have it or not is another thing you may be sitting in your little hut because you don't know your inheritance and allow the devil to steal everything which should be yours you know that the children of Israel even after they entered Canaan's land they allowed the Canaanites to live in most of it and then later on some other people would come the Moabites would come and somebody else would come and they

would just occupy the place and Israel would say well we got a little corner here I got a little hut here isn't that enough for me God said no this whole land should be yours it's for me and you just allow these enemies to occupy it and that's exactly what God says to you today this body of yours is the land of Canaan are there giants living there? that body is supposed to be for God 100% from head to foot no giant should be living in this land of Canaan you know that your body is the land of Canaan and if a single giant is ruling any part of your body your eyes or your tongue or your ears or anything telling you what to do telling you what to read and watch on the internet telling you what books to read, telling you what to do and how to speak and everything that giant needs to be killed

you read the book of Judges that's exactly what the Israelites never did God has given us His power in the book of Joshua God is willing to stop the sun for 24 hours to make His people overcome the enemy what does that teach me? it teaches me that God is willing to do anything to help me to overcome every sin in my flesh imagine if you believe that that God will even stop the sun to help me to get victory I believe that, God will do everything that's the meaning of this verse, His power has given you everything needed for a godly life through the true knowledge of Him who has called us to glory you see there's a true knowledge of God which means all this is not Old Testament stuff this is New Testament stuff and I'll tell you this is not great philosophical stuff you know who wrote this?

the fisherman who probably failed in a few classes in his school he wasn't as clever as you he wasn't a graduate he was a fisherman but he had the revelation of the Holy Spirit and that's what we need that God has given us His power through the true knowledge of Him means to know what a wonderful God and Father He is how He wants to give me everything that's the true knowledge of Him, the devils told you that God's not interested in you or He won't listen to you or you're so insignificant and you're not important and you listen to all those lies then you don't have a true knowledge of God, no wonder you don't have His divine power He says this divine power comes through the true knowledge of Him who called us know Him as one who loves you intensely far more than you realize you know I'll

tell you something I believe one of the greatest shocks and surprises you are going to get when you see Jesus face to face is how much He loved you say Lord, boy you love me so much oh I wish I'd known that on earth you see the Father and you'll be shocked when you discover how much He loved you and how much He wanted to do for you and here you are on earth always condemning yourself and thinking God's angry with you and God's upset with you over something here and something there and you live like that, miserable, listening to all the wretched lies of the devil and making your life miserable I'm not throwing stones at you, I was like that myself for many years I finished with that the devil can't fool me about God anymore I know my Father the true knowledge of Him, that's the way and by

this verse 4, He has granted to us granted means it's a gift His wonderful promises promises of God are all magnificent and precious and the purpose of all these promises is that through those promises you can partake of the divine nature I told you about the nature of the tree coming into the branch, you ask that branch how in the world do you produce such lovely apples? just surrender to the tree, the nature of the

tree comes in and that should be your answer how did you become such a sweet, humble person?

I don't know, just stayed in Jesus and He just let His life flow into me how is it you're not a proud, arrogant person like all the other people in the world? I don't know, I just stay in the tree, that's all it's just like an apple, I mean, do you think that branch thinks oh boy, look at me, producing such wonderful apples? not at all, it doesn't have any such high thoughts about itself because it knows, if it's cut off from the tree even for one second at the end of it, it's producing anything so my dear brothers and sisters when John the Baptist said an axe has to be laid to the root of the tree he was telling us that something fundamental has to be hit right inside right inside Jesus has come, the Holy Spirit has come to hit something inside and what is that? what do you think is the root of sin? the fruit we know telling lies, adultery, lustful looks hatred, anger, bitterness witchcraft, strife, conflict this is all the fruit which comes out of the flesh well, what is the root? see, let me turn you to Galatians in chapter 5 in Galatians chapter 5 it speaks about the deeds of the flesh in verse 19 the deeds of the flesh, that means the fruit which comes out of this tree called the flesh what are they? immorality, impurity, sensuality adultery, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger disputes, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing and things like these.

I'll tell you something when I went through that list once I said, yeah, I can understand all of these but I don't understand this sorcery, witchcraft how does witchcraft come out of the flesh?

I thought witchcraft was something else from outside no, I believe God's word where does your anger come from? it doesn't come from outside does it? outbursts of anger it says your outbursts of anger, where does it come from? there's something within you that wants you to get angry or take another example jealousy, where does that come from? there's something in our nature that wants to be jealous you don't have to get it from outside or disputes to get into a fight with somebody I mean there's something within you which wants you to fight with your husband or wife or somebody at home or a neighbor or any such thing envy, where does that come from? there's something within that comes out what about idolatry? worship of idols, do you know there's something in man that wants to worship

idols? you know the Bible says it's not just something on the outside the idols may be of different types one fellow worships an idol of wood and stone another fellow worships science or nature, or money, or his job something, but man wants an idol and if you're not a wholehearted disciple of Jesus Christ I can tell you in Jesus name you do have an idol maybe a wife, maybe a house maybe your job, maybe your profession something is an idol it's from within, man wants an idol because the devil is always trying to help him to find some other god to replace the real one and the same with witchcraft, from within there's a desire for man to get involved with sorcery and witchcraft, you say no I don't have such desires well, you don't know the Bible says these are the deeds of the flesh, they

are that's why Harry Potter books have got such wide sales how do you think it became the number one sales book in the world, is it because there's something godly in it no, it's because of the sorcery in man's flesh and you can feed it if you like, just like you can feed pornography, I don't think there's any difference between reading pornography and reading Harry Potter, it's the same thing it's just fruit on the left side or fruit on the right side of the flesh what does it matter, it's the same rotten thing so, it's something here which the Bible says, and if you read the Bible the answers are all there John said, it's no use just cutting off all these it's no use just saying ok, I stopped watching internet pornography I stopped reading Harry Potter, I stopped doing this and stopped

doing listen, there are many other manifestations if branch 6 and 7 are cut off there are still branch 1, 2, 3, 4, branch 25, branch 26 what about all of them, when are you going to finish? no, the much better way is to get the axe to the root so if you understand what the root is and say Lord, I want to see the root of sin and allow Jesus through the Holy Spirit to hit that many of these things get solved and now, to understand the root of sin, we've got to go back to Genesis 3 in Genesis 3, we see those two trees the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life and there are many ways we can look at these two trees we can look at these two trees as a picture of the old covenant and the new covenant where the old covenant gives you the knowledge of good and evil, this is bad,

this is right, this is wrong this is bad, this is good, that's what the ten commandments did whereas the tree of life symbolizes God himself giving you his life now another way to look at it is when Adam reached out for the knowledge of good and evil why was it so bad that God said you will die as soon as you eat it in these two trees was the option that Adam had of two ways in which he could live two ways in which he could live one was where, you see man had a conscience let me tell you that first Adam was created with a conscience when God made him out of mud he didn't have a conscience but when God breathed into him he suddenly got what no animal had because God never breathed into any animal God took mud and made the animals all the animals are made of the same blood that's why you

find the dogs have got kidneys and heart and liver and all just like you and I have but God breathed into Adam and suddenly he got a conscience a conscience that made him sensitive and aware of God now in order to educate this conscience so that you don't do what is wrong conscience tells you don't do what's wrong he wanted to have this knowledge from this tree within himself that I have got this knowledge now I can decide what is good and what is evil I don't need anybody to tell me have you met good people like that who don't harm anybody who don't cheat, don't tell lies, don't commit adultery don't murder and you say well why doesn't God take them to heaven I'll tell you why because the knowledge of good and evil brings death the point is not whether you are good or evil Adam didn't

get kicked out of Eden because he murdered Eve or spat on Eve's face or told a lie or nothing it was just that he decided I want to decide myself now what is good and evil I don't want God to tell me that yeah let him be in heaven and I'll acknowledge him as God but when it comes to good and evil I decide myself that is the root of sin the other tree was where God says no no no no you be dependent on me and receive me as your life and I will tell you in every situation what is good and evil these are two ways in which you can live one is where you use your mind you say yeah I think that's okay use your reason the other is you listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and that tells you the two principles by which you can live your life and the difference between them is hell and heaven and

that's why you have heard me say many many times dear brothers and sisters if there is one habit you must develop from your early in your Christian life it's the habit of listening to God it says in Luke chapter 10 and verse 42 let me give you an example of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life here was Mary and Martha living in a house and Jesus came to visit that house and Martha welcomed Jesus into the house and what did she do? she did not listen to what the Lord had to say to her she lived by the tree of knowledge of good and evil which told her I know what to do I'll just go to the kitchen and get some food was that evil? no there are a lot of good people in the world who are not acceptable to God just like Martha was she knew within herself what was right and

wrong she didn't need to pray about it or ask God nothing you know there are a lot of things which we say I know what to do I don't need to wait on God or I don't need to consult Him I know and Mary was different

she symbolizes here the life of dependence the tree of life where she sat at Jesus feet and said Lord I want to hear you what are you going to tell me you tell me to do something I'll do it but I want to listen to you and when Martha saw Mary sitting apparently lazily she came and upset you know people who live by the tree of knowledge of good and evil get very upset particularly upset with somebody else who you think is not doing what you think they should do you get upset with people who are not doing what you think they should do because your tree of knowledge of good and evil

says they should do this and they're not doing it you know people who sit and listen to Jesus don't get upset Because they leave other people to do what they should do.

They're not here to be busybodies in other people's lives. You know this curiosity that you have to find out there, this is part of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A person who is dependent on God is not interested.

You know these people who want to know who's marrying whom next and who's pregnant and who's having a baby and this, that and the other. I say, brother, you please go ahead and be occupied with that. I know so little of the Bible that I want to know what God is trying to say to me.

I have no time for all this. Life is so short that I don't have time to find out who's marrying who and who's getting pregnant. When they have a baby, they'll tell me, I'll know about it, that's it.

You know this curiosity to know so many things about other people. Do you know how much it destroys your spiritual life? He doesn't look evil, it looks so natural, yeah, Adam's nature, that's right. So Martha is upset, why is she sitting there while the food is boiling, her heart is also boiling because Mary is sitting there doing nothing and she finally can't stand it anymore, leaves, let it get burnt, let me go and tell my sister something and tells Jesus and Jesus says, Martha, you're worried and bothered, verse 41, about many, many things.

You are worried and bothered about so many unnecessary things. One thing is needful, only one thing. I'm glad Jesus didn't say 25 things, I wouldn't remember it all.

When Jesus says one thing, that's easy to remember. He didn't even have three points, one, only one thing, listen to me, depend on me, lean on me, I'll tell you what to do. I'm not really so hungry for food, I'm hungry for people who will listen to me.

You know a lot of people think in the world today that the most important thing is to run around doing something or the other for God, it's not true. You may think that I'm traveling a lot here and there and going and doing so many things, it's not true really. Most of the time I spend listening, whatever I'm doing, if I'm sitting at a computer I'm listening, if I'm reading the Bible I'm listening, if I'm traveling in a plane, if I wake up in the middle of the night I'm listening.

I never want to give up that habit. Somebody invites me somewhere and I listen, not to them but to God, Lord do you want me to go? I have no choice, you tell me to go, I go, you tell me no, don't go, I'm quite happy to sit here all my life. The most important thing to do is to listen.

The axe has to be laid to the root of this wanting to do things on my own, that's the root of sin, I want to do it on my own, I know what's right, I know what's evil, I don't need to depend on God, it's a life of independence of God and the other is a life of dependence on God. So the question is not whether a man is good or bad, you know that, a lot of people think oh such is a good man, why doesn't he go to heaven, is

he depending on God or is he just a good person like Martha doing a lot of good things? No the Christian life is a life of faith, faith means dependence upon God and that is the most important thing that you can do. You know once the people came to Jesus and told him in John chapter 6, what can we do to do the works of God, it's a very, Luke 6 and here in verse 28, they said to him, what shall we do so that we may work the works of God, boy what a question, isn't that a good question to ask the Lord, all of you, what do you think? What shall we do to do the works of God, how many of you would like to do the works of God, I would like to do it.

What shall we do to do the works of God and Jesus said, this is the work of God that you believe, believe in him, believe in Jesus. From that will flow all other works, it's like a branch saying to the tree, what shall I do oh tree that I shall produce wonderful apples, just depend on me, don't have all these high thoughts about yourself, just depend on me. Very simple the Christian life.

You know and once you learn that secret, you don't get pushed around by other people. You probably don't know but many, many Christian leaders and preachers have tried to push me into this ministry and that ministry, why aren't you doing this, why aren't you doing that, you're so imbalanced, why aren't you doing this, why aren't you, you can say what you like, I know my calling from God and I'll do it and I give them an example, I said supposing you go to the kidneys, you know we have two kidneys in the back of our body, supposing you go to the kidneys and say, what are you fellas just always purity, purity, purity, purity, always purifying the bloodstream and just watching the bloodstream, bloodstream, but you know the 101 other things in the body like eating food, chewing the food, digesting food, you're only purifying the bloodstream, purifying the bloodstream, the kidneys will say, is that all you got to say, okay, goodbye, I'm going to continue purifying the bloodstream, you know why, they know their calling in the body, when we listen, the axe to be laid to the root means self is not in the center, deciding what I shall do and what I shall not do, that's the difference between Martha and Mary, Martha says, I decide what to do, I'm going to go in the kitchen and make something for the Lord, Mary says, I don't know what to do, I'll sit at the Lord's feet and ask Him what to do, it looks like laziness, but that is the most greatest work that you can ever do and that's the way to accomplish the most on this earth, when I was a young Christian, I looked around at a lot of Christian ministries, you know, I knew the Lord had called me to serve Him and I wanted to do it the right way and I saw great preachers going here and there and becoming very famous and I said, no, that doesn't impress me, I don't want that, then I saw just about two or three in my life I met brothers who would, much older than me, very much older than me, as I looked at their life and read about their life, I found they would pray and wait on the Lord and then go to a place and there'd be a church there, and then they'd pray and wait on the Lord and go to another place and there'd be a church there, and then they'd pray and wait on the Lord and go to another place and there'd be a church there, and I said, boy, that's the way to do it, but as these other great preachers, they would preach and preach and preach for fifty years, there wouldn't be a single church anywhere, they'd just preach sermons here and there, collect a lot of money, became very famous, but where's the church you planted, brother? Oh, no, that's not my calling. Well, that's, you couldn't make Paul go to that type of ministry.

So I saw the secret of some of these men, and I watched one man particularly very closely in my younger days, was he would wait on the Lord to listen, listen, what does the Lord tell me to do? And I want to say to you, if you want to live the most useful life you can ever live on the face of the earth, let the ax go to the root of this tree, where you think you know best what you should do with your life, where you want your own way, where you want self to be in the center, deciding this, that, and the other, you may not do anything bad, but you'll waste your life, like Martha. You can spend all your life in the kitchen, serving the

Lord, and at the end of your life, when you stand before the Lord, he'll say, ha, you were worried and bothered about so many things in your earthly life, I wasn't interested in any of those things you did. Can you imagine the shock you'll get, but Lord, I did so many things for you.

Imagine Martha going and saying, Lord, do you know the number of chapatis I made there for all of you? He says, I'm not interested. Have you learned the secret of dependence on the Lord? The ax has to be laid to this root of this independence of God. The tree of knowledge of good and evil speaks of a life of independence of God, and there are people independent of God who live very good lives, because they've got a conscience.

They don't cheat. I knew one atheist who never told lies. He was very honest and upright, but he was an absolute atheist.

He was more upright than many who call themselves Christians. The thing is not good or evil, the thing is, do you live in dependence on God, or independence of God? How is your life? And that's why Jesus said, you need to pray always. I don't mean kneeling down and going through the ritual of prayer.

I'm saying, well, how can you pray always? Is that difficult? Supposing I were to say to you, you must breathe always. You say, I've got to breathe always? You mean, I can't even take a rest from that? No, you can't. Is that a strain? No.

That's exactly how prayer always is supposed to be. It's to become so natural to just depend all the time on the Lord. All the time, Lord.

It becomes a way of life after some time. It's almost effortless. Have you seen some of these experts? They just lie down on their back on a river, and they don't sink.

They just know the art of just lying down there, and you try to do the same thing, and you sink. You see, how in the world is this guy just lying there? They've learned some technique of just lying down there on their back, and they just float around, and almost effortless. It's like that.

Praying always is really like that. A way of life where we're depending on the Lord, Lord, all the time. The axe is laid to the root of this independent spirit.

That is what the New Covenant is all about. So we saw two things in our last session. We saw what turning around from was to be in our last session, and we saw a little bit about laying the axe to the root of the problem.

Now, the reason I've spent time on all this is because unless you deal with it like this, you're really not going to be able to enter into a New Covenant life. We'll think more about that on Sunday. Let's bow our heads before God.

And as I've often said, Jesus said, the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life. The fleshly understanding of it will profit you nothing. Let the Holy Spirit apply it to your spirit.

Heavenly Father, we pray that the word will bring forth fruit in our hearts, not just understanding in our minds. Thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16649.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-root-of-sin/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net