

# (The Truth Will Set You Free) Freedom From the Curse

by Zac Poonen

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*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us and becoming sin, and we can be free from the curse by being rooted in God's word and the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 58:01

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 18:21, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 16:17, Galatians 3:13

**Topics:** "Forgiveness", "Christian Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of treating others with kindness and fairness, as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. He warns against speaking evil about others and encourages forgiveness and generosity. The speaker also addresses the issue of exploitation and mistreatment of workers, emphasizing the need to pay them fairly. He highlights the significance of being serious students of God's Word and serving one's generation in the will of God. The sermon concludes with a reminder to release others and extend pardon in order to experience release from the cages of bitterness and unforgiveness.

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## Transcript

Lift up our hearts before the Lord and still our hearts to hear His voice, cast all our burdens upon Him, our anxieties and tensions and everything, everything, let's take our minds away from everything of earth and put it on the Lord. Be still and know that I am God, says the Lord. And as we wait on Him, we want to wait expectantly and with faith, not with doubt or unbelief, so that we don't miss anything that God has for us.

And with a humble broken heart, God is near the broken hearted. And if you are broken hearted this morning, He will draw near you. He resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

Let's worship Him. Our Father, all glory and honor belong to You. We know all the theory about being a nobody, but it's so difficult to be a nobody.

But we know that You always choose and use nobodies, and we want to be in that position all the days of our life, so that Your name will be glorified through us. We bow before You. Be exalted in our midst, O Lord, this morning.

Let Your Spirit rest upon us mightily, powerfully, and help us to hear Your Word, and help us to have the Spirit of Heaven right in our midst this morning. We seek Your glory in Jesus' name. Amen.

So, we want to continue our study in Truth Will Set Us Free. I want to turn to a verse in Galatians chapter 3. Galatians in chapter 3, we read, starting in verse 10. As many are of the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them.

So, no one is justified by the law, that is evident, because a righteous man can only live by faith. However, the law is not of faith. See, that's why we keep saying that if you are bound by a legalistic spirit, it is the opposite of the spirit of faith, because the law and faith are opposites.

And he who practices them, according to the law, shall live by them. But nobody could ever keep the whole law. And so, all were cursed.

Cursed because they couldn't keep the law. But then it says, Christ redeemed us, or delivered us, or set us free from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, this was written in the Old Testament, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, so that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

You know, in the Old Testament, when the Lord told Abraham, I'll bless you and make you a blessing, it was purely earthly. The greatest blessing they could get in the Old Testament was a land of Canaan, money, plenty of property, many children, and freedom from all sicknesses, etc. But in the New Testament, the blessings are all spiritual.

God has blessed us, Ephesians 1, 3, with every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. And the promises, as far as material things in the New Testament, the promise is, if you seek the Kingdom of Heaven first, the heavenly things, and make that the central goal of your life, the material necessities, sufficient money to live, sufficient health to do God's will, will be added to you. But that's not what we look for, and that's not what we pray for.

So, Christ has delivered us from the curse by becoming a curse for us. I don't think any of us understand what it is to be cursed by God. But here it says that Christ became a curse for us.

And that's what happened on the cross. It wasn't just that He took my sins. I think the depth of Christ's suffering, like we spoke on the first day of His being persecuted by God, we really have to meditate on it to understand what actually happened to Jesus on the cross.

It was much more than physical death. I mean, words like 2 Corinthians 5, 21, where He became sin. What's the difference between becoming sin and bearing our sins? It says in 1 Peter 2, He bore our sins on His body on the tree.

But in 2 Corinthians 5, 21, it says He became sin. All the evil that sin is, He became that when He was forsaken by God. Our sin, for us, He became a curse.

I mean, I myself haven't understood the depth of that. I'd like to meditate more on that and ask God to give me more light. Give me more light so that I can understand how much Jesus loved me.

Why do I need to know how much Jesus loved me? Because my love for Jesus is dependent. Please listen carefully. My love for Jesus is dependent on how much I understand His love for me.

The Bible says we love Him because He first loved us. And I would add to that in saying that you will love Him as much as you understand that He loved you. If you understand that His love for you is only this much, that's about all.

You'll love Him also. But when you understand the depth and height and length and breadth of the love of Christ which passes our human knowledge, which has to come to us by revelation, like it says in Ephesians 3, what's going to be the result? We'll love Him like He loved us. Many people ask, how can I love the Lord more? I'll tell you, ask God to show you how much Jesus loved you.

That's one thing. And secondly, ask the Lord to show you how much He has forgiven you. Because that's another thing Jesus said, He who is forgiven more will love more.

One of the things that distresses me among believers of all groups, including ours, is that we don't seem to love one another as Christ loved us. It's a great tragedy that Christians who should be known by the fact that we love one another, in the early days when Christians were persecuted, the heathen people used to say about the Christians, behold how they love one another. Today, if you look at Christendom and listen to what people say about each other, you will say, behold how they hate one another.

Christianity has drifted so much. We have much more understanding today. If Bible knowledge could make a person holy, we should be having the holiest people on earth at this time.

Because we have more Bible knowledge, we have Bibles on CDs, commentaries on CDs, concordances, many, many versions of translations. But with all these translations and commentaries and concordances, and people studying the Greek and the Hebrew and everything else, people don't seem to love one another. And those early Christians who didn't even have a Bible in their hands, but who had something even more wonderful, the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they loved one another.

Why did they love one another? Because they understood how much Jesus loved them. For myself, from my earliest Christian life, I have sought for 46 years to understand how much Jesus loved me. And it's taken many, many, many years for me to understand some of the things which I've shared with you.

But what I've shared with you has gone to your head. For me, it has come to my heart. It's changed my life.

It's made me love Jesus. It's made me forgive people. It's made me love people.

The more I have seen how much Jesus loved me, the more I've seen how much He forgave me. And here is a verse which I must honestly confess, even after all these years, I haven't gone to the depths of it. Christ became a curse for us.

Some of us read that and just skip it and go on. Can you explain to me what that means? I'd like to know. I don't think any of you know.

See, we can skip over verses like this and completely miss what the Lord has for us. And if the Lord sees that you treat His Word in such a careless manner, He's not going to give you revelation. One of the great tragedies I find in today's young people is they're not serious students of God's Word.

And because they're not serious students of God's Word, I have a tremendous fear of what is going to happen in the next generation in our churches. We're not going to have prophets. We're not going to have teachers.

We're going to have meeting attenders. We're going to have people who get up and speak and bore everybody for 45 minutes and yell at them and shout at them and criticize them and send them home. We're just going to end up like another denomination if we don't humble ourselves and dig into His Word.

If we don't have another generation growing up who love His Word and ask God to give them revelation on what Jesus went through, not only His death, but His mighty resurrection, that resurrection power, the power of the risen Christ, we really need revelation on that. It's not study. It's not understanding.

Understanding is in the mind. Revelation is in the heart. The people who studied the Bible in Jesus' time thought He was Beelzebub, prince of demons, clever people.

Peter, who was not so clever, got revelation in his heart. This is not Beelzebub. This is the Christ that all the Old Testament prophets spoke about.

And Jesus said, Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed because, to paraphrase His words, your human cleverness did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven showed you this in your heart. I want to encourage all of you to seek God for revelation in your heart a hundred times more than for understanding in your head. Understanding in your head will never make you holy.

There are great Bible scholars who are not holy, and there are simple people who can't even sometimes, don't even sometimes have a full Bible in their mother tongue, who are holy people. So pursue that. Ask God to show you what it means that Christ became a curse for us.

He delivered us from this curse. So I want to share something with you about this curse. The first time the word curse comes in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 3. And we need to think about this a little.

When Adam sinned, God did not curse him. If you've heard me speak, you've heard me say that before. But these are things that nobody notices.

They read the Bible so carelessly. I myself never noticed it for more than 40 years. And that's amazed me that I read the Bible so long.

I've never read it in a book. I don't think in any Bible school they teach that, that Adam was not cursed. The ground was cursed.

And yet in the next chapter, when his son Cain killed his brother, Cain was cursed. Not the ground, but Cain himself. So you see the two first occurrences of the word cursed comes first when Adam sinned and the ground was cursed.

And then when Cain killed his brother, he himself was cursed. Teaching us that there is a curse on the work of our hands. And there's a curse upon ourselves.

And a curse upon ourselves is more serious than a curse upon the work of our hands. Why was Cain cursed? Why was his sin worse than Adam's? Because when Adam sinned, he only hurt himself. He didn't slap Eve.

He didn't even call Eve any bad name. His sin hurt himself. It's like taking drugs or you see a drunkard.

Here's a drunkard or drug addict. We think they are terrible sinners. But they are sinners like Adam.

They hurt themselves. Okay, there's no blessing in their life or work. But Cain hurt another child of God.

When you speak evil, you hurt another child of God and there's a curse on you. On you. Not on the work of your hands.

On you. Because you are hurting another person. How many churches do you hear the message that one who backbites is more evil than a drug addict? You'll only hear it here.

Because most people don't have an understanding of the difference between Genesis 3 sin and Genesis 4 sin. In Genesis 3 sin, you hurt yourself. Smokers, drunkards, drug addicts, they're all Genesis 3. Backbiters, gossips, evil speakers are all Genesis 4. They are cursed.

They deserve to be cursed. And I pray the curse of God will always be upon them till they repent of their evil. Yeah, if I'm like that, the curse of God deserves to be on me.

I never want to be like that. The other poor fellow is a drug addict. He's only harming himself.

Okay, the labor of his hands are cursed. Nothing, no blessing comes out of his life. You know how drunkards are financially stricken and drug addicts are also financially at the bottom.

There's no blessing in the work of their hands, but they are not cursed like the gossip and the backbiter and the evil speaker sitting in a church. If you understand this, it'll be the greatest liberation in your life. But I'm pretty sure the devil doesn't want you to know the truth because he wants you to sit inside that cage forever.

Jesus came to deliver you from that curse. Please remember that. So we see a progression here.

When Adam sinned, he didn't slap his wife. He didn't call her her names, but he blamed his wife. He told God, it's not my fault, it's her fault.

And that's the first step. When you start blaming your wife or blaming your husband, it doesn't get rid of the curse on the ground. It's still there.

You can blame anybody in the world. And the more you blame, the less this problem is solved. Or you can blame your brother or blame the elder brother or blame anybody.

As long as your finger is pointed like that, there's a curse on the work of your hands. Sure. And I think you deserve it.

I remember a poem, which I read years ago, how the hands of men are always pointing at each other for their faults, mistakes, sin. But when Jesus came to earth as a little baby, his hands helplessly caught his mother's hands. He didn't have any finger pointing at anybody else.

And when he hung on the cross, even though he could have blamed the whole world, his hands were nailed. And you know, when your hands are nailed, you can't point it at anybody. That's blessed me for many, many years.

I read that more than 35 years ago, that a crucified man cannot point a finger at anybody else. If so, he's not crucified. At least one hand is not crucified to point at somebody else.

I mean, a man's crucified. Whom can he blame? Even when people blame him, he just keeps quiet, like Jesus did. Most believers who talk about being crucified know nothing about being crucified.

It's all theory in their heads. They don't have revelation. Even after years, I've known people who heard these truths for 30 years, they've got no revelation.

And I've seen other people in one or two years, their grip. Blessed are you, Simon, or whatever your name is, son of Jonah, whose flesh and blood has not revealed it to you. Many years in the church has not revealed it to you.

Your father in heaven has seen your humble broken heart and given you revelation, which other people who have sat in the church for 25 years more than you have not seen. You are blessed if you have seen what it means to be crucified with Christ. That is God's will.

He doesn't want us to be cursed. He doesn't want the work of our hands to be cursed. It says in Psalm 1 that the man who turns away from the conversation of ungodly people and doesn't sit with the scoffers and doesn't walk in the way of the ungodly, but meditates on the law of the Lord day and night, whatever he does will prosper.

I have rejoiced in that. I say, Lord, that's the way I want to walk all my days. I never want to listen to the counsel of the ungodly or the conversation of wicked people.

I want to stay away from that. I want to let my mind meditate on your word first thing when I wake up in the morning, even before I get out of bed. I want my heart to turn towards God and judge myself for anything that displeased him.

I want to live like that the whole day because I want everything I do to prosper. That's Psalm 1. Whatever he does will prosper. That's because if I root my life in God's word, whatever will prosper.

In Jeremiah 17 verses 5 to 8 says, if I root my life in the river of God's Holy Spirit, like a tree that is always green, when all the other trees are barren, I will always be green. That means I will always be fresh 365 days a year. So these two pictures from Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17 are pictures of freedom from the curse.

These are wonderful pictures. Psalm 1 is rooted in the word, and Jeremiah 17 verses 5 to 8 is rooted in the Holy Spirit. These are the two things I need.

I need to be rooted in the word, filled with the Holy Spirit. And if I open my whole heart, thy word have I hid in my heart, not in my head, Psalm 119 and verse 11. I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee, that I allow the Holy Spirit to rule my heart.

Whatever I do will prosper, and I will always be fresh spiritually. My words will be fresh. I'm not talking about only preaching.

Most of us don't preach. Just in ordinary conversation with people, your words will bless people and not ruin them. The Bible says about many believers whose tongue is set on fire by hell, in the meeting they bless God, and then afterwards they curse people with the same tongue.

And James says, how can that be? Can a fountain send forth sweet water and bitter water at the same time? Is it something you can switch off and turn on? I mean, if you have a tap in your house with two connections, one connected to the water supply, another connected to the toilet, and you turn on one and the toilet water comes through, if you want that, and then you turn on the other and the water supply comes, you'd be mad to have a tap like that. But do you know that a lot of believers have that? They've got a switch. Okay, toilet water now.

Back, fresh water now, because I'm praising God. How can that be? Why are we so stupid concerning something more important than a tap in our house, our tongue? That is the reason why we remain with the effects of the curse still upon our life, and we spend our life like Adam, blaming others. But there's a progression.

When I point my finger at others, it doesn't stop there. In Genesis chapter 4, it progresses. Sin always progresses in the next generation.

We can see that the sin that started with blaming your wife ended with the elder brother murdering his younger brother. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer. And the Bible says in 1 John 3, we should not be like Cain.

Do you know that's an exhortation given to believers in 1 John 3? My dear beloved brothers, don't be like Cain, who hated his younger brother. Why? Because God blessed his younger brother and did not bless him. It's a terrible thing when you are jealous of God blessing somebody else.

That shows you've got something of the devil and something of hell right inside your heart, even though you've got the Bible in your head. The greatest evil is to have the Bible in your head and the devil in your heart. The Pharisees were like that.

A lot of believers are like that. When you have jealousy, you've got the spirit of Cain. It's the spirit of the devil in your heart.

And it didn't come straight away. It started with the first generation was blaming. The second generation of sin is jealousy and hatred.

And yet you'd love to see that fellow die. You won't kill him because the police will catch you, but you'd love to see him dead. It's terrible when it becomes like that.

How can Jesus redeem such people from a curse? The curse will always be upon them in their life. I'm not saying that they won't prosper materially. The world is full of crooked businessmen who are cursed by God, who are not millionaires, but billionaires, one thousand million.

And they prosper more and more as they cheat more and more people. Because the devil's promise is, you bow the knee to me, I will give you everything in the world. And they get it.

So don't any of you fool yourself that because you've got money, God is blessing you. And because you've got plenty of it, maybe you bowed the knee to the devil and God, the devil's very happy with you. And even the devil told Jesus, I'll give you money.

I'll give you everything in the world if you just bow down to me. Jesus would never have been a poor man if he had bowed the knee to the devil. He wouldn't have had to sleep under the trees in the Mount of Olives if

he had bowed the knee to the devil.

But he wouldn't have saved us either. And he wouldn't have gone back to heaven. He said, get behind me, Satan.

I'm only supposed to worship God, not you. I don't want your money. I don't want to do something wrong to earn some more money.

I don't want to cheat the government on taxes or stamp duty or any such thing to make a little more money. Let other people do it. I want the blessing of God upon my life.

And I want to be upright and I want to be honest in everything I do. I want to be righteous. When I stand before the Lord in the day of judgment, I don't want the government of India to say, Lord, how can you take this fellow to heaven? He's not paid a lot of taxes.

He cheated many, many of our taxes during his earthly life. Keep him here. The Lord will say, really? Okay, then he better stay here.

I don't want that. I want to go to be with the Lord. I don't want the government or any human being to say, this guy borrowed a book from me, which he never returned.

He borrowed a knife or something else from me, never returned it. He borrowed some money from me, which he never returned. He conveniently forgot about it.

I don't want anybody in the world to be able to say that to me. I want to go with Jesus. And I'm willing to have much less in my bank account because I want to go with Jesus.

Do you want to be ready to go? I mean, if you are left behind, at least you know that I warned you, you won't be able to blame me if you get left behind on earth and never make it into God's kingdom. I warn you, these are serious matters. Don't live like other believers.

Don't live like other people in the world. Don't bring a curse upon yourself by robbing other people of their dues. If people work for you, pay them their wages properly, whether it's a servant who works in your home or anybody who does any work for you.

Don't be miserly, stingy and hard on them. In James chapter 5, it says, a final word to you proud rich people. When the crash comes, your fine clothes will stink, your money will corrupt, your greedy luxuries are a cancer in your gut, destroying your life from within.

You thought you were piling up wealth, but actually you've just piled up judgment for yourself. All the workers whom you exploited and cheated, they are crying out for judgment upon you. And the workers whom you used and abused to make money for yourself, their voices and their groans are like a roar in the ears of their master avenger.

You looted the earth and you lived it up and all you'll have to show for it is a fatter than usual dead body when you die. You condemn and murder perfectly good people and you stand there and take it. Dear brothers and sisters, make sure that nobody, that you owe nobody anything.

Make sure you've paid all your servants, all who work for you righteously. You ask me how should I pay them? I'll tell you exactly how your office pays you, generously. Does your office give you a bonus? Why

don't you give your servants a bonus? You know, I've learned something through the years that God treats me the way I treat people who are under me.

If you're in an office, you have people under you. I'm in a church, I'm an elder brother in a church, I have people under me. The way I treat those younger brothers is exactly how God is going to treat me.

I want to be very gentle with my younger brothers because I want God to be very gentle with me. I've seen elder brothers who are very hard on their younger brothers and I watch these elder brothers. The grace of God is not on their life because God is a very righteous God.

He treats you exactly like you treat the people who are under your authority. You husbands, I'll tell you how God will treat you. Tell me how you treat your wife.

Do you jump on her for a small mistake? Mark my word, God will jump on you for every little mistake you've made and you deserve it. Tell me how you treat your children, parents. You get upset with them for every little thing? God will righteously get upset with you for every little thing.

You deserve it. This is the curse. Any of us can have the blessing of God in our life.

I have learned through the years. You know, many of you think that I'm a very hard man when I stand up in the pulpit. Of course, I stand here.

I want to be like a lion. But I've seen through the years that a lot of people who have fallen into sin come and speak to me more than they speak to others who they think are not so strict. Because they've learned that with all my strictness, I know what it is to be compassionate to the worst sinner in the world.

And God has been extremely good to me. Extremely good. Far beyond what any of you know.

How much we were forgiven in the past. 2nd Peter chapter 1 verse 9. If you forget all the sins you were cleansed from from the day you were born, and you think God was not merciful to you, you will become blind and short-sighted. I know why some people when they read the Bible, they get nothing out of it.

Because they are blind. You give a Bible to a blind man, what can he get out of it? Nothing. But there are a lot of people who are not blind physically, but they are blind when they read the Bible.

They get nothing out of it because they have forgotten how much God has forgiven them. What is the meaning of being short-sighted? A short-sighted man is a man who lives only for this world. His vision is only such a short distance.

60 years, 70 years, 100 years. That's all. A long-sighted man is one who says, 10,000 years from now, what is the value of this? That's a long-sighted man.

His decisions are based on 10,000 years from now. How will this thing I'm doing affect me? The short-sighted man says, next year, how will it affect me if I do this? Or 10 years from now? He is short-sighted. Most believers are short-sighted.

And the reason they are short-sighted is because they don't remember what all God has forgiven them. We don't feel guilty about our past sins because they're all put under the blood of Christ. I never feel guilty.

I tell you honestly, I'm not guilty. I don't have any condemnation or sense of guilt concerning anything I did right from yesterday till my birth. But I remember everything that I can remember of my past life because I don't want to be short-sighted because that is what makes me compassionate to other people who are in sin.

It's a terrible thing when I see believers who are hard. I feel sorry for them because I know it will never go well with them. They remind me of Adam pointing their finger at their wife.

They remind me of Cain jealous of Abel being blessed by God, his younger brother being blessed. How do you feel when somebody younger than you has a much richer anointing than you? How do you feel when somebody who came to the church through you today has a richer anointing than you? It's happening. You should jump for joy.

If you don't jump for joy, you'll be like Cain. Or you'll be like Saul. Saul and David, the same spirit of Cain and Abel.

Saul was like an elder brother sitting on his throne and he was really jealous of David because he was afraid David would occupy that throne. So he was determined to throw daggers at him, javelins and kill him somehow or the other because he wanted to keep his throne. The spirit of God departed.

Saul was an anointed person. He was such a humble person that when he was first made the elder brother in Israel, the king, it says he went and hid himself. He covered himself under some luggage, thought thinking nobody would find him there and that God had to pull him out from there and say, come on, call that man here.

Such a humble man who never wanted to be an elder. But once he got on the throne, boy, his whole attitude changed. He wouldn't give it up.

He wanted to live there forever, even though he was disobedient to God. He couldn't accept the discipline of God. And then he got jealous of this other younger person who was coming up who would take over the throne from him and he wanted to get rid of him and he wanted to promote his son.

Have you seen elder brothers who promote their sons to positions in the church? That's Saul. He tried his best to promote his own children, Jonathan, to the throne. We see it all around in Christendom organizations started by some man with all that money from America.

And then he says, why should this money, which I have labored and built up this organization, why should it go to a stranger? Because all the brothers are strangers. You see, it should go in my family. They have not understood the new family in Christ.

Their only family is their own son. So they say my son should take over. It's happening in every single organization in America, in India, everywhere, except in CFC.

Thank God it'll never happen here. We believe in a spiritual sonship, not a physical sonship. We don't believe in a royal dynasty.

We believe in a spiritual sonship. Moses had sons. He never handed over the leadership of Israel to his sons.

He gave it to Joshua, who was not even related to him. He was a man of God. He was the humblest man who lived on earth, a man who knew God face to face.

And God said, not your son, Moses, somebody else. Moses said, fine, Lord, even I knew it was not going to be my son. It was going to be Joshua.

Can you say that? It's a rare elder brother in the world who will not favor his own children. Even among us, you ask yourself whether you show favoritism to your children in some way, then you're a descendant of Saul. Any type of favoritism.

Saul, he wanted to promote Jonathan, but he didn't succeed. You cannot succeed. You can try your best, but the anointing does not flow down physical lines.

God has got his sovereign choice. And if he's chosen a Joshua, that's going to be the one. If he's chosen a David, that's going to be the one.

And all our trying, scheming, manipulating, you cannot fight against God. It's good to humble ourselves and take the low place and say, Lord, I can only serve my generation in the will of God. And then I die and I move on.

You can only serve your generation in the will of God. David was a man after God's own heart. Acts 13.22, it says in Acts 13.36, he served his generation in the will of God and he slept.

I've learned that myself. I can only serve my generation in the will of God and then go to sleep and hope that God will raise up somebody to serve the next generation. I can't do it.

But you be careful that in your life you're not jealous of anybody, that you don't bring a curse upon yourself by wrong attitudes. So much of it is happening. I want to show you a verse in Luke's gospel, chapter six.

When you think about being released from this cage, it says in Luke chapter six, in verse 37, the last part of verse 37, it says, pardon and you'll be pardoned. And the margin of the NASV says, the actual word in the Greek is release and you will be released. Release people and you will be released from the cage yourself.

Are some of you sitting in a cage today, a prison which you made yourself or which the devil made for you? It's perhaps because there's somebody you have not released. Some of you, maybe you've had a very difficult time with your wives and you're always meditating on all the wretched things your wife did. You haven't released her or all the wretched things your husband did and you haven't released him.

You got, symbolically speaking, you got your hand on his throat or her throat. And God says, as long as you keep your hand on somebody's throat, I'll keep my hand on your throat. That's why you're feeling choked.

That's why you can't breathe properly. That's why you've got spiritual asthma. Because God's got his hand on your throat and he'll keep it there until you release every single person in the world on whose throat you got your hands.

A lot of people in the world have done evil to me in many, many ways. They've made life very, very inconvenient for me. They've cheated me financially.

But God is my witness. I don't have my hand on anybody's throat. I have forgiven them all.

I pray for those who persecute me. And do you know, I don't have spiritual asthma. I don't even have physical asthma.

Even though I had it when I came to Bangalore. God told me and my wife to move to Bangalore in 1972. We were in Vellore and we moved here and as soon as we came here, within three months, I was hit with asthma so badly, I couldn't sleep at night.

I used to sit up in a chair at night with this bump, bumping my mouth, just to be able to breathe. And people said, Bangalore is not the place for you. It's one of the worst places in India for people with asthma.

I thought, well, I thought the Lord led me. Did I get my wires crossed? Did I understand God rightly? I sat there breathing in difficulty and difficulty. And then two, three years later, God baptized me in the Holy Spirit and I forgave everybody, released everybody.

And lo and behold, I could breathe properly. And I've never had asthma for 30 years. Can you believe it? I live here.

I travel on a scooter in the rain, sun, even without a jacket sometimes. I come back, I'm okay. I've hardly been in bed with a sickness for the last so many years.

And I've learned something through it. When you release others, God releases you. When you cast your burdens upon the Lord, He takes care of you.

A lot of people, I'm not trying to blame everybody, there are some sins due to, some sicknesses due to sin, and some sicknesses not due to sin. We need to distinguish two categories. But I believe with all my heart, there are some people who are sick because they haven't forgiven somebody.

They have problems in their life and they'll continue to have problems in their life because they haven't released somebody. Release, the Lord says here, and you will be released. If you are the most selfish person in the world, let me tell you what is good for you.

Release other people. It's good we get a pause once in a while so that we can think about what we heard. Like in the Psalms, have you sometimes read the word Sila? You know what Sila means? Stop.

Think about that. So that's good. Stop and think about that.

Have you released everybody? Do you have a sickness today which multitudes of pills and injections don't cure you of because you haven't released somebody? I'm not saying that everybody who is bitter gets sick. I personally believe it's better to get sick now than to be judged for it in eternity. I think it's a mercy if God makes you sick now because He says something is wrong.

There's a verse in 1 Timothy chapter 5 which says, verse 24, that some people's sins are quite evident. It goes before them to judgment. But some people's sins, they don't show up till much later.

1 Timothy 5 24. That teaches us that some people's sins, God gives them a chastening right now. Oh, you are a blessed person.

My son, don't regard the chastening of the Lord lightly. For whom the Lord loves, He chastens. He sees some sin in your life and He gives you an asthma.

He gives you some arthritis. He gives you some rheumatism. He gives you some migraine or something like that and speaking to you saying, come on, forgive that fellow, release that fellow.

God's love for you. And then you wonder how the other fellow who's more bitter than you, who's got more of a critical attitude than you, he seems to be quite healthy. I'll tell you why.

Maybe God's given up on him. Maybe God has given up on him. God is not going to chasten him.

I never in my life spanked somebody else's children. Do you know that? Even though they do worse things than my children have done, I never spanked them. Why? They are not my children.

I've only spanked my children and I spanked them pretty hard when they did something wrong because I loved them. And they love me today for that, all of them. God loves us and He spansks us.

But if you are not one of His special selected ones, He'll just let you go. He lets you do the most evil things in the world, like a lot of people in the world do a lot of evil things. Look at all these preachers who swindle money from poor widows and from poor people and live in grand luxury themselves.

Nothing seems to happen to them. I believe God's given up on them. You may think whatever you like about them.

I've got my opinion. God's given up on them. So let me say this, that if God chastens you, you're a blessed person.

It means that God is trying to tell you something is wrong. Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 7, this is how we can get out of the cage. God wants us to be free.

Matthew chapter 7, it says here, verse 12, in everything, in everything, treat people the same way you want them to treat you. But this is the message of the whole Bible. You know what Jesus said is the message of the whole Bible.

It was only the Old Testament those days. Jesus saying, do you want the message of the whole Bible in a nutshell? Treat other people the way you want them to treat you. Do you want people to be hard on you? No.

Do you want people to go around speaking evil about you? No. Then don't speak evil about others. Do you want people to forgive you when you make a mistake? Okay, forgive other people when they make a mistake.

Treat other people the way you want to be treated yourself. How do you want God to treat you? Treat your wife like that. Treat your husband like that.

Treat your children like that. Treat the maidservant in your home the way you want God to treat you. I've seen some believers, particularly women, married women, I've seen for years they are in the same pathetic spiritual condition, but they themselves don't know it.

I can see it clearly. And I know it's because they are very hard on the maidservants in their home. And they deserve for God to be hard on them.

They deserve it. It's a law. I've had servants in my home.

I've always wanted to be good to them. And God's been very good to me, I'll tell you that. You don't know how much God has blessed me.

You see only a fraction of the way God has blessed me immensely in my life. In my personal life, in my private life, in my financial life. Everything I've done has prospered.

But I've always been very careful to treat other people the way I wanted God to treat me. Whoever they are, especially beggars and servants, and people lower than me in society, and people who are under my authority as an elder, never have I tried to take advantage of them. Never have I tried to be showing favoritism to my children or any such thing.

Because I wanted God to be good to me. I know God is a God of impartiality. I wanted to be impartial.

And I want to tell you, God's been extremely good to me in my, particularly in the last 30 years, exceptionally good. So I can recommend that way to you. You'll never be in a cage.

I've not felt I was in a cage. I've been flying in the air like an eagle, at least for the last 10-15 years. It's been wonderful.

So I want to recommend to you, treat other people. Whenever you have opportunity to treat somebody beneath you, think, is this the way I want God to treat me? And do it like that to them. It'll go exceptionally well with you.

You will prosper in everything you do. Your business will prosper. Your everything will prosper.

Your life will be as fresh as a green tree when everything is barren around you. I have experienced that, a freshness all the time, every day. Because I've tried to release people all the time.

You see, all the time people are doing wrong things to us. You got to keep on releasing them. Even before they come and ask you forgiveness.

Did Jesus wait for the people who crucified him to ask him forgiveness before he forgave them? God can do that. God has got the right to say, I will not forgive till I, people repent. But you're not God and I'm not God.

Jesus gave us an example what man should do. Father, forgive them. They have not asked for forgiveness.

But as a human being, I forgive them. I release them. I don't want to wait for them to repent.

I don't want them to ask forgiveness. They never asked Jesus for forgiveness. He forgave them.

And I thought about how he spoke to Judas Iscariot, this crook for whom he had done so much good for three and a half years, when he came to betray him with a kiss. He didn't say, Judas, you know what will happen to you? I tell you. He never said anything like that.

He said, friend, have you come to betray the Son of Man? Betray the Son of Man? Betray an ordinary man like me? Oh, makes me weep when I think of it. Jesus saying to this crooked traitor, have you come to betray an ordinary man like me with a kiss? Friend, oh Lord, give me that attitude to my betrayers. Give me that attitude to those who hate me and want to destroy me.

I want to be like Jesus. I want to release people. And I know the blessing of God will be on my life.

As I told you, there are sins which are due to sin. Let me point out to you John chapter 5. A man who was sick for 38 years in the pool of Bethesda, Jesus healed him. And afterwards, when Jesus met him, he told him in John 5.14, now you have become well.

Don't sin again, lest something worse than your lameness happen to you next time. This time you sinned and you were lame for 38 years. Next time you sin, it will be worse.

So why was he sick for 38 years? Because of sin. Now you turn to John chapter 9. There was a blind man. And the disciples asked Jesus, why is this man born blind? Was it his sin, verse 2, or his parents' sin? And Jesus said, not this man's sin, nor his parents' sin.

What does that teach us? Some sins, some sicknesses are not due to sin. What does John 5 teach us? Some sicknesses you can have for 38 years because of sin. So there's John 5 type of sickness and John 9 type of sickness.

John 5 type of sickness is due to sin and you can be sick for 38 years with it. John 9 type of sickness is not due to sin or your parents' sin. So we can't classify all sin as because of all sickness as due to sin.

That's wrong. Neither can we say no sickness is due to sin. That's also wrong.

That is John 5 and John 9. And if you are sick, the first thing you need to check up is whether it's a John 5 type of sin, sickness. Even if you've had it for 38 years, you can be healed if you get rid of that wrong attitude. I believe that.

It's amazing. Healing is God's will for us. You read Deuteronomy 28 and God says, if you disobey me, I will curse you with blindness and sickness and fever and consumption and tuberculosis and all those things.

That is the curse of the law. And Jesus died to deliver us from that curse. He says, you'll be poor.

You'll be like a beggar. Poverty and beggarmdom is a curse. We don't preach the prosperity gospel here.

We don't preach the health and wealth gospel. But we do believe that if we seek God's kingdom first, God will never allow us to be beggars. He will never allow us to sleep on the pavements.

Jesus was not a beggar. Jesus was not perpetually sick, unable to live for God. No, he was healthy.

And he wasn't a millionaire, but he always had enough for his needs. And God will always provide our needs. And he gave us enough health to do his will because we are not under the curse.

But make sure you're released, everybody. Let's pray. You got to do some homework now.

You got to do something practical about what you heard this morning. You got to repent and say, Lord, there are certain habits I have in my life that I have to get rid of permanently. Otherwise, I'll bring a curse even upon my children.

Get rid of those habits, permanently release people and say, Lord, please help me to be sensitive, to treat other people exactly the way I want you to treat me. Heavenly Father, help us, we pray. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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