

# The Unshakable Life

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the call for Christians to live an unshakable life through faith in God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 45:48

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:20, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:24, Matthew 7:26, Ephesians 6:13

**Topics:** "Overcoming"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of living an unshakable life in a world that is becoming increasingly evil and dangerous. He shares the news of his son and daughter-in-law having twins, emphasizing that every child is a gift from God and a message that God has not given up on the world. The speaker explains that while it is expected for new believers to be shaky in their faith, as they grow, they should become steady and unshakable. He highlights the importance of mastering sin and how, through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, believers can overcome sin and live unshakable lives. The speaker also references Ephesians 6:13, encouraging believers to put on the full armor of God so that they can resist the attacks of Satan and stand firm in the face of adversity.

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## Transcript

Well, I'm thankful to be here again. I am speaking on the same subject throughout this weekend. I usually speak four separate messages, but I'm going to be speaking in Abundant Life three times over the next two months, so I thought I would take a series of three messages, and this weekend is on The Unshakable Life.

There's only one thing that's changed since I spoke last night. I was the grandfather of six children last night. Now I'm the grandfather of eight this morning.

Those of you who know my son Sanjay and Kathy, she delivered two sons this morning, twins. So thank you for praying. Every child is a gift of God, and there was an Indian poet who said that every child comes into the world with a message that God still hasn't given up on this world.

But, you know, the world is getting more and more evil and a dangerous place, and we think about children growing up. They need role models. They need examples, and a lot of Christians today are, I'm sorry to say, quite pathetic examples for their own children and for others in the church.

So I want you to think of that and take it as a challenge this year. God wants you and me to live an unshakable life, and that's possible. It was not possible in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, they could only look forward to some things that would be possible only after the coming of the Holy Spirit within man. I feel that Christians haven't understood the tremendous difference that the Holy Spirit coming inside makes. It's Almighty God who created this universe coming inside us.

Think of that. That was not possible in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit came upon people.

God was near people. He spoke to people, but it was always outside, and as long as God was on the outside, He couldn't do, couldn't change people on the inside. Men were shaky.

Even the great prophet Elijah, after bringing down fire from heaven, and you'd think he was on top of the world after that. And then after that, he brought rain down on a parched land, and yet the very next chapter you read, he runs away in fear from the queen who wanted to kill him. And this man who killed 450 prophets single-handed got afraid of a woman and ran away and sits depressed under a juniper tree and say, Lord, I've had enough.

Take away my life. That was the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. Moses was another great prophet.

But he also, he'd be up on the mountaintop talking to God one day, and then he'd come down, and those tablets which God gave him, he would, in anger, throw it down. That's like taking the Bible and tearing it to pieces. Who would do that? This was Old Testament.

That great man Job. You read that book of Job. Sometimes he was on top of the world and down in the dumps, and then up again.

Old Testament greatest men were like this. And what I want to say to you is if your life is like that, that is not God's will. You're living a substandard Christian life.

Maybe you're living like all the other Christians around you, but they're living substandard too. It's not God's will. We must rise to the heights that the new covenant in Jesus Christ offers us.

That's a precious word, the new covenant. We just drank the cup, and Jesus said, This is the new covenant in my blood. It's different from the old covenant.

We must determine I'm not going to live like those old covenant people. I'm going to live a new covenant life. Let me show you a verse in Acts of the Apostles in Chapter 2. This was a prophecy that David made about Jesus.

We know that Jesus lived an unshakable life as a man. He did not use his resources as God when he lived on this earth. That's a very important truth.

For 16 years of my Christian life, I never realized this wonderful truth that Jesus, though he was God, though he was God on this earth, God can never cease to be God. He was the second person of the Trinity. Yet he never used the resources of God so that he could be an example for us.

He lived as a man. And that's the thing that brought faith in my heart that I could walk as Jesus walked by the same principles that he lived by. I could have the same, as I sought him to be filled with the Holy Spirit,

I could have the same attitude that he had.

And the devil would not be able to shake me. And I want to encourage you to believe that, my brothers and sisters. We're called in 1 John 2, 6 to walk as Jesus walked, to live as Jesus lived.

And it's possible. Don't let the devil tell you it's not possible. Acts chapter 2 verse 25, David says of Jesus, this is how Jesus lived.

I was always beholding the Lord in my presence. I always had my Father, my Heavenly Father in front of me. And because he's at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

I will not be shaken. Nothing can shake me. See, this was not experienced by people in the Old Testament.

You know how badly David himself was shaken. Let me show you another verse from the Old Testament in Psalm 112, which says, Psalm 112 verse 1, Praise the Lord. How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments.

Here's one characteristic of one who fears the Lord. He greatly delights in God's commandments. And he will not, verse 7, he will not fear evil tidings because he trusts in the Lord.

That's the second characteristic. One, they keep the commandments. The other, they have faith in the Lord.

And what is the result? The result is in Psalm 112 verse 6, He will never be shaken. He will never be shaken. Like I said in the Old Testament, many of these things were written as a prophecy.

The Bible says that those prophets look forward to that future day when all these things would become reality. It was not reality in their time. And think how those prophets in heaven, if they can see us, are so disappointed that so many of us who are living in this age when these things can be real are still living by those old covenant privileges and standards.

I think God is so disappointed with many of His children because they are not living up to all that Jesus purchased for them on the cross. And I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, make this a goal in your life. Say, Lord, I want this year to come to an unshakable life.

That's God's will for you. Many things will happen around us but they need not shake us. Let me show you another verse in Ephesians, in chapter 6. In Ephesians, chapter 6, and verse 12, it says here, sorry, not verse 12, verse 13.

Ephesians 6, verse 13. Take up the full armor of God so that in the evil day, you'll be able to resist and having done everything, you'll be still standing firm. You will be unshakable in the evil day.

When Satan attacks you left, right, and center, you will stand firm. This was not possible in the old covenant. This is a privilege we have when we allow the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, to take full possession of every area of our inner life, when we surrender everything to Christ.

So first of all, what does it mean to trust, to have faith, to be unshakable? We are unshakable when we have faith in God. And there are a number of things that faith involves. I just want to share a few things with you.

First of all, to believe in God means to believe in a God who is almighty, who knows the end from the beginning, is to believe that anything and everything that happens to us is something God already knew about. Nothing can take God by surprise. Something that happens to you may take you by surprise.

There are many things in my life that's taken me by surprise. I never anticipated that those things would happen. I never anticipated that some circumstance would take place or some event would take place or some danger or sickness or some other calamity would hit me.

But when it does hit me, the one thing I realize is this didn't take God by surprise. He didn't say, oh no, I didn't know that would happen. We may say that because we didn't anticipate it.

What does it mean to have faith in God? To believe, first of all, that nothing takes God by surprise. There's nothing that can happen to you this year or next year or till Jesus comes that can take God by surprise. He knows it.

He already knows it. I mean, if you don't believe that, you got to be an atheist. But do you recognize that when something unexpected hits you or your home or your church or anything that did not take my Heavenly Father by surprise.

That's faith. That's what will make you unshakable. And the second thing, faith is to believe that if God already knew that something was going to happen, He's made some provision for it.

I mean, which earthly father would not make provision for his children if he knew they're going to face something. And we make so many plans for our children. And God's a million times better Father than any of us.

So faith is to believe that if anything happens, He's already made a provision for it. You see that way back in the beginning of time and in terms of human history. God, when He sent Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden, He gave them the freedom to choose.

If He had not given them that freedom, they could never have become holy. They could have been obedient, but not holy. Holiness requires choice.

The planets are obedient to God. The stars, they've been moving in their orbits for thousands of years with never disobeying God even for a split second. They're much better than Christians.

But they can't be holy. Imagine being totally obedient for thousands of years and you can't be holy. And they can't be sinful either.

Why? Because they don't have freedom of choice. It's automatic obedience. And if God had made Adam or you and me like that, we would have been robots.

God wants you to make a choice. A choice to be holy. And that's why He sent Adam into the garden with the power of choice.

And there had to be at least one thing forbidden in that garden, at least one, to find out whether he'd make the right choice. If everything was permitted, how would you find out? And that's why God had to say, there's one tree, you're not to take part of. Because it's that decision we make that makes us strong, that makes us unshakeable.

And we know He made the wrong choice. I want to tell you this, that God will never, never take away that power of choice from you. I've seen demon-possessed people, they have no power of choice.

The demons control them. They say things that they don't want to say. They do things they don't want to do.

They tear their clothes. It's not their normal being. Demons are like that.

But God gives us freedom. When you're born again, He still gives you freedom. When He fills you with the Holy Spirit, He still gives you freedom.

Don't let anybody take away that power of choice from you. God Himself doesn't. But, when He knew that Adam was going to fall, He already made a provision for it.

It's not that when Adam fell, God had to say, Oh, no! Don't tell me you went and ate that. No, He knew they were going to fall. He knew.

He didn't make them fall, but He knew. He knows everything that you're going to do tomorrow. He doesn't make you do it.

He's like a silent observer. He observed Adam falling. It disappointed him, but He had already made a provision for it, because as soon as he comes into the garden, He tells Adam, Okay, you messed up your life, but I made a provision for it.

Through the woman, one day will come a seed who will crush the serpent's head. See, that was a provision God already made. And throughout the Old Testament, you'll find that God's always made provision for His people.

When they came to the borders of the Red Sea, when Pharaoh was following them, God had made a provision for them, to make a way for them to go through. When they were out in the desert, not knowing which way to go, He had made a provision for them. He sent a cloud to guide them.

When they were by the waters of Mara, where they were bitter, the waters were bitter, you read in Exodus 15, God had made a provision. There was a tree God had planted there years earlier, for them. And throughout the Old Testament, you see that God's always made a provision for His people.

And this is the message that comes through to us today, that faith is to believe that if God foresaw something, He's made a provision for it. He's made a solution to that problem that you're going to face next week, or next month, or next year. That's the thing that gives me confidence.

I don't know what I'm going to face. I don't know what the devil's going to send across my life. And why does God allow it? Because that's the way we're going to be strong.

You know that there's a lot of difference between fat people and strong people, though they may weigh the same. It's a lot of difference between a fat person and a strong person. One's got muscle and the other's got fat.

And what is it that makes the difference? The difference is one person just eats and eats and eats and eats and eats and eats some more. And the other one eats and takes exercise. That's what makes the difference.

And so it is in the Christian life. When we read the scriptures, come to the services, read Christian books, and get lots and lots and lots of information, we're eating. It's good.

We need to eat. But if you only eat, you'll be spiritually fat. And fat people are not always strong.

You can just touch them and they can fall down. And the devil just touches some Christians and they fall down. Some little thing and they're knocked down.

They're not unshakable. They're not steadfast on their feet. Because they ate and ate and ate.

So don't think that you're going to be spiritual by knowing more and more of the Bible. Do you think all those people who spend 4 or 5 years in a Bible school and come out from there are spiritual? Oh no. Most of them are not.

They're just fat. With knowledge. With a lot of information.

And God doesn't want His children to be spiritually fat, but strong. And so He doesn't... He wants us to eat God's Word. He wants us to feed on God's Word, to hear God's Word, but He also wants us to exercise.

And that exercise comes when we face resistance. The whole principle of building muscle is to subject that muscle to some resistance. And that's why God permits trial.

If God didn't permit the devil to try us and test us, we'd all be fat and flabby, useless Christians. So God allows the devil to test us and tempt us. In fact, the Lord told... The Lord allowed Satan to tempt Job.

He had to get permission from God. But Job came out of it a better man at the end of it. God permitted Satan to sift Peter like wheat.

But he came out a better man at the end of it. And you'll come out a better man at the end of it too if you react in faith. Lord, I believe that You permit this to come into my life.

And You made a provision. And the other thing about faith is this. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13.

I need never be afraid of what the devil's gonna bring into my life. Because 1 Corinthians 10, 13 says God is faithful. He will never, never, never, never, never, you can say that a thousand times, allow you to be tested beyond your ability.

So there is no situation that you can ever face in the future where you have to say Oh God, this is becoming too much for me. Never. Because God is faithful.

That is faith. Faith is a very down to earth practical thing. It's not just believing something in our head.

It's believing as I said that God, nothing takes God by surprise. It's believing that God's made a provision for whatever comes into my life. And it's also believing that God regulates the strength of that trial that comes into my life.

It's like he watches the needle on that meter on that gauge so that it never gets into the red. He reduces the pressure to make sure that the devil never tests us beyond our ability. You know each of us has some ability.

And God allows us to be tested only according to our ability. As we get stronger he allows us to be tested in stronger and more difficult ways. It's like graduating in school.

You go from one class to another to another. It's a wonderful promise. To me 1 Corinthians 10-13 has been a tremendous help for me to be free from the fear of the devil.

I believe he can never tempt me beyond my ability because God is faithful. And if you have that confidence you'll face the future with tremendous confidence. My God will never allow me to face anything in this year or next year or till Jesus comes.

That's too much for me to bear. He'll always make a provision. Somewhere if I look around it'll be there.

When they came to those bitter waters and Moses said Lord how shall I solve this? God said just open your eyes. There's a tree right there. Throw it into the river.

And the same way the same God will do something for us who has already made a provision. He'll never allow us to be tested beyond our ability. And the other thing is that he allows these things as I said for our sanctification.

I must believe that this is for my good. And that's why I don't try to avoid that trial. I believe that in the evil day I'll be able to stand.

So keep those things in mind as we consider the remaining part of what it means to live an unshakable life. One more thing before I move on and that is we have one more aspect of faith is to believe that even if I've fallen and made a mess of my life, God still loves me. That's what the Lord told Peter.

You know when God told Peter, when Jesus told Peter, you're gonna deny me three times within the next 12 hours. And one would think that if you knew that some believer is going to be severely tested in the next 12 hours, what would you do for him? You'd pray, Oh God, please help him that he doesn't fall. Protect him from falling.

But isn't it interesting that Jesus never prayed that. He said, Simon, Satan has decided to sift you like wheat. You're gonna deny me three times within the next 12 hours and I'm not gonna pray that you won't fall.

You need to fall. Can you imagine Almighty God saying to us, you need to fall into sin? What a terrible sin that is to deny the Lord. Can you think of denying Jesus three times? It's a terrible sin.

Why does God allow us sometimes to fall into sin? He doesn't like it. He hates it. God hates sin more than anything else.

He sent his son to die on the cross for our sin. He sent his son to save us from our sin. The very name Jesus means one who can save us from our sin.

Matthew 1 21 is the first promise in the New Testament. You shall call his name Jesus because he shall save his people from their sins. Why then does this God who paid such a price to save us from sin allow his children sometimes to fall into sin? Why did he allow Peter to fall into sin? To deny him.

To humble him. You know, God seeks to humble us because he can never give us his grace if he doesn't humble us. It's a law of God, just like the law of gravity, which you can't change.

He gives his grace to the humble. The law of gravity says the earth is going to pull down anything. You throw it up, it'll come down.

That's a law. You can't change it. And it doesn't make a difference whether you're a believer or an unbeliever if you step off the roof of this building.

The law of gravity doesn't bother whether you're a believer or not. It just pulls you down. It's like that with pride.

When the Bible says in 1 Peter 5 verse 5, God resists the proud. It doesn't matter whether you're a believer or not. You can say, I'm a child of God.

That's fine. But if you're proud, God will resist you. It's a law.

It does not change. Like the law of gravity doesn't change. God resists the proud.

Whether you're a proud unbeliever or a proud believer, God is against all pride. He has to be. That's his nature.

And he can't support you when you're proud because that's against his nature. Just like he hates sin, he hates pride. But he delights in those who are humble.

He gives grace to the humble. And that's why it should be our greatest longing to pursue humility. I've often said there are three secrets of the Christian life.

You can write them down if you like. First is humility. The second is humility.

And the third is humility. You got it? Those are the three secrets of the Christian life. If you got it, you got it.

Because God gives grace to the humble. And why is it important to get grace? I was telling you earlier that the old covenant people could never come to this unshakable life. But we can if we get grace.

Grace is what makes our heart strong. Without grace, your heart will be weak. It says in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 8. It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace.

Hebrews 13 verse 8. It's good for a heart to be strengthened by grace. There's only one thing that can make a fat person strong. Spiritually fat that is.

It's grace. It'll strengthen our heart. But God gives His grace to the humble.

And when God strengthens my heart by grace, and sin seeks to come inside me, it cannot come in. You see, temptation is like sin trying to get inside my heart. Sin is so strong.

We know the lusts in our flesh are so strong. They push their way into our heart and we just yield. That's how you go into internet pornographic sites.

Because the pressure is so strong. And like Eve reached out her hand and plucked the fruit. You reach out your hand and click the mouse.

Go where you shouldn't be going. The pressure is so strong. The pressure was so strong on Eve and on you.

There's only one thing that can help you fight that pressure. You know how when you want to get angry with somebody, the pressure is so strong that you cannot control your tongue? And the words come out? What you need is strength in your heart to stand against that pressure of sin. Otherwise you'll topple and fall.

Now that's alright if you're a little child. You're just born again yesterday. I don't expect you to be unshakable today.

It's like a child that's born. You don't expect that child to be walking tomorrow. But you do expect that child to be steady on its feet at least by the time it's two years old.

The children of Israel came out of Egypt and two years after that the Lord took them to the borders of the promised land and said, go in. That promised land was a picture of victory where the giants would be killed and they didn't go in. They should have gone in two years after they came out of Egypt.

But instead they wandered for forty years. A child is steady on its feet by the time it's two years old. Any parent would be concerned if their child's not walking and steady on their feet by the time they're two.

If you've been a believer for more than two years God expects you to be steady on your feet, to be unshakable. Can you see the disappointment in God's heart when those Israelites wandered for forty years? And the disappointment in God's heart when He sees so many of His children today unsteady even though they're forty years old as believers. God wants you to be unshakable.

But it's only grace that will strengthen you. And grace is given to the humble. And when you get grace, it says in Romans 6 and verse 14 it's a great verse.

It's not a verse to be argued about, it's a verse to be believed. Sin shall not be master over you. Sin will not be able to rule you.

Sin is like a master. You remember what God told Cain. Sin is crouching at your door.

Genesis 4 but you must master it. It's not a message that comes in Romans, it's a message that came in Genesis 4. But they didn't have the ability in those days to master sin. But finally after the coming of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit now we can get grace to master sin.

He says sin will not master you because now you've got grace, you've come under grace, you've come under the new covenant, you're not under the old covenant. Now you've got another supernatural power within you. Grace is God's supernatural power within us.

It's not just forgiveness of sins, that's just the beginning. A supernatural power that will enable my heart to be strong, to face any temptation, to face any trial, to face any calamity, to face anything. You know it says in Psalm 46, we will not be disturbed even if the mountains tumble down and fall into the sea.

God is our refuge and strength. We will not be shaken. Now they couldn't really experience it like we can.

I mean they said that in moments of when they were on the mountaintop but a few days later they were down in the dumps in the valley. But it's not like that for us today. We can have the Holy Spirit within us and keep us unshakable that in every evil day like it says in Ephesians 6.13, we can stand.

That's faith. You must believe it dear brother and sister. If you believe it, it will work in your life.

God gives his grace to the humble, truth number one. Romans 6.14 If you get grace, sin will not rule over you. Put the two together and you discover the only reason why you sin is because of pride.

Because when you're proud, God didn't give you grace. Do you know that spiritual pride is a danger that every believer faces? Pride, everybody in the world faces. A believer faces the problem of pride due to earthly things as well as spiritual pride.

Even the mighty Apostle Paul he said in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 7, I was in danger of getting proud. I was in danger of exalting myself. So God had to give me a thorn in the flesh, 2 Corinthians 12 7. Why? To humble me.

Imagine the mighty Apostle Paul perhaps the greatest servant of God in the first century was in danger of spiritual pride. And if he became proud because of all the wonderful experiences he had, God would have to be his enemy. God would have to resist him because that's the law and God did not want to resist the Apostle Paul so he gave him a thorn.

It was a sickness. In Peter's case, you know sin is the last resort that God adopts to humble a person. God can try to humble us in so many ways, by sickness, by financial difficulties, when we lose a job, when we lose a house, by a difficult wife or a difficult husband or difficult neighbor, so many ways he tries to humble us and we're still resisting, resisting in pride, then God says okay my last resort is let him fall into sin.

That'll humble him. It's not God's will. It's never God's will that we should fall into sin.

But if he does not find any other way to humble his children, thank God that Paul humbled himself with just a sickness. Peter needed to fall into sin to be humbled. That's a great lesson for me and for you.

Lord, please keep me in that place of humility always, because then you'll be behind me pushing me forward. If I ever get puffed up, you'll be in front of me pushing me back and I don't want that. This is the reason why we fall.

The devil's against us, the lusts in our flesh against us, we've got human beings against us and if almighty God is also against us, we are doomed. We've got to have God on our side pushing us forward and he's only on the side of the humble, not on the side of the clever, not on the side of those who are gifted, not on the side of those who have a lot of Bible knowledge, not on the side of preachers or apostles, he's on the side of the humble. He supports the humble.

That's why for myself, I've always said that if I ever fall into the smallest sin, even a little dirty thought or a little bitterness or one rude word, I consider them all as sins. Every one of them, if I fall, I say Lord, it's because I was proud somewhere and you couldn't give me grace. That's why I fell.

Otherwise, I wouldn't have fallen. I would not have spoken that rude word. I would not have got angry.

I would not have got depressed. I would not have got discouraged. I would not have become gloomy.

I would not have had a bad mood. All is due to pride. If God gives me grace, I'll never have a bad mood.

I'll rejoice always like the Bible says, I'll be anxious for nothing. I'll always walk in triumph like the apostles spoke in the Bible. This is God's will.

It's grace that makes us live like that. And that's why we need to acknowledge whenever we fall into any sin, like even the worldly proverb says, pride goes before a fall. We need to acknowledge Lord, you saw some pride in me.

You tried to humble me through a hundred ways and I did not yield. Finally, this was your last method. I humbled myself.

Help me, Lord. Now give me grace. The other thing I want to share with you is concerning the fear of God.

We saw in Psalm 112, how blessed is the man who fears the Lord, not just who trusts in the Lord, but who fears the Lord and who keeps his commandments. He'll be unshakable. This is what Jesus also said in Matthew chapter 7. In the Sermon on the Mount, he said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, this is his concluding paragraph in Matthew 7 verse 24.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like the man who built his house on the rock, unshakable. The flood, the wind, the storm, nothing could shake it. That's the type of life God wants us to live.

But he said, on the other hand, it's not if a person neglects to hear my word. No. One who hears my word, verse 26, Matthew 7, 26, but does not do them.

His problem is not that he didn't come for the services regularly. He was probably there every service. He reads the Bible every day.

He reads Christian books. But he doesn't do. Why doesn't he do? Either he's careless, or he believes the lie of the devil, it's impossible for you to keep God's commandments.

The devil's been a liar from the beginning. Every commandment that God gives, the devil tries to get you to disobey it in some way or the other. I mean, he started that from the time of Adam and Eve.

God gave them one commandment and the devil was determined to make sure that they'd disobey that. And the way he makes us disobey is by saying, that's impossible. It's impossible.

Look what Jesus said in Matthew 5, 20. Unless your righteousness, you see, this is one of the words that at the end of which Jesus said, if you hear these words and do them, you'll be unshakable on a rock. But if you hear these words and just ignore them, then you'll be on sand.

And I want to tell you from my experience of, as I've traveled around different places and met believers for the last 50 years, most believers take the Sermon on the Mount very lightly, because they believe it's impossible to live by this standard. Who told them that? Who do you think told them that? Was it the Holy Spirit or the devil? It certainly wasn't the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit inspired this.

Would you ask your little boy to lift a weight, five ton weight or something and then blame him for not doing it? Would God Almighty give me a command in Scripture and then punish me when he knows I can't even keep it? No. We must come to Matthew 5, 6 and 7, believing this life is possible. God will enable me to live this life.

And he said in Matthew 5, 20, unless your righteousness exceeds, surpasses the righteousness of the Pharisees, you'll never enter into God's kingdom. What does that mean? The Pharisees fasted twice a week. Do we have to fast four times a week? They prayed three times a day.

Do we have to pray five times a day? That's not the point. The Pharisees' righteousness was external. They kept the Ten Commandments on the outside.

Jesus gave them a certificate. He said, the outside of your cup is clean. And I'm sure Jesus can give many of you the certificate.

Your outside of your cup is clean. You look very holy to other people. In fact, right now as I look at you, you look a lot of holy people sitting here.

I don't see anybody looking unholy here. But it may be quite another story when you're alone at home this afternoon. The inside is dirty.

That was a problem with the Pharisees. The hidden part of their life, which nobody could see, that was dirty. The way they talked to each other as husband and wife at home, which nobody could hear.

There they were sinful. Their attitude to money, their financial dealings in areas that other people couldn't see. It was dirty.

It was sinful. Outside was holy. And Jesus said, if your righteousness is only like that, you'll never enter God's kingdom.

No matter how many services you attend, no matter how many times you get baptized or sing songs or lift your hands or say hallelujah, you'll never enter God's kingdom if your righteousness doesn't start becoming righteousness on the inside. And then he explained it. He said, for example, the Pharisees avoided murder.

You must avoid anger. That's Matthew 5, 21 onwards. The Pharisees avoided external adultery.

You've got to avoid adultery in your thought life. Do you know that every sin begins in the heart? Nobody falls into sin externally without first falling in the heart little by little by little by little. It's like a slippery slide slope.

You start there and you go down, down, down, down, down, down. Finally you hit the bottom. So if you watch it at the heart point, you can never fall.

That's what Jesus was saying. Be careful with the thoughts that come into your heart. Thoughts about other people.

Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. The proof that you fear God is that you're more careful about the areas of your life that people cannot see than about the areas people can see. That's what Jesus said.

Clean the inside of the cup and then the outside will be automatically clean. You don't have to worry about the outside. If I take care of adultery on the inside, there will be no adultery on the outside.

If I take care of anger on the inside, there will be no murder on the outside. So what shall we hear? What shall we pay attention to? This word which says take heed to your heart. Watch your heart with all diligence.

It says in Proverbs for out of it are the issues of life. Jesus said that. From inside from the heart comes forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications.

It all begins there. That's the whole message in the Sermon on the Mount. Watch your attitudes to people.

Treat other people, Matthew 7, 12, the way you want them to treat you. That's a lovely verse. He said the whole Bible is really teaching this, Matthew 7, 12.

Do you want other people to speak evil of you behind your back? Don't speak evil of other people behind their back. Do you like people to be gossiping about you? Don't gossip about others. Do you like people to be considerate about your needs? Be considerate about the needs of others.

Treat other people exactly the way you want them to treat you. He said the whole Bible, that's the message of the Bible. It's an inner attitude.

And you say, Lord, this is the way I want to live. Give me the power of your Holy Spirit to live like this. Let me watch my thoughts.

Let me watch my attitudes to show that I fear you. I know these are areas which other people don't see. For example, if I'm walking down the road and I suddenly get a bad thought about somebody.

It could be a bitter thought or a dirty thought. And nobody's seen it. The person walking with me doesn't know it.

I say, Lord, I slipped up there. Lord, forgive me. Let there be a little mourning.

Have you ever wept on your pillow at night because you lost your temper during the day with somebody? Have you ever wept on your pillow at night because you lost it in your mind or you did you had a wrong attitude towards someone? Those are the people who come to a life of victory. They're careful about the areas of their life where they slipped up which only God saw. And you know God is testing us.

He's given us this private area of our life called our thought life. It's so private that even if your wife of 50 years does not know what you're thinking. It's so totally private.

And there in that area, He tests whether you fear God or fear man. We can be very careful about our external life and it only proves that we fear man. For example, if you and your wife are having a yelling match with each other at home and some believer walks in.

Everything is silent and you suddenly become very nice to each other. And then this person leaves the house. Then what happens? You start the yelling again.

Why? Because you say, we've got to be careful about our testimony before this man. But after he's gone, who's here? Only Jesus. Ah, who cares for him? Do you realize that? Do you realize that when all the men and all the people have left your house, the only person left there is Christ himself? And you couldn't care less what he thinks about you? That's the proof that we don't fear God.

Well, what shall we say? The times of ignorance, it says in Acts 17, God overlooks. Praise the Lord. Let's come to him with honesty.

The only thing that God requires of you as a first step, which is a step every one of us can take right now, is a step of honesty. Lord, Lord, this preacher was speaking about me today. God's love for you.

Lord, this is me. What I heard about today describes me perfectly. But I want to be free.

I want to come to this unshakable life. Give me the power of your Holy Spirit. Give me this grace.

Help me to humble myself. And if you've never received Christ into your life, that's the first step. Lord, I'm a sinner.

I need Jesus Christ to be Lord of my life. And if you are, if you have done that, maybe you're backslidden. Maybe you've gone back.

Maybe you were more devoted to Christ years ago when you surrendered to him. Come back to him today. Say, Lord, I want this year to be completely different from everything that's gone by.

I want to be a complete change in my life. I want to live an unshakable life. Let's pray.

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