

# The Way of Grace (■■■■■)

by Zac Poonen

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that corresponds with our preaching, and the need for a revival of the fear of God in our lives.*

**Duration:** 48:41

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 8:10, John 1:17, Acts 1:1, Acts 2:1, Romans 8:4, Hebrews 8:7

**Topics:** "Chinese"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of understanding the new covenant in relation to the old covenant. He emphasizes that the new covenant allows for the fulfillment of God's righteous requirement within us, not just externally. The preacher shares his personal experience of struggling with sin and realizing the need for the new covenant. He highlights that Jesus Christ came to establish a better covenant, one that surpasses the old covenant and leads believers to a deeper understanding of grace and truth. The sermon emphasizes the impossibility of loving both God and money simultaneously, citing Luke 16:13.

---

## Transcript

There's a very wonderful word that we read in the first sentence of the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles is a description of the early Christians. And it is God's intention that our own life should also be like it is in the Acts of the Apostles.

And when we read the Acts of the Apostles and we compare our own life, we find a tremendous difference. There's a principle that we read in the first verse of the Acts of the Apostles. It says in Acts chapter 1, verse 1, The Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke.

And in the first verse, he is referring to the gospel which he wrote. And this is how he describes the gospel that he wrote. This is how Luke describes how he wrote the gospel.

Theophilus, I have already written the gospel according to what Jesus taught at the beginning of all things. Now notice something in that verse. Jesus did and taught.

Now there is a saying in the world that you must practice what you preach. But here it says that Jesus preached what he had already practiced. Here it says that he practiced it first in his life, then he preached it.

He did, it says here, and then he taught. What we see here is what he did, what he taught. He did it first, then he taught.

All the words of the Lord must be like that. It must be done first, then we can teach others. We must do it first, then we can teach others how to do it.

I have traveled in many places, and the tragedy I have seen is this. That so many people preach what they have never practiced in their life. And it was like that in my life too, in the beginning.

When our brother first became a Christian, it was the same. Until one day, he realized that he was a hypocrite. What he said on the podium was different from his own life.

Who first did, and then taught. And I found that I came to a place in my life as a preacher, many years ago. Where though I preached wonderful things from the pulpit, it was not true in my private inner life.

And I have known many preachers, and I have come to see that that is the condition of many people who preach the word of God. And then I came to a rock bottom, zero level in my life. Defeated, inwardly.

Defeated in my home life. Not behaving like Jesus Christ at home. Not behaving like Jesus Christ in my private life.

But yet carrying on as a professional preacher. And I got on my knees before God. And I was honest with him.

And I said, Lord, I said I am a hypocrite. The people who hear me preach don't know that. Lord, you know that in my life.

And that proves that I am more interested in the opinion of people, than the opinion of God. But I was fed up with myself. And I said, Lord, you have got to change my life.

I am not interested in fame or money in the world. But I ask you, Lord, for one thing. And I can honestly say, I ask God for only one thing.

I said, Lord, do this for me. That what I preach, will be true in my inner life. That my outward life and my inner life will correspond with each other.

And when I was honest with God. And I sought God for his power. I sought God that I might have the power of the Holy Spirit in my life.

And live the type of life the Bible taught that I should live. And live the type of life the Bible taught that I should live. God opened my eyes to see something that I had never seen for the first 15 years of my Christian life.

For 15 years I was born again, my sins were forgiven. And God gave me a new life. And I had a baptism in water.

I was baptized in water. And I went regularly to an assembly. But there was one thing that I never understood.

What I didn't understand was the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Lord Jesus came to the world to establish a new covenant. The Bible says in Psalm 25 verse 14.

Psalm 25 verse 14. And He will make those people know His covenant. That's a very beautiful verse.

We can learn many things from that verse. One is that God has certain secrets. And just like we reveal our secrets only to those who are intimate to us, God reveals His secrets only to those who are intimate with Him.

There are certain things which God reveals publicly to everybody. But there are certain things which are secrets. Forgiveness of sin is not a secret.

God has proclaimed throughout the whole world that Jesus died for our sins and we can have forgiveness through His death on Calvary's cross. God has proclaimed throughout the world that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus will be saved. But there are certain things beyond that which are secrets.

But it says here that He will reveal those secrets. But not to everybody. And here is the important thing.

That it is not by human cleverness that we can discover those secrets. My human cleverness and intelligence gives me no advantage in understanding the secrets of God. It doesn't say that God reveals His secrets to the clever.

In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 11, 25 that He hides these things from the clever. But what did we read here in Psalm 25? If I fear God, God will reveal many of His secrets to me. And I have come to see that there is one very simple test for fearing God.

Just like in the chemistry laboratory, they have a thing called litmus paper to find out if something is an acid or not. And here is a very simple test by which we can find out whether we fear God or not in the same way. If I am more careful about not sinning in public, but careless about sinning in my thought life, then I don't fear God.

For example, you are tempted in some way. But you won't give in to that temptation externally, because you will lose your testimony. But you will give in to that temptation internally, and enjoy that sin in your thought life, because you cannot do it externally.

What does that prove? That proves that I am afraid of men, but I am not afraid of God. So many young people, they commit sins in private, which they will never commit in the presence of other believers. In public, other believers are watching them.

So they don't do certain sins. In private, only God is watching them. So they sin.

What does that prove? That proves they are afraid of believers, but they are not afraid of God. This tells us that they are afraid of people, afraid of Christians, but they are not afraid of God. This is the situation that many Christians are in today.

That is why they cannot understand the secrets of God. It is easy for us to get the knowledge of the Bible. But the knowledge of the Bible does not make us spiritual.

Our brothers want to give you a formula. Just like when you have chemistry, you have a chemical formula. The knowledge of the Bible must be combined with obedience, which is equivalent to being spiritual.

If I don't obey what the Bible says and do it, then I cannot be considered spiritual. I can come to the meetings. I can hear so many divine words.

From Genesis to Revelation. And each Sunday, my balloon is getting bigger and bigger with all the hot air being pumped into it. This balloon becomes so huge, but it is only full of hot air.

There is nothing inside. It can be easily deflated. This is not spirituality.

If I increase my knowledge of the Bible, and I still quarrel with my wife at home, I am not considered spiritual. If I haven't got victory over shouting at my wife, what can I stand up here and preach to you in the morning? Nothing. That's just knowledge.

And knowledge is a great deception when it comes to spirituality. Brothers and sisters, we need to fear God. The great need is for a revival of the fear of God in the midst of the believers.

And when I learned to fear God in my life, that is, I began to say, Lord, I am not interested in the opinion other people have of me. I am interested in your opinion about me. I don't care whether other people think I am spiritual.

Lord God Almighty, do you think I am spiritual or not? When I prayed like that, then this verse was fulfilled in my life. Then God showed me the secret things in the Word of God. Then God made known to me His covenant, as it says here.

Jesus came to establish a new covenant. A new covenant that was better than the old covenant. We read in the beginning of the meeting from John 1.17, the old covenant came through Moses.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. The old covenant was like primary school education. Jesus Christ came to lead us on from primary school to secondary to university, higher.

The old covenant was good. But it was like the kindergarten, primary school. Do we need the kindergarten? Sure.

All of us begin there. But we are not meant to stay there forever. So we can say the old covenant was good, but it was incomplete.

That was not God's full purpose. It was only a first step that God revealed to man. But God's intention was, later on, to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to lead people into the kingdom of heaven.

God's intention was to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to lead people into the new covenant. We read in John 1.17, the old law came through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The word the Bible uses for the old covenant is the law. And in the new covenant, Jesus has come with grace. And there is a difference between law and grace.

The law could raise people under the old covenant to quite a high standard of life. We know that Abraham and Moses and Elijah lived before Jesus Christ. But they lived at quite a high standard of life.

So we can say that even the primary school brought them to quite a high standard of life. Then the secondary and university education that Jesus gives should raise us to a still higher standard of life. Why is it then, when we look at the lives of many believers, their standard of life is lower even than those Old Testament people who had primary education? I'll tell you why.

I'll tell you why it was like that in my life for many years. Because I did not understand the new covenant. I did not understand the real meaning of grace.

Because I did not fear God, He did not reveal His covenant to me. My sins were forgiven. But I was defeated in my thought life.

I loved money. And the word of God says you cannot love money and love God at the same time. Impossible.

You know the word of God says that in Luke 16, 13? It's impossible to love God and love money at the same time. But I never knew that. I tried to love God and I loved money too.

I was careful about my external life, but I used to lust with my eyes. Many other sins I was defeated by. But then God opened my eyes to see the new covenant.

We know that Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. And what Moses and the law could not do, God did through Jesus Christ. We read that in Romans 8, verse 3. There was something that the law could not do.

This is a very interesting verse. Which contrasts the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. What the law could not do because of the weakness of the flesh, God has now done.

Let's just stop there for a moment. And ask this question. What was it that the law could not do? The law said you must not commit murder.

You must not steal. You must not commit adultery. And because God gave a law like that.

It prevented many of those Israelites from committing these external sins. I come here to Singapore and I am really thrilled to see the law and order situation here compared to my own country in India. There are many people in Singapore who would like to steal.

But they won't steal because there is a law against stealing. There are many people in Singapore who would like to kill others. But they won't kill them because they know the law will catch them.

There are many people in Singapore who would like to commit adultery. But they won't do it because the law will catch them. So is the law a good thing? It certainly is a very good thing.

Because the law keeps people from doing a lot of bad things. And Paul said in Romans 7.16 I agree that the law is good. Just think what a terrible place Singapore would be if there was no such law.

If there was no law in Singapore, what would happen to Singapore's security? Our lives would not be safe. The law is good. It keeps people from external sins.

What is it that the law cannot do? What is it that the law cannot do even in Singapore? In Romans 8.3 it says the law could not do something. What is that? If a man walks down the street in Singapore and lusts after a girl, the police cannot catch him for that. If a man walks down the street in Singapore and lusts after a girl, the police cannot catch him for that.

If he commits adultery and lusts after a girl, the police can catch him for that. As long as he is only doing it in his heart, the law cannot do anything to him. If a man in Singapore hates another man, the law cannot do anything to him for that.

But if the hatred comes out and he kills him, then the law will catch him. If I walk down the street and I see something in the shop and I feel like stealing it, the law cannot catch me for that. But if I actually go and steal it, then the law catches me.

Have you understood now what the law cannot do? Have you understood now what the law cannot do? The law cannot prevent me from committing sin inside my heart. It can only prevent me from committing sin on the outside. If we are believers, and all we say is, I don't commit sin on the outside, that means you are still under law.

If you continue to say, I don't commit sin on the outside, that means you are still under law. This is in the Old Testament. They did not sin on the outside.

Paul was like that. Paul said about his own testimony in Philippians 3. Philippians 3, verse 6. Blameless. That means externally, Paul was not committing any sin.

But what about what was going on inside his heart? Paul says in Romans 7. Verse 7 and 8. He said in the last part, I would not have known about coveting if the law had not said you shall not covet. But sin, verse 8, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced inside of me coveting of every kind. But sin, verse 8, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced inside of me coveting of every kind.

Brothers and sisters, do you know what the Ten Commandments are? I will tell you some of the Ten Commandments. You shall not have any other gods but Me. You shall not bow down to any idols.

You shall not call upon God in vain. Respect your parents. You shall not steal.

You shall not tell lies. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not kill.

You shall keep the Sabbath. That's nine commandments so far. And these nine commandments, the Israelites could keep.

But then there was a tenth one. And that was the difficult one. The first nine were easy.

You know why? Because the first nine all dealt with the external life. How many of you know the tenth commandment? You know what that said? You must not desire your neighbor's wife. Covet or lust after you.

Or desire anything that belongs to somebody else. Or covet somebody else's treasure. The desire in your heart.

That's an inward thing. You can't see it. You don't know the desires in my heart.

I don't know the desires in your heart. You know why God put that tenth commandment at the bottom of the list? To find out how many people really fear Me. How many people will admit that when it comes to the tenth commandment, they can't keep it.

And Paul is referring to the tenth commandment here in verse 7 of Romans 7. What Paul is saying is, all the nine commandments I could keep. But when I came to the tenth one which said you shall not lust. I could not keep it.

I found all types of lusting in my heart. That's what he says in verse 8. What do we learn from verse 8? One thing. That Paul was an honest man.

He was not a hypocrite pretending that there was nothing dirty in his heart. I'll tell you something brothers and sisters. God helps us when we are honest.

If we sit here and pretend, oh, there's nothing dirty in my heart, God will never help you. If you can be honest and say, Lord, I see there are a lot of filthy things in my heart which I'm defeated by. Then God can help you.

Now we understand what the law could not do for Paul. It could not produce righteousness inside. It could only produce righteousness on the outside.

But now here is the wonderful news. Do you know what it is? Do you know what the gospel really is? What the law could not do, God has now done. Through the new covenant.

That's what we read in Romans 8.3. What the law could not do, God did. How did he do it? There was only one way by which he could do it. And we really need the revelation of the Holy Spirit to understand this.

Here it is, Romans 8.3. God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. And for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. Why? That's the important question.

Verse 4. So that, this righteous requirement of the law, listen to this, might now be fulfilled inside of us. Up till now it was only fulfilled on the outside of my life. Now hallelujah, it can be fulfilled on the inside of my heart as well.

Do you think that's good news? For whom is it good news? It is good news for those who are sick and tired and fed up of their inward defeated life. But those who are not bothered about their inward life, they won't listen to this message. Let's turn to Hebrews chapter 8. Hebrews chapter 8, it says about the first covenant and the second covenant in verse 7. Verse 7 it says, if the first covenant had been faultless, there would be no occasion sought for a second.

That means if primary school education was enough, then there would be no need for secondary schools or universities. But we know that primary school education is not enough, therefore we institute secondary schools and universities. So God also saw that the first covenant is not enough, He instituted a second one.

And He says, this covenant, I will make a new covenant, He says in verse 8. And this will be different from the old covenant. And see what it says in verse 10. Very important.

This is the new covenant. Middle of verse 10. I will put my laws inside their mind, I will write them inside their hearts.

Where was the old covenant written? Outside on two tablets of stone. Moses came down from the mountain with those commandments written on two tablets of stone. It was outside.

And God was saying, this proves that it can only work on the outside of your life. But the new covenant is not written on the outside on two tablets of stone. It is written inside my heart.

And when the Bible says, I am free from the law, what does it mean? We read in Galatians chapter 5, verse 18. That if you are led by the Holy Spirit, you are not under the law. That if you are led by the Holy Spirit, you are not under the law.

This is a very important verse that we need to understand. What does it mean to be free from the law? Let us take the case of a thief in Singapore. There are two ways in which he can be free from the law.

If the government of Singapore will remove the laws against stealing, he will be very happy. Say, now I am free to steal as much as I like. But there is another way.

If God can do a work inside that thief's heart, so that he no longer wants to steal. Then also he is free. Then he does not need a law which says, thou shalt not steal.

Because the desire for stealing is taken away from inside. And here is where many Christians have misunderstood what it means to be free from the law. Many Christians have misunderstood what it means to be free from the law.

They think of the first way. They think that if I am free from the law, then I can simply break the law. I am here to commit a sin, so that God can cleanse me of my sin.

This is not the freedom that the law speaks of. This is the level of the primary school of the Old Covenant. And it is because many Christians have not understood this, that their life standard is lower than the life standard of people in the Old Testament.

We see that many Christians do not understand this. So their life and life is lower than the life standards of people in the Old Covenant. Jesus came to give us something better.

He placed that law inside my heart. For example, if God can do a work in my heart that I never lust after a girl, even once. I do not need a law which says, do not commit adultery.

Because I am not even doing it in my heart. Why do I need an external law? If God can do a work in my heart that I do not even hate a human being. I do not need a law which says, thou shalt not kill.

Because there is no chance of my killing anyone, because I am not even hating anyone. That is the meaning of being free from that law. That God writes His laws inside of me, so that I do not need the external law anymore.

This is the New Covenant. This is what God opened my eyes to see when I was in need and defeated by sin in my life. Then I understood Romans 6.14. Romans 6.14 is another very important verse.

It says, sin will not be master over you. Because you are not under law, but under grace. When you were under law, sin was ruling you.

Not externally. Inwardly. But when you move out of this primary school, which Moses brought.

Come to this New Covenant, the higher thing that Jesus brought. Which is called grace. Then sin will not have power over me, even inside.

Because when I am tempted to sin. The Bible says, in Hebrews 4.16. That God will give me grace to help me in my time of need, so that I do not fall into sin. In the Old Covenant.

David could sing. What did he sing? In Psalm 103. He said in verse 3. Bless the Lord who forgives all my sins.

Bless the Lord who has forgiven all my sins under the Old Covenant. Bless the Lord, because he has forgiven all my sins. So forgiving all sins is a primary school subject.

Have you already received forgiveness for all sins? Very good. This is primary school. When Lord Jesus came, he brought more things.

More than just forgiveness of sins through his shed blood. What is that? What we read in Romans 6.14. There you got forgiveness. Now you can get victory.

When you get forgiveness, you are in primary school. When you get victory. You have moved to a higher class.

Sin shall not rule over you. Why does sin rule over many believers then? Why do so many believers lose their temper? And lust. And backbite.

And are bitter towards people. And grumble and complain about so many things. They have got evil attitudes towards others.

They are jealous. Why? Because they haven't understood the New Covenant. My dear brothers and sisters.

God desires to lead us on to something more than we already have. In the book of Revelation. When Jesus spoke to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. He always concluded his message with one sentence.

Do you know what that was? He who has ears to hear. Let him hear. He who has ears to hear.

Let him hear. Not everybody is interested in this truth. Jesus knows that.

But Jesus also knows that there are some people who are really longing for all of God's truth. Who are sick and fed up of their defeated lives. And to such people he says.

He who has ears to hear. Let him hear. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24402.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-way-of-grace-■■■■■■/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**