

Things Unshakable - an Unshakable Life

by Zac Poonen

God wants us to have a steady, steadfast, unshakable life, and we can achieve this by living in His presence and trusting in His sovereignty and provision.

Duration: 46:37

Scripture: Psalm 16:8-11, Matthew 5:20, Matthew 7:12, Acts 2:25

Topics: "Unshakable"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of obeying God's commands and trusting that they are for our own good. He compares our relationship with God to that of a parent and child, highlighting how children often think they know better than their parents and end up making mistakes. The speaker references Matthew 5:20 and Matthew 7, explaining that those who not only hear God's words but also put them into practice will have an unshakable life. He warns against the dangers of disobeying God's commands, such as refusing to forgive or indulging in sinful behaviors, which can lead to negative consequences in our lives. The speaker encourages believers to truly believe that they can follow Jesus and strive to walk in his footsteps.

Transcript

An unshakable life. And the coming two Sundays, one two weeks from now and one in the middle of March, I hope to be continuing that series with two other messages. But I believe it's God's will that our Christian life should not be up and down, dependent on circumstances, affected by the storms of life, unexpected events, and failure or any such thing.

God wants us to have a steady, steadfast, unshakable life. That's because Jesus lived that way. And the great promise of the New Covenant is that the same Holy Spirit that lived in Jesus as he walked on earth as a man, has now come to live in us and can duplicate in us.

It's amazing but true, the same life that he lived in Jesus as a man. One of the great truths which I never get tired of mentioning, changed my life more than 30 years ago, was when I discovered that even though Jesus was God throughout his time on earth, he never, he could not give up deity. God can never stop being God.

But he never used his resources, the resources he had as God when he lived on earth. He had to go near a fig tree to find out if there was fruit on it. He didn't even know the date of his own second coming.

What does that prove? He was tired. He was tempted. God can never be tempted.

He gave up those privileges in order to be an example for us. You see, just like an angel flying across a swimming pool can never teach me to swim. Jesus could never be an example for me if he had access to resources that I don't have access to.

He could never say follow me if he had access to power that I don't have access to. Then he could only say admire me. But he never said admire me.

He always said follow me. He said believe in me and follow me. And that's a great challenge.

And I fear that many Christians never come to that unshakable life because they don't believe they can follow Jesus Christ. They sing follow, follow, I will follow anywhere, everywhere, but it's just words. And if you ask Christians, most believers deep down in their heart, do you really believe that you can walk in the footsteps of Jesus? The answer would be no.

If you ask them why, they'll say he was God. See, deep down in their heart and the back of their mind, they're convinced that Jesus lived the way he lived because he was God. In other words, he used resources that we have no access to.

And then he's taunting us by saying follow me, knowing very well we can't. That's an insult. It's an insult to Jesus Christ to say that he was taunting us by saying follow me when he knew very well we could not.

Even an earthly father would not taunt his children like that, asking them to do something which he could do as an adult, which they couldn't do as a little child. When Jesus said follow me, he really meant it. The Bible says in 1 John 2, 6, we are to walk as Jesus walked.

Or as the Living Bible paraphrases it in 1 John 2, 6, anyone says he's a Christian, he must live as Christ lived. That is the Christian standard. And when we look at Jesus' life, he was rock steady, unshakable, no matter what happened.

What I read in the Gospels is nothing fazed him. He was always unfazed through the trials of life. We read of a time when in the middle of his message in the synagogue, the first time he preached in Nazareth, they stopped him in the middle of the sermon.

They were angry with him, took him out to the cliff on which their town was built, and they wanted to throw him down. It didn't affect him. He just quietly walked away in the middle of a storm in the lake.

He was not disturbed. His was an unshakable life no matter what happened. People would come to capture him in Gethsemane and he would say, have you come for Jesus of Nazareth? That's me.

Let these other people go. And as I read through the Gospels, I can either admire him, which of course we do, we adore him. But also the thing that challenges me is, Lord, with the Holy Spirit's power, I can live like this on this earth where nothing disturbs me.

I'm completely unshaken. What was the secret of his life? Let me show you a verse in Acts of the Apostles chapter two. This is a prophecy found in Psalm 16.

It's quoted here. Psalm 16 verse 8 to 11. I was always, David says of Jesus, Acts 2 25.

I was always beholding the Lord in my presence. He's at my right hand. Therefore, I shall not be shaken.

The reason why Jesus could live an unshakable life was because he lived in the presence of the Father. All the time. I have set the Lord always before me.

Always, always. He lived in the presence of the Father. And he calls us to live in his presence.

It's possible. You see, this was not possible in the Old Testament because the Holy Spirit would come upon people for a while and then he wouldn't be upon them. But once the Spirit came to dwell within, we can dwell in God's presence all the time.

And there are two aspects of this. One is faith and the other is obedience. Like we sing in the song, trust and obey.

For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey. So to have the Lord's presence in front of us always means, first of all, I trust in him. He's at my right hand.

That means I lean upon him. I trust him completely. I lean upon him.

He's at my right hand. And therefore, I shall never be shaken. So there are two things here.

He's in front of me. He's at my right hand. I lean upon him in trust and I live before him in reverence for him and in obedience.

So I just want to look at these two things which are mentioned in this verse. And this is how Jesus lived. First of all, what does it mean to trust in the Lord? The Bible says in Psalm 125 verse 1, those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion that can never be moved.

Unshakable. Because they trust in the Lord. Psalm 112 says, they will not be afraid of evil tidings.

Their heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. So faith is a great factor, a very important factor in helping us to be unshakable. Now we need to understand what faith means.

Faith is such a vague type of thing in the minds of many people. And unfortunately, today faith is being related, is related only to possessing material things and physical healing. Almost every book on faith that you read in a Christian bookshop today relates to getting more of the things of this earth or getting physical healing.

God does that. But those are among the lower gifts of God. The most important gift that he gives us through faith is that we can live an unshakable life as what the Bible calls overcomers.

As overcomers. Which is not possible in the Old Testament. The great men of the Old Testament could not live a steadfast life.

Job was one of the great men in the Old Testament, the great man of God, whom God himself would certify to Satan as a God-fearing man. But if you look at the book of Job, he was up and down. Sometimes he'd be full of faith in God and sometimes he was down in the dumps and depressed and discouraged.

Elijah was like that, one day calling down fire from heaven and the next moment depressed and saying, Lord, take away my life. I've had enough of it. That's how these Old Testament men were.

Even the great John the Baptist, the fiery prophet, the forerunner of Jesus. He was a bold prophet and yet when he was in prison for a few days, he began to lose faith and sent a message to Jesus saying, are you really the Messiah? Even though he saw heavens open and saw the dove descending on Jesus and the voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son, yet he lost faith. The reason was none of these people, even the great John the Baptist did not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within.

They could not live a constant, unshakable life. They could not have the type of New Testament faith that we can have. So we need to understand what New Testament faith brings.

First of all, why is it that we can never be shaken as we look towards the future? Because we know that God, faith means that we believe that God knows the end from the beginning. I mean, the book of Revelation tells us all the way up to the future and everything that's going to happen between now and the coming kingdom of God. God knows everything that's happening.

Everything that happened before. There may be things in your past life and like in all of our lives that surprised us when it happened. We were shocked.

Oh, I never expected that. But the thing that's comforted me is to know that even though it caught me by surprise, it never took God by surprise. There's nothing that's ever happened to you or to me in our past life that surprised God.

As if he were to say, boy, I never thought that would happen. Not even the way you failed him. He knew about everything.

And that applies to the future too. As I look into the future, I don't know what's going to happen. Next week, next month, next year, 10 years from now, 20 years from now till the Lord comes.

I don't have a clue. I don't even know what's going to happen this evening. But I know one thing which I'm absolutely sure of, that God knows that.

And nothing is going to take God by surprise that happens to me in my life. If you can believe that, that's the first step to faith, to have an unshakable life. Lord, I believe that as I look into the future, nothing is ever going to happen to me nothing that's going to take you by surprise.

There may be a lot of things that take me by surprise, but not you. The second aspect of faith there is to believe that if just like a loving father would plan for his children, you know, supposing you got a anticipated expenditure for your children for something, you would plan for that to make provision for that expenditure, whether it's to go to college or to pay a hospital bill or anything. In the same way, a much more loving father in heaven has made some provision for those problems that I'm going to face in the days to come.

That's the second aspect of faith. God in heaven has made some provision for that event, whether it's some surprising event which the devil puts upon me or even my own failure. That's the encouraging thing.

Even where God knows that I'm going to mess up something because of my own stupidity or my own disobedience. Even there, God has made some provision. That's the message of the Bible.

So you don't have to be discouraged if you messed up your life. If you will trust God, he can bring you to complete recovery. Right at the beginning of the Bible, you read of God created man and woman perfect

and they went and messed up their life immediately.

Almost the very next day after they started life in the Garden of Eden. But then when God comes into the Garden of Eden and they confess what they did, immediately God says, OK, I've made a provision for that. You messed up your life.

And he immediately tells them how Christ is going to come and die for their sins and crush the serpent's head. That's right in Genesis 3. It was not as though God suddenly had to think, Hey, what shall I do now? Adam and Eve have failed. He knew that they were going to fail before he created them.

He didn't make them fail, but he gave them freedom of choice. And wherever you give freedom of choice, there's the possibility of failure. God did not want us to be obedient robots.

We would be like the planets, perfectly obedient, but incapable of being holy. You understand that no planet in heaven can be holy. But every planet's been obeying God better than any Christian has ever obeyed God.

For thousands of years, they've just obeyed God automatically, but they don't become holy. What does that teach us? That mere obedience cannot bring holiness. If obedience to God's commandments could bring holiness, the planets would be holy.

It's when you obey out of personal choice. When you have the opportunity to disobey and you choose to obey, that's what makes holiness. The planets don't have that choice.

They have no choice. They're forced to obey. And God didn't want to make Adam and Eve like that.

And that's why he sent them into the garden with freedom of choice. That's why he gives you freedom. That's why if he sees, for example, that you are going to drive somewhere to commit some sin, you're not going to get a flat tire.

He lets you go. Because every time you're going to travel somewhere to commit a sin, you get a flat tire. It wouldn't... You'd be compelled not to commit sin.

But then you'd never become holy. There's no choice there. God allows you to... You know, you can cheat the income tax and you may never get caught.

But God's testing you in those situations. God tests you in so many situations like that. He gives you freedom of choice after you're born again.

He gives you freedom of choice even after you're filled with the spirit. He gives you freedom of choice because without freedom of choice, you can never be holy. So God gave Adam and Eve freedom of choice and he gives us freedom of choice.

And when we mess up that and we think that our way is better than God's way, that's how we usually mess up our lives, God still makes a provision. That's the blessed part of it. For everything that we can ever face in the future, God's made a provision.

When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they didn't know that there was a huge Red Sea in front of them. They'd get stuck there. They realized it only when they came there.

But God had made a provision for that. They didn't know that when they came out of the Red Sea, they'd come into a desert. But God had made a provision there for a pillar of cloud to take them through.

God made them provision for them to get manna every day in that desert where they wouldn't get food otherwise. The whole Bible is a picture of teaching us that God makes provision for the unanticipated needs that His children face. That's faith.

Lord, I believe. I mean, the whole message of the Bible teaches me I don't anticipate the problems I'm going to face in the future, but God's made provision for it. I believe it.

And then the trials He sends across my life, faith is to believe that... Here's the third thing. Faith is to believe that every trial that God sends into my life is designed to make me strong. God doesn't want me to be spiritually fat, but spiritually strong.

And I hope you know the difference between being fat and being strong. There's a world of difference between the two. Fat people can be weak and sick.

God wants... What is the difference? What is it that makes a fat person strong when all that fat is converted into muscle? If you eat and eat and eat and eat and eat and eat, you become fat. But on top... We need to eat, of course. But on top of that, if you exercise and exercise and exercise as well, you become strong.

This is exactly the same in the Christian life. Eating in the Christian life is receiving God's Word, reading it, coming to the services, hearing the messages, reading Christian books, you know, exposing ourselves to messages. On television or anywhere, this is eating.

It cannot make you strong. It'll make you fat. You need something more in addition to all this intake of God's Word to make you strong.

Just like in the physical world and the whole principle of building muscle is you go into a gym or anywhere and you subject the muscles of your hand and leg to tension. Any muscle that's subjected to some tension gets strong. And that's the reason why God allows Christians to face trials.

That's why He allows the devil to tempt us. Otherwise, we'd just become fat, useless Christians. But when He allows the devil to tempt us and we're subjected to that resistance and we resist the devil instead of yielding to the devil, we become strong.

And that's why He gives us the spirit. I hope you'll clap when the trial comes as well and say, we're only getting theory here. The practical will start this afternoon in your home, first of all.

That resistance that the devil brings to us is designed by God. I mean, God could remove the devil with one word. He could crush the devil like an ant.

We crush an ant under our foot in a word. Why doesn't He do it? One reason, among others, is so that we can be subjected to resistance so we can become strong. So faith is to believe that God has designed these trials for my sanctification, to make me strong spiritually so that I can be unshakable.

A strong man can stand on his feet. You can't push him down easily. You can perhaps push down a fat man because he's not strong, but not a strong man.

And that's what the devil wants us to be. Every one of us. It's not a question of going to Bible knowledge.

You don't have to go to Bible college. I've never been to Bible college a single day of my life. You can read the scriptures and understand it and let the Holy Spirit take you through trial and say, Lord, I just want to be faithful to you here and you become strong.

The other thing I want to say is faith is to believe 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13. 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13 that these trials that are going to come my way not one of them will be too strong for me to handle. It says in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13 that God is faithful.

He will never, never, never, never say that a thousand times never allow me to be tested beyond my ability. If you're in grade one, he'll give you a question paper at that level. You're in grade five, he'll give you a question paper at that level.

I mean, even teachers know that. God knows it too. Each of us are at a different grade spiritually and he will not allow you to be tested by the testings that come to me.

If I'm more mature than you, I'll face greater temptations. Just like the student in grade 10 is going to have a higher test than one in grade one. It's like that.

But he'll never allow me to be tested beyond my ability. That's a promise. God is faithful.

Just like we read in 1 John 1, 9 that God is faithful. If we confess our sins, he's faithful to forgive us. Now we believe that.

Here's the second promise. That he's also faithful never to allow us to be tested beyond our ability. That's what makes us have confidence as we face the future.

I mean, I'm sure the devil's got some massive temptations with which he could knock me down quite easily. Sure. But it's not going to come my way until I'm strong enough to face it.

Maybe five years from now, I'm strong enough to face it. Then the Lord will say to the devil, OK, now you can tempt him with that. But you can't tempt him with that right now.

He's not ready. If you believe that, it'll give you such tremendous confidence to face the future. You cannot be knocked down.

You never have to say, Oh God, this is becoming too much for me. Whenever you say that, when you face some problem in your home or in your work, you're saying, God, you're unfaithful. You're a liar.

You said that you wouldn't allow me to be tested beyond my ability. And here's something which is beyond my ability. I want to say to you in Jesus name, it's not beyond your ability.

It is within your ability if you ask God for grace to help you there. The Bible says he'll make a way of escape so that you can bear it. You can't handle it on your own.

Of course, that we understand. But God says, I'll give you the ability to handle it. It's when you try to handle it on your own that you fail.

God wants to give us grace. Faith is to believe that God will give me that grace at that particular time. If I ask him for it, you know, that verse in scripture, which says you do not have because you do not ask, you

do not, you ask and you do not receive because you do not believe that God will give it to you.

You do not have grace to overcome that trial because you don't ask God for grace. You think you can manage on your own. You ask God for grace and you don't get it because you don't believe God will give it to you.

And there's a promise in the book of James chapter one for all those who ask without faith. You know what it is? Let not that man think he will receive anything from the Lord. But if he asks in faith, what he has promised he will give.

There is one more thing I want to say. And that is supposing I fail. There's another aspect of faith is to believe that when I have failed and messed up my life and hit rock bottom.

And if some of you are there today, listen to this. God still loves you. Don't ever lose faith in that fact.

This is what brought the prodigal son home to his father's house. There sitting with the pigs in that story, he had come to the end of everything. He had wasted his father's wealth and ruined his father's name and messed up his life.

Sitting there, he said, well, I know that my dad still loves me. At least he'll give me a little place with the servants. But when he came back, what a surprise he got.

His father loved him much more than that. Faith is to believe that when I've hit rock bottom, my father still loves me. That's why Jesus prayed for Peter.

When Simon Peter was the last night before he went to the cross, Jesus told Peter, you know, Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you, to sift you like wheat. And you are going to deny me three times in the next 12 hours. But I'm not going to pray that you don't fall.

Have you seen this type of love? Where you know somebody is going to be tempted and you don't pray that he won't fall, you hope that he will fall. God's love is so special. He wanted Peter to fall.

He never prayed that Peter wouldn't fall. But what he did pray was, after you've fallen, Peter, after you've messed up your life, don't let your faith fail. I am praying something for you.

I'm praying that your faith should not fail. Let me show you that verse in case you don't know where it is. It's in Luke chapter 22 and verse 31 and 32.

Luke 22, verse 31 and 32. Satan has desired to sift you like wheat. That is to tempt you to deny me.

And you're going to deny me. But I have prayed for you, verse 32. And I'm not praying that you don't fall.

You will fall in that moment of temptation. But I'm praying that your faith will not fail. Notice what Jesus prayed for Peter.

Because when you come back from there, you'll be able to strengthen your brothers. So that's what the Lord is praying, that my faith will not fail. That what was it that should not fail in that moment? That when Peter had messed up his life, denied the Lord three times, fallen so badly, he shouldn't get so discouraged there and say, well, God's given up on me.

He must believe that God still loves me. He can lift me up from there. That's the message of the gospel.

But then we can ask ourselves, why did God not protect Simon Peter from falling? Couldn't God have done that? Well, he can do anything. But the great virtue that God seeks to build up in us is humility. Humility is the great secret of the Christian life.

And that's what he seeks to build up in us. And it's very difficult for God to do it, particularly after he blesses us. I've often said, it's very easy for God to bless somebody.

And it's very easy for God to bless somebody mightily. But it's very difficult for God to keep that person humble after he has blessed them mightily. And that's where they fail.

Even the great apostle Paul, he says in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, because of the fantastic experiences and revelations and ministry he had, he was in danger of getting puffed up. Is there anybody sitting here who is not in danger of getting puffed up? If you think you're not, you're the first candidate for failure. Every single one of us, you and me included, are in constant danger of pride and spiritual pride if you're a believer and if God's blessed you and used you.

And we need to beware of this. Paul was aware of it. He said, I'm in danger of exalting myself.

This was the greatest servant of God in the first century saying, brothers, I was in danger of spiritual pride. And so God helped me. He helped me by giving me a little sickness, which he calls a thorn in the flesh.

I kept on praying, God, take it away. And he didn't take it away. God said, Paul, you need that.

You're in danger of becoming proud. And I don't want you to become proud because there's a law of God which says in 1 Peter 5 verse 5 that God resists the proud. Oh, if God resists you, there's no hope for you.

But he gives grace to the humble. You know, grace is the thing that can strengthen us. But he gives grace only to one type of person.

God doesn't give grace to the rich or the clever or the smart. Or any of these things, he gives grace to only one type of person, a humble person. And God is the one who knows whether we are humble or not.

And God wanted to give grace to Paul so that Paul could continue his ministry firm and strong until the end. And the moment he saw Paul was going to get a bit puffed up. He gave him a sickness.

This guy who could heal the sick was sick himself. And that boy, that really humbles you when you can heal other people and you can't heal yourself. And it humbled him.

And when he was humble, he got grace. That was Peter's need as well. Peter was the one who boasted, Oh, Lord, everybody may deny you, but not me.

You don't know. I'm a bold witness for you. He was proud.

Compare all pride comes with by comparing yourself with other people. I'm not half-hearted like them. I'm wholehearted, radical.

The Lord says, Peter, really? You're the one who's going to deny me first. Why did God allow that? You know, God tries to humble us through numerous ways. When you face a financial crisis, there's one way of God trying to humble you.

When you lose your job, when you lose your house, when you have a difficult wife or a difficult husband or difficult children or difficult neighbors or a difficult boss, these are means. These are the mighty hand of God in which he's trying to humble you and you resist it. You still remain strong.

Then God's last resort is to allow you to fall into sin. And that'll really humble you. He doesn't want us to fall into sin.

God hates sin. He hated it so much that you see that on the cross, how God had to forsake his own son. That's how much he hates sin.

But that is God's last resort to humble a proud man. He tries so many ways and you don't get humble. Then he humbles you publicly with sin and your testimony is gone.

And then you're broken before God. Then God can give you grace. That's what happened to Paul.

It just appeared to Paul through his sickness. That's what happened to Peter through his failure. All these great apostles.

God humbled them and then he lifted them up. He said, okay, you've learned the lesson. So remember this.

I mean, we need to learn that in our lives too. There's no need for us to fall into sin. The humblest person that walked on this earth was Jesus Christ.

And he remained in humility without falling into sin. That's the way he wants us to go. There are many godly men and women who walk through this earth in humility despite God using them mightily.

They've remained in humility and it's possible for all of us to remain like that. Every single one of us. If we take those little, little warnings God gives us.

That's what I want to go on to next. Jesus said about this unshakable life in Matthew chapter 7. He described it like a house built on a rock. Faith is one aspect.

One thing that makes our life unshakable. The other is obedience. Now obedience is a word which we shrink from.

But actually, you know, think of obedience like this. Think of the commands you give to your children. Is any one of those commands bad for them? No, not if you're a good father.

Everything that you tell your children to do is in their best interests. But most children don't even understand that. That's why they disobey.

They think they know better than you. Especially when they get to teenage years. And when they mess up their life, 10 years later after they messed up their life, they say, oh, dad was right.

But that's too late. And God, when he tells us, gives us a command, faith is to believe that everything my heavenly father tells me is for my good. Can you believe that? In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus says, everyone who hears my words and does them, not just hears, but does them, will be like a man who built on a house on a rock.

Nothing could shake it. Nothing could shake it. Unshakeable life.

Because what he heard, he did. And he heard something more, he did it. Why did he do it? Because he believed that God knew better than him what was good for him.

You see, our stupidity is manifested in the fact that sometimes we think we know better than God what is good for us. For example, the Lord says, forgive that man who hurt you. You say, no, I'm not going to forgive him.

Whose life are you going to destroy? Your own. When you don't forgive somebody. The Holy Spirit says, turn your eyes away from that filthy picture you're looking at.

And you say, no. Whose life are you going to destroy? Your own. You're tormented by dirty dreams because you didn't turn your eyes away from the things God told you to turn your eyes away from.

You didn't turn your eyes away from that pornographic sight on the computer. You get tormenting dreams at night because you watch all these violent movies. God says, why do you want to watch that? Can you imagine Jesus sitting and watching all that? You say, well, it doesn't matter.

I need some entertainment. Well, that's not entertainment. That's going to torment you at night in your dreams.

Everything God says for us is for our good. But just like our foolish teenage boys and girls, we think we know better than God. Then we mess up our life.

He who hears my word and says, Lord, you know better than me what's good for me. I'm going to do exactly what you say. And I obey.

My life will be unshakable. And he was referring particularly to the words he spoke in the Sermon on the Mount. So let's look at Matthew 5, verse 20, for example.

Matthew 5, 20. Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, this is one of those words, if we listen and I obey, unless your righteousness surpasses, goes beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Do you want to enter the kingdom of heaven? Is there a single person here who does not want to enter the kingdom of heaven? Well, Jesus said, your righteousness must surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees to enter God's kingdom.

What did he mean? Does it mean we go to fast more than the Pharisees or pray more than the Pharisees or know the Bible more than the Pharisees? No. He was talking about inward righteousness compared to external righteousness. The righteousness of the Pharisees was external.

They looked holy on the outside. Like all of us are looking right now. Holy on the outside.

Spiritual. And we want people to think that we are very spiritual. Because on the outside, we're so concerned about having a good testimony before others.

And the Lord says, if you're only concerned about that, and I want to say to you in Jesus name, if you're only concerned about your outward testimony before others in this church or anywhere else, you are a Pharisee. Your outward life may be clean. Jesus gave a certificate to the Pharisees.

You're the outside of your cup is clean. He said. What greater certificate can you get than from Jesus himself, who said in Matthew 23 to the Pharisees, the outside of your cup is clean.

But you'll still go to hell. He said in the same chapter, because your inside is all dirty. I want to ask all of you sitting here.

Does the Lord have to say that to you? The outside of your cup is clean. But the inside is dirty. You look holy on the outside.

You look so spiritual when you sing those songs and you clap and wave your hands and say hallelujah. But what about your inner thought life? What about the way you're handling money? Are you unrighteous in money matters? The Bible says, Oh, no man, anything. Do you owe money to people? I'm not talking about a mortgage where you got a house to balance the money you borrowed or a car to borrow the money you borrowed for your car.

I'm not talking about those type of things. I'm talking about loans for which you've got nothing to show, which you wanted to just spend on yourself. I'm talking about thoughts that you allow to persist in your mind, which you know that which are impure, which are not honoring to God.

Thoughts about bitterness against somebody. I'm talking about that secret gossiping and backbiting that goes on between you and your wife at home about people. One of the things that Jesus mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount was Matthew 7, 12.

Treat other people exactly the way you want them to treat you. Do you want people to gossip about you and speak evil about you and tell lies about you in their home? No, don't do that to other people. See, one of the things I've discovered through many years of being a Christian is God treats me in exactly the same way I treat other people.

Think of that. God will treat you the way you treat other people. Do you remember that story where Jesus said about a king who forgave his servant \$10 million? \$10 million, okay.

That man says, I don't have any money, oh king. He says, okay, forgiven. And that guy went out and caught a fellow by the throat who owed him \$10 and said, pay up.

Otherwise, I'll lock you up in jail and put him in jail for \$10. And the king heard it and said, come back here. How much did I forgive you? \$10 million.

How much did that guy owe you? \$10. And you couldn't forgive him? Okay, your debt is back upon you. Do you know there's such a thing called unforgiveness? That means God forgives your sin, \$10 million sins.

And one day he calls you back and says, no, you're not forgiven. It's back in your account. You got to pay up.

Why? Not because you committed adultery or murder. No. But because you wouldn't forgive somebody else for something they did.

God treats you as you treat other people. And that's righteous. If you treat somebody else like that, don't you deserve to be treated like that? You judge somebody severely.

In the day of judgment, God will judge you exactly as severely as you judge somebody today. That's why I tell people, don't judge other people. That's not your business.

God is the only judge and he can do his job very well without your help. He doesn't need your help. Thank you.

He can do it. And the other thing about God, there's something wonderful about God in the way he judges. There's a lovely verse in Hebrews 9.27 which says, you know that verse, it's appointed unto men once to die and after this, the judgment.

Hebrews 9.27 When does God judge people? After they die. When do you judge people? And you know the answer. Why is that? Why does God wait until a person dies before he judges? He says, I have a hope that he will turn sometime before he dies.

Think of the thief on the cross. I mean, even thief's mother may have given up hope for him, but not God. He had hope for him and the last minute he got converted.

But we are so impatient. We immediately pass judgment on someone. I want to tell you something.

There's a little line I wrote in front of my table and kept there for many years before in front of me which said, the happiest people in the world are those who never judge others but only judge themselves. I've sought to live like that for many years. I see people failing around me, believers and others who've slipped up and fallen and I say, Lord, I am not their judge.

I don't want to pass an opinion. I don't want to pass a judgment because of one reason. I am not God.

And secondly, that guy has not died yet. So I can wait. And third, I don't know what all struggles he went through before he fell and I don't know what all difficulties she went through before she slipped up.

I don't know. I don't even judge a prostitute. I say, Lord, I don't know what all misery she went through that made her land up as a prostitute.

I don't want to judge anybody on the earth. I kept that verse before me because I found in that race of Adam a tremendous tendency to judge people. I found it in myself.

And I kept that verse in front of my table. I wrote it and I pinned it up there and I looked at it for years. Now I don't need it anymore because it's in my system now.

The happiest people in the world are those who never judge others but judge themselves. It doesn't mean we shouldn't have discernment. Discernment is different from judgment.

I can discern, hey, that's not spiritual. The way that person is doing things, that's not a godly way. I need that discernment so that I avoid that.

I don't go to certain churches because they're not preaching God's word. I don't admire certain preachers because they're not following the principles of Christ in relation to money and many other things. That's discernment.

But I'm not here to judge them. That's not my business. I need to watch my own life.

The Bible says, 1 Peter 4, 17 says, we judge ourselves first and thus prove that we are members of God's family. That's a wonderful verse for me. I want to prove that I'm a member of God's family.

And 1 Peter 4, 17 says, when we judge ourselves, we put ourselves first. That's the mark of the household of God. So in conclusion, let me say this.

Can you come to God with just one, only one thing God asks of you today as a first step? It's a lovely verse in Jeremiah 3, 13 which says, only acknowledge your iniquity. Only acknowledge. In other words, just be honest.

Honesty is the easiest thing. Purity takes a long time. Perfection takes years.

Even to love everybody and forgive others may take a struggle. But honesty? What did the thief on the cross say? I deserve this. That was honesty.

He went to paradise. What did the woman caught in adultery say? Yeah, I did it. I'm sorry.

Okay, I don't condemn you. There's one thing all of us can do right now and be absolutely honest in the light of the word God spoke to you this morning. Do you think God was speaking to you? Not about your neighbor, about you.

Not about somebody else you're thinking of, but about you. Lord, I want to be honest about my own need. I am a hypocrite.

The inside of my cup is dirty. Why am I worried about other people's cups? Look at my own cup. It's dirty.

Let me clean up my own cup first. I believe that God will meet with any such person here who's willing to start with that first step of honesty. God will give you faith to believe that he will cleanse the inside of your cup from all sin with the blood of Christ and give you strength with grace to be an overcomer.

The Bible says sin will not rule over you when you're under grace. God will give you that grace if you can take the first step of honesty. And one last thing.

God is more eager to bless you than you are to be blessed. Can you believe that? It's true. More eager to cleanse you than you are to be cleansed.

More eager to make you unshakable than you are desires to be unshakable. More eager to fill you with the Holy Spirit than you are desiring to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Let's pray.

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