

True Holiness

by Zac Poonen

True holiness is a pursuit of spiritual growth that requires recognizing the importance of the fear of God and making a conscious effort to fear God.

Duration: 41:57

Scripture: Luke 9:23, John 6:38, Hebrews 4:16, James 1:14-15, 1 Peter 1:15-17

Topics: "True Holiness", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing true holiness distinct from counterfeit or Old Testament holiness. It addresses the fear or lack of understanding of holiness among Christians, comparing holiness to spiritual health and the damaging effects of sin. The sermon highlights the need to ask for God's grace to overcome sin, understand the fear of God, and embrace the way of the cross by denying self and following God's will.

Transcript

I want to speak today on true holiness. There's a need to recognize true holiness distinct from counterfeit holiness or Old Testament holiness, which came short of God's standard. I find that most Christians I have met, born-again believers that I have met, are either scared of holiness or don't know anything about holiness.

In fact, they're afraid of that word. And that's because the devil has fooled Christians, not allowing them to see that holiness in our spirit, in our heart, is exactly the same corresponding to health in our body. Now, who's afraid of perfect health? Why should we be afraid of perfect holiness? Because we don't realize the damage that sin does inside, just like I've met people who had cancer and never discovered it until two or three years later, by which it had already done a lot of havoc inside their body.

If we are injured on the outside, we know it. But what goes on inside, sometimes we don't know, and sin is like that. One of the great things that all Christians need to see is sin is the sickness of the soul.

And just like you would want to be totally free from all sickness, if you are sensible, you'd want to be totally free from all sin. And just like you realize that sickness only destroys your body, you need to recognize that any sin that you tolerate in your life is destroying you inwardly, the full effect of that you may realize only when you stand before Jesus Christ on the day of judgment when it will be too late. And the devil knows that, and he makes sure that he blinds Christians to this reality.

So holiness is not something we should be afraid of, but something we should long for. Look at the amount of money you spend, and the effort you spend to be healthy. We should, if we spend 10% of that effort and time to be holy, all of us would have been a lot holier than we are right now.

I want to turn you to 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 15. It says here in 1 Peter 1, 15 to 17. Like the holy one who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior.

Every part of my behavior must be characterized by holiness because the one who called me is holy. Children must be like their father. Verse 16, because it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy.

And verse 17, if you address as father, the one who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourself in fear during the time of your stay on earth. Fear, the fear of the Lord is very, very important if we are to pursue holiness. So before getting into that, let me explain the difference between temptation and sin because a lot of people are confused in this area.

If a thought is flashed into your mind, that is temptation. When you yield to it in your mind, it is sin. Turn to James chapter 1. In James chapter 1, we are told the distinction, the difference between temptation and sin.

In verse 14, James 1, 14, everyone is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own lust and the word lust only means strong desire. By itself, it does not refer to anything sinful. We are told in Galatians 5 that the Holy Spirit lusts against the flesh, proving that the word lust is not evil.

The Holy Spirit has a strong desire against our evil nature within us. So this strong desire, which by itself is not sin, entices us. And the next verse says, verse 15, when this strong desire or lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin.

There must be a union for conception. This strong desire, if my mind agrees with it, there is sin. But if it's only a desire, it's not sin.

We need to understand that. That a thought flashed into our mind is not sin. When Jesus was in the wilderness tempted by Satan, Satan flashed thoughts into his mind, turned the stones into bread.

He said, no. Go to the top of the mount, top of the temple in Jerusalem and jump down and prove that you're the Messiah. It was not actually on top of the mount, top of the temple that the devil said that.

It was they were in the wilderness. It was a thought in his mind. Why don't you go to the top of the temple and jump down? Or in his mind, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said, I'll give this to you if you worship me.

Thoughts came into Jesus mind, evil thoughts, which he rejected. Temptation, which he rejected. So we don't have to be condemned.

If a thought has flashed into your mind, it could be the most evil thought imaginable. We cannot avoid it as long as we live on this earth. If you reject it in your mind, there is no conception.

But if your mind accepts it, yes, I'd like that. In a moment, you have sinned. Conception has taken place.

It's like a pure virgin girl walking down a road. We are called the virgin bride of Christ. That's why I use that picture.

And here on the other side of three handsome young men, the world, the flesh and the devil trying to attract us. Remember, the devil comes as an angel of light. That's why I say he looks attractive to many believers, too, and invites this girl.

Come in. The girl is attracted to all these three handsome, rich men. But she says no.

There's no conception. Was she attracted? Yes. Did she conceive? No.

Are you attracted by temptation? Yes. That doesn't mean we are evil. If you don't yield to it in your mind, you do not sin.

We don't have to pretend that money is not attractive. You don't have to look at a pretty girl and say she's ugly. That would be telling a lie.

That's not the way to overcome temptation. We can be honest, truthful and say, yes, I'm attracted, but I refuse it. That is overcoming sin.

We don't, a lot of Christians are living a life of pretense. The Lord is very, very compassionate towards sinners. That's one of the great truths we read in the Gospels.

And so anyone here who feels you're such a wretched sinner, you've messed up your life so much, you're good for nothing. I want to tell you that Jesus is fantastically compassionate towards you more than you can realize. He's not angry.

He's sad because you're ruining your life with sin, because you've messed up your life. He's sad. When Jesus was on earth, you never find him getting angry at sinners, murderers, adulterers, thieves.

He was compassionate, but he was terribly angry with people who pretended to be holy, but sinned in private. And if you're one like that, pretending before people in the church to be holy and unrighteous and sinful in your private life, doing things dishonoring to God, but giving everybody the impression in the church that you're a wonderful, holy person. I want to tell you in Jesus' name, Jesus is terribly angry with you.

He would say to you the words that he said to the Pharisees, you generation of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of hell? He never said that to sinners. He said that to hypocrites, people who pretend. And those are the ones who've got to be most scared in the day when Christ comes back.

They need to tremble today because their judgment is going to be the worst. So how shall we come into this holiness that the Bible speaks about? When God created man, the first thing we need to learn is the fear of God. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, meaning it is the ABC.

When children go to school, the first thing they learn is ABC. They don't learn that. They can't learn geography, history, science, nothing.

And in the same way, in the Christian life, the first thing you need to learn is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the ABC of wisdom. In other words, all the rest of your spiritual education depends on, first of all, learning the fear of the Lord.

If you only want an academic knowledge of the scripture, you don't need to learn the fear of the Lord. It's like studying chemistry or mathematics or physics or anything. You can study the Bible like that, like they

teach in a lot of seminaries.

It's not knowledge that's going to make us spiritual. If Bible knowledge could make people spiritual, we should be having the most spiritual people on Earth in the history of Christianity today. Look at the number of amount of knowledge there is.

You can have the Bible on a CD and an iPod and all types of things. It hasn't made people holy because they haven't learned the ABC. The ABC is the fear of God.

That's the reason why knowledge can destroy you if you don't have the fear of God. And when it comes to the fear of God, I told you that God made man. He created him on the sixth day, at the end of the sixth day.

And for man, the very first day was the Sabbath day, his very first day. God said, I don't want you to work, I want you to fellowship with me. That's the first thing he taught Adam, fellowship with me and then go and work.

And so that whole day he was with God, he wasn't even tempted that day. The next day when he went to the garden, he was tempted. And if he had carried that presence of God that he experienced on that first day with him into the garden, his life would have been so different.

Why did God allow him to go alone into the garden? Because that was the only way to find out what choice Adam would make. When God created the planets and the stars, he made them without freedom of choice. They have obeyed God for thousands of years, better than any human being.

But they're not holy. They can't be sinners, the stars, they can't be sinners, they can't be holy. They can't be children of God.

Why? Because none of them have got freedom of choice. And if God could have made Adam looking like a human being, but programmed inside like the robots that people in Japan make, and then he would never have been holy. He would have looked like a human being, you know, spontaneously doing everything God wanted him to do, never touching the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

He would never have been holy. He'd never have been sinful. He would not have been a child of God.

He'd have been a robot. So free will is essential to be holy, but not only free will. Dogs have got a free will, but they can't be holy either because there's something else they don't have, but they don't have a conscience.

Animals are not moral beings. That's why there are not going to be any animals in heaven. It's only God's children.

And to be a child of God, you need free will and a conscience. Only Adam and the angels have that. That's why the angels could sin, Adam could sin.

And when we exercise our free will, as our conscience prompts us in the right direction, that's the way to be holy. If we go against our conscience, we become sinners. It's as simple as that.

So when we think of the fear of God, which is the first thing I want to talk about, I want to share three things. First of all, the fear of God concerning holiness. The first time the word fear of God occurs in the

Bible is in Genesis chapter 20 and verse 11, where Abraham had just told a lie saying that Sarah, his wife, was his sister in order to save his own life.

And the king discovered that and later on asked Abraham, why did you tell me this lie? And Abraham replies in Genesis 20 and verse 11, because I thought surely there is no fear of God in this place and they will kill me because of my wife. That's the first time the expression fear of God comes in the Bible. And it interested me because it was related to sexual sin.

Abraham was afraid that those people would sexually sin against his wife. And he refers to that as no fear of God. Where there is no fear of God, there's plenty of sexual sin.

So when it says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, this is one of the first areas where we need to learn the ABC. Because all human beings are tempted in this area from a very young age. I asked the Lord once, I said, Lord, why do you allow sexual desire to start in little children when they are 12, 13 years old, when they can't get married for another 10 years or more? Why didn't you allow, you know, people to be like innocent little babies until they are about 20 and then when they are ready to be married, let sexual desire come up then.

It would protect them from a lot of problems in their teenage years. God in his great wisdom has allowed us to have strong sexual desire from our teenage years. And the answer I got from the Lord was because, the Lord said, because I want man to overcome this before he gets married.

If you don't overcome it before you get married, the chances are pretty slim that you'll overcome it after you get married. Because the desire is so strong, and that is why it's a sin for people who are not married to have any type of sexual contact. It is the clearest proof they do not fear God at all.

I don't care which church they go to, I don't care what activity, Christian activity they are engaged in, they don't fear God, they don't know the ABC. This is the area where God is going to test every man. And if men are tested in this area because they lust after a woman who is immodestly, provocatively dressed, it's absolutely righteous on God's part to punish that woman who tempted that man by being dressed in that way.

So this is an area where all sisters need to be very careful. I want to say to you all sisters in Jesus' name very lovingly, as a father I would say to you, don't cause more problems for men than they are already facing in the world in this area. They struggle as it is.

And don't add to that if you are a Christian. Let the worldly people do that. I plead with you in Jesus' name, change the way you dress, so that you dress in a way that will honor God, and not like the way these models and film stars dress.

Who is your example? When God looked around Israel to find a young 19 year old girl to be the mother of Jesus, do you think he picked on some girl who was provocatively dressed walking down Israel? No! He looked for a godly young girl. Mary, ask yourself all you young sisters, if you were living in Israel, would God have chosen you? That's a pretty good question. It's a very important area.

Sexual temptation, men and women have to be very, very careful in this area. I remember a young sister once came to me in our church and asked me, Brother Zach, how shall I dress as a young girl? I said, I'm not going to give you any rules, because each culture, there are different types of dresses they wear, but I would say this, you know in your mind what can stimulate and provoke other people. If you don't know, ask

your father, or your husband.

Don't ask your mother, she may not know. ask a man. A man will look at you and immediately tell you whether it's provocative or not.

I mean, it's men who can detect this much quicker, that's why I say ask your dad or your husband. And I said, no, I'll tell you, I'll give you a guideline. If Jesus were living in the next street, and he called you up and said, come with me, I want to go to the marketplace with you today.

How would you dress to walk with Jesus in the marketplace? That's the way you should dress all the time. I said, that's the only guideline I want to give you. Don't dress like that only when you go to church, and then dress like worldly people when you go to work.

Oh no, don't you want Jesus with you when you go to work? I tell you, you need him more there than in church. And if you are dressed the way you are now, young sisters, would Jesus be proud of you and say, this is my sister, look at the way she's dressed? Or would he be ashamed? You know, it's so easy to think Jesus is with us, Jesus is with us, he's not with you. It's very important, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

We'll never make progress, just like you tell a kid, if you don't learn your ABC, you're not going to make progress in your education. In the same way, I'd say, if you don't learn the fear of God, all your spirituality is just a lot of hot air, there's nothing in it. The other area is, let me read a verse in 2 Peter chapter 1. In 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 14, it speaks about, the whole chapter is dealing with false prophets, which means teachers who teach wrong doctrine.

And the interesting thing is, this wrong doctrine is not necessarily in the words of fundamental doctrinal statements. It's not there that they are in error. They're called false prophets in verse 1. In verse 14, we are told that these preachers have got eyes full of adultery.

Can a preacher or a pastor have eyes full of adultery? That's what it says here in 2 Peter 1 verse 14. It's speaking about false prophets, the whole chapter. And they never cease from sin with their eyes.

You look at them and you think they're godly men because they know the Bible so much, they can preach so well, and they entertain you so much, but their eyes are full of adultery. Christendom has seen such preachers for all these 2,000 years. Peter writes about it in the first century, about false preachers who've got eyes of adultery.

That's where their doctrine is wrong. Unfortunately, Christians think false prophets, remember verse 1 is talking about false prophets, false prophets are those who've got some doctrinal error. Well, this is their biggest doctrinal error.

Their eyes are full of adultery. But hardly anybody thinks of that as a doctrinal error. It cannot cease from sin.

And that's why it's so important to be careful with our eyes. A man who fears God is careful with his eyes. The second thing mentioned in verse 14 is they have a heart trained in greed.

They love money. The 2 characteristics of false teachers is their eyes are full of adultery, and they love money. They urge poor people to pay their tithes and give their money so that they can ride their, drive

their fancy cars and buy jet planes and buy expensive houses from the money taken from poor people.

Can you imagine Jesus doing any such thing? These people are not representatives of Jesus Christ. They are the number one hypocrites, agents of the devil who bring a dishonor upon the name of Jesus Christ. We have to learn the fear of God.

And when such preachers don't have the fear of God themselves, they're going to produce a generation of people who don't have the fear of God, but who are oozing with Bible knowledge. Who's got the most Bible knowledge in the world? The devil. It doesn't make him spiritual, and Bible knowledge will not make you spiritual.

So please keep that in mind. The other area where the fear of God is tested is in James chapter 1, we read in verse 26. James 1, 26.

This is an amazing verse. It says here in James 1, 26, if anyone thinks that he is religious, that is, as we would say, he thinks he's a very spiritual person, but he cannot control his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart. And let me paraphrase the rest of that verse.

His whole Christianity is worth zero. Now I don't know how many people believe that. If you cannot control your tongue, you can be preacher, choir member, usher, pastor, whatever it is, your Christianity is worth zero.

What type of Christianity are you going to give to other people? This is the area where we need to learn the fear of God. And the use of our eyes, the use of our tongue. We may say, well, what to do? I don't have self-control.

I want to control my tongue, but I cannot. Well, how is it when you have a couple of visitors in your home, you don't yell at your husband or wife? How is that? How do you suddenly develop self-control when a couple of people are sitting there in the room? It's a lie to say you don't have self-control. The reason is not that you don't have self-control.

You don't fear God. You fear a couple of brothers sitting there in your church, sitting there in your couch. Then you'd be careful how you speak to each other at home.

But once those two people have gone away, and you think the house is empty, but Jesus is still there, you say, oh, Jesus, who cares for him? You get back to your normal behavior, husband and wife with each other. Do you see how we deceive ourselves by saying Christ is the head of this house? He's not. You don't recognize his presence.

You fear those two visitors who came to your house much more than you fear God, who's all the time there. When God made Adam, his first day was a day spent in the presence of God. And that's what we need to develop, the sense of God's presence.

Wherever I go, Lord, thou seest me all the time. Jesus said, we read in Acts 2, 25, he set the Lord always before him. All the time he lived in the presence of the Father.

And that's how we are to live. That's the meaning of the fear of God. Turn to James chapter 3. It speaks about this tongue again.

James 3 and verse 6. It says here, our tongue is like a fire. A world full of sin. James chapter 3 and verse 6. The tongue is a fire.

The very world of iniquity. And it's right inside our mouth. And it says further down in verse 8, no one can tame the tongue.

No one can tame the tongue. It says we've tamed lions and elephants, but no one can tame the tongue. And that's the significant thing that happened on the day of Pentecost.

The day that the Holy Spirit came upon people and filled them. We read in Acts of the Apostles in chapter 2. While those disciples were waiting in the upper room, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and filled them within. And this is the first mark that came there.

Acts chapter 2, verse 3. There appeared to them tongues as of fire resting on each of them. Now I'm not speaking about what's written in the next verse of speaking in other tongues. I'm talking here about speaking properly in our mother tongue first.

And this tongue of fire symbolized that the Holy Spirit was now going to take control of this tongue which was once set upon by the fire of hell, as we read in James 3, which is now going to be set upon by the fire of the Holy Spirit. This tongue would be purified. That is the first sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

People ask me, what's the sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit? Well, you get control over your mother tongue. If you don't get control over your mother tongue and you speak in other tongues, that's useless. But that's what's happening in a lot of churches today.

They praise God in other tongues on Sunday morning and go and shout at their wives with their mother tongue on Sunday afternoon. I say that's a deception. That's not the fullness of the Spirit.

The fullness of the Spirit will give us control over our eyes and control over our tongue. And that's where we learn the fear of God. The second thing I want to move on to is the grace of God.

The fear of God is a New Testament concept. Before I move on to that, let me show you this one verse. 2 Corinthians 7 and verse 1. It says here in 2 Corinthians 7 verse 1. We are to perfect holiness.

See the last part of that verse. Perfect holiness in the fear of God. The fear of God is a New Testament concept.

It's there. We are to cleanse ourselves. As we fear God, we cleanse ourselves of impurities that we find in our own life.

The grace of God is the second thing I want to mention. The first thing the grace of God does for us is mentioned in Ephesians 1 and verse 7. Ephesians 1, 7 we read. The grace, we are given the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption through His blood. The forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Our first problem is the guilt of our past life.

That needs to be cleansed away completely. For that, we have the blood of Jesus Christ. According to the riches of God's grace, He blots out our past.

Every single person sitting here, you can be absolutely sure if you turn to Christ today and say, Lord, I've committed unimaginable sins in a moment. If you have turned, if you believe that the blood of Jesus was shed for your sin, every sin can be blotted out in a moment. Your record can be clean.

Wonderful message of the gospel. But it doesn't stop there. It goes on to say in Romans 6 and verse 14 what grace can do for us.

In Romans chapter 6 and verse 14, we read the further thing that grace does for us. Sin shall not be master over you. See, this is our second problem.

Even if our past sin is forgiven, if sin is still controlling my life, controlling my eyes, controlling my tongue, controlling my attitudes to people, I'm a slave. I'm supposed to be a slave of Christ, but I'm a slave of sin. I say, Lord, is there any deliverance from this sin? I mean, I've often thought about when I'm preaching the gospel to a non-Christian who doesn't know anything about the gospel, I say, hey, do you know that Jesus can forgive all your sins in a moment? And he asks me, but sir, I have, what about this anger? Will Jesus deliver me from this anger? Will Jesus deliver me from this lust to watch pornography? And if I have no victory over those areas, I say, well, Jesus can't do all that, but he'll forgive you all your sin.

I say, I don't want this gospel, thank you. Do you blame him for rejecting this third-rate gospel that is being preached by so many Christians, that Jesus will forgive your sin? But of course he's too powerless when it comes to anger or these giants of Canaan are too strong for our God. That's a lie.

Jesus can make you master sin. Sin can come under your feet. You have not because you don't believe.

You don't ask. You don't believe what that grace can bring you there. To be under law is to struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle to overcome sin.

It's like the disciples fishing, fishing, fishing all night and catching nothing. Constantly defeated. But when Jesus came, in a moment, the nets were full of fish.

That's what grace does. When I come to him and say, Lord, you can do what I can never do in my own strength. I mean, if you have failed repeatedly, I want to tell you, it's because you've been trying in your own strength.

And you try for another hundred years in your own strength, you can make any number of New Year resolutions, you will not overcome. Till you come to God and say, Lord, I need grace. I need the power of your Holy Spirit.

I don't need only forgiveness, I need grace. Turn to Hebrews in chapter 4. Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 15. Here we read about the example Jesus has given us.

The wonderful thing about the New Covenant is, God doesn't give us just commandments, he gives us an example. The Old Testament, they only had commandments. Do this, do this, do this.

It's like trying to teach people swimming on a blackboard. Move your legs like this and move your hand like this. Nobody learns swimming that way.

In the New Testament, Jesus says, follow me. He jumps into the pool and says, do what I do. That's the wonderful thing about the New Covenant.

We have an example. An example of one, it says in this verse, who can sympathize with our struggle. He knows that when we get into the swimming pool, we drown.

Because the power of gravity is so great. And he has experienced that power of gravity. He was tempted like us.

He felt the pull of temptation. But he did not sin. And one of the great examples of that is his walking on water.

You remember that time when he walked on water? Gravity pulled him down like sin pulls us down. Sin is like gravity. But he overcame gravity and walked on the water.

A picture of his overcoming sin. And then the greatest miracle there is Peter walking on the water. He tells Peter to come out of the boat and Peter walks on the water.

Peter can overcome sin. Peter can overcome the law of gravity. Picturing the fact that we can overcome the law of sin that pulls us down.

But the moment he turned his face away from Christ. And thought the temptation was too great for Christ to overcome. Immediately he began to sink.

And he cried out saying, Lord save me. And Jesus immediately held his hand. And kept him from falling and sinking.

That's what it says in Jude 24. He's able to keep us from falling. Now I want you to look at Hebrews 4 16.

The next verse to the one that we just looked at. The verse we saw before was that Jesus is tempted like us. And did not sin.

In other words, he was pulled by the law of gravity but he overcame. He was pulled by the law of sin. But he did not sink.

Therefore. Therefore. Whenever you see therefore in scripture.

Find out what it is there for. Therefore. Means it's referring to the previous verse.

Let us draw near. Therefore. Linked to the previous.

Because Jesus never sinned. Let us draw near. With boldness to this throne of grace.

There was no grace in the old testament. Jesus brought this. This throne of grace.

So that first of all we receive mercy. Which is an old testament word. Referring to the forgiveness of all our past sins.

And find grace. To help us. In the time of need.

The time of need according to the previous verse is temptation. Picture a mountain climber who is climbing a mountain. And slips and is hanging by his fingers over a cliff.

But too proud to ask for help. He slips and falls and breaks his bones. Then he asks for help.

And the ambulance called mercy comes along. Forgiveness of sins. Jesus picks him up.

Forgives his sin. Fixes all his broken bones. And he goes climbing again.

Again he slips and he's about to fall. This is a picture of just about to fall in time of temptation. This time he is humble enough to say.

Help me Lord. I'm going to fall. And he finds strong arms lifting him up.

And placing him on solid rock. That's grace. Grace to help.

In time of need. So this is what you can do when you're tempted. And to do a little homework.

Start with the sin. That you have fallen in the most. Can you think of that right now? That's right.

What you're thinking of right now. That's the sin. Next time you're tempted in that area.

Instead of being too proud. To battle and try to climb. You've fallen so many times.

Before you reach the bottom and break your bones and ask for mercy. Ask for grace. To help you in your time of need.

Lord, I can't make it. Help me. And I'll tell you, you'll experience a miracle.

You'll find yourself standing. And you'll wonder, hey, how did that happen? That was grace. Not the grace that forgave you.

But the grace that gave you victory over sin. Now in the beginning. Like a child learns to walk.

It may take a little time. But the child never gets discouraged. You see these 10-month-old children trying to walk.

They fall, get up a thousand times. But they walk. They run.

And you who have been defeated, defeated, defeated. I want to tell you in Jesus' name. You can walk in victory.

God can help you. Grace can help you to be an overcomer. Then finally.

Let me say one more thing. We need to understand what it is to walk the way of the cross. Jesus said in Luke chapter 9 and verse 23.

Luke chapter 9 and verse 23. If anyone. He was saying to all of them.

He's saying to all of us today. If anyone sitting here wishes to come after me. Do you want to come after Jesus? There is only one way.

He must deny himself. Take up his cross daily. And follow me.

If Christians don't understand the fear of God. They don't understand what the grace of God can accomplish. Here's another thing they don't understand.

What it means to take up the cross. And that's what I want to explain to you in very simple words. From John chapter 6 and verse 38.

John chapter 6 and verse 38. This is a verse. Which I call the one line autobiography of Jesus' life.

He's telling his own entire life story in one sentence. I came from heaven. And Lord, what did you do on earth? What did you come for? Many would say he came to die on the cross.

That was just the last part of his work. I came not to do my own will. Here's my will.

Here's God's will. I came not to do my own will. But to do the will of him who sent me.

That's where he died. To his own will. He carried a cross every day.

For 33 years. That's the cross he asked us to take. We don't have to be physically crucified.

But every day, numerous times. You have the desire to do what you want to do. To speak to somebody the way you want to speak.

To look where you want to look. And there you see the will of God is different. And if you're willing to die, you can follow Jesus.

And the Holy Spirit is the one who teaches us the fear of God. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the grace of God. And the Holy Spirit is the one who will give you strength.

To deny your will. To say no to your own will. And to do the will of God.

This is the only way to follow Jesus. And as we do it, we'll find we are perfected in holiness. Inwardly.

It will bring spiritual health into our life. You'll feel like a spiritually fit person. Don't be afraid of perfect holiness.

Let's pray. Smile your heads before God. If God has spoken to you.

He respects your dignity as a human being. He doesn't want to shame you. And so he speaks to you privately in your mind.

Something that even your neighbor never heard what he said to you. Will you say, Lord, I want to obey. That is the proof that you fear God.

That what God spoke to you in secret. You will obey. Say, Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit.

That's the secret of spiritual strength. To become truly holy. God desires the best for you.

And that's why he called you to this life. Heavenly Father, I believe with all my heart. That there are a number of people sitting here.

You have spoken to clear as crystal. I pray that the devil will not deceive them. That they will respond in their heart to you right now.

And say, yes, Lord. I want your way. I messed up my life long enough.

I want to learn the fear of God. I want to know the grace of God. I want to go the way you went.

The way of the cross. Help them each one, Lord. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Thank you. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/sdiaGIKQO6w.mp4>
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