

Turning Around From Earthly (Tamil)

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and living a heavenly life, which involves overcoming sin and recognizing the devil as the enemy.

Duration: 1:01:05

Scripture: Matthew 3:2, Mark 9:1, Acts 1:8, Romans 6:14

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Heavenly Mindset"

Description

This sermon addresses the question of why there are many Christian churches, emphasizing the need for churches that focus on teaching a heavenly life rather than earthly blessings. It highlights the importance of repentance, turning away from earthly pursuits to seek a heavenly mindset empowered by the Holy Spirit. The message encourages believers to prioritize spiritual growth, victory over sin, and living in alignment with the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Transcript

One of the questions that many non-Christians ask when they become Christians is, why are there so many Christian churches? I mean, if there is only one Bible, why isn't there only one church? Why do we have so many different denominations even among Protestants? Because I don't know whether even Christians know the answer to that. Because that could be a question that people ask us, why did you start a church in Tanjavur when there are so many other churches already here? I remember when we first came here for a conference many years ago. We had many people from outside and we had a question time.

One of the questions they asked was this, have you come here to steal the sheep from other churches? I said no. We never want to steal any sheep. Some goats may come and they may become sheep after coming to our midst.

But I said there is another way to look at it. Supposing there is some town where there are no colleges, only schools. So people finish matriculation or something and that's it.

They can't go anywhere else so they finish with matriculation. There may be a hundred schools like that. So if somebody comes there and starts a college, he is not stealing any students from the schools.

He is only trying to help those who don't want to stop with matriculation but want to go higher. So sometimes the planting of a new church is like that. For example in some places there are no schools at all.

So if somebody starts a nursery school, that's like a village where no church is preaching about being born again. There are many churches today that do not preach you must be born again. Many people think that if people believe in the bible and go to some church they must be born again.

The person who used the word born again was the Lord Jesus. And he did not say that to a prostitute. He said that to a bishop, Nicodemus.

I have never met a servant of God who would tell a bishop you must be born again. Why? Because even those who claim to be spirit filled, they are scared. They are not servants of God.

They fear men. They think if a man is a bishop and puts a cross around his neck he must be born again. No, Jesus would come and say you must be born again.

Whoever we are, whether prostitutes or archbishops, you have to be born again. Everybody is a sinner. And so there are many churches unfortunately that do not preach you must be born again.

That is why 90% of Christians in India are not born again. So to start a nursery school is like starting a church that preaches you must be born again. But to be born again is not enough.

In the new testament you don't read only about being a sinner. And even more than that. So in a school, in a village where there is only nursery schools, somebody may come and start a primary school.

He is not stealing students. He wants to help those who want to go beyond nursery school to primary school. If there is a village with primary schools, somebody may come and start a secondary school.

But nobody complains about that. Because they realize this is to help those who want to go higher. Now many people don't want to go higher.

Some people say ok nursery school is enough, we can read and write, that's enough. So nobody is compelling anybody to join a primary school. And like that where there is a secondary school, somebody may start a college.

And where there are colleges, somebody may start a post graduate college. But you know very well that nobody comes and compels your children saying you must go to high school or you must go to college. All of us have freedom to study as much as we want.

Some people may say oh fourth standard is enough, that's enough for me. Some people even after they finish college they say no I want to go higher. It's exactly the same in the Christian life.

The Christian life is like going to school. It's like a spiritual school. Those who are not born again are like the multitudes of illiterate people in our country who cannot even read and write.

There are many millions of people in our country, particularly many older women who cannot even write their name. That's not their fault. Their parents did not teach them when they were small.

So I'm not blaming them. It's sad. Think of your condition if you were born again.

You would not even be able to read the bible. So that is a picture of those who are not born again. They are spiritually illiterate.

And then there are some who have joined the nursery school and learned to be born again. They've just learned bare minimum. How my sins can be forgiven and how I can go to heaven.

Now you would have thought that okay you've learned that now you can leave the school. Why do you want to sit in the school if that's all you're learning? How many years do you stay in nursery school? But many believers are in churches which are like nursery school for 25 years. Even after 25 years, all that they know is you must be born again.

And their only job is to get other people to join the nursery school. They themselves are not growing. Now you tell me, how many of you would be happy if your children only studied up to kindergarten? No, you wouldn't be happy.

Unless you're some poor laborer in a slum who's not bothered about the children's education. But if a teacher does not know more than kindergarten, he cannot teach anything more than that to the students. See for example, a pastor or a preacher or an elder, if he doesn't know how to get victory over anger, or he's still lust with his eyes, how can he teach anybody else about overcoming these things? He can only tell people, Jesus will forgive your sin.

And he can keep collecting every month money just like the school you pay fees every month. And like the teacher collects his salary, the pastor collects his salary. And keeps the students in the same class for 25 years.

None of you would send a child to a school which has only got kindergarten for 25 years. But so many Christians are sitting in such churches. They never get free from the love of money.

They never get free from fighting and quarreling. They never get free from jealousy. They don't get free from anger.

They still don't forgive other people. What have they learnt in the Christian life? They are born again. But then, if you live like that, they even lose their salvation.

So, I remember that first meeting in Thanjavur. I said, we're not going to steal any sheep. We're not trying to steal any students from any school.

But we want to make a provision for those who want to go a little higher in the Christian life. Now, 90% of people may not want to go higher. That's okay.

They're happy to live in the kindergarten all their lives. That's fine. We don't disturb them.

We want to make a provision for those who want to go higher. Now, that doesn't mean that everybody who sits in our church is going higher. No, you can go and sit in a college for 25 years and fail every year.

And there are students like that in our churches. They sit there, but they don't have any victory. Their home life is not godly.

They are like students who sit in a college and get zero in every subject every year. They say, we're going to college. Maybe all right, but you're getting zero in every subject.

So, we can't glory that I belong to this particular church. We can't glory that I'm going to this college. What are your marks in each subject? What are your marks in your married life? How many marks are you getting in your thought life? How many marks are you getting in your words, your speech life? These are the tests.

I believe that the devil has done a tremendous work in making Christians live at a very low standard. Most Christians are happy if I can go to heaven when I die. I think they are the most ungrateful people on the face of the earth.

The most ungrateful. Why? Because Jesus came and gave everything to die for them, to save them from their sins. Not to forgive their sins only, but to save them from their sins.

And here they are, they are not saved from their sins, but they sit happily. Now, your sins are forgiven, and you are not eagerly battling and striving and praying for overcoming every sin in your life. I don't care which church you go to.

I don't care if you are a part of Christian fellowship church. You are a thoroughly ungrateful person. Because Jesus paid such a price to save you from your sinful life, and you are not bothered about it.

That is like some student whose father is paying 10 lakhs to get him admission in some good college. 10 lakhs! He can build two houses with that sum. But he wants to give his child a good education, put him in a good college.

And that child is just fooling around, playing the fool and getting zero in all of a sudden. That is the picture of believers who are not seeking eagerly for a life of overcoming all sin in their life. How happy would you be if your children got zero in school? Well, you would be very unhappy.

You would be very disturbed. Well, I want to tell you God is very disturbed about that. Let me show you first of all Matthew chapter 1, where we see the meaning of the name Jesus.

This is the first time in the Bible that you read the word Jesus. It never comes before that. This is the first time.

The first time it comes in Matthew 1.21, but we are also given the meaning of that name. It says here, you shall call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. What does it say? Not he will forgive their sins.

Of course he will forgive their sins. But he will also save them from their sins. That means he will not only forgive your anger, but he will save you from your anger.

He will not only forgive your lusting, he will save you from your lusting. He will not only forgive you for your jealousy, he will save you from your jealousy. He will not only forgive you for having a miserable family life, he will save you from it.

That is the meaning of the name Jesus. Maybe some of you never knew the meaning of the name Jesus till today. Why was he called Jesus? One who saves people from their sins.

You know when we pray, we pray in the name of Jesus. What is the meaning of that? For many people, in the name of Jesus means it is time to say Amen. That is not the meaning of it.

No, in the name of Jesus means, in the name of someone who came to save me from all my sins. Father, I am praying in the name of someone who came to save me from all my sins. So what should be the first thing I ask the father for? Before I ask for healing and money and other things.

First of all, save me from all my sins. Because I am praying in the name of Jesus, which means one who came to save me from all my sins. Now then the question comes, can we live such a life on earth? That depends on only one thing.

Whether you believe the Bible or whether you believe the devil. The devil says, it is impossible as long as you live on this earth to overcome sin. But the Bible says in Romans 6.14, if you come under grace, sin will not rule over you.

Why do we have this title for the conference, a heavenly life on earth? Everybody lives on this earth in an earthly way. True Christianity is to live on this earth in a heavenly way. That was not possible in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites did not live in a heavenly way. There are many proofs of that. All the Israelites were interested in making money.

That is a mark of earthly minded people. They were happy when their earthly riches abounded. That is a mark of all earthly minded people.

Another thing, the Israelites were always fighting with earthly enemies. They were fighting the Philistines, Canaanites, Midianites, so many people. But it was always earthly people.

They never fought against their own sin. They never fought against the devil or demons. They were always human beings.

That is another mark of an earthly life. Earthly minded people will fight always against other earthly people. If you fight with other human beings, it does not matter which church you go to.

You are 100% an earthly minded person. In heaven, they only fight against the devil. No angel fights against another angel in heaven.

See Revelation chapter 12. It says there was war in heaven. Verse 7. Can there be war in heaven? Yes.

Revelation 12.7 But the war is not with one angel versus another angel. It is the angels waging war against the devil, the dragon. In heaven, the war is angels versus the demons.

How do you know whether a church is a heavenly church or an earthly church? In an earthly church, the elders are fighting with each other. And the brothers and sisters are fighting with each other. And the husband and wife are fighting with each other.

That is exactly like all the other earthly religions and families on the face of the earth. And that is how it was with the Israelites. There were three leaders from a family in Israel.

From one family. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam was the leader of the women. They were all from one family.

But Aaron and Miriam were criticizing Moses. That is in Numbers chapter 12 you can read it. That is how it was in the Old Testament.

If you have two or three elders they will fight with each other. That is the mark of an earthly church. That is the mark of earthly minded elders.

They can't get along with each other. That is the mark of an earthly minded husband and wife. So there will be conflict and fight.

But they will come to the church and sing about Jesus. One who can save them from all sin. But there is no salvation from sin in their home or in their church.

It is only songs. They are singing about Jesus. In the mark of a heavenly church they fight against the devil.

Not against each other. The mark of a heavenly home. They don't fight against each other, husband and wife.

They fight against the devil. Because they know that all the confusion in the home is brought by the devil. Now you may think that all the problems in your home are caused by your wife.

I will tell you why you think like that. Because you are a foolish husband. A wise husband or wife will recognize that all the problems in my home are caused by the devil.

Not my husband or my wife. I will tell you why you think like that. Because you are a foolish wife.

A wise husband or wife will recognize that all the problems in my home are caused by the devil. Not my husband or my wife or even my children. So what is use fighting with them? The enemy is over here.

Why fight with somebody here? The enemy is that side brother. Fight the enemy. Have you heard of any army where the soldiers are fighting with each other? Suppose the Indian army goes to fight against Pakistan and the Indian army soldiers are all fighting with each other.

Yeah, the enemy will be very happy. That's how the devil is very happy when he sees Christians all fighting with each other. Many years ago, the Lord told me, if you want to fight the devil, you have to stop fighting with human beings.

That is one of the first steps to begin a heavenly life on earth. See, overcoming lust of the eyes is a very difficult thing. It can take many years.

Overcoming anger is a difficult thing. It can take many years. Overcoming the love of money can take many years.

But to stop fighting with other human beings, you can stop today. If you want, you can take a decision today that I'll never again fight with my husband or wife. If they come to fight, I won't fight.

Either of you can take the decision, husband or wife. See, you need two hands to make a noise. You know that.

Have you ever tried making noise with one hand? If the other hand refuses to cooperate, there's no sound. So, when one person in your home wants to fight, the other person says, no, I won't fight. No matter how much the other person says, don't blame the other person.

Don't say that person wants to always fight. It's because you also cooperate that the fight comes. We like to blame other people.

I believe nobody can have a fight with me because I refuse to fight. They can't even fight on a doctrine. A lot of people say, you're preaching false doctrine, brother Zack.

So, I say, okay, I'll explain to you what I teach. I'll show it to you from scripture. Not my words, scripture.

But when they find that it is in scripture, then they get angry. Then I stop discussing because I see these people are not interested in the truth. They're only interested in winning an argument.

Then I say, okay, let's stop reading, studying the Bible. Let's talk about something else. Let's say, well, it's good the Congress won the elections.

We can talk about that. Or some cricket match. India won the match.

Don't you agree on that? That's a good thing. Why do I change the subject? Because I see he's getting angry that he doesn't have any explanation for the doctrine I show him. I don't want to fight with anybody.

I show how to do. That's why some times you read in the Bible, Jesus hasn't answered some people, because he knew whom to answer and whom not to answer. He never went for a fight because he was a heavenly person.

Even when somebody said, you're the prince of devils. Jesus just smiled and said, okay, you're forgiven. Jesus smiled and said, you're forgiven.

Why? He's not going to fight with somebody who calls him a prince of devils. Because Jesus knew one thing. Let me ask you.

Supposing a hundred people come to you. Oh brother, you are the greatest prophet of God. Will you become the greatest prophet of God? Yes or no? A hundred people came and told you.

If a hundred people come and tell you, you're a devil. Will you become a devil? No. Then why worry about what these people say? Supposing a hundred thousand people come and say, you are a prophet of God.

Will you become? What if a hundred thousand people say you're a devil? No. What does that teach us? The opinions of men are fit to be thrown in the rubbish bin. You know all the rubbish you have in the kitchen after you've cut vegetables and all those things.

Just throw it away. All the opinions of every man must be thrown away like that. Do you know that the devil's opinion is better than man's opinion? Because the devil knows you better than all men.

If the devil is afraid of you, that's a good testimony. Because the devil was afraid of Jesus. Jesus was not bothered.

Somebody called him the devil. So, that's one mark of a heavenly person. You can never fight with him.

It's a mark of a heavenly woman. Can you imagine what our homes will be like if we have heavenly men and heavenly women living there? Can you imagine what our churches will be like if the elders become heavenly? Many elders, they love their position as elders. They are earthly minded.

Every elder brother who loves to be an elder brother is earthly minded. There are many elders like that, even in our churches. Because if you remove them from eldership, they get offended and go away.

That is the clearest proof that they love to be the elders. They were earthly minded. So, it's a good thing they were removed and a good thing they left the church also.

We don't want earthly minded people. They can join hundreds of other churches. Where they talk about earthly things.

We don't stop them from going. I say, please go. Don't waste your time here.

So, God wants a heavenly church on this earth. He wants many heavenly homes on the earth. That was the message of John the Baptist preparing people for the coming of Christ.

So, when we find many many churches not telling people how to live a heavenly life. Because the elders and pastors there are not living a heavenly life. They are all lovers of money, lovers of fighting.

And lovers of position and titles and all that. It's a sad thing today. Where people want titles.

Jesus said, don't ever take any title like rabbi or father or anything like that. But so many believers love titles. Look at this mighty apostle John at the age of 95.

What does he call himself? Revelation chapter 1. How does he call himself? Verse 9. Revelation 1 verse 9. I John your brother. He doesn't say your pastor. He doesn't say reverend John.

Or right reverend John. Or bishop John. Or arch bishop John.

Or cardinal John or pope John. What is he? The greatest apostle. The only apostle living at that time.

Your brother. Because Jesus said, don't take any titles. Be a brother.

But today people think they are greater than the apostle John. They are earthly minded. Earthly minded people only have love for titles.

Manager, deputy director, director. And different levels of cabinet ministers. MLA, MP, all these things.

It's all earthly. Heavenly minded people have no interest in titles. That's why we read in John chapter 6. Jesus gave an example to his apostles.

After he fed the 5000 with 5 loaves. And there were 12 baskets full. In verse 13.

After feeding the 5000 there were all these baskets of food left. And all the people said this is really the prophet who has prophesied to come to the world. Verse 15.

And they wanted to make Jesus their king. See after they came back from Babylon 600 years earlier. They didn't have a king.

Now they wanted to make Jesus their king. They came together, thousands of them. We want to make you our king.

Verse 15. When Jesus realized that they were intending to take him by force to make him their king. He just went off to the mountain to be by himself alone.

Have you ever seen a man like this? When everybody wants to come and make you a king, he runs off. You know why? Because he was a heavenly man. Heavenly people have no interest in earthly titles.

They have no interest in earthly positions. And even if 10,000 people come to make them a king by force, they'll run away. See nobody can make you a king unless you want to be a king.

I remember when we started our church in Bangalore 34 years ago. Many people wanted to make me a pastor there. They never succeeded.

They haven't succeeded till today. I said I'm just a brother. I'll be my brother till the day Jesus comes.

But Jesus said that. I remember getting a letter from some college once. Twice I got a letter.

Brother Jack, you've written so many books. We want to give you an honorary title of doctor. I didn't even reply to the letter.

I threw it in the trash can. Because Jesus said you must be a brother. Because that is the greatest title on earth.

Do you know why it is the greatest title on earth? Because you are calling me a younger brother of Jesus Christ. See when I call you brother, you're not my blood brother. Why do I call you brother? I'm saying you're a younger brother of Jesus Christ.

You're a younger sister of Jesus Christ. Why do you want to give up that high title and take some low title like reverend or something like that? I'm just showing you how Christianity has given up this heavenly life and become just like all the earthly people. Most Christians are like that.

And that's the reason sometimes we have to start another church to teach people how to live a heavenly life. Every church is teaching people how to live an earthly life. We have to start a church that teaches people how to live a heavenly life.

You see John the Baptist said in Matthew chapter 3 this is the way he prepared people for the coming of Christ. And before Jesus comes into your life also there must be a preparation. And here is the preparation.

Matthew chapter 3 verse 2 He told the people of Israel repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He didn't say it has come. It is coming.

It is near. It's coming very close. It's very near.

He was saying about how Jesus would come and establish the kingdom of heaven. Why did he say that? What does repent mean? The Tamil translation is excellent. It explains it clearly.

It's turning your mind around. You are facing one direction and then you are turning around the other direction. He was preaching to the nation of Israel.

They were looking in one direction for 1500 years from the time of Moses. You can read that in Deuteronomy 28. They were looking at earthly blessings.

Earthly prosperity. Turn to Deuteronomy 28. You read there Deuteronomy chapter 28 This is the blessing Moses promised to them.

He said if you obey God verse 1 diligently and keep all his commandments first of all the Lord will make you the highest nation in the whole earth. Today people say America is the highest nation on the earth. They like that position.

The Lord told the Israelites I will make you the highest nation on the earth. That has no value in heaven. But on earth to be the most powerful nation in the world has got a lot of value.

The Lord said further on in verse 4 You will have many children your animals will produce many children your flocks will produce a lot of children. In those days a man's wealth was not in a bank. His wealth was in his animals and in his feet.

They didn't have any factories and all that. So the Lord said I will bless your fields I will bless your crops See in verse 5 your basket and your kneading bowl will be blessed. In verse 11 the last part Read verse 11 The Lord will make your bond in prosperity.

He will make you prosperous in your field and in your cattle and everything. In verse 12 He will send rain upon your land. And you will have so much money that you will have money to lend to other nations and you will never have to borrow.

Imagine having so much money not just to loan a person but to loan to a whole country. That is the blessing they were promised. There is not one promise here I will make you more spiritual.

I will make you overcome sin. No no no No promise that I will make you not even a promise that I will take you to heaven. It was only And when a Christian is only interested in He is living in Deuteronomy 28 He is not living in Romans chapter 6 or Romans chapter 8 A spiritually minded Christian lives in Romans 8 not Deuteronomy 28 So here were Israelites living in Deuteronomy 28 for 1500 years If they got sick it was because God was punishing them If they were poor it was because God was punishing them If they became rich it was God's blessing them If they were healthy God was blessing them For them the mark of blessing was health and wealth That is not Romans 8 That is Deuteronomy 28 Today most churches are preaching Deuteronomy 28 again That is why they live an earthly life That is why they are defeated by sin Like John the Baptist said Repent Turn around from watching this Deuteronomy 28 you have been watching for 1500 years This Deuteronomy 28 you have been watching for 1500 years from that turn around That is the kingdom of earth Now another kingdom is coming Kingdom of heaven Has the kingdom of heaven already come?

Or is it going to come when Jesus returns to earth? Let us read in Mark chapter 9 verse 1 Jesus said to the people standing there Some of you standing here Mark chapter 9 verse 1 This is 2000 years ago He told some people you will see the kingdom of God in your lifetime How is that? He said when it comes with power That is what he said here That is the secret Because Jesus used the same word in Acts 1 verse 8 He spoke about that power coming to earth He said the power of heaven will come into your life When the Holy Spirit comes upon you So wait for that And they waited 10 days And the Holy Spirit came into their life He was upon them till then Now he came inside them He was near them Now he came inside them And he made them a heavenly people That is the mark of a man filled with the Holy Spirit Why?

Many people say if you are filled with the Holy Spirit you will speak in tongues No, that may be a gift God gives But 1 Corinthians 12 is very clear that not all speak in tongues But one thing is for every Christian That the Holy Spirit will make us heavenly Because he is the Spirit of Heaven Let me tell you something Even if you try for a 100 years you cannot make yourself a heavenly person Do you think if a dog tries for

all its life it can become a human being? Do you think if a pig tries all its life it can even become a cat?

No And you can try all your life you cannot become a heavenly minded person The Holy Spirit has to do a miracle in our hearts And when he comes and does a miracle he can make us a heavenly minded person We can only repent that's all And when the Holy Spirit sees that you have turned away from the things of earth and facing the things of heaven And you want that more than these earthly things Then the Holy Spirit will come and fill you and make you a heavenly person But if your mind is always on earthly things And you say Oh God fill me with the Holy Spirit You may speak in tongues but you will be an earthly minded useless Christian You will be just like those Israelites You know why the Holy Spirit came to earth?

To make us heavenly people That's what John the Baptist was saying Turn around Because now the kingdom of heaven is near So I want you to pray a prayer I want you to pray that in this weekend these 2-3 days God will really help you to change your mind Make us heavenly people Or at least change our direction before we leave this place Let's pray Heavenly Father Help us to hear the voice of the Spirit In these days that we will not miss what you are trying to say to each of us We should not miss what you are trying to say to each of us God you have so many wonderful things in your word for us We don't want to In the name of Jesus we pray Amen For more information

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