

We Have a Father in Heaven

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God as a loving Father who encourages and fixes our mistakes. It encourages honesty in prayer, unity in marriage, and daily encouragement to others. The speaker highlights the power of prayer, the cleansing blood of Jesus, and the need to walk in the light by being honest with God.

Scripture: Jeremiah 33:3, 1 John 1:7, Matthew 18:19, John 17:4, Romans 8:15, Hebrews 3:13, Romans 15:5, Matthew 6:9

Topics: "God as a Loving Father", "The Power of Prayer and Honesty"

Description

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Transcript

I don't know whether you have noticed one thing between the way the Old Testament prophets spoke and the way Jesus spoke. I don't know whether you noticed it. I took a long time to discover it myself.

But if you read carefully in the Old Testament and the New Testament, Prophets always stood up and spoke. Jesus almost always sat down and spoke. Did you notice that? If you haven't, next time you read the New Testament, just see how Jesus spoke.

He would sit in a boat, He would sit in a mountain, He would sit by the sea. Many, many times, even in the temple, it says in John 8, He sat down and spoke. There's a reason for it.

I'm not saying it's wrong to stand up. There are times in the Church we have to speak like a prophet. There are times in the Church we have to speak like a father.

But the Church is a family. And when a father is speaking to his children around the dining table, he doesn't stand up. He sits, and the children sit around the table, and he says, My children, and he tells them what they need to hear.

So an elder brother has two functions. One is as a father to the children. A lot of my function is like that.

And the older I get, the more I have become like a father to more and more people. So that's one reason to sit down. The other is my legs are not as strong as they were when they were younger.

We stand up like a teacher. In a classroom, a teacher doesn't sit down. A teacher stands up in the classroom and teaches.

So we have that function too. So I just mentioned that in Vasa. I have the habit of trying to get the most out of every verse, particularly in the New Testament.

The New Testament is written in Greek, and the Old Testament is written in Hebrew. I don't know either language. But I thank God that great scholars of Hebrew and Greek have translated the Bible.

We who know English, there are so many translations that we can get the benefit of the Greek and the Hebrew without knowing Greek and Hebrew. So I look at a number of translations. I don't believe all of them.

I believe that that which is closest to translation of the Greek and Hebrew, in my opinion, is the New American Standard Bible, and closer than the King James Version. And if that offends some of you, so be it. But I have found... I used the King James Version from the time I was converted in 1959 to 1971.

So I still remember my verses from there. But I found subsequently there were things that were wrong, for example. For example, in Acts Chapter 12, the King James Version translates that Peter was kept in prison until Easter.

Easter? Herod did not celebrate Easter. But you read the King James Version, it says Easter. It's not Easter, it's Passover.

That's just one example. I could tell you many other examples where the translation was wrong. But it was translated in a time where people were celebrating Easter.

So they wrote it like that. But I go to the New American Standard Bible, there's just one example where it's very accurate. And the other thing is the King James Version is written in the language of 1611, and English was very different in those days.

And some words very clearly are different. Particularly you read in 1 Thessalonians 4, we who are alive, talking about the rapture when Christ comes alive, we who are alive will not prevent those who are asleep in Christ. How do you understand that? Are you going to sit on their graves and prevent them from rising up from the dead? But prevent did not mean in 1611 what it means today.

In 1611, prevent means going ahead of. That's one example. I live in India where English is a second language.

Not for me, but for most people. So if they read something in 1611 English, they won't understand it. So I recommend the New American Standard to everyone in India, so that it's written in today's language.

But in addition, I also look at other paraphrases. I read, this is a translation. A paraphrase, I would take only to help, but if I want to get the accurate meaning, I go to the translation, which is the NASB.

But sometimes I get a little light on some of those other verses from a paraphrase. I use the Living Bible and the Message paraphrase. I don't accept everything in it, because it's not a translation.

But I'll give you one example. It blessed me so much that I wrote it in front of one of my Bibles. Luke chapter 10.

You know, Jesus sent out his disciples to go and preach. Verse 1. Seventy of them. And they came back and said to him, in Luke chapter 10, verse 17.

The seventy returned with joy and said, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name. And Jesus said, I was watching this Satan falling from heaven like lightning. I give you authority over serpents and scorpions and other.

And particularly verse 20. Verse 20 is a lovely verse. Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you.

But rejoice that your names are written in heaven. And I read that in the Message paraphrase. It was something like this, verse 20.

Don't rejoice in your agenda for rejoicing. It's not in your authority over demons. But in God's authority over you.

That really spoke to my heart. I mean, it doesn't come out so clearly here, even in the NASB. But the paraphrase was so vivid.

Don't rejoice in your authority over evil. But in God's authority over you. How much have I allowed God to have authority over me? I said, that's what I must rejoice in.

Not that I have authority over demons or any such thing. And it's not, and the other part was, not what you have done for God should be what you rejoice in. But what God has done for you.

That has also spoke to me, the second part of it. Not what I have done for God. Sometimes we rejoice in what I have done for God.

I did this, or I went and somebody was blessed through my message. No! Don't rejoice in that. Your agenda for rejoicing is God, what God has done for you.

And not what you have done for God. Very simple, but I've never read a paraphrase or translation of that verse that brought out that meaning so well. Now the message is not accurate in every place, and so I don't recommend it.

But when I compare, I sometimes find the verse, it's such a blessed paraphrase of that verse. My agenda for rejoicing is not that the demons are subject to me, that I have authority over evil, but that God has authority over me. And also, I rejoice not in what I have done for God, but what God has done for me.

That's just in passing. I thought anything that blesses me I must share with others. When Jesus taught us to pray, in Matthew chapter 6, He said, Pray then in this way, Matthew 6 verse 9. He didn't say we have to repeat it.

We don't have to blindly repeat those words every day. When people don't know how to pray, it's good for them to repeat it. In my younger days, my parents just taught me to repeat this prayer.

From the time I was, I think, maybe six or seven years old, every day in the morning, I would kneel on my bed before getting out of bed, on my bed, as a little boy, and pray this prayer. It's the only prayer I knew, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, and so on. And then I'd get out of bed.

Even though I prayed, Thy will be done as it is in heaven, I never did His will. I just did what I wanted to do the rest of the day. But as I've grown up more and I became a Christian, I meditated on this prayer a lot more.

In fact, there's a whole book of mine there called, God-Centered Praying. The whole book is about this prayer. So if you want to read more about this prayer, you can take that book, God-Centered Praying.

The whole book is explaining this prayer. There's so much in it. But I just want to say a few things.

One is, if you had gone to an Old Testament saint or prophet, like even John the Baptist, the greatest of them, and told him, Do you think you can call God your father? He says, Oh no. He's not my father. He's Almighty God.

I dare not call him by any other name. We call him Jehovah. We say, Praise Jehovah.

You know the word Hallelujah? Which Christians often say. Shall I tell you some surprising things about it? It's never found in the New Testament. Until you come to the book of Revelation.

I never see Jesus using that word. Even once. I mention this because some Pentecostals particularly have asked me, Brother Zak, why don't you now and then say Hallelujah, like many preachers in Pentecostal churches say.

I say, as it is I speak for so long, if I add a hundred Hallelujahs in between, my message will go much longer. So I want to spend my time saying something profitable. So I don't say so many Hallelujahs.

And the other reason is some people say Hallelujah because they're thinking of what to say next. I forgot what's my next point. So I keep saying Hallelujah till I think of the next point.

So I don't want to do that type of trick either. But the other thing I studied, you know because Hallelujah, Yah is the short for Jehovah. Hallel is praise.

Hallelujah means praise the Lord. Well I say it in English. Praise the Lord.

It's the same thing. Really. You can say it in Hebrew if you like.

Hallelujah. But people understand it better in English. Praise the Lord.

So since I speak mostly in English, I say praise the Lord. It's the same thing. I don't know whether you know that till today.

The other thing I discovered in the New Testament, I mean I show people some surprising things in the New Testament they've never known before. Like what I message paraphrase of Luke 10 20. But here's another one.

Do you know the first time the word Hallelujah is mentioned in the Bible is in Revelation 19? And there it is. Hallelujah that Babylon is destroyed. Aha.

It's not Hallelujah I got a new job. Or Hallelujah I got more money. Or even I found a good wife.

No. Hallelujah that false Christianity has been destroyed. That's one thing I really say Hallelujah for.

Wherever corrupt Christianity. And corrupt Christianity is mostly centered around money. There are two gods in the world.

And it's not God and the devil, by the way. Jesus said the two masters are God and money. Luke 16 and verse 13.

You cannot serve God and wealth. He didn't say you cannot have wealth. He said you cannot serve wealth.

He didn't say you cannot earn money. But he said don't serve money but serve God. Because you will serve one or the other.

God or money. How do you know which one you are serving? Now if I were to ask you are you serving God or money? You are earning money. All of us are earning money to live.

Jesus also earned money as a carpenter right up to the age of 30. He probably started working when he was 15 or 16 as a carpenter when Joseph died. And then he was the eldest in the family and he had to work for 12 to 14 years.

And he worked hard, earned money to support 8 members in his family. One widowed mother and 4 brothers and 2 sisters and himself. He had an 8 member family.

Much bigger family than many of you have. And he worked not as a corporate executive or anything. He worked as a carpenter.

He wasn't earning much but he lived very simply I am sure. And I don't think they had separate bedrooms. All of them probably, all the boys slept in one room and the girls in another.

That was it. That's the type of house these poor people lived in. Remember Jesus lived like that.

Next time you think of complaining to any of your children that you don't have a separate room for yourself. Jesus never had one in his entire life. Anyway, that's besides the point.

What I am saying is that he worked hard and earned his living. But money was not his God. His Heavenly Father was God.

And a true disciple of Jesus will not live for money. And will not make a decision on the basis of money but on the basis of what God says. So how do you know whether you are serving God or money? I had to face this myself.

I was earning a very high salary when I was a naval officer. And then when I quit the Navy and started serving the Lord and gave away all my income, I used to live on occasional gifts I got. My income dropped 85%.

Now a lot of people who went into Christian work in India, their income went up 85% or 10 times. Because most of the people in Christian work in India, listen to this, most of the people in Christian work in India, I know them, did not have a proper job when they started Christian work. If the parents have an intelligent

child, they say, he must be a doctor or a computer engineer or something like that.

And if someone is failing in every class, let him go to serve the Lord. This is the truth. And you got to live in India to know that.

And that guy who goes to serve the Lord earns more than the doctor and the lawyer because he sends reports to America about thousands being saved and all that, all lies. And a lot of dumb people in Western countries send him money, not verifying what's happening there. And he lives in grand style.

This is the truth. I lived there. I lived there for 80 years and I'm speaking from my experience.

And I've traveled from North to South, East to West. I've traveled all over India in the 56 years I've served the Lord. And I know.

And a lot of Christian preachers hate me because I expose all this humbug going on in the name of Christ. They are not serving God, they are serving money. And if you withdraw the money, they'll stop serving God.

That's what I mean. But that also applies for those who are not full-time workers. When you make a decision about a job, when you make a decision to move somewhere for a job, what is the thing that determines what you... Do you ever think about what is God's will in that? Or do you only think in terms of how much you're going to earn? No, I'm not trying to condemn anybody.

I'm just telling you what Jesus said. You cannot serve God and money. Luke 16, 13.

So how to choose, how to find out whether you serve God and money is very easy. Let me use an example. Here's a man called A. Here's a man called B. And they both say, Zack is my servant.

How do you find out? You sit there and you tell A and B, you call Zack, let's see who he goes to. A calls me and B calls me. Zack, come here, Zack, come here.

And I go to A. You find out immediately. Zack is A's servant, B is just fooling. Okay, now let me apply that to God and money.

Now you're sitting here, God is calling you this way, money is calling you this way. Who have you listened to in your life so far? Be honest before God. When you sought direction for your life, did money determine your decision? Or did God determine the decision? Did you even consult God at all? Or was it only money and comfort? Money, comfort, ease.

I'll go. I'll also add God as a little helper. You know, like rich people have a servant or a maid in their house to help in the work.

Yeah, I'd like to have God help me. Why do people employ a maid in their house? To make life a little easier in the home for the wife. Yeah, I'd like to have God along as a maid or a manservant.

I tell you honestly, that is exactly how many Christians treat God. They've decided where they're going to do, what they're going to do. Money is the main factor, comfort and ease and honor and position and everything else.

But they want God as a manservant. They'd like to have a servant in the house to help them. Makes life a little easier if you have a servant in the house.

God is there, I can always call on Him. Hey, Lord, I want this, I want this. Get this for me.

You know, what do you tell a manservant? Go to the market, get this, get this. That's exactly how people go to God. I'm telling you the truth.

If it hurts you, it's meant to hurt. So that you wake up and don't waste the rest of your life. You can do nothing about your past life.

And I'm not trying to get you to feel all condemned about your past. I'm telling you about the future. I don't talk about the past because I know you can do nothing about it.

Except repent. And be honest. I'll tell you one thing.

To all of you sitting here. If you're honest in responding to what you hear from me. Your life can change today.

No matter how much you've messed up your past life. At least from today. Say, Lord, I want to do it good from now on.

It's like eating junk food. You know what junk food is? It's a very common expression in America. It's become more and more.

People have become more and more aware. That a lot of food that people eat is not good for their health. And that's why they get so many sicknesses.

And a lot of food that Christians, not Christians. A lot of food that people eat. Particularly rich people who can go anywhere they like.

And go to any restaurant they like. Or hotel. And it's junk food.

And there's so much awareness of it that has come through the internet and other things. That people are aware now of what is known as junk food. Which is not good for the health.

So sensible people read that. They say, I'm putting on such a lot of weight. And I'm eating a lot of junk food.

It'll shorten my life. And I can leave my wife as a widow. I can leave my children fatherless.

Just because I ate a lot of junk food. I don't want to do that. I've been careful about that, like that myself.

I say, Lord, if I can deny myself something. And live a little longer. To bless some more people.

Not to make more money. No, no, no. I lost interest in that long ago.

But to help a little more people come closer to God. I am willing to deny myself the enjoyment that certain food brings. Because I can live one more year.

To bless somebody on the face of this earth. To come closer to God. I want to ask you.

Are you willing to do that? You don't have to be a preacher like me. You can bless people without being a preacher. You can bless people just by giving them a phone call.

And telling them. Brother, I read this verse today in the Bible. I'm not a preacher.

You say, you tell your friend. I read this verse this morning. It blessed me so much.

And this is what I got out of it. I just want to take two minutes to tell you what I got out of it. Put the phone down.

You prophesied to that person. And that person may come back to you later on. You know that word you said to me that day when you called me up? It met such a need in my life.

You didn't realize it. Do you ever do that? Do you ever think of doing that? Of blessing someone with some word that you heard? Particularly a good friend of yours. Don't call strangers up and tell them.

Because they may not want to hear what you have to say. But someone you know well. Your relatives.

Maybe your son or daughter. Or your dad or someone. Here is something you got.

If you could live one more year. And bless people like that for 365 days. Just by denying yourself certain foods.

Don't you think you would do that? I would. The Bible wants us to be disciplined. If you read 1 Corinthians 9 it says.

Athletes don't eat everything. They will never win the marathon race or the 100 meters race. If they just eat what they like.

And sleep as long as they like. And do whatever they like. They will come last in the race.

They won't even be selected by the country to represent the country in the Olympics. They discipline themselves. A lot of people win the marathon race in the Olympics.

They run every single day. They run a marathon for 4 years. And then get selected and win the race.

And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9. The last 10 verses of 1 Corinthians 9. Think of that. You must discipline yourself. Because the Christian race is also like that.

And there is a beautiful passage there in 1 Corinthians 9. I want to show you first before I come back here. 1 Corinthians chapter 9. Verse 24. Don't you know that those who run in a race all run.

But only one receives the prize. Run in such a way that you may win. Now listen.

This is written to the Corinthian Christians. Who are the most carnal, worldly, fleshly of all the churches. And you are telling such people to win the race.

Yes. Even the most worldly, fleshly, carnal, baby Christians. Can change their attitude and start running in such a way that they can win.

That's an encouragement to everybody here. There may be very few people sitting here who are so carnal as the Corinthians. If there is hope for them, there is hope for you.

Run in such a way that you may win. Now he is not saying that to one person. It's not like one father telling his son.

You are taking part in the Olympics. I want you to win. No.

He is telling 200 Christians in the church. Corinthian church. 200 of them.

All of you can come first. All of you can come first. Yes.

This is the wonderful thing about the Christian race. It's not only one person who comes first. All 200 can come first.

I don't know how many are here. But I want to say to you. All of you can come first in this race.

If you do what it says here in verse 25. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control. In all things.

They do it to receive a gold medal or in those days a wreath on their heads. But you are getting an incorruptible, imperishable award. Therefore, I, he says about himself, Paul.

I will always run in such a way, not without aim. I don't run here and there. I have got a definite goal.

I discipline myself to get there. And I will get rid of everything in my life that is going to hinder me from getting there. If food is going to make me die one year earlier, I will deny myself such junk food.

Now you may think this is a message on eating. No. This is a message on living a godly life.

I don't want to live. I will tell you honestly. I don't want to live one day less than what God planned for my life before I was born.

I have done a lot of foolish things in my unconverted days. Which could have shortened my life. What to do? But I changed my ways now.

And I have disciplined myself. Because I want to live healthy and strong. I don't want to be a burden to others.

I don't want to be a burden to my wife. I don't want to be a burden to my children. I want to be healthy and serve God as long as I can.

There are certain things I have no control over. I don't have any control over the atmosphere or the things, the surroundings in which I live. But I have control over what I can eat.

And how I live. I can decide whether I can go for a walk every day or not. And keep myself fit.

Because I want to live, not for myself, not to make money. I mean people do that to win a race. Paul says, why can't you do that to live for God? And so he says, I run in such an aim, I want to win.

And now he says, verse 27. This is the verse I was coming to. I discipline my body and make it my slave.

There is a beautiful paraphrase of that, I think in the Living Bible, which says, I don't let my body tell me what I should do or what I should eat. I tell my body what it should do. I like that.

Most people, their body tells them, come on, eat this, do this. Sleep a little longer. And we obey the body.

Paul says no. I tell my body, don't eat that. Eat this.

Don't sleep so long. Get up. I tell my body what it should do.

I don't let my body tell me. If your body tells you, you are a slave of your body. You are not a slave of Jesus Christ.

It is very simple. I am not teaching you some health thing. I am teaching you what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 9.27. I tell my body what it should do.

Why? Because I want to win a prize. Not some earthly award to come before the Lord and say, Lord, I finished the work you gave me to do. Do you know what Jesus said in the last day of his life in John 17? Father, I have glorified you by finishing the work you gave me to do.

Do you know there is only one way you can glorify God? Finish the work God gave you to do. That's why I want to win the prize. Otherwise, listen to this warning.

I, the great apostle Paul, verse 27, can preach to others, and when I reach the finishing line, God will say, disqualified. Disqualified! Paul? Can Paul be disqualified? He says, yes. He says, if I don't discipline myself like this, I will be disqualified.

So I discipline myself. I ask my Paul on the basis of verse 27, Paul, what do you do? Tell me honestly, what do you do to prevent being disqualified by the Lord finally, when he judges everybody? One thing Paul will say, I'll tell you, I'll tell you, Zach, Paul tells me, whatever I do, I tell my body what it should do and what it should eat and when it should get up and what it should do. My body does not dictate to me.

A simple thing. You can change your life. Apply that to God and money.

I don't let money tell me what I should do. I let God tell me what I should do. I need money, so I consider that.

I'm not saying you should take the least paying job or go to some jungle because life will be tougher there. No, that is called Spartan. You know, the Spartans were people in ancient Greece who believed that you must live a tough life and make your body suffer.

I'm not like that. I'm not a follower of John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey. I've never eaten locusts and wild honey.

I'm a follower of Jesus who could enjoy a good meal to such an extent that they said, look how Jesus eats. They called him a glutton. But he also knew how to fast for 40 days.

He could enjoy a good meal and he could fast for 40 days. That's the balance. But I believe Jesus did not let his body tell him what to do.

He disciplined himself. He'd get up early in the morning and go to pray. Everybody likes to sleep early in the morning.

But Jesus knew that the Father had a certain limited time for him to do the work on the earth. 33 and a half years. And if he fooled around a lot of those days, he would never complete what the Father, even in a

hundred years, he would not have completed.

He was so disciplined in his life that he completed. And he says, turn with me to John 17. John 17 and verse 4. Read carefully.

Read every word carefully. I have glorified you on the earth, John 17 4, by finishing the work you gave me to do. That's what it says in my margin.

By finishing the work you gave me to do, I have glorified you on earth. I think all of us sitting here will say, I want to glorify God on earth. I'll tell you how.

By finishing the work God planned for you before you were born. Don't shorten your life by anger, bitterness. It will shorten your life, anger and bitterness.

Don't shorten your life by gluttony. Don't shorten your life by running off doing things which you want to do. You cannot finish the work.

You say, I want to glorify God. Well, the only way to glorify God is by finishing the work he gave you to do. Read John 17 4, never forget it.

I have glorified you on earth having finished the work you gave me to do. I want to say that at the end of my life. Lord, I messed up my life for many, many years in my unconverted days and all of us have to say that.

We can't do anything about that. And I quoted that verse to you the other day. John 17, sorry Acts 17 verse 30.

The times of ignorance God overlooks. Fine. But now he tells us all to repent.

To change our mind. So forget about the days when you did foolish things. Maybe some of you have been doing foolish things up till today.

Fine. Start today. And say, Father I want to discipline myself to run this race.

I don't want my body to tell me anymore what I should do. How much I should eat or what I should eat, how long I should sleep or anything. We all need sleep.

You can't be fresh to do the day's work if you don't get sleep enough. But you can be lazy. You can take that to an extreme, way beyond food is a good thing, but you can be a glutton.

I want to finish the work that God gave me to do. Have you read this verse in Philippians chapter 3? Philippians 3. Who are the enemies of the cross of Christ? Enemies of the cross? You think those are the people of other religions who persecute the Christians. But here it speaks about the enemies of the cross of Christ in verse 18.

Many people walk of whom I have often told you. Philippians 3.18 Whose God I tell you, even weeping, verse 18. They are the enemies of the cross of Christ whose end is destruction.

Who are they, Paul? Verse 19. Their God is their stomach. It's in the Bible.

Verse 19. Their God is their belly. It's written in the margin of my Bible.

Their God is their appetite. Have you read that verse in the Bible? When you read that, do you ask yourself, is my appetite my God by any chance? Is my appetite my God? I enjoy a good meal. Many people are kind enough to give me a good meal when I visit their home.

I enjoy it. I don't pretend that Oh, I'm not going to eat that, no. I've taken the trouble to prepare a good meal.

I want to honor them by enjoying a good meal. I'm sure Jesus did too. But his God was not his stomach.

When he was on his own and he had control over what he would eat in his own home as you have in your own home. I don't have control over what I eat when I visit somebody else's home, but I do have control when my wife and I are living together in our home, we have complete control over what we eat. And I have decided my God will not be by stomach.

No. My appetite will not be my God. Because, I'll tell you why.

Not because I want to look physically fit and trim. That is honor seeking. To look physically fit and trim before others and to get honor from others.

Oh, what a slim muscular man. I'm not interested in that honor. I want to live every single day that God planned for me to live on this earth.

A lot of very slim people are not physically fit. They get honor, but they die before their time. I'm more interested in being healthy to live as long as God wants me to live on this earth so that I can finish the work God gave me to do.

Not to make more money. But if there's one more soul I can bring to Christ, before I leave this earth whom I'm supposed to bring to Christ, I want to bring that person to Christ. Is that your passion? I want to ask you, what type of Christian are you? How would you show your gratitude to Jesus for dying on the cross for you if you're not serious about doing what he wants you to do? And I'm telling you one thing you can do from today onwards.

Don't let your God be your belly, your stomach or your appetite. Keep fit. Don't eat things which are junk food and don't eat a whole lot of food which is not good for you.

Discipline yourself in your terms of food and sleep. These are the two things we need where we need to discipline ourselves so that I can finish the work God's appointed for me and you must finish the work God's appointed for you. It says, Who are the enemies of the cross of Christ? Verse 18.

Those who God is their belly. Have you ever thought that one who worships food is an enemy of the cross of Christ? Connect those two verses. Enemies of the cross of Christ.

Paul says, I'm telling you, weeping. Not the non-Christians. No.

Sitting in the church. Enemies of the cross of Christ. And Paul had such a concern.

He says, I'm weeping as I write this. My tears are falling on this letter. These enemies of the cross of Christ.

He's not just rebuking people. He says, there are people whose God is their stomach. Their mind, verse 19, is on earthly things.

Those are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose God is their stomach and their mind is always on some earthly thing. How to make a little more money here and how to enjoy myself a little more here.

The mind is all the time. But of course, they come to church. They never miss a Sunday meeting.

Oh no. They get a testimony. That brother, boy, he and his family are there every Sunday in the church.

They're always on time. They're always there to help in arranging the chairs and many other things. They never miss anything.

But six days of the week, their God is their stomach. And their mind is set on earthly things. God and money are the two masters.

Well, but as we are to pray, Matthew chapter 6, our Father is who? Not money. Our Father who art in heaven. That's the God we worship.

He's not on earth. He's in heaven. And I can call Him my Father.

Do you know God is your Father? You know, the word in the Hebrew is it's not Jehovah, but Abba. Abba is the Hebrew word for Father. In Indian language, it is Abba.

Or Dad in English. The actual translation of that word, Abba, you read in Romans 8, it says the Spirit cries out within us. I think it's verse 16 or something in Romans 8. It says, Abba, Father.

And the actual translation would not be Abba. Abba is a Hebrew word. Dad.

I must show that to you. So that you don't think I'm bluffing. Romans chapter 8. How do you know that the Holy Spirit is in you? Here it is.

Romans 8, 15. We have received a spirit of adoption. The last part of Romans 8, 15.

Which cries out, Hebrew Abba, English Dad. The Spirit comes out within me and cries out, Dad! Father! How many of you pray to God saying, Dad? Unfortunately, when I was a new Christian, nobody told me to say that. They taught me to pray, Oh God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. But I call him Dad now.

You know this song, for example. I don't sing some of the songs that are sung. Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah.

Have you heard that song? Very popular among Christian circles. Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah. Pilgrim through this land.

Or something. You know, when I sing that, I don't raise my voice. The others all sing, Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah.

And I quietly say, Guide me, O my Heavenly Father. Because I don't call him Jehovah. I'll tell you honestly, I don't call him Jehovah.

People say, there are many songs like this. Jehovah is the true God. Jehovah is the true God.

Jehovah, Jehovah. I never sing those songs. You say, what's wrong with that? Isn't that his name? Supposing my son came to me one day and said, Mr. Poonen, I'd like to talk to you.

My son. I say, what's wrong, son? Are you angry with me? Are you angry with me? Why do you call me Mr. Poonen? And he says, isn't that your name? It is, but not to you. You call me Dad.

Others call me Mr. Poonen, not you. So I go to God and say, Jehovah. And God will say, the Jews are supposed to call me.

You're not a Jew. You're my son. Why do you call me Jehovah? So I sing, guide me, O my Heavenly Father.

You may say that's a small thing. It may be a small thing for you. But I don't let my son call me Mr. Poonen.

I say, I'm Dad to you. You're my son. And that's how my Heavenly Father treats me also.

I'm not Jehovah to you. I'm your Dad. Call me Dad.

It's made a world of difference to me. Brought security in my life. Jehovah means distant.

Dad. He's so near. So caring.

If you, being evil fathers, know how to give good things to your children, how much more your Heavenly Dad will give you. Those are the words of Jesus. Entire life, Jesus would call him Father, Father, Father, Father.

He never called him God except when he was dying on the cross. And at the end of that period, I told you, he took the anesthetic. It's almost towards the end of his... And how do we know the job was done on the cross? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? God, God, God.

He's standing before the judge of the universe for my sin. Took the punishment. Eternal hell in three hours.

How do I know it's finished? At the end, he said, It is finished. Praise God. It is finished.

Thank you, Father. And the veil in the temple that blocked off the presence of God was torn. Saying, You can come now into the Father's presence.

And that's where I live now. I don't live this side of the veil. I live in the Father's presence now.

And then he says beautiful words. You remember? His last words on the cross? What is it? Oh, God? No. Father.

Back to Father again. Into your hands I commend my spirit. And he gave up his spirit.

It was back to Father again. That's how I know the job was done. There are some people who teach, believe it or not, that Jesus went three days to hell.

Rubbish. He was in paradise that same day. If he had gone to hell, he could not have met the thief.

The dying thief. He told the thief, today you'll be with me in paradise. And you know how clever people can twist that? The Jehovah's Witnesses, they don't believe that Jesus was God.

They believe he was a created being sent to die for the sins of the world. No created being can suffer eternity in three hours. That's the clearest proof.

No created being can suffer eternal hell in three hours. Only an infinite being can suffer eternity in three hours. He can suffer eternity in one minute.

That is the clearest proof that only God Almighty himself could die for me on the cross. Otherwise, he'd have to spend eternity in hell. And if he spends eternity in hell, it'll only be for one person.

But an infinite God can suffer it for all people. If Jesus was a created being, he can die for one person. And he has to spend eternity in hell in place of that one person.

But because he is God, in three hours he can spend eternity in hell, and he can suffer for everybody. So what do the Jehovah's Witnesses do about this verse which says, He told the thief, Verily, willy, I say unto you, today you'll be with me in Paradise. You know what they do? Very clever.

They just put a little comma after today. Verily, willy, I say unto you today, comma, you will be with me in Paradise one day. Very clever, isn't it? I'm just telling you the amount of deception that goes on in Christendom.

The amount that people will do. In the beginning was, John 1, 1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. You know how they translated the Jehovah's Witnesses? In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was A, God.

Yeah? I'm not afraid to mention these deceptions. I love them. I love non-Christians.

I love Hindus, Muslims, I love atheists. If there's a human being on Earth, I cannot love. I'm not Christ-like.

God so loved the whole world. He loved Christians, He loved Hindus, Muslims, Atheists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the world. He loved same-sex people, and He loved transgender people, but He doesn't agree with all of them.

He doesn't agree with all the other names I mentioned. But He loves all of them. I want to love all of them.

I want to save all of them. I don't want them to live in their deception and go to hell. That's why I love them.

When I point out an error in somebody, if I point out an error in the teaching of some false religion, I'm not hating them. No. I say, that's not the truth.

I love you, brother, but that's not the truth. It's very important to know that. If somebody came and told me 2 plus 2 is 5, because he never went to school, I don't blame him.

There are many people in India, in the slums, they play in the mud the whole day. The father and mother are working some type of small job. The children are just playing around.

They never go to school. And I will not be surprised if they say 2 plus 2 is 5. I will not look down on them. I will not despise them.

And I'll sit with them and say, here's 2, here's 2, put them together. It's 4, not 5. So that's how I would treat people. But I would not agree with them.

I don't love him by telling me, ok, ok, 2 plus 2 is 5. That's not love. That's deception. So, agreeing with somebody just for the sake of peace.

I don't agree with people for the sake of peace. I say, I'm sorry, what you believe is not correct, my brother. Our father who art in heaven.

So when we pray to God, we must call him Dad. I enjoy it sometimes, when I get up early in the morning, before I get out of bed, and say, Dad, thank you for this day. Help me to accomplish all today that you have left me alive.

One more day I'm alive. And boy, when you get near the age of 83, you're thankful for every day you have. One more day to live for you, Lord.

One more day that I can discipline myself and do your will. One more day that I can be a blessing to somebody on this earth. At least one person.

If not anybody else, at least to my wife. There's always somebody you can be a blessing to. The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 3, Encourage one another daily.

Have you read that verse? Hebrews. You take these words seriously. Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 13.

It's a great commandment. By the way, it's not, commandments in the Bible are not optional. There's no command that is optional.

There's no choice. Choose A or B. There's no such thing. Encourage one another as long as it is called today.

Day after day. Okay, simple question. Who is the one you meet daily? Your family members.

I think all of you have got some family members. Father, mother, husband, wife, children. The ones who live in your own home.

Those are the ones we must encourage daily. If you're married and your partner is alive, your husband, your wife, everyday. If they are dead and gone, maybe your children.

Those are the ones we must encourage you. And others we meet once a week or once everyday. It's a great verse.

I try my best to follow it. Not to preach to people. You can encourage people just by doing something.

Just by doing something. Do a little job for your wife and you encourage her. You don't have to open your mouth.

Or for your husband. But imagine what your home will be like. If you follow the simple thing.

Encourage one another. So, the more I get to know God, the Bible says in Romans 15. Romans 15 we read.

What is God like? He's called here in Romans 15. Verse 5. The God who gives encouragement. Aha! You say, I want to be like God.

Well, God is a God who gives encouragement. Romans 15.5. You want to be like God? Some areas it's tough to be wholly like God. That will take time.

It will take many years for us to become totally free from sin. But encouragement? I'll tell you something. I've never forgotten that somebody spoke to me.

Somebody who did not even know English properly. Just knew a few words of English. A godly man.

Very godly man. I was about 30 years old. Which is more than 50 years ago.

But I still remember it. I met this godly man at a meeting. He was like a father.

Maybe more than 60 or 70 years old. And I was a young, struggling Christian. I was at a conference and he put his hand on my shoulder and says, God has got a plan for you life, my son.

I'd never met him before. He was just a stranger I met in a meeting. But a godly man who put his hand on my shoulder and said, God's got a plan for you, my son.

50 years have gone by and I have not forgotten that encouragement. Did he preach a great sermon? He couldn't speak English properly. He could say this much.

But at that time, it was a word that really encouraged me and I know it does because I remember it today. I learned something from that to do to other people. People need encouragement, I'll tell you this.

I heard a story of two brothers in a church, both very discouraged, walking down the road and they met each other on the road. They spent about 5 minutes together. I don't know what they spoke and then they went home and one called up the other and said, Thank you for that 5 minutes.

I was so discouraged when I met you and I got encouraged. And this chap says, Hey, I was the one who was discouraged when I met you and I got so encouraged meeting you. These were two discouraged people who just met each other for 5 minutes and they encouraged each other.

Just because they met a brother in Christ. They were not preachers. They just shared together something and they went away encouraged.

Do you know how much you can do without being a preacher? Encourage one another daily. God is a God of encouragement. Get to know your Heavenly Father as one who loves, patient, long-suffering.

Learn to know him as a dad. You know how a good dad is? Encouraging. I always tell fathers, a bit of advice to fathers and mothers.

Supposing you have a little kid, maybe 3-4 years old, trying to build something, but he doesn't know how to read the instructions of that building blocks. But you know how little children are. They are pretty proud when they are 4-5 years old.

You go to help them and say, Dad, just leave me. I can do it. Okay, you move away.

And he tries to mix it. It's all crumbling and collapsing. And after about half an hour he comes to you and says, Dad, I'm sorry.

Help me. What do you tell him? I told you so. Never.

Never let those words come out of your mouth towards anybody. That's the voice of the expert. That's the voice to bring a distance between you, the expert, and that poor sinner.

That 5-year-old child. Never say to anybody, I told you so. You know what you should say? Let's fix it, son.

Let's fix it. And you go and sit with him and do it. It could be a young brother in the church who came to you for advice.

Many people come to me for advice. Some of them don't follow it. They mess up their life.

They say, Brother Zak, I didn't do that. I will never say, Remember what I told you three months ago? I told you so. Never will those words come out of my mouth.

Let's say, Brother, let's fix it. There's nothing God cannot fix. No problem he cannot solve.

I have a father. He never tells me, I told you so. He never says that to me.

And I will never say that to another person. Get to know God as a loving father. That's the foundation of your Christian life.

It's the thumb in the finger. I only say there are five things you need to get a good grip. If I want to hold something tight, I can't hold it with two fingers, but with five fingers, it's much better.

To know God as a father is number one. Very important. The blood of Christ.

Word of God, every day. The way of the cross. Fullness of the Holy Spirit.

And then, the grip, the body of Christ. I become one with others. That's how we live the Christian life.

But knowing God as a father, it's so important. I want to encourage all of you, when you wake up in the morning from tomorrow onwards, to begin your day by lying in bed. Even you little children, talk to God and say, Dad.

In public, we say, Father. I don't call him Dad in public prayer, because I see Jesus called him Father. But in private, Jesus said, Abba.

And that's what we read in Romans 8. So, our Father, and one more thing, our Father who art in Heaven, in other words, He is my Dad, but He's a Dad who controls the whole universe. All authority in Heaven and Earth belongs to Him. To Jesus.

My Heavenly God, who is my Heavenly Father. So, the two things, and I begin to pray, and you must remember this in all prayer. I'm talking to my Father, who loves me immensely, who will never say to me, I told you so.

Never. Have some of you made a mess of your life? Did long ago somebody warn you about it? Did God warn you about it, and you didn't listen, and you messed up your life? You come to God today, I'll tell you

something, my dear friend, He will never say to you, I told you so. God doesn't talk like experts.

It's foolish pastors and preachers who talk like that to you, and make you more discouraged than you already are. You come to your Heavenly Father, you'll say, never mind my son, my girl, I'll fix it for you. I have a Father who's fixed 101 things for me.

I messed up a lot in my life, in my unconverted days, but my Father has fixed it all. I'm a very happy person today. There's no gloom in my life.

Discouragement is gone from my life. Self-condemnation disappeared. There are two no-entry roads in my life.

You know these no-entry roads? Don't enter. Discouragement. No-entry road.

Self-condemnation. No-entry road. Fear.

No-entry road. I've discovered some no-entry roads, and I see that sign. Discouragement, I see that sign.

No-entry. What do you do on the traffic, on the streets, if you see a no-entry sign? You avoid it to avoid the police, but not only to avoid the police, but to avoid an accident. You can have an accident.

Cars coming the other way in that street. Forget the police. You'll kill yourself going into a no-entry road.

And that's what happens if you go into this no-entry road called discouragement. Self-condemnation. Fear.

What will happen to me? I'll tell you. You've got a dad who cares for you. Have you messed up your life? He says, I'll fix it for you.

Have your children gone astray because you didn't bring them up properly? You know what I tell people? Married couples who say, Brother Zach, I discovered these truths very late in life, and by the time my children have all gone astray, they're all wayward today, they've grown up. I say, okay, I'll tell you a solution for that. I don't say, I told you so.

I say, let's fix it. You and your wife kneel down. Promise me that you'll kneel down five minutes every day.

That's all. Resolve all differences you have with each other. Remain united.

If two agree, God will answer. We read that in Matthew 18, verse 19. Agree.

And live in agreement. Ask forgiveness for one another. Be quick to ask forgiveness and quick to forgive.

And then kneel down for five minutes. That's all. That's not tough.

Talk to your dad in heaven. Tell him the truth. Take the blame.

Say, Dad, my husband and I, my wife and I, we messed up. Our children have gone astray because of our fault. They're out in the world today.

No interest in God. But you are almighty, our father who art in heaven, who can fix everything. Please, forgive us first.

And please fix this problem for us. We can't do it. Is there anything impossible with God? You know the words of Jesus? With God, nothing is impossible.

What wonderful words. With God, nothing is impossible. Do it every day.

Five minutes a day. United. Make sure your wife and you are united.

If two of you agree concerning anything. Not just for those five minutes. You seek to be completely in agreement.

Okay, you messed up in the past and lost your children. Don't lose your marriage. Now, be united with your husband or your wife and say, Lord, for the sake of my children, if not for the glory of God, we're going to be united to bring our children back into God's kingdom.

I tell you, your prayer will be like putting a rope around them. It may take time to pull them in. I've given that advice around the world to different people.

Very important. Let me read this verse to you in closing. Jeremiah and chapter 33.

It's easy to remember. 3-3-3. Jeremiah 33 verse 3. Jeremiah 3-3-3.

33 verse 3. The Lord says, verse 2, The Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it, call to me and I will answer you. Not I might. I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty things which you do not know.

I will tell you many things that you do not know. Claim that promise. It's good to have a promise.

It's good to have a check in your name when you go to the bank and say, please cash this check for me. The promises of God are like that. You go to the bank of heaven and say, in the name of Jesus, he has signed this.

Please cash this check for me. I want my children to come to Christ. Do it from today.

It can change your life. God is a good God. He cares for us.

Don't believe the lies of the devil when he tells you that's impossible and God hates you or God's fed up with you. Don't believe these lies. He's a liar.

He's lied to man from the time of the Garden of Eden. Don't fall for his lies. Say, Lord, be honest with God.

You know what it means to walk in the light? If we walk in the light, it says the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all sin. 1 John 1.7. I'll explain to you in simple, ordinary language what it means to walk in the light. Light is something that exposes everything.

It means be honest. That's all. To walk in the light with God is to be absolutely honest.

Lord, it's my fault. I messed up. I don't blame anybody else.

I don't blame my wife. I don't blame my husband. I messed up.

That's walking in the light. The blood of Jesus will cleanse you from all sin. You keep blaming other people, nothing will cleanse you.

Your sin will remain on you till the end of your life. Is it difficult to be honest? A prostitute can be honest right now. A murderer can be honest right now.

That's what that murderer did on the cross. I'm guilty. Jesus said, Really? You'll be with me in paradise.

The other thief said, Bring us down from the cross. In other words, I don't think I'm so bad. Maybe a few years in prison for me, but not crucifixion.

I don't deserve it. You know where he is today? He's been burning in hell for 2,000 years. Why? He wouldn't be honest.

Why did this other guy who was just as bad a murderer as him go to paradise? Honest. What else did he do? How many good works did that thief do? Did he even go and ask forgiveness from the people whose father he had murdered or whose husband he had murdered? No, he never got a chance to set right things. But he went to paradise.

Because God sees according to your ability to set things right. Don't condemn yourself over some things you can never set right. Some people condemn, Oh, I can't set that right.

It's such a miserable thing. That guy's already dead. How can I set it right? Forget it.

That thief could set nothing right. God sees according to what you're able to do, not according to what you're not able to do. Be encouraged as you leave this conference.

You'll come to a good church here. I would recommend it to anybody who's living in this area. And if you can move here, move here.

But seek to be a wholehearted disciple of Jesus. And thank God you had the opportunity that you were invited to come here and to hear God's Word. It'll change your life from today.

Believe it. Lord, I believe that what I heard in these days is going to change my life. It's going to change my family life.

It's going to be completely different from today. Will you say Amen with me? A few people agree. Do you say Amen? A few more agree.

Everyone? Amen. Praise the Lord. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I believe we're all agreed. Some are too shy to say it, but I believe they agree in their heart. You are our Father who runs this universe.

We have forgiven everybody. Therefore, we believe you will forgive us for you taught us to pray. Forgive us as we forgive others.

And we trust you. We are agreed concerning the problems different ones have in their own home, in their life. You said, call unto me, and I'll answer you.

Fulfill that, Lord. Fulfill that, Dad and Father in Heaven, for many needy people sitting here. Whatever their need is, financial, physical, family-wise, job-wise, or anything, meet every need.

We humbly ask, Father, in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/R4eFRhJAVLg.mp4>
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