

(Words of Life) 57. Judging Ourselves and Not Others

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the necessity of balancing self-judgment and reliance on God's grace in the Christian life.

Duration: 27:15

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, John 1:14

Topics: "Personal Growth", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of balance in the Christian life, highlighting the need for both grace and truth, love for God and others, and the integration of evangelism and discipleship. It discusses the partnership between God's work and our responsibility in areas like cleansing ourselves from sin and putting to death the deeds of the body with the help of the Holy Spirit. The sermon also addresses the significance of judging ourselves rightly, focusing on personal growth and leaving the judgment of others to God or appropriate authorities.

Transcript

Welcome once again to Words of Life. Today we want to think about another area where there are two sides. The failure of many Christians is the failure to be balanced.

The glory of God we read in John 1.17 is seen in Jesus Christ in John 1.14 full of grace and truth. This is a balance. If you have only grace or only truth, you are imbalanced.

Then the glory of God is not seen. In many areas this balance is mentioned in scripture. For example when somebody asked Jesus what is the great commandment in the law? He said I have to give you two.

Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. He said I can't give you one. There is a balance.

Which is more important, the fruit of the spirit or the gifts of the spirit? Which did Jesus have? He had both. He would have been a failure if either of them were missing. Which do you need? Both.

In many many areas it is like this. Evangelism without discipleship is a failure. Mark 16 speaks about evangelism.

Matthew 28 speaks about discipleship. Both together constitute the great commission God has given. And in many many other areas we could say the same thing.

Balance is the important thing. To care for people's spiritual needs and their physical needs. And here is another area.

To ask the Lord to cleanse us and to cleanse our souls. To cleanse ourselves. Both are in scripture.

If you have only one, you have only half the truth. And half the truth can be error. See 1 John 1 and verse 7. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all sin.

So this is something we can never do. You can never do anything to cleanse yourself from all the guilt of your sin. Only God can cleanse us.

As it says in verse 9, only He can forgive us and cleanse us. Now this is the only cleansing that many Christians know about. But there is another cleansing or purification which we have to do ourselves.

You know when the devil quoted one verse to Jesus in the temptation. Saying what is written. Jesus said it is also written.

And that truth with the other truth protected Jesus from falling into that temptation. So if you don't know the other truth that balances one truth the devil gives you, you can fall. Will the devil quote scripture? If he quoted scripture to Jesus, won't he quote it to you and me? He won't quote scripture to people who don't respect scripture.

But if you respect God's word, then he knows he can try and lead you astray with God's word. How will he do that? By over emphasizing one truth and neglecting another. Truth is like a bird with two wings.

If you cut one wing, the bird will just go around in circles. Two wings it can go straight. Movement does not mean progress.

You can go around in circles, there is a lot of movement but no progress. You can be very active and still be in the same place spiritually after 20 years. Progress requires both wings.

It is written it is also written. It is written that God cleanses us with the blood of Christ. In the next page, chapter 3 verse 3, it says we have to purify ourselves to the level of Christ's purity.

Who does that? We have to do it. The one who has this hope purifies himself. As Christ is pure.

You see Romans in chapter 8. And we read in verse 13. The last part. If by the Holy Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Verse 12 he is speaking to born again believers. You must put to death the deeds of the body. But if you think only of that, you will go astray.

It says by the Holy Spirit, that is the other side of it. So that is the balance. You put to death but it is by the Holy Spirit's power.

You make the fan turn but it is by electrical power. You have to put on the switch. Then the electrical power turns the fan.

You can put off the switch. So the Holy Spirit's power is something given to us. You use it or you don't use it.

But the Holy Spirit is not going to do things automatically just like electricity won't switch on the fan automatically. You have to decide when it is hot and you need to turn on the fan. Electricity doesn't decide that.

So through the Holy Spirit's power you put to death the deeds of the body. And it says in 2 Corinthians in chapter 7. About this our cleansing ourselves. It says in verse 1. Since we have these promises.

Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. And blessed holiness in the fear of God. So who is going to cleanse this filthiness of the flesh and spirit? Now if I read that verse.

And I say Lord please cleanse me from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. That's not a scriptural prayer. The word of God says let us cleanse ourselves.

So the responsibility is on us. I have to put off the old man. I have to put to death the deeds of the body.

I have to take up the cross everyday. I have to deny myself everyday. But the Holy Spirit is there to help me.

I have to keep the commandments but the Holy Spirit is there to help me. See Philippians 2. Verse 12 and 13. If you read it separately you get a wrong picture.

Read it together. What are we to do? Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Because God is working inside me to will and to do His good pleasure.

God gives me the desire to do His will. And God gives me the ability to do His will. But I have to respond otherwise nothing will happen.

If everything depended on God then all of us would have become perfectly like Christ by now. Why is it there is a difference among believers? It's not because God has failed. God is willing to make everyone like Christ but not all have responded equally.

Why is it ten intelligent students all get different marks in an examination? All may have equal intelligence. But all may not be equally hard working. It's the same way.

God gave intelligence but these people don't work hard. God gives all the power of the Holy Spirit. All may not use it equally.

So God works in but we've got to work it out. If it was only God's part like I said we'd be like the planets. Perfect obedience but like a robot.

So this is the balance. God works in verse 13 and we have to work it out verse 12. So verse 14 how are we to come to a life without any grumbling or disputing? As we read in the next few verses.

How to come to that life? God first of all gives me a desire to live a life without any grumbling or complaining. And God gives me the ability to live that life. I must put on the switch.

I must work it out. My part is very easy. God's part is the difficult part.

The new covenant is a partnership with Jesus. He multiplies the loaves I distribute it. I pour the water he turns it into wine.

I roll away the stone he raises Lazarus from the dead. That's how it is. I go and wash in the pool of Siloam and he opens my eyes.

It's a partnership. I cast my net on the right side he fills it with fish. It's a partnership where he does the difficult part and I do the easy part.

He supplies the electricity I put on the switch. So I must cleanse myself. With the power he gives me the oil filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

See 2 Timothy in chapter 2. We read here. Verse 21. If a man cleanses himself he will be a vessel for honor sanctified useful to the master.

This is not talking about God cleansing us from our guilt. This is we cleansing ourselves from filthiness of the flesh and spirit. You see something in your life and you say Lord give me grace to get rid of this.

There were 2 types of enemies that Israel had in the Old Testament. The armies of Pharaoh. God killed them in the Red Sea.

That God did. Then the giants in Canaan. That the Israelites had to kill.

Of course with God's power. So you see the balance there. Some enemies God killed.

With Israel doing nothing. God says you do it I'll give you the power. You see the same thing in the New Testament.

The old man Romans 6. God is crucified on Calvary. I don't do anything. Romans 6.6. Your old man was crucified by God.

It's like the armies of Egypt. But what about the lusts in my flesh? Galatians 5.24 says those who are Christ's crucify the flesh with its affection. Who does that? Not God.

We believers. These are the giants in Canaan. Many Christians haven't understood this difference.

They are asking God to do what they are supposed to do. And sometimes they don't know that God has done something for them. They are trying to do that.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. Our guilt God has to cleanse. Our old man God has to crucify.

He has done that. Now he says I'll give you the power of the Holy Spirit. You put the lust to death.

You take up the cross and deny yourself. If I ask God to do that also. You do both parts Lord.

You do my part also. Then I become a robot. God doesn't want me to be a robot.

That's why there is God's part and my part. So I need to cleanse myself. We see that here.

We saw it in 1 John 3. We saw it in 2 Corinthians 7. And here in 2 Timothy 2.21. In 1 Peter 4. It says in verse 17. Judgment must begin with the household of God. It begins with us first.

Now the children of Adam. All of us. We put ourselves first in everything except judgment.

Every time we think of us first. Even from childhood. I must get the best toy.

I must get the biggest piece of the cake. It's always us first. When we grow up we are still us first.

But we do it in more clever ways. But one area we put other people first. Only one area.

And that is judgment. When it comes to judgment. Others first.

We judge that person. Everybody around us we judge and we don't judge ourselves. That's because the world is upside down.

Jesus turns to him and says. My hands are straight when you are converted. Then what happens? Then we put others first in everything except judgment.

Brother you go ahead of me. You take that position. I don't want it.

You go ahead of me. You choose that after that I'll take what's left. No competition in the church.

I give honor to the other person. And I receive what God gives me. But when it comes to judgment.

I don't put that person first. I'll put anybody else first. Myself.

This is true Christianity. In 1 Corinthians 11. Paul says.

And verse 31. If we judged ourselves rightly we would not be judged. That means in the day of judgment.

We will not be judged at all. If we judge ourselves rightly now. It's like the teacher saying.

Take your examination paper home. And correct all the mistakes. In human examinations that's not permitted.

But in God's examination. You can take your examination paper home. Correct your mistakes and bring it next day.

But if you don't bother about correcting it. Then the teacher marks it wrong. But the teacher is willing to help you.

To correct your mistakes. Before you submit your paper in Christianity. This is such an easy examination.

I can get 100%. Because where I make a mistake. The teacher says listen this is not the way to do it.

This is how you should do it. And shows me how to do it. Correct that and then give me the paper.

What is illegal in a human examination. Is correct in Christianity. If we judge ourselves.

As the Holy Spirit shows us. In the final day. The Lord says there is nothing left.

Because you cleansed yourself. You judged yourself. Jesus says.

In Matthew chapter 7. Verse 1. Don't judge other people. Leave them alone. James 4 says there is only one judge.

That is God. God doesn't need your help to judge other people. One of the biggest sins in Christendom.

Is to judge other people. It is none of our business. To judge other people.

That judgment of other people. Leads to backbiting and criticism of them. Behind their back.

If you love somebody. Go and tell that person directly. If he has got a black mark on his face.

Go and tell him brother. There is a black mark. Can I wipe it off for you? Don't speak behind his back.

Saying see that man has got a black mark on his face. First of all. He says don't try to pick a speck out of your brother's eye.

When there is a big log in your own eye. What is this log in your own eye? Listen. It is an unloving attitude.

To the fault you see in your brother. You may not have the same fault your brother has. But if you have an unloving attitude towards his fault.

What you have is a beam in your eye. You may not have the speck he has. But you got something much worse.

Fallacies were not caught in adultery. The woman was caught in adultery. But their unloving attitude to her.

Made her sin like a speck. And their sin like a log. Is committing adultery only a speck? No it is a big sin.

But compared to an unloving attitude it is only a speck. That is why Jesus stood with that woman. But Jesus did not condone and ignore the adultery.

No he said you have sinned. But don't sin again. But I don't condemn you.

Because we acknowledge your sin. I am not here to throw stones at you. Those fallacies.

Who were million times sinners. They wanted to throw stones. Because they did not judge themselves.

But don't we have to judge people we say? Yes. If you are a father. In your circle you have children and those in your family.

Definitely you have to judge them. If two of your children are having a fight. You can't say no I will not judge.

You have to listen to them and stop the fight. Then you have to punish some of them. You don't have to judge your neighbour's children.

It is not your business. That is outside your circle. Suppose you are an elder of a church.

You have a responsibility for all those people in your church. You have to discipline them. Teach them.

Correct them. Guide them. But you don't have to judge people in another church.

You have to judge people in your circle. Because that is outside your circle. You are working in an office.

You have people working under you. You have to discipline them. Correct them.

Pass judgment. But you don't have to judge people working in another office. So we have to judge within our circle.

That is where you have a responsibility. Outside that. Leave them to God.

Or leave them to those other people whom God has put in charge of them. So, once I have covered all within my circle, my children, those in my church, those who work under me in my office, once that's over, my responsibility is over. That's very little.

And the rest of the time, I can spend judging myself. I don't have to mind other people's business. In 1 Peter chapter 4, Peter says, let none of you suffer as a murderer.

1 Peter 4, 15. And then, let no one suffer as a busybody in other people's matters. That is in the same category as a murderer.

In the same verse, you are a murderer, I am a busybody in other people's matters. That will bring a lot of suffering. Mind your own business.

Peter learnt it from Jesus. Jesus told Peter in John 21, towards the end, you are going to suffer a lot when you grow older. Jesus turned and looked at John and said, what about him, is he also going to suffer? Or is he going to have an easy life? You know what Jesus told Peter? That's none of your business.

If I want him to live for 2000 years, that's my business. Till I come back, that's my business. You follow me.

That's the word the Lord speaks to you. Don't worry about that other brother or sister. Whether he is obeying the Lord or not.

Unless you are an authority over that person. In which case, you speak to that person. Lovingly.

Don't throw stones. Speak to that person. Otherwise, mind your own business.

Leave that person to God and to whatever authority God has placed over him. Follow me. What peace there can be in our life.

What rest there can be in our heart. And you say, Lord, I want to follow you. I don't want to be a busybody in other people's matters.

I don't want to run other people's lives. I want to live before your face. And I want to follow you.

And I want to judge myself. And wherever I get light on myself, I want to cleanse myself. Don't you know that people don't cleanse themselves? I will not judge them.

Maybe they haven't yet got light on it like I have. So I want to be merciful to them. If you follow this principle, you will live a very good Christian life.

Will you pray? Say, Lord, help me to live this life. Judge me myself. God bless you.

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