

Departing From Sin (Telugu)

by Zac Poonen

A firm foundation in our spiritual lives is essential for avoiding sin and maintaining a relationship with God.

Duration: 50:11

Scripture: Matthew 7:24

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a firm foundation in God, likening it to the crucial role a foundation plays in a building's stability. It warns against backsliding and falling away due to seeking worldly desires or not having a strong foundation in God. The message stresses the need for believers to have a genuine transformation of nature, departing from sin and being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading to avoid spiritual leprosy and maintain a fervent love for Jesus in the midst of increasing sinfulness in the world.

Transcript

So this year, we are going to think about this verse that you see on this, at the back. And that's a very important verse to think about, 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 19. If you really take this very seriously, it will make a big difference in your life.

See, it says here, that there is a firm foundation of God. Now, you know how important a foundation is for a building. Of any building, I would say that is the most important part.

We can say that all the people only look at the outside of a building. But the person who is constructing the building will first take care of the foundation. And nowadays they build many many big buildings in many places which are hundred stories high.

And the more high the building is, the deeper, the stronger the foundation must be. Jesus told a story about a man who built a house without a foundation. And it shook during the storm and fell down.

Around us, we see so many believers who backslide and fall away. So many preachers who started out well, have fallen away. They have fallen away through seeking honor or love of money or something like that.

Many fall into adultery also. Many preachers and pastors. How can that happen after a man has been a believer for so many years? See, like, if you build a building two, three, even two, three stories high, and

there is a crack in the third floor, an engineer may say, the fault is not here, the fault is in the foundation.

Because the foundation is not strong, the wall is sinking and there is a crack here. So when you see a believer who has been a good believer for maybe 15-20 years, and then suddenly you find him falling away into some sin, the fault did not happen there, the fault happened right at the beginning of his life in the foundation. And the type of preaching we hear nowadays is laying a very poor foundation for the believers.

So it is very important that all of you, before this weekend is over, make sure about yourself that you have a good foundation in your life. Because that will produce fruit in your children and grandchildren also. If your foundation is weak and shaky, your children and grandchildren will also be like that.

But if your foundation is strong, then you can be a blessing not only to your family, but to other people in your church also. So the foundation that God lays, called the foundation of God, is always very firm and strong. So this is a good expression, the foundation of God.

Now there are so many foundations people are laying which are not the foundation of God. So many preachers in Christianity are not laying the foundation of God. So how to find out whether this is the foundation of God? See nowadays whenever there is any valuable product produced by some company, somebody will make a counterfeit of that.

So the companies will put a special seal of theirs with a hologram on it so that nobody can duplicate it. So then they say, don't buy it if this seal is not there. If this seal is not there, then it is not our company product.

Somebody else has made it. It is a counterfeit. It is very important in these days also to make sure that you join a church where this seal is there.

Every local church is like a building. Not the physical building, there is a spiritual building going on inside these physical buildings. That spiritual building inside the church building has got a foundation.

And there you must check the seal. Because here it says, the foundation of God has got a seal. And if you don't look for the seal, then you will be deceived.

There are two things written on that seal. Number one, the Lord knows those who are His. That is the first thing you need to recognize.

So many people in the church think you are a believer. That is useless. All the people think you are a good believer.

Useless. It is the Lord who must know that you are a good believer. That is one of the first things you need to understand.

It is written on the foundation, the Lord knows those who are His. So many other people may be there, but the Lord does not recognize them. Why is that? Because man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

See, we go down a road and you can see so many buildings made by different architects and different designs. And some of them look very nice. And when you go inside, you can see so many things.

But none of us look to see the foundation in a building because we cannot see it. You cannot see the foundation, it is hidden. Because there are two parts to a building, one which is hidden and one which is visible.

All the buildings, they may look nice on the outside. But if an engineer is examining it, he will say, I want to see the foundation before I decide if it is a good building or not. But the rest of us, we just look at the painting and the size and say, this is a beautiful building.

And one day you see the beautiful building has collapsed because the foundation is not strong. So, man always likes to make something beautiful for other people to see. But a wise person says, I am going to live in this building, I better make sure of the foundation.

So, God also looks at our heart which nobody can see. The foundation is there, inside. When you receive Christ as your Lord, there is a foundation laid in your heart.

And it says here, God knows those who are His. On one side, that is a warning. People may think you are His, it is no value.

Make sure that God Himself can put a certificate in your heart, you belong to Me. You know, when we are born again, the Holy Spirit comes inside. If the Holy Spirit does not come inside, the Bible says you don't belong to Him.

If the Holy Spirit does not come inside, the Bible says you don't belong to Him. We read in Romans 8, verse 9. If the Spirit of Christ does not have, you do not belong to Him. And this Holy Spirit is given a name in Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1, we read in verse 13.

That when you listen to the message of the truth, the gospel of salvation, you believe you are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That is a seal that this is a genuine product, not some counterfeit. The Holy Spirit comes inside.

That is like God's seal, you belong to Me. Every one of us must be absolutely sure. Here is one way by which you can know whether the Holy Spirit has come inside and put that seal.

Romans chapter 8, verse 15. It says here that you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption by which you cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit, verse 16, that we are the children of God.

Verse 16. So, how do we know that the Holy Spirit has come inside? From inside, a cry comes out, Abba, Father. It is not that somebody keeps on telling you, yes, God is your father, God is your father.

No, the Holy Spirit tells me inside. You are a child of God. You were a child of the devil, but now you are a child of God.

That is a seal. It is very important. That is why when I give the gospel to people, I show them the promise that if you receive Jesus, you can become a child of God.

But I do not tell them, now you are a child of God. The Holy Spirit has to tell them. If I tell them, I may be making a mistake, because I do not know whether they have laid a good foundation.

So, I preach the gospel, I show them the promises, then I leave it to the Holy Spirit to tell them, you are now a child of God. It is so clear here. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

So, I want to ask you that. Do not ask yourself whether your elder brother or some servant of God thinks you are a child of God. There are many people sitting in many of our churches who think that they are children of God, who are not children of God.

God knows those who are his children. The elder brother in your church does not know. He may look on some of the outward appearances and say, yes, I think you are a child of God.

But he may be mistaken. You cannot afford to take a risk in this matter. See, I want to preach the gospel in such a way so clearly that everybody here understands the truth.

Because if one person sitting here goes to hell, and the fault is with me, if the fault is with me, the Lord says to me in the final day, see, that person went to hell because you did not make it clear to them what the gospel is. Then I am responsible. I am responsible for somebody going to hell.

I cannot stop people from going to hell. But I can show them what is the way into God's kingdom. After that, it is up to them.

Even God does not force them to go to hell. So, I would say this to all of you. Make sure that the foundation of God with the seal of the Holy Spirit is there in your life.

And one part of that seal is, 2 Timothy 2.19, The Lord knows those who are His. But it is not enough for God to know that. I must know it.

How do I know whether I am His? The Lord knows those who are His. How do I know that I am His? Let everyone who names the name of the Lord, declare that I am His. Depart from wickedness.

That is how I know. The Lord knows those who are His because He knows everything. Now the question is, how do you know that you belong to the Lord? All of you can know that you belong to the Lord if you depart from sin.

Then that nature comes inside. Nobody has to teach you. If somebody has to teach you, then it is doubtful whether you are a child of God.

You depart from sin automatically. Because the nature is there. We can look at an example.

See, when a pig has a little baby pig. That pig grows up and it just loves to play in the dirt. It is always dirty.

You can wash it and scrub it for a little while and put some perfume in it and in half an hour it will be dirty again. Because it is a pig. It is a nature.

Who taught that pig? Did the mother pig teach that pig? No, you are a pig. You must be dirty. It is nature.

Now you see on the other hand a cat when it has little children. How is it that little kittens don't like to go to those dirty things? And even if accidentally it gets dirty, it is always licking itself and teaching it and keeping itself clean. How does that cat, little kitten, depart from all dirty things? It is not because its mother teaches it, you are a cat, don't touch dirty things.

It is a nature. As soon as it is born, it has got its nature. You know, we see that in all of creation.

A lion's children will always be fierce because they are lions. And the snakes, little snakes will always be poisonous and stinging others. But little kittens and little puppy dogs and all, they are not harmful like that.

Everything is nature. Everything in the world. The birds, they give birth to little ones, those birds learn to fly.

No mother bird teaches its bird to fly. It is nature. All around us we see nature.

Whether it is a lion or an elephant or a dog or a bird. Or a snake. Or an ant.

All are governed by nature. When we are born into this world, whether you are Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Atheist, the nature is the same. You see that in children.

When you see children fighting with each other. You cannot say who is Christian, who is Hindu, who is Atheist. They are all the same.

Where? How did that come? Just like the dogs and cats and all other animals. We also got a nature. It came from Adam.

Adam got a poison from the devil and that has come to all of us. Now you can call one baby Hindu, Christian, Christian. It makes no difference.

The nature is the same. That nature is to fight and quarrel and be selfish. Now you can train that child, don't do this, don't do this.

Don't tell lies. You can punish it when it does something wrong. That won't change its nature.

Only it will be afraid to do it because it is afraid you will punish it. You can frighten a child. If you tell a lie, I will punish you.

If you disobey me, I will punish you. And so the children obey. Because they are afraid of punishment.

The nature has not changed. Sometimes we read in the circus, they keep a tiger and teach them so many tricks. Sometimes we read in the circus, they keep a tiger and teach them so many tricks.

And the tiger behaves itself. And then one day you read in the paper, the tiger got angry and killed the person in the circus. Because the nature was never changed.

It was only sort of controlled for some time. And like that we can control our children just like they train the tiger in the circus. And like that tiger behaves itself, the child behaves itself.

And then one day it goes out from our house to stay in the college hostel. And he goes completely astray. Why is that? Because the nature was never changed.

So Christianity is not just teaching people to behave properly and speak nicely. It's a change of nature inside. You cannot change the nature of a pig and make it clean.

No matter how much you teach it, train it, it will still be dirty. You can never train a pig to be clean. But almighty God, supposing He does a miracle, that inside that pig He puts the nature of a cat.

Suddenly you will find the pig is avoiding all the dirty things. Not because of training, not because somebody is using a stick. But because God did a miracle inside that pig and gave it another nature.

And then you will see that pig licking itself and keeping itself clean. That has to be a miracle. You will never see a pig licking itself like a cat.

But if God does that miracle, it will happen. I am using that example to show you what it really means to be born again. When we are really born again, it's not just change on the outside.

Many things change inside. And God lays a foundation inside. And one mark of it is, I want to avoid all wickedness.

I may fall, even a cat, little kitten may sometimes fall into some dirty puddles. But if it falls, it will jump out immediately and keep itself clean. So, a Christian also may fall into sin.

Because the world is so dirty. It's like walking in some dirty puddles. You try your best to keep your clothes clean, but still some dirt comes.

So, cats can get dirty. And believers can also get dirty. But there is a big difference.

As soon as a cat comes out of it, it licks itself clean. So, when a believer falls into sin, he proves he is a believer by immediately coming out and saying, Lord, I am sorry. Please forgive me.

Cleanse me. If you don't feel bad immediately, as soon as you fall into some sin, then that is a danger sign. That you are not feeling any desire to depart from sin.

That could mean two things. One, you may never have been properly born again. Because nobody preached the gospel properly to you.

See, that is the condition of many believers, many people who sit in our churches. They have never heard the gospel properly. See, in our church in Bangalore, we have now maybe 300-400 people.

And many of them have told me this. We thought we were born again before we came here. But after hearing the message here for one or two years, now I realize I was not really born again at all.

Because I never wanted to avoid sin. I never hated sin. I just do the outward things Christians do.

So, I don't blame them. You know, I blame their preachers. Wherever they were going, they didn't teach them the proper gospel.

So, it is quite possible that some of you are also like that. That you have not been taught that to come to Christ, you must first turn from sin. The Bible says, what fellowship does light have with darkness? No, Christ and sin don't mix together.

So, the foundation of God involves departing from sin. And if you find, as I told you, you are not departing from sin. You alone know in your life what is your attitude to sin today.

And if you find in your inner life, you are not departing from sin. Or you depart from sin only when other people are looking at you. See, even unbelievers and thieves will not do something wrong when somebody is watching them.

Nobody will go and steal a bank when somebody is watching. Nobody will go and kill somebody when there are so many witnesses. So, if you avoid sin only when people are watching you.

But you don't avoid sin when nobody is watching you. And that proves that you have no fear of God. Then the question is, are you really born again? It is good to have a check up.

Or secondly, you may have been born again once upon a time. But you have gone back so much. That you have backslidden and lost your salvation.

And that sensitivity to sin is gone. You see, when people get leprosy, when a person got leprosy in their hand, they don't feel anything. All these little nerves that give you sensation are gone, are dead.

All these blood vessels are also gone. The first sign of leprosy is this. If there are small patches, there is no sensation.

Then you go to a doctor and say, I don't feel any sensation here. The doctor will say, you have leprosy. If you don't treat it, it will spread.

But if you treat it now, you can be cured. Nowadays there is 100% cure for leprosy. But if he doesn't take that, one day his hand will have no sensation.

Then he can put his hand on some hot plate in the kitchen. Hot vessel. He can hold that hot vessel which is just full of boiling milk or something.

And he doesn't feel anything. His hand is burnt. He doesn't feel anything.

And his hand will be destroyed. But if you touch something so hot like that, posing a boiling vessel full of boiling water or something, you touch it, immediately your hand pulls back. Why is that? Did somebody tell you to pull it back? No.

Even a little child, small child, two years old, touches something hot, the mother doesn't have to say anything. It's got sensation. It departs from anything that will hurt.

Anything that causes pain. But when people get leprosy, that sensation dies. They can touch.

They don't pull that hand away. Finally the hand will be destroyed. See that is how it is with many people's heart also.

In the beginning, when we are really born again, we are very sensitive to sin. We want to avoid some dirty cinemas, dirty pictures, or all the filthy things that are on the internet. You see it, you say, no, no, no.

You see something in a magazine and you turn the page. It's like pulling your hand away. I don't want to see that.

Because a new life has come inside you. The Holy Spirit has given you another nature. But after some time, after some years, maybe 10 years, 12 years, the same believer who would never go to a cinema, now he is going.

The one who would never watch any dirty thing on the television, now he is watching it. Now when he sees some dirty picture in a book, he doesn't turn the page, he keeps on looking. How is that? He was so careful with his speech 10 years ago.

Now he is so careless. 10 years ago, he was very faithful with money. Now he is not so faithful.

Now he tells little lies. 10 years ago when he was born again, he never told lies. 10 years ago when he was born again, he never told lies.

How did this believer become like this? He got leprosy inside. He doesn't depart from sin now. He can touch sin, hold sin, and doesn't feel anything.

How can you hold something which is boiling hot and not feel anything? Definitely, leprosy has come in your hand. How can you see something which is impure and dirty and not even feel it in your heart? There are so many young Christians who see all types of filthy things on the internet nowadays. They sit alone in their room, nobody is there.

They sit alone in their room, nobody is there. There is no firm foundation of God in their lives. Few years back, their parents were teaching them about God, about fear, about everything.

It was a good situation then. Now, they don't have any protection. Now, they live with disbelief and eat together.

What they say is, if you live with people who have leprosy, if you live with them, they will also get leprosy. You meet them daily, you blow air with them, or you eat together. If you do all these things, they will get leprosy.

You will not let your children go and play with some people who have leprosy. Why is that? Because you say they may get the disease. But you allow your children to go and play with people who have such bad influences in their lives.

When my children were small, we never had any television in our home. They would say, can we go to that house and see one friend of ours is invited. So, I would say, no, you ask your friend to come here and play with your children.

Because my children go there, they are small, they don't know what is good or bad. They may pick up some spiritual leprosy there without my knowing. I may discover it only 2-3 years later.

So, just like I would not allow my children to go around and play with people who have leprosy, I did not allow my children to go to different homes and do what they like. All parents must be careful. God has given your children to look after them.

They don't have a natural desire to depart from sin. They have a natural desire to commit sin. So, when they are young, we have to protect them.

Just like you protect your young girls from bad company, you must protect all your children from bad company. It's because many parents are not doing that, that we have so many Christian children today who have gone out into the world. So, this is a very important message here.

Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from wickedness. Just like our hand will immediately depart from something hot, or a little kitten will immediately pull away from something dirty. That is how God wants us to depart from evil.

That is how God can protect us from all the evil in the world. But He doesn't force us. He has given us a conscience inside.

When you are going to do something wrong, when you are looking at something wrong, reading something wrong, seeing something on the television or computer that's wrong, immediately, there will be a voice inside, which will tell you that's not good for a Christian. Avoid it. Turn off that.

Turn the page. Don't look at that. Don't read this.

Don't watch that program on television. Now, when you hear that voice, it is the voice of the Holy Spirit saying to you, depart from sin. God wants to put a seal on you and want to lay a firm foundation in your life.

You don't listen to that voice. Slowly, your foundation will be destroyed. You can still sit in the church and get a good testimony before others.

But your inner life will be filthy. You know, I'm sorry to say, many people are like that. You see, how do you know? Because I've moved around believers for 50 years now and I know.

Sometimes you look into a person's face or his eyes and I can see impurity there. Yeah, what is in the heart cannot be hidden sometimes. So, dear brothers and sisters, we are living in the last days.

Do you know what Jesus said about the last days? That's a warning. Matthew 24 Matthew 24 The disciples asked Jesus Verse 3 What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And Jesus said many, many things. Most of the things are external.

Verse 6 There are wars and seven famines, earthquakes. But then he warned us about something that will happen inside us. Wars and famines and earthquakes and all are outside.

There will be many false prophets. Verse 11 They are all outside. But one thing Jesus said There will be so much sin in the last days.

A lot of disobedience to God's laws. That is one of the signs that the coming of Jesus is near. And we see that nowadays.

Even among believers. Believers fight with each other without any conscience. They speak evil of each other.

They are not disturbed. They do so many wrong things and they are not disturbed. And then what will happen? Other people are like this.

The Lord said you be careful that your love doesn't become cold. Love for Jesus is like a fire. You know you see a fire and you put one paper inside and immediately it's burned.

You put a snake inside the snake will die immediately. Nothing can live in a fire. Love for Jesus is like that.

It's such a fervent thing that sin cannot live that. It will be burnt up immediately. But when the fire dies down then the snakes and the ants and the lizards and the cockroaches can all come and live there.

How is it that all the wicked things in the world begin to enter into our heart? Dear brother sister it means the fire has died out in your heart. The fire that you had once upon a time has died out. That fervent love

for Jesus that you had in your heart has died out and Jesus said this is going to happen in the last days.

So I have taken that warning seriously. I said Lord even though I have been a believer for 50 years if I am not careful this coldness in the world will come inside me and then I will become careless towards sin. I will become careless in the way I speak.

Then I will once again start getting angry with my wife. I may have given it up 30 years ago but it will come back because my love for Jesus has gone down. So that's how we got to preserve ourselves in the last days.

The love of many people is going to become cold because there is so much of sin. And that desire to stay away from sin goes away. So take this warning seriously and may God protect us in these last days.

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