

Some Lessons the Lord Taught Me

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of getting a good start in the Christian life, recognizing the uniqueness of Christianity, and learning to give and trust God.

Duration: 1:07:13

Scripture: Job 23:10, Proverbs 26:11, Luke 16:13, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 10:13

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Trials And Temptations"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's provision and strength during trials and temptations. It highlights the need to rely on God's faithfulness, the assurance that no trial is too much to handle with God's help, and the encouragement to push back against temptations to grow stronger in faith.

Transcript

Since many have joined our church newly, there are new believers. We're always happy to see new believers and we're happy that our children also are growing up and coming to the place of understanding. So I thought I would share with you some of the lessons God taught me from the time I was born again.

And I hope that will be an encouragement to you who are either newly converted or unsure of your salvation, so that you can get a good start. You know, it's very important in the Christian life to get a good start. Like in a race, if you get a good start, that helps you to keep going.

So many of us who are brought up in Christian homes, which is true of many of our children, you may never know the exact day when you accepted Christ as your Savior. Some people know it, I don't know it, because I was brought up in a God-fearing home and sent to Sunday school when I was a child, so I heard about the gospel from when I was very young. So I must have asked Jesus to come into my heart a hundred times or more perhaps.

Different meetings, but the reason I asked the Lord so many times was because nothing seemed to change in me. I accepted the Lord and the next day was just the same. And that may be the experience of some of you.

And you may wonder, am I really saved or not? Well, it was like that with me for at least six years. I really don't know, maybe the first time I asked Christ to come into my life was when I was first thirteen. But for six

years I was tossed here and there, and I think I'd have gone on like that forever if God had not had mercy on me.

I think I was quite sincere each time I asked Christ to come into my heart. I would hear a preacher. I knew I was a sinner.

I knew I couldn't save myself. I believed Christ died for me. I didn't know all the mysteries of the gospel that I know today.

In fact, I knew very little, just that I was a sinner and Christ died for me and rose again. I believe that. That may be true of a number of you, but that's where we begin.

Why do we say Christianity is the only true faith in the world? I don't call it a religion really, because among all the religions in the world, nobody, no religious leader in any religion ever came and said, I have come to die for your sins. Holy Jesus Christ. And secondly, no religious leader in any religion ever rose up from the dead, from the grave.

These are the two foundational truths of Christianity. Christ died for our sins and he arose from the grave. Unfortunately, most Christians only speak about Christ died for our sins, but the apostles spoke more about his resurrection.

So the living Christ was more important to them than the Christ who died on the cross. They never once said we are witnesses of his crucifixion, even though they were. They said, let me show you one example of that in Acts chapter one.

You know, Judas Iscariot fell away and they had to select somebody to replace him to complete the number of 12. And so we read here that Peter got up in verse 15 and said, well, one fell away and he was appointed to do that. Now it is necessary, verse 21, that among those who accompanied us all the time we were with Jesus, beginning with the baptism of John, we want one of these, last part of verse 22, to become with us a witness of his resurrection.

Not a witness of his crucifixion, a witness of his resurrection. I wonder how much when we witness to others, we speak about the resurrection. In my early life, I did not.

I'll tell you why I didn't, because people didn't teach me. I was just a baby. We are to be witnesses of his resurrection because that was the most unique event that happened in the history of the world.

Crucifixion, the thieves were crucified. Hundreds of people were crucified by the Romans and many people have been crucified since Christ as well. So to be a witness of his crucifixion is not what they were.

They said we're witness of his resurrection, that the one we believe in conquered man's greatest enemy, death. No one's been able to conquer death. Man's conquered space, but he can't conquer death.

So we need to recognize that all of us. CFC must be full of people who are witnesses of the fact that of Jesus rose from the dead. That means we believe in it.

We didn't see it with our eyes, but we've seen in our heart. See, one of the things that as a young Christian, I used to wish, I think all of us have wished, I wish I was alive in the time of Jesus. I think every Christian would have wished that.

Lord, I would have been wonderful if I'd been in Nazareth or Galilee in those first 30 years and I could have seen you and touched you and moved around with you and my faith would have been much stronger if I'd actually seen you or if I'd actually seen you being killed and then actually seen you right before my eyes, you know, ascending up, overcoming the law of gravity and just disappearing into the clouds. I would never lose faith then. I would never have any doubt in my mind whether all that I'm believing is true or not.

If only I could have been like that. But then I saw a verse which really helped me, which changed my mind completely. Acts chapter 20.

And here's the time when Jesus rose from the dead and he appeared in verse 19, Acts 20, 19 to the disciples and they saw him and they believed. But it says in verse 24, Thomas was not with them that day. They were all 11, rather 10.

And so Jesus made a special appearance. Eight days later in verse 26, John 20, 26, Thomas was also there and Jesus appeared and said, Hey, Thomas, you're the one who said you wouldn't believe. Okay, now put your finger into my hands and see the nail prints.

Put your hand into my side and see the place where I was pierced by the sword. Then do you believe now? And Thomas was astounded. He said, My Lord and my God.

And listen to this. This is the verse that really opened my eyes. Jesus said, Because you've seen me, you have believed.

But blessed or more blessed are those who have not seen and believed. You know, that opened my eyes. Lord, I'm not like Thomas.

I never saw you. I never put my finger into your nail prints. In fact, in all my 77 years, I've never seen Jesus or never seen an angel, never seen any light from heaven or never heard the voice of God with my ear audibly.

No. With my sense, I've not felt, you know, all our five senses. I can't say I've used any of them to contact Jesus in any way.

I've not seen. I'm not heard. But I believed and I saw in this verse that in some way in which I cannot explain, I am more blessed than those people who walked with Jesus and saw him and saw the miracles.

It really requires some faith to believe that. I'm sure you're saying, Oh, it can't be. It'd be much better if I had actually seen him.

That's what my senses tell me. That's what my mind tells me. It'd be much better if I'd actually seen him.

But I have come through the to discover one thing that many times what I think is wrong and God's word is true. So I just accepted by faith that it is more blessed not to have seen Jesus, not to have had any visible or audible sense or any of my five senses revealing Christ to me. Zero.

I've never had any such thing in my life. So I belong to that more blessed category than others. You know, there are today many people, particularly in Pentecostal churches, who boast that they saw an angel and somebody competes with them and says, I saw two angels and it goes on like that.

But I'm not in that competition. Not at all. I tell them I've seen zero angels.

But I've had hundreds of angels serve me whom I never saw. All the accidents that I got saved from the road when I rode a scooter in India. Boy, there were lots of them.

I never saw any of them, but they were there. So I don't have to see them. I'm one of those who have not seen and therefore more blessed.

And in the beginning, like all young Christians, we have a lust to see, oh Lord, if I could just see some people talk about a vision and a light. I remember a man of God whom I respected very much, Brother Buxwing. He was the one man in this country whom I really respected.

He gave a testimony once. He was a young Christian and he also had this desire. Lord, one day when he was praying as a young man, Lord, just send a light into this dark room.

He opened his eyes and he saw a light. Then he realized there's a moonlight coming from one of the ventilators. So, you know, we also have, I'm sure all normal Christians have a desire to see something.

I've also longed to see visions and lights and God hasn't given me any. I belong to the more blessed category and God did not want to bring me to the less blessed category. So I ask you a question.

How many of you want to belong to the less blessed category? How many of you want to belong to the more blessed category? You know, in scripture, it always speaks about more blessed and less blessed and somehow our human tendency is to choose the less blessed. I'll give you another example of this. This is one.

More blessed are those who have not seen yet believe. I want to be in that category till the end of my life. There's nothing great in, you know, when you belong to that category.

I'm not saying God will not reveal himself in some way. But in my case anyway, most of the time when I have, all the time I would say, when I've known the guidance of God in my life, it has been by an inner witness in my life. And here's another example before I go on.

More blessed and less blessed. Turn with me to Acts chapter 20. If I were to ask you a question, how many of you want to be more blessed? We'd all say yes.

Everybody here will raise their hands. I want to be more blessed. Really? Okay, listen.

Acts 20 verse 35. The last part. Jesus said, these are the words of Jesus himself.

This is one of the few words of Jesus found in the Acts of the Apostles. It is more blessed to give than to receive. How many of you want to be more blessed? Most human beings do not want this.

Every unconverted, even many converted Christians believe exact opposite of what Jesus said. It is more blessed to receive than to give. I'm ready to stretch out my hand to receive a gift.

Somebody gives. Very reluctant to give. I have to pray a lot before I give.

Never have to pray when I receive. You see the deception of our flesh, our Adamic nature teaches us it is more blessed to receive. Is Jesus a liar? No.

And the test of it is in our life. If you see a man or a woman who's really blessed, I'll tell you one thing. You may not know about his private life, but he has learned to give more than to receive.

And that's why he's more blessed than you are. I don't mean all his money. Some of us are so poor that you don't have much money to give.

God's not a beggar. He's not primarily looking for money. He primarily wants our heart and our body and our life and our plans.

God's not short of money. I'll tell you that. That's one thing we have proclaimed in this church for 41 years.

And not only in this church, in all the many, many scores and scores of churches that CFC has planted in different places, is one thing we have consistently taught that God is not hard up for money. And that's why we don't take a collection. We never take an offering.

We have never taken one in 41 years in this church or in any of our churches. Because God's not hard up for money. And he provides it.

He says the silver and the gold in the world is mine. And one of the Psalms, Psalm 50, I think, he says, if I were hungry, I won't tell you. Because the cattle on a thousand hills is mine.

So God is not short of money. The way many preachers and pastors give the impression that God is hard up for money is a complete lie. All the men of God through the years who really known God have proved that in their personal life.

There was a great man of God in the 19th century called Hudson Taylor, an English doctor who went to China as a missionary. He made a statement concerning God's work. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies.

God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies. So he never told anybody about his needs, even though he was in China. And he had to support so many fellow missionaries.

He just trusted God and would pray. I remember one classic example in his life where they needed some money urgently for some expense in the mission field. It was very urgent.

It was needed within two or three days. And he prayed, Lord, we need this urgently for this work. We don't say God's work does not need money.

You know, our work through these 41 years has required a lot of money, including the construction of this building. Buildings are not important, but it's very difficult to meet out in the sun in the open. So it needs money, but God's not hard up.

He's not in a tight spot. That's what I'm trying to say. So he, Hudson Taylor, needed this money urgently in two or three days.

And he prayed. And sure enough, almost the next day, a check came for that money. But the wonderful thing is, in those days, it took about three months for a ship to travel from England to China to bring a letter.

So this check came the next day, but it was posted three months earlier. And here was this man praying, Lord, I need some money by tomorrow. This is how God is.

There's a beautiful verse in Isaiah 65, 24, which says, before they call, I will answer. Before they call, I will answer. Amazing.

So if you learn to give, you'll experience some amazing results in your life. I remember also reading in Hudson Taylor's, when he was a young doctor, and he was working as an assistant for somebody, and he felt God was going to call him to go to China. And he wanted to strengthen his faith.

He says, you know, when I'm out there in that strange land, I have to learn to trust God. And now itself, I must practice that. I must trust, see how God will take care of me.

And so his doctor, his boss was an absent-minded person. And he would tell Hudson Taylor, you know, they used to be paid every week by Saturday. And he says, listen, Hudson Taylor, I'm sometimes forgetful.

So on Saturday, before I go home, please remind me to give you your salary. Otherwise, I'll forget it, and you'll be without money for the next. So remind me.

Don't hesitate. So Hudson Taylor decided, I won't remind him. I'll trust God to remind him.

Let me see if I can trust God for a simple thing like this. And most Saturdays he gave. But one Saturday, the doctor said goodbye and walked off.

And he had completely forgotten to give Hudson Taylor his money. And he had hardly any money left. And Hudson Taylor said, OK, Lord, I trust you.

And he was going to pack up for the day when half an hour later, the doctor came back. Hey, I forgot something here. I've got to take something from the drawer.

And he came back and said, oh, by the way, did I pay you your salary? He said, no, you didn't. Why didn't you tell me? And he paid him. Can you imagine how such an action would strengthen somebody's faith? That's what helped him when he went into more difficult circumstances, to trust God.

And I want to say to all of you, from the earliest, you don't have to wait till you're 50, 60 years old. He was a young Christian. Those are some of the things where I also, you know, I read these things.

And I said, Lord, I want to exercise my faith in some things. When he's a young Christian, you can learn to trust God. It may not be in the same way, but it's a wonderful thing to experience trusting God to do something for us.

And God will allow different circumstances to come into your life, where it's like an examination. God gives us personal tuition. He doesn't treat us all in the same way.

You know, God doesn't put us in one classroom and teach us all the same thing. The Holy Spirit gives us personal tuition. So the experience you go through will not be the experience somebody else goes through.

The trials of faith God gave me was not like Hudson Taylor, where somebody didn't, where I had to remind somebody to give me my salary. I worked in the Navy, where I automatically got my salary on the first of every month. But the trials of faith were different, that God would test us to see, and He'll test you as well.

So this matter of being tossed about, as I was saying, I was never very sure about my salvation. And if any of you are like that, I want to repeat what I've said many times, how God gave me that assurance. Even though I was not really sure of my salvation, I still had the habit of reading the Bible, just a little bit.

It's a good habit to have, even if you're not converted. Anybody here not converted? Read the Bible every day. It's still, it's a good habit to have, because faith will come.

The Bible says, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. So you're not going to get faith if you don't read the Bible. If you say, I'm weak in faith, I'll tell you, as a doctor, diagnosis is, you don't read the Bible.

That's why. You understood now the reason. It's like you go to a doctor, and there's some spots on your face, and he says, you lack certain vitamins.

You need to take this regularly, and we do it. So if you say that your faith is weak, I'll tell you straight away, you don't read the Bible enough. Because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

The more I've read the scriptures, the more faith has come into my heart. So if you say that I want to belong to that more blessed category, that has not seen, and yet has believed, then this not seeing should be replaced by reading the scriptures. Otherwise nothing will happen.

Otherwise you will not just say, I didn't, I don't see, because there are some people like that. They haven't seen, and they don't even believe, because they don't read the scriptures. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

That's a verse in Romans 10 and 17. Particularly, Word of Christ means the New Testament. So one day I was reading the New Testament.

This is when I was 19 and a half, and I was working in the naval base in Cochin. And I read, I just, you know, that day my portion was John chapter 6. That's all. It wasn't any special chapter I opened.

It just happened to be my portion for that day. And I read in John chapter 6 and verse 37, all whom the Father gives to me, will come to me. And him that cometh to me, I'll never cast out.

It's a great verse. And if any of you lack assurance, let me share with you the word that gave me assurance. Him that cometh to me, I will never cast out.

And I said, Lord, I must have come to you 100 times. He said, I never cast you out. I mean from that verse.

It's not an audible voice. That's what I got from that verse, that he didn't cast me out. And I said, Lord, I believe.

You know, anytime you hear me say the Lord spoke to me, please don't think it is an audible voice. I've never heard an audible voice. It's always in my heart and almost always through some scripture that the Holy Spirit would remind me of.

That is how I say the Lord spoke to me. So don't get some illusion that I'm some type of mystic, sitting all by myself in a room and hearing voices. Because voices means you can't trust those voices.

I can trust God's word. If you see an angel, how do you know it's not the devil? Because the Bible says the devil comes as an angel of light. All these people who say, they say angels.

It may have been demons they saw. So don't look for all those things. God's word is a solid foundation.

So I said, Lord, I believe this. And I don't know how it is. But I just like, you know, we say in the Navy, I dropped an anchor that day.

An anchor is dropped by a ship in a very rough sea. And it goes right down that anchor. You know what an anchor looks like? It goes and grips the rocks and the ground underneath.

And the ship, if it's a good anchor, the ship will never move from that spot. It'll swing a little, but it'll be there forever, as long as the anchor is there. And I dropped that anchor 57 years ago and more.

And it's held. And I know that if you drop that anchor in your life, it'll hold. Jesus says to you personally, listen to his word, speaking to you personally today.

You have come to me. I have not cast you out. Maybe that's a word for somebody here, who's not sure whether Jesus accepts you.

Because, you know, we feel I'm such a rotten sinner. I'm not like all those other people. It doesn't matter how great a sinner you are.

You may have committed a few sins or multitudes of sins. You know, Christ would have had to die, even if you had committed only one sin. Supposing you had committed only one sin in your whole life.

That's all. Christ would still have to come and die on the cross, otherwise you wouldn't be saved. It doesn't matter whether it's one or one million.

Both need to be forgiven. And if you committed only one sin and you're forgiven, and here's another guy who committed 10 million sins and he's forgiven, you're equal. You're on the same level.

Because acceptance is based on the fact that Christ died for our sins, whether it was one sin or a million sins. So don't ever think I've been such a bad sinner and perhaps he won't accept me. That's a lot of rubbish.

That's what the devil whispers into your ear. It's a lie. Tell the devil to his face he's a liar.

I like to tell the devil that. You're a liar Satan. You're an accuser.

I'm never going to listen to you. When you tell me lies, I won't listen to you. When you accuse other people to my mind and saying he's like that and she's like that, I'm not going to listen to you.

How many of you married people have heard the devil tell you your mother-in-law is bad like that? You believe it? A lot of people believe the devil's lies. They ruin themselves. The devil's a liar.

Jesus said that. John 8 44. He's a liar from the beginning.

You know the first sin. How many of you know this? The first sin mentioned in the Bible is a lie and that was spoken by the devil in Genesis 3. You shall not die even if you eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That's the first lie.

That's the first sin you see in the Bible. So what does the Bible begin with? Satan is a liar. You believe that? The first thing the Bible says about Satan is that he does lies.

So all those things he whispers into your ears are lies. Don't listen to it. God's word is alone the truth.

So don't ever listen to him and he says you're too great a sinner to come to Christ. And that's why it's written in the scriptures about that thief on the cross. You know the Romans did not crucify everybody.

They put some people in jail. Barabbas was in jail. He wasn't crucified.

He was also a criminal. But the worst were crucified. Like today the worst murderers are hanged.

Some murderers only get life imprisonment. The worst murderers are hanged. In the time of the Romans the worst criminals were crucified.

And here we read in the scriptures that the worst criminal crucified saved at the last minute. Teaching us a number of things. One, that you can be the worst sinner in the world and still can be saved.

That's one truth. The second truth you learn from that is you can be even saved at the last minute just before you die. But don't wait for that because you don't know when you'll die.

And you know there are some churches, orthodox churches, where they teach people to pray, Lord save me from sudden death because there are a lot of things I have to settle in my life before I die. Don't be like that. We must be always ready.

And that teaches us that you can be saved at the last minute before you die. Another thing we learned from the thief on the cross is that the Lord will forgive you if you take the blame yourself. Don't blame anybody else.

He said on the cross, I'm guilty. I deserve this. What a thing to say.

I don't think there are many criminals who are hanged even today who say, I deserve to be hanged. They'll fight till the last minute not to be hanged. Put me in prison for a few years.

But this guy said, no, I deserve to be hanged. I deserve to be crucified. I'm so bad.

I don't blame my mom and dad for bringing me up in bad ways. I don't blame the company I got. I don't blame all the friends who led me astray.

Nobody. I blame myself. That's the other lesson you must learn.

Many Christians haven't learned that. Simple lessons from the thief on the cross. You can be the worst sinner and you can be saved.

You can be saved at the last minute, but you'll be saved only if you take the blame completely yourself without blaming anybody else. One of the things we have to really get rid of is the second sin that Adam committed. You know, the first sin Adam committed was opening his mouth and eating the fruit which Eve

gave him.

What is the second sin? The second sin was he blamed his wife. God asked him, have you eaten of that tree? And he said, look at her. That's the woman.

She's the one who made me eat it. So this habit of, which I call the second sin of Adam, it's very much in us. Always trying to put the blame on somebody else for something or the other in our office or in our home.

You know, children do that. Most children. You know, if you ask him, did you hit him? Yeah, but he hit me first.

That's how it is. It's right from childhood. We're putting the blame on somebody else.

And if you have eliminated that from your life, and I tell you, it's pretty easy to eliminate it. If you just decide from now onwards, I'm never going to blame anybody else for anything. If it is his fault, okay, that's between him and God.

He's not responsible to me for that. See, that's the difference between Adam and Christ. When Adam sinned, he blamed Eve.

But when Jesus was on the cross, he took the blame himself for sins he never committed. What an example. Now the Lord's not asking you to take the blame for sins you've not committed, but things you've done wrong.

In all problems and conflicts between human beings, always the fault is on both sides. I'll tell you that. Sometimes 90% of the fault may be on the other side, sometimes 99% of the fault may be on the other side, but at least 1% is with you.

There is no conflict in human relations where you can say 100% of the fault was on the other side. There was only one such case, and that is God and man. Now there's a conflict between God and man, 100% the fault was with man, and yet God took the blame.

What an example, where 100% of the fault is with the other side, and God says, okay, I'll take the blame. That is the spirit of Christ. I'll tell you, it's not such a big crime if you take the blame for something you didn't do, in order to resolve a conflict, and in order to bring peace.

We are so, we're so like Adam, defending ourselves. You know, Jesus told the Pharisees in Luke 16 15, turn to that verse, it's an important verse, Luke 16 15, you are those who justify yourselves before men. Is that such a big crime? You know, the crimes that Jesus condemned the Pharisees for, you guys are hypocrites, you keep the outside clean, inside dirty, and you drive widows from their houses, just because they couldn't pay the rent.

You're so rich, and you're squeezing money from these poor people, and so many things Jesus said about the Pharisees. But here's another thing that he said, you are those who justify yourselves before men. Now, many of us may not have some of the other characteristics of the Pharisees, but do you have this one? Do you have this one? You justify yourself before others, because you want to appear correct, right.

You're not wrong, the other person is wrong. You know how much that hinders your Christian life? That's why the Pharisees could never come to Christ. But the thief on the cross, he did not justify himself.

He said, I'm to blame. And Jesus said, really? You can come to heaven today. He said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

He didn't know the kingdom will take another 2,000 years. Jesus said, no, no, no, you don't have to wait 2,000 years. Today, you can walk with me in paradise.

And can you imagine the surprise the angels see when Jesus and that thief walk hand in hand that same day, that same evening, they're walking in paradise together. Because at the last minute, he said, Lord, I'm guilty. I deserve this.

I won't blame anybody else. But please remember me. I'm not expecting much, just remember me.

God loves people who come to him like that. Be one like that. You are those who justify yourself before men.

And this, which is very great in the eyes of men, is an abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16, 15. God knows your heart.

And justifying yourself before men is highly esteemed. Then people will esteem you highly. Oh, he was not the one at fault.

She was not the one at fault. The other person was at fault. And your esteem goes up.

And the Bible says that is an abomination before God. Don't do it. It's very, very important.

I've seen among some of the finest believers an unwillingness to acknowledge that they could have been wrong, that they could have been a mistake. I remember hearing of a wife who said to a marriage counselor, my husband thinks there are only two perfect people in the world, God and him. That's all.

And he's got some doubts about God also. But as far as he's concerned, he's okay. This is how it is, you know.

We think everybody else is wrong, but not me. And we do so much. You just look back, even at this moment, you can think back to different things in your life that come to your mind right now.

But you wanted to defend yourself. No, I'm not wrong. I was right.

And you got so many reasons, and like a lawyer in a court, you can say this and that and the other. You got some esteem in the eyes of men and detestable in the eyes of God. I say, no, Lord, I don't want to do it.

Now don't carry what I say to such an extreme that you tell a lie. You know, you don't have to tell a lie. If something is the truth, you're going to speak the truth.

But your spirit in all these things, Jesus said, the words I speak to you are spirit and life. So there's nothing wrong in explaining a situation saying this is how it was. But if the spirit behind it is to justify yourself, that's wrong.

If the spirit behind it is, we must know the truth about this situation. Forget about what people think of me. Then you're right.

So it's the motive. Always remember this. Man looks in the outward appearance.

God looks at the motive. And if that's one thing you young believers can understand right from the beginning of your Christian life, that your motive is more important than your action. Action is important.

But your action can be good and motive bad. You get zero. You know, you get zero for a good action if the motive was bad.

So in the final day of judgment, what you did will not be as important as why did you do it. So always ask yourself the question, not what did I do? But why did I do it? That's what it says. You must know these verses.

1 Corinthians in chapter 4. The reason I quote these verses is so that you know this is not some bright idea I have, but it's in scripture. And if you get established in some of these fundamental truths, it can help you throughout your life. 1 Corinthians 4, 5. It says don't judge other people.

Why does it say don't judge other people? Because you don't know their motives. You see the action. You see a man going into a drinking bar.

He may be going there to witness to somebody. He may be going there to give out some tracts. You say, oh, I saw that brother going into that bar.

You don't know the reason why he went there. It's much safer not to judge because Jesus said, if you don't judge, you will not be judged. Judge not so that you don't get judged.

I say, Lord, in the final day, I don't want to get judged. I said, then don't judge others. Okay.

I may have my opinions. I can't help having opinions, but I won't pass a judgment. I won't go around talking about that to others.

So it says don't judge because the time has not yet come. There is a time that will come when you will be able to judge clearly. And that is when the Lord returns.

Because when the Lord returns, he will disclose the motives of people's hearts. Then you will know, ah, why did he do it? And then you'll be so ashamed that you attributed a bad motive to him when his motive was an excellent motive. Can you imagine standing in the judgment seat of Christ and seeing the history of many people you related to and you discover that you were wrong and you were wrong.

You were wrong about this person and you were wrong about that person and you were wrong about this person. The other person you judged, you were completely wrong. Can you imagine how ashamed you will feel at the judgment seat of Christ? I've thought about that because I've also made that mistake in the past and I've repented of it.

The wonderful thing about repentance and asking God to forgive is it's blotted out from the record. And I'll tell you this about my life. I have judged people wrongly.

I've made mistakes. But in the day of judgment, you will not see it in my record. You know why? Because I acknowledged my mistake.

I said, Lord, I was wrong judging that person. I'm sorry. Please cleanse me in the blood.

It's blotted out from my record and you will not see it in the final day. You want to have a clean record in the final day when Christ comes back? Think back to the times where you have judged others, attributed motives to them which they never had. Clear your record now.

Don't wait till the judgment seat of Christ and be careful in the days to come to say, Lord, I don't want to be like the dog that turns back to his vomit. No, I want to turn away from that. The Bible says in Proverbs that there's the verse.

Here's another good verse for you to remember in 2 Peter. It's quoted in 2 Peter. I'll show you that verse for 2 Peter and chapter 2 verse 22.

It's happened to them according to the true power of proverb, a dog returns to its vomit. That is a verse which is quoted from the Old Testament and one of the little principles of Bible study that I have taught you before, particularly if you have an NASB, the New American Standard Bible is one of the most accurate translations of the Bible among all the translations there are. I've used it for what, more than 40 years.

And one of the advantages of the New American Standard Bible is in the New Testament, whenever there is a quotation from the Old Testament, it comes in capital letters. That's great. So I can just flip through the pages of the New Testament and find immediately which are the verses which have quoted from the Old Testament.

And whenever I see a verse like that, I go back to the Old Testament verse. You see, what does it say exactly there? And I've discovered some amazing truths. I would encourage you to do that.

You've got an NASB and you see some letters in capital. That means it's an Old Testament quotation. Go back there and look up that and you'll see some amazing truths.

I don't have time to tell you all the amazing truths. I discovered that. But this one, Proverbs 26 and verse 11, which doesn't come out in 2 Peter 2, but it does come out in Proverbs 26.

That's the advantage of comparing scripture with scripture. In Proverbs 26 and verse 11, it says, like a dog that returns to its vomit, is a fool who repeats his folly. So when you meditate on that, a dog, I've never seen a dog do that, but I presume, I believe the Bible, the dog vomits and feels a bit hungry and says, I couldn't get any other food.

Let me go and eat up what I vomited already. Now, human beings won't do that, but dogs do it. So what is the meaning of that spiritually? That means, according to this verse, you did something very foolish, okay? And you vomited it out means you recognized it was foolish.

You did something foolish that's not yet vomited out. It's still inside you. But one day you discover, hey, that was very foolish of me to do that.

That day you vomited it out. Some days later, you go and do the same foolish thing again. That's going back to his vomit and eating it up again.

That's sad. That's the meaning of this verse. So the one encouraging thing I learned from that is, I'm permitted to do a foolish thing once.

Praise the Lord. Thank God I'm permitted to do a foolish thing once, recognize and vomit it out, and I'm clear. But I should try my best by the grace of God not to repeat that, not to do it again.

It's a good thing to learn. Lord, I'm sorry I went and justified myself there. I'm just ashamed of myself.

Let me not go and eat that vomit again. I'm not going to do that again. I falsely accused that person not knowing the real reason.

Don't let me eat that up again. Lord, I have this tremendous tendency to, whenever I hear something bad about somebody, to spread it. Have you done that? You heard something bad about somebody and you have such an itch.

You know what an itch is? You feel scratchy. You've got to scratch it. And that's what I mean by an itch.

You've got to tell somebody this bad story you heard about someone. It's an itch. And then you told somebody you feel relieved.

I'd like you scratch yourself and you feel relieved. I told somebody that. I hope you vomit it out today and you'll never go and eat that vomit again.

These are some of the things the Lord's been taught me through the years. It tremendously helped me. It took me a long time to learn.

I'm not saying that I never ate up what I vomited. I vomited a few times and ate it up again. But I finished with it now by the grace of God.

I mean some new area I may do foolish things but not the old areas. In new areas we'll keep on doing foolish things. But don't go repeating the old areas and finish with some of them.

You know we want to become more and more like Jesus. I'll tell you the great example I see in Jesus. There's a in John chapter 6 halfway through Jesus ministry.

He says to his disciples John chapter 6 verse 70. Didn't I choose you twelve but one of you is a devil. He meant Judas son of Simon Iscariot who was going to betray him.

But the wonderful thing about Jesus was he never mentioned his name. He didn't say who it was. Three and a half years when Judas joined Jesus he was a wholehearted disciple just like Peter.

Somewhere along the way he discovered that Jesus is not going to be the ruler of Israel. You know I think Judas I have a feeling that Judas now this I'm guessing I have a feeling Judas probably wanted Jesus. Jesus is so powerful he'll just drive the Romans out and become the ruler of Israel and I'll be the prime minister in the kingdom.

And gradually he discovered that Jesus was not in that type of business of trying to rule. He would forgive those who hurt him and he was not interested in fighting with the Romans and I think Judas was disillusioned. Hey this is not the type of Messiah I thought was coming.

So he decided to betray him and that happened somewhere maybe a year or so after he joined Jesus and Jesus knew it. He could see through. You know one thing about a spiritual man like Jesus he could see through people and the more spiritual you are you will be able to see through people.

You won't be fooled easily and Jesus never told anybody who that was and how do we know that because at the last supper when he said one of you is going to betray me everybody didn't turn and look at Judas.

You know what they said? Lord is it I? Every one of them said Lord is it I? And Judas also acted wholly and said Lord is it I? He was really smart. Jesus never revealed what a wonderful thing to know that somebody sitting in your midst is absolutely evil.

You say let God reveal him. I'm not going to do it. Now don't carry what I say to an extreme if you find somebody's doing something wrong today in a church we must go to the elders and tell them what you've seen or heard what somebody did or said but as an elder I have you know elders then decide when should this matter be brought up and very often I've had to take that decision in relation to different churches and different problems that arise and my example has been Jesus.

Jesus waited till the right time when God himself would expose it. In some of our churches we've had to remove elders in a number of churches in India and even abroad but I was never in a hurry to do it. I said let God himself do something that exposes the thing that others also will see yeah this person needs to be removed and it's good to wait for that and don't jump immediately to do that.

These are little lessons we need to learn even when I know something is wrong, somebody's doing something wrong. Lord is it right time to expose that or not? It's good to pray about everything. Jesus was like that.

One of the other truths that the Lord taught me, I'm very glad that I learned it very early in my life. See I was converted the same month that I became a naval officer. In those days naval officers earned a lot of money.

I had so much money I didn't know what to do with it and I was single and I somehow by the grace of God I understood this truth which is mentioned in Luke 16 and verse 13 that there are only two masters in the world, God and wealth. Mammon is a word for wealth. Wealth means property, shares, money, everything that the world considers wealth and Jesus said you cannot serve God and wealth.

You cannot love God and wealth. You can't hold on tightly to God and wealth. The three things he said there, you cannot serve God and wealth, you cannot love God and wealth and you cannot hold on tightly to both God and wealth.

You have to love one, choose one and I'm so thankful that right almost immediately after I got converted there when I was 19 and a half and I started earning my first salary as an officer, the Lord made that clear to me, you cannot serve God and wealth. You have to recognize the money you got is what God gave you and don't hold it tight-fistedly like the people in the world. Hold it in an open palm.

I'm not asking you to put it all in the offering box but keep it in an open palm so that the Lord says I can use it as I like and I can tell you where to give it and so I believe I can say with a good conscience today that in 57 years of my Christian life, I never once went after money. Never once. Not when I was a naval officer, not when I left the Navy, not when I became a full-time Christian worker.

I had a struggle to be free from the love of money. Of course all of us have a struggle but I battled it from the beginning and I found one of the ways to battle it was by giving so that I would give a lot of my money. I never believed in typing.

I have never typed in my life because I felt that is like income tax. God is not a master collecting income tax for me. He loved me and I said Lord.

Most of the time in those single days, I'd give 50 percent of my income to God's work somewhere and I was so happy but I'm not asking anybody else to do it. I had plenty and I was single and my parents were not dependent on me. I had no responsibilities and I found I could live very simply and buy very few things and hardly ever went to restaurants etc so that I had money that I could save and I could give for God's work.

Now I didn't understand the significance of all this but I discovered later that if God sees in you a spirit of discipline and sacrifice, it's amazing what God will do for you and through you. Absolutely amazing. He'll take us through trial.

He'll take us through financial pressure and he's taken us through even after when we got married. My wife and I went through tremendous financial pressure for the first two or three years but that was also good for us to see whether we love money or whether we stand true to God when we had little whether we'd go asking people or borrowing. It is all a test.

So some of you go through financial pressure, pass the test. It's a test. He will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability.

He will relieve that pressure at the right time. You can be sure of that because there's a verse which helped me a lot many many years ago. That's in Job chapter 23 and verse 10.

Here it says, he knows the way I take or the margin says he knows the way it is with me. That's a better translation. He knows the way it is with me.

So I read that in the living bible. The living bible is a great paraphrase particularly for the old testament because the old testament reading can be pretty heavy particularly the prophets. So I found living bible was an excellent paraphrase to read the old testament.

I could read lots and lots of it whereas even NASB can be heavy and the living bible paraphrase of Job 23 10 was so blessed that I made a little plaque of it and kept it in my front room. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. Wow! I said what a wonderful verse that is.

He knows every detail of what is happening to me. Some of you who are going through some pressure right now, would you like to remember that? That the Lord knows every detail of what is happening to you right now. Every detail.

Not just the broad facts that you are going through pressure but every little detail. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. Of course in the new testament it goes one step higher.

Romans 8 28 he plans every detail that is happening to me. That's even better. Not just knows but plans every detail that's happening to me.

So it's wonderful to live in this verse. Romans 8 28 has been another great verse for me throughout my life. Tremendous help.

I call it the filter. Like the water filter that purifies dirty water and gives you clean water to drink. Romans 8 28 is a filter.

People do evil to me it comes out good. People do good it comes out good. You can put any type of water into it.

It'll come out clean and Romans 8 28 is like that is a wonderful filter that you must have in your life and believe. According to your faith be it unto you. Okay one last verse I'd like to share with you.

There are many wonderful things I could tell you new Christians particularly and maybe some of the older Christians have also been helped today. 1 Corinthians 10 13 is another great verse that's helped me tremendously and that is that no temptation has ever come to me that is not common to people all over the world. So I discovered that I'm not especially tempted.

Sometimes the devil would like to tell you oh you're facing so many pressures unlike other people. Rubbish. You're facing the same type of temptation that common to all people in the world.

They may not tell you about it. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man. Do you believe that? Do all of you really believe? Some of you who feel sorry for yourself that you've gone through so much pressure and trial.

Oh nobody's known the pressure I've seen. Rubbish. Millions of people have faced it better than you.

They didn't complain about it. That is the only difference. It's common.

Every temptation and trial that has come to you has come to many many many other people in the world. Find some comfort in that. But the wonderful thing in your case is that you have a God who is faithful to ensure that none of those become too much for you.

If he weighs it, says that's too much for my child you can't let that happen. Now I think of some of the trials that I've gone through in my life and I see that God didn't allow some things to happen till I was strong enough to handle it because I would have lost my faith if it had come earlier. I mean if you give a 10th standard examination to a second standard student he'll fail.

You give it to him when he's next year in third standard he'll fail again. You give it to him next year when he's in fourth standard he'll fail again. He'll keep on failing.

God doesn't do it. He does not give a 10th standard examination to a second standard student. A second standard student will only get a second standard question paper.

Next year he'll get a third standard question paper. That's a great verse. So don't ever say this word, this sentence which is very common among many believers, this is becoming too much for me.

Have you ever said that? From today onwards never again. This is not too much for me. It is common to many millions of people around the world and they don't have a God like I have who is faithful, who will plan every detail.

He's allowing it to strengthen. It's a wonderful thing. You know when you read about the word of God and the different things in scripture, questions come in our mind.

I remember one of my grandsons when he was seven years old asked me, Grandpa why has God allowed Satan to exist when he's so bad? Why doesn't God just destroy him? That's a question that's come to many of us and I was so delighted that a seven year old would ask me that. So I told him listen son, you know how you've got to do exercise in order to build your muscles otherwise you'll just become fat. You've got to run or play or when our muscles are subject to some resistance like when you run your calf muscles are subject to resistance.

When you pull something your muscles in your arm are subject to resistance. That's what makes you strong and so that God allows the devil to resist you, to push you, to do something wrong so that you can push back. That's how you become strong.

When the devil tells you not to obey daddy and mommy you got to push back and say no I'm going to obey daddy and mommy. He was so delighted. He said I'm going to not resist the devil all the time.

I want you to think of that. Why does God allow those temptations in your life? Because he wants you to be strong. He'll make a way of escape it says here that not only that you'll endure it but you'll become strong and he will make sure that it never becomes too much for you.

So if some massive temptation has come your way now you know what it is? It's an indication of the tremendous confidence God has in you. He's telling you hey you're not in second standard you're in 10th standard. You thought you were in second standard you're not.

Look at the massive trial that's come your way. You're in a much higher class than you thought. I mean wouldn't you like to get a jump from second standard to 10th standard like that? That's what God is saying.

You're not so low as you thought. This is a test of what I think of you. So be encouraged everybody here.

The entire bible is full of encouragement. There is not a single discouraging word in this book. Believe me.

If you got a discouraging word you didn't get it from this book or you got it from some preacher who doesn't know this book. There are strong words to correct us but no discouraging word. Not even one.

God bless you. Are you happy? Okay let's pray. Heavenly Father what a wonderful God you are.

What a loving father. What would we do if we did not have you as our father? Temptations come to everybody but we have a father. That's what makes the difference.

We pray you'll help each of us to live as those who demonstrate to the world around us. I have a father who cares for me. Help us each one Lord to be different from the others in this way that we manifest that we have a father in heaven who provides for us and cares for us and never let us down.

Never allow us to face something too much for us. Assures us that we are his. Accepted us.

Forgives us readily and teach us to be merciful to others just like you have been merciful to us. Pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/pwjhtz9Kiek.mp4>

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