

Laying on of Hands (Video)

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the significance of laying on of hands, emphasizing the act as a means of imparting blessings, authority, and healing. It explores the principle of giving what one has received from God, drawing parallels from biblical examples like Moses' rod and the boy's lunch. The message underscores the importance of being givers and freely sharing the gifts and blessings received from God.

Scripture: Exodus 4:2, Matthew 14:17, Matthew 16:19, 1 Corinthians 11:23, Matthew 10:8

Topics: "Impartation of Blessings", "Generosity in Sharing God's Gifts"

Description

This sermon delves into the significance of laying on of hands, emphasizing the act as a means of imparting blessings, authority, and healing. It explores the principle of giving what one has received from God, drawing parallels from biblical examples like Moses' rod and the boy's lunch. The message underscores the importance of being givers and freely sharing the gifts and blessings received from God.

Transcript

All right, we're in Hebrews chapter 6, and we're going to read again chapter 5, 12, through chapter 6, verse 3. So Hebrews chapter 5, reading from 12 through chapter 6, verse 3. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you've come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. So we're going through the book of Hebrews verse by verse, and we're stuck on verse 2. We've been there for five or six weeks now.

These are, again, the elementary principles, the first principles, the foundation or the milk of the word. And he is saying that these things are absolutely essential in the life of the believer. Remember that a principle is not something that you learn once, and then you forget, and you move on.

But a principle is something that is always true, and that always is there. So the principles of literature is the ABC, and you can never get away from the 24 letters. 24 in Greek, I think, 26 in English.

The 26 letters of the alphabet. It doesn't matter how complicated the writing becomes. It doesn't matter how long the book is.

It's always those 26 letters. And so in the faith, there are these basic fundamentals. The first one being repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, the second one.

Third one, the doctrine of baptisms. We've dealt with baptisms now the last four weeks. And so this week we're in verse 2, the laying on of hands.

Now when you look at the laying on of hands, you think, well, you know, it's not at the same level as faith or repentance or baptism. And yet the writer includes it in this list of the fundamentals of the faith. And so it must be important.

I think it's easy for us to say, well, you know, it's not at the same level as the others that we've already dealt with. It's not at the same level as the resurrection from the dead or eternal judgment. And yet he mentions it there as one of the principles.

And so what is the importance of the laying on of hands? And obviously, what do we mean by the laying on of hands? And we need to go to the Old Testament. Now remember that many of these things in the New Testament don't come from the Old Testament, or they do appear in the Old Testament, but they're very radically changed in the New Testament. The laying on of hands remains pretty much unchanged from the Old Testament through the New Testament.

So we can look at the Old Testament and see how it functioned there, and then we're going to look at the New Testament and see how that operates there. And then what we want is the principle. We want to extract the principle out of this, and we'll do that when we get near the end.

So we're going to go to Genesis chapter 48 to begin. Genesis chapter 48. And I've selected these verses because they highlight not just the importance of the idea of laying hands, but another little detail which we'll see in a moment.

So what is happening is Jacob—remember that in Egypt, Joseph had come to Egypt, and then later on his family came, including his father Jacob. And Jacob is now ready to die, and one of the things that they would do when they were about to die is that they would bring in the children, and they would lay hands on the children and pronounce a blessing on the children. And obviously these may be—they may be small children, or they may be adults.

It seems that Joseph's children are small. So Joseph brings his two boys. His two boys are born to him while he is in Egypt, and it seems that they are small because it says that Joseph brought them from beside his knees.

So they were toddlers. They were down here somewhere, and he brings them to Jacob, and he bowed down his face to the earth. Verse 17 says, now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand—sorry, I cut out a few verses to save time, because otherwise we're not going to get through.

So what happens is that he presents the boys so that the oldest one would be at Jacob's right hand. Jacob can't see. Jacob has cataracts, or he's old, and so he can't see.

They didn't have glasses or those kinds of things. So he brings the two boys, and he presents the oldest one at Jacob's right hand, and the younger one at the left hand. And this is the little thing that we see here, is that in the Old Testament, the right hand contains a greater blessing than the left hand.

And in fact, the idea of the right hand of God are blessings forevermore. That idea appears right through the Old Testament. Now that doesn't flow through to the New Testament.

When we lay hands in the New Testament, it doesn't matter whether we use the left hand or right hand or both hands, but those days it did matter. So he brings the boys in the right order. The oldest one is to get the greater blessing, the younger one the lesser.

And so when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, who is the younger, it displeased him. And so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. So what Jacob had literally done is he had crossed over his hands so that his right hand was on the younger and his left hand on the older.

And Joseph said to his father, not so my father, for this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head. But his father refused and said, I know my son, I know.

He also shall become a people, in other words a nation, and he also shall be great. But truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations. So in this is a prophecy.

Now here's one of the things that we need to understand, one of the principles we need to understand of the principle, and that is that we cannot by the laying on of hands change anything that God has determined. We cannot tell God that he must bless this one and not bless that one. God is the one who blesses, and we'll see that again in Jacob in a moment.

And so Jacob is simply doing what God had directed him. He is not able of himself to say to the younger, you have the greater blessing, and the older one has the lesser blessing. This is determined by God.

Now of course it's significant in the case of Jacob, and I don't want to get too sidetracked, because you remember that Jacob was the younger of the two brothers, Jacob and Esau. Esau sold his birthright, a legitimate deal, sold his birthright to Jacob. Jacob then goes into his father and receives the blessing in the place of his brother Esau.

So we'll look at that scripture in a moment. But what you can see is that Jacob, the younger, receives the blessing, and now he passes that on to his grandchildren. These are his grandchildren.

Remember, Joseph's his son, and these are his grandchildren. Just by the way, there is no—while Joseph is one of Jacob's twelve sons, there is no tribe of Joseph. But there are the half-tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

So the blessing bypasses Joseph, as it were, and goes to his two sons, and they become the two half-tribes, making up the twelfth tribe. And so he is simply saying what God has told him to say. We have a wrong idea today—well, hopefully not we, but many have a wrong idea today—and that is that in the laying on of hands, we have power to determine someone's future.

We don't have that power. God alone has that power. We'll come back to that again near the end.

Now, in Genesis chapter 27, so Jacob had gone in—so we're going way back now to when his father Isaac was getting old, and Jacob had gone in, and he had received the blessing. Remember that he had covered his arms with the skins of the goats, of the kids, and put his brother's clothes on, prepared a meal, and his father smells him, and embraces him, smells him, and gives him the blessing. And so he's got the blessing, he goes out.

Now Isaac then—so his brother comes in, Esau, and Isaac realizes what has happened. And Isaac trembled exceedingly and said, Who? Where is the one who hunted game, and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him, and indeed he shall be blessed. So Isaac suddenly realizes what has happened.

But notice that he says that the blessing is irrevocable. The blessing cannot be withdrawn. It cannot be changed.

So this gives us an idea—and we're going to see this emphasized in the New Testament—that the laying on of hands is a very authoritative thing. It's a very important thing, and it is very significant. Now, if we lay hands on someone without God's approval, that has no power at all.

But clearly this had God's approval. How do we know that? Because Jacob now has to flee from his brother Esau. He runs for his life to his uncle Laban, and that night, or the night after, he lays down to sleep.

He uses a rock as a pillow, and God appears to him in a vision. And God affirms the blessing that Isaac had pronounced on him. God now himself tells him, You are the blessed one, and expresses all of the things that were attached to that blessing.

In other words, what Isaac did, even though he did it in ignorance, was still what God wanted. If this wasn't God's will, God would never have confirmed that blessing. But God confirms the blessing.

And so one of the things, then, that we're seeing here is the first thing about laying on of hands in the Old Testament is to impart a blessing—to impart a blessing. Now, I've just used these examples. There are many, many other examples, but I've just used these because there are particular lessons that we learn from these particular examples.

And that flows through to the New Testament in the form of the Holy Spirit. We'll come back to that in a moment. The second thing that the laying on of hands was used for in the Old Testament was to appoint officers or ministries.

Numbers chapter 27, verse 22. So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eliezer the priest and before all the congregation.

Now, again, this is near the end of Moses' life. Remember, Moses is not allowed to go into the land. And Joshua, his right-hand man, the young man, is now going to take over the leadership of the people of Israel.

He's going to take them into the Promised Land. And so God spoke to Moses, told him what to do, and so he brings Joshua and sets him before Eliezer the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as—or commissioned him—just as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses.

So this is—at what point does Joseph—this is an important question to ask because it again applies to the New Testament as well—at what point does Joshua become the man who would lead Israel into the Promised Land? Not at the time of laying on of hands. This had already been determined before. And we can try and analyze his life and try and figure out at what point that happened, but you remember that he was one of the two spies that came back—Joshua and Caleb—came back with a good report, while the other spies came back with a wrong report.

And so God had been preparing him, but this is officially recognizing him. And you see that this is a public thing. It's not Moses taking him, you know, behind the tent and saying, well, yeah, I'm going to lay hands on you and, you know, you're going to be the next leader.

No, this happens publicly. And the priest is there to lay hands on him, and it happens before the whole congregation. So God had already called Joshua.

God had already anointed Joshua. Joshua had been leading the people in their battles. He had been the sort of second in charge, if you will, under Moses.

So God's blessing was already on him. But this is not for his sake, this is for the people's sake. This is important.

We'll see this in the New Testament. So for the people's sake, this is the official recognition of his ministry. I suppose these days you would have the swearing-in of a president, or of a member of Congress, or a senator.

At what point does he officially begin his duties? At the point that he is sworn in. And again, that is generally done in a public or semi-public way, because it is a declaration that from this point on he is inaugurated, or he is sworn in, and he has the job. And so in Deuteronomy chapter 34, just a different version.

Remember, Deuteronomy is written later. It's a summing up of everything that happened in the first four books. Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

For Moses had laid his hands on him. So the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. So not only was he blessed and used before, but he is now blessed even more, and he gets the wisdom.

So before he was really the commander of the army. Now he has to judge, and he has to listen to the people's arguments, and fights, and civil suits, and all this sort of stuff. And he has to judge between them, and he needs wisdom.

So he gets the equipment that he needs to be able to do the job. Numbers chapter 8, verse 10. So you shall bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites.

So now we've seen different people laying hands on. So this is not restricted to one particular office. This is not just for the priests, or for the high priest.

But we see that different people are able to lay hands on people. And here the whole congregation laid their hands on the Levites. Remember, the Levites was the tribe that God had chosen to serve in the temple, and to serve in the things of God.

And so the children of Israel will lay their hands on the Levites. Now obviously there's three million Israelites. So how are three million going to lay hands on him? Well, I assume that what happened, it doesn't tell us, but I assume what happened is that the representatives of the twelve tribes, the leaders of the twelve tribes, would have done it on behalf of the congregation.

It would be impossible for the whole congregation to do that. Now if we go to the New Testament, the first one I want to show you is in Matthew chapter 19. So this was a custom, it seems, for people to bring their children to the rabbi, the priest, or the teacher, and for them to lay hands on the children, and to pray a blessing over the children.

Otherwise where would they have got this idea from? So clearly this was something that was already being practiced, and they bring them to Jesus. The disciples say, no, Jesus is too busy. He can't be bothered with the children.

And obviously Jesus says bring the children, and he lays hands on them. Some of the other Gospels says he took them in his arms, and he prayed for them. So the same way then as a blessing is imparted, a blessing is given, in the Old Testament as they prayed for the sons who would become the heirs of the blessing and of the inheritance.

So Jesus prays for the children. Now we must remember again that our laying hands on someone does not override God's will, and it does not override our free will. In other words, you can lay hands on a child, but if the parents don't raise that child right, the laying of hands is of no value.

And that's why when we do this—and I'll explain the details in a moment—but when we do this, there is always, I certainly always will bring a admonition to the parents to make sure that they raise the child in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, that the child is raised properly. You can have whoever lay hands on the child, but if the parents mess up, it's messed up. We still trust God that somehow this child will come back, that somehow the child, when it grows up, will get some sense and in the end become a useful citizen, but above all a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It also does not override the child's personal or free will. If that child says, I'm out of here when it grows up, and it says, I'm not going to serve God, I don't believe in God, well, the prayer is not going to help that. But what it does is, obviously, it gives us an opportunity to minister to the parents.

It gives us an opportunity to ask God. Remember, we saw on Sunday that Jesus prayed for Peter. He says, I prayed for you that your faith will not fail.

And so we must pray for one another as he intercedes for us. He's ever-living to intercede for us. And so it's good and right that we pray for children, and that we pray that God would save them.

They are not saved because we lay hands on them. They are saved when they come to faith in the Lord themselves. And so it is good that we do that.

Now, just remember that this is not a command. There is no verse anywhere in the New Testament that says that we must lay hands on the children. The only text we really have is what happened here, is that they brought the children to Jesus.

And of course, we have the examples from the Old Testament. And so it is good that we do that, because Jesus did it. But if we never lay hands on the child, does that mean the child is damned? No, obviously

not.

That child still needs to grow up and come to faith, has to come to a point of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we can't make a sacrament of it. In some churches, it is a sacrament, and obviously they baptize when we dealt with baptism.

We dealt with that, so they will baptize the child, and at that point the child is apparently saved and becomes a full member of the church. And of course, we've seen that that is not true. So it is not a sacrament.

We only have two sacraments, if you will, and we don't like to call them sacraments. It's the Lord's table and baptism, not laying on of hands. But it is still a good thing to do.

It's a wonderful opportunity for us to address the parents and the grandparents and those that are here. It's a good opportunity for us to be reminded as a congregation of our responsibility to our own children and to the children in the congregation, to pray for them. And if we have an opportunity to teach in the Sunday school or at any other occasion, to bring the gospel so that they may come to know the Lord Jesus.

So this is the first way in which we use it in the New Testament. The second way is in Mark chapter 16 verse 17. This is Mark's version of the Great Commission, Matthew chapter 28.

So Mark 16, and these signs will follow those who believe. In my name, they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues, they will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them. And they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Now, I'm not going to deal with all of the other things because it'll be away from our focus. But they will hands on the sick, and they will recover. Now, who is he speaking to? He's speaking to all of the believers, not just the twelve, but however many believers there were.

This is after the resurrection, just before his ascension. He's in Jerusalem, so maybe 120 or so. And he gives to them the command.

The command is to all believers. So any believer can pray for someone and lay hands on them and ask God to heal them. Now again, we don't have the time to get into this whole healing thing.

We do believe that God heals, and we do believe that we need to be obedient. And if someone needs it or wants it, to lay hands on someone and to pray for them. But at the end of the day, God is sovereign, and God heals whom he will heal.

We cannot demand that God heal. We cannot say, because I've laid hands on you according to Mark chapter 16, because people pray this. This is exactly what I hear people pray sometimes, not here.

But you know, I've laid hands on you according to Mark chapter 16. You must now be healed. We don't, again, this is a whole study on its own.

Paul was not able to heal everyone that he knew and that worked with him. He left various ones sick at different times. So healing is God's choice.

We lay hands on them, we pray for them, and we trust God to do the healing. Now Paul does this in Acts chapter 28. In Acts 28.8, it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever.

This is a Roman. And dysentery. Paul went into him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him, and he healed him.

As I said, Paul was, you know, there were times certainly that Paul did not heal someone, and he left them. But here, Paul is putting this into practice. Now remember, we said that this is the privilege of any believer.

So if your children are sick, then you can pray for them. You can lay hands on them and pray that they may be healed. The problem, of course, is that we have many aberrations.

We have many abuses of this thing in all sorts of different ways. And I'm not going to get into all of that. But this is a legitimate tool and blessing that God gives us.

Now you'll begin to see that the principle behind laying on of hands is imparting or giving. It's giving a blessing. It's giving healing.

Or it's giving authority, in the case of Joshua being appointed, or the Levites being appointed. So it is giving something to the person who is being prayed for. Now if we go to Acts chapter 8, when Simon—remember, Simon is the magician.

He is faking to be a Christian, but he's not. But when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money. Yeah, I'll just have that one verse.

So the point here is—and we touched on this when we dealt with the baptism of the Holy Spirit two weeks ago—of the five examples in the book of Acts, three times they laid hands on people, and they received the Holy Spirit, and two times people just received the Holy Spirit without hands being laid on them. But this is obviously a legitimate way or use of the laying on of hands. Again, it is giving.

Now remember, again, the principle we must never get away from, and that is that no preacher or Christian has power in their hands. This is part of the false nonsense that we hear today. So they speak about this prophet or this evangelist, he has healing hands, or he has the gift of healing, so he can dispense healing.

So he goes down the line and he touches people, and now they're all supposed to be healed. No, it is God who heals. It is God who blesses.

It is God who calls to ministry. It was God who called Joshua and equipped him for the ministry. We have no power in our hands unless we're acting as the hands of God.

Now remember, in 1 Corinthians 12, it speaks about the body of Christ, and it says that one is the ear, and one is the eye, and one is the hand, and one is the foot. So God or Jesus doesn't have a body here on earth. I believe he still has a body in heaven, the resurrection body, which he received at the resurrection.

But he is not physically here on earth. We are here on earth. So we are his hands.

How are things going to get done here on earth unless we do it, unless he does it through us? So he uses the church, and he literally uses our hands. Now if he's going to use our hands, of course, the point that

I've been laboring is that we need to make sure that we have the authority to act on his behalf. You can't put on a policeman's uniform and go stand on a corner here and stop the traffic.

Well, I guess you can try, and you may be partly successful. But you don't have the authority to do it. Only those who have been given the badge has the authority.

And so where do they get the right to arrest someone? Where do they get the right to stop the traffic? It's in the badge. And what does the badge say? The badge says that the city council, in our case, or the police commissioners, have ordained him, have commissioned him, have given him authority. We've spoken about this before in the context of the military.

Officers in the military have a commission when they become an officer. And that commission, I'm not sure here in the United States, but certainly in South Africa, that commission is signed by the president. My orders of commission was signed by, I've forgotten his name, but by one of the presidents that we had at the time, personally signs them.

So when you disrespect the officer in the military, you're not disrespecting him, you're respecting the whole system. It goes all the way up to the president. That's where his authority comes from.

In the same way, when we as Christians operate as God's hands, with his authority, so not when we have sent ourselves, but when he has sent us. We're going around and saying, I have authority to heal, or to impart the Holy Spirit, or to impart this blessing, or that blessing, but if God has not authorized them, they have nothing. And it's a total waste of time, and it's really taking the name of the Lord in vain, by the way.

This is how, one of the ways in which we take the name of the Lord in vain. It's not just when we use his name as a swear word, but when we impersonate, in most countries there's a law against impersonating an officer. What do you do when you impersonate an officer? You say, you put on uniform, you put on a badge, you say I'm an officer, a police officer, but you're not.

You don't have that authority. These charlatans who go around saying, well, we have authority to heal, and to do this and that, and the other thing, who are they impersonating? They're impersonating God. They're saying, God has authorized me to heal, when in fact God may not have authorized them to heal.

And so, they're using the name of God in vain. They're saying, in the name of Jesus Christ, be healed. But Jesus never gave them authority to use his name, so it's a way in which his name is used in vain.

Anyway, we're off the track. So, he offered them money because he saw the laying on of hands. Acts chapter 13 and verse 2. Now, remember, in the Old Testament, officers or leaders or the Levites would be ordained by the laying, or commissioned by the laying on of hands.

We saw this with Joshua, and we saw this with the Levites. And this is also true in the New Testament. So, here in Acts chapter 13, Paul is in the congregation.

He is there, and he is preaching. He is not being sent out. And it says, they ministered to the Lord and fasted, and the Holy Spirit said, now separate was by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

They were doing the will of God. And so, as Paul goes, he goes—in Barnabas too, of course—they go with the full awareness that God is going with them, that God has given them authority, and God has given them a commission, a job to do. And their job was to become apostles, and they go out and they preach.

In Acts chapter 6, we have the appointment of deacons. And it says they had the whole selection process. We're not going to get into that.

And they selected the men, and they set them before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. So, now they were officially appointed as deacons. Now, the question, if you're thinking, would be then, why do we need to lay hands on someone if God is the one who calls, and God is the one who equips? So what's the point, then, of laying hands, because God has already called and equipped? The point, again, is it's not so much for the individual, but it is for those that he is ministering to, to know that this individual, this man, has been appointed as, in Paul's case, an apostle.

In the case of these men as deacons, or as an elder. Now, normally, elders and deacons—remember, these deacons, not only did they have the job of feeding the widows, but they also had the job of resolving disputes between the widows. Because, remember, there was a lot of fighting between the Greek speaking and the Hebrew speaking widows, and so part of their job was to keep peace amongst the two sects, or the two factions.

And it would be easy for them to say, well, who are you guys to tell us to butt out? But the apostles had laid hands on them. This recognized them officially. Now, when we ordain elders, we lay hands on elders, they should not need the ordaining or the laying on of hands in order to do their job.

They should already be doing the job. They should have the confidence of the congregation. The congregation should be looking to them as it is for leadership and for direction.

So why do we need to lay hands on them? So that those who are otherwise minded, those who are contrary, those who are argumentative—because the first thing they'll say is, who gave you authority? Because, remember, part of the job of elders sometimes is to put people out of the church, or sometimes to put people under discipline, or to admonish, or to rebuke. Well, who are you to tell me? But if he has been ordained, his hands have been laid on him, the church has recognized, and God has recognized. So he has a badge, if you will.

And the laying on of hands is the badge, is the order of commission that he is able to fall back on. Now, he should never need to accept, in the case of those people who are really rebellious, have to say, because I'm an elder. You know, I've heard elders throw around this thing and say, well, yeah, I'm an elder, you better do what I say.

That should never, ever be necessary. But we recognize that there are those who come in amongst us who are rebellious, who are troublemakers, and sometimes we need authority to be able to deal with that. All right, 2 Timothy 1, verse 6. Therefore I remind you, Paul, writing to Timothy, to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Now, remember that, again, Paul did not have the power to give a gift to Timothy. We dealt with this when we were in the book of Timothy. He is simply recognizing what God has already done.

When Paul came, and I've forgotten where they were in some part of Galatia, but Paul comes there, and he sees this young man, and he recognizes God's hand on him. And so he speaks to his mother. His father seems to be absent.

He speaks to his mother, and he takes him with him, and he trains him for the ministry. So when Paul first saw him, he recognized God's hand on the young man. So when he lays hands on him, he doesn't make

him anything.

He's simply recognizing what God has already gifted him to be. And so, again, that's the principle. We can only recognize what God has done.

We cannot appoint men that God has not called and gifted. We cannot lay hands on someone that God has not chosen. We can only recognize what God has already done.

And so it's a very serious and a very important step. Now, in 1 Timothy 5.22, Paul says to Timothy, do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins. Keep yourself pure.

The context is the appointment of elders. Remember that Paul is telling Timothy, you need to appoint elders. He gives him a list of the qualifications of an elder, but then he says, don't lay hands on hastily.

In other words, be careful, because this is a serious, serious step. I have ordained elders, and I have made mistakes. And I say that to my regret.

And it's one of those things that you can't easily undo. There is no mechanism in the New Testament for taking back the laying on of hands. Obviously, if the man is disqualified, he should be stepping down, but we know he has the problem.

Those who are carnal, who are prideful, it doesn't matter how much they fail, they will not step down, because they've got the bit between their mouths, and they're going to run with it. And so it becomes a really difficult thing to undo, and sometimes results in division in the church, because they will get some people on their side, and it really becomes very, very messy. So Paul says, don't be in a hurry.

Be careful when you lay hands on someone, but in the context of appointing them to ministry. And he says, nor share in other people's sins. This goes beyond just laying hands for the ministry.

I need to move a little faster. All right, this goes beyond just laying hands on ministry. It applies to that.

If there is a man whose life is not right—he is an adulterer or whatever—and you appoint him as an elder, you are participating with him in his sins, because part of the idea of laying on hands is identification. Why do we shake hands? Shaking hands is a form of laying on hands. It's not in this sense, but I'm saying, you know, we're one.

I identify with you. We don't shake hands with people we don't like, or we don't know, or, you know, who are our enemies. We only shake hands with those that are friends, and so we're identifying with them.

When we lay hands on someone and they are not in a good place, we are identifying with them in their sin, and we're sharing in their sin. But obviously, it also applies to identifying with people who are not appointed to ministry, but who are not living right lives, people who are in sin. And by participating with them, we are sharing in their sin by reaching out and saying, well, we're one, identifying with them.

And that's why, of course, we have a process from the Scriptures of disciplining people and saying, no, we do not agree with the way that you are living. This is not correct. This is not godly.

You need to get your life right before we can identify, and that's a whole other story. All right. Matthew chapter 16.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Now, I've made the point that we cannot do what God does not authorize.

We cannot bind what God does not bind. We cannot loose what God does not loose. But it also speaks about the authority that is given to the church.

Matthew 16 is dealing with church discipline, and the authority that's given to the church is backed up by heaven. Let me just leave it there, otherwise we're going to run out of time. First Corinthians 11 23.

Now, I'm going to change direction a little bit, because I want to look at the spiritual aspect of the laying on of hands. So, we've dealt with the physical aspect. It is there to bless children.

It is there to pray for the sick, and it's there to appoint ministry. Now, 1 Corinthians 11 23, and this is a passage which we'll read again on Sunday at the table. Notice the first two lines.

I received from the Lord what I delivered to you. There's a principle there again. We're using this word principle a lot tonight.

Paul is not saying, I sucked this out of my thumb. No, he says, I got it from the Lord. The Lord gave it to me.

Now, I remember again, there's a lot of people saying, well, the Lord told me. The Lord never told you anything. But the Lord told Paul, and Paul is telling them.

But here's a principle. You cannot deliver. You cannot give what you have not received.

I mean, that's simple. If you only have a dollar in your back pocket, you cannot give a hundred bucks. I mean, it's not difficult, is it? You can only give what you've got, and spiritually, you can only give what you've received.

You can't give what you've concocted, what you've manufactured. You can only legitimately pass on what God has given to you. And if God hasn't given you something, you have nothing to give.

All right. Exodus chapter 4 verse 2. So, the question we must ask is, what do I have? Because we want to impart a blessing. Remember, this is the bottom line.

It's imparting a blessing. We want to give blessing to people. And I'm not meaning blessing just in the sense of, yeah, I'm praying that God will bless you and make you rich, and that everything will be great, and you won't have problems.

That's not—we're talking about being helpful to people by blessing them. But if we don't have a blessing, how do we give a blessing? If we don't have victory, how do we give victory to others? And of course, we understand you can't just lay hands on someone and impart victory to them. We impart these things not just through the laying on of hands, but through ministry, through prayer, through counsel, through advice, in many, many different ways—practical ways of helping.

And the thing is that you can't give what you haven't got. But in Exodus, the Lord said to Moses—this is Moses—what is in your hand? And he said, a rod, his cane, his walking stick. And Moses took his wife—sorry, so Moses has to give it to the Lord.

He throws it down, becomes a snake, takes it back up again, becomes a stick again. But the point is, we're talking about laying on hands. We lay on hands when we give a blessing.

But you can't give if you don't have—your hand's empty, you don't have anything to give. And so the question we must ask is, what have I got that I can give? And people say, well, I don't have anything to give. And I'm sure that if God asked Moses, what have you got? Moses would say, I've got nothing.

I can't even speak. Aaron has to speak for me. And God says, what do you got? What's in your hand? He says, a stick, just a stick.

But he gives it to God. And verse 20 then says—I'm cutting out a lot in between, just trying to make the point—but Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

This was the same stick, but he had given it to God, and it now becomes the rod of God. It symbolized God's authority. With that stick, he brought the plagues over Egypt.

With that stick, he opened the Red Sea. With that stick, he ruled the people of Israel. It was just a stick that he picked from a bush somewhere.

It was nothing fancy. But in God's hands, it became the symbol of God's authority, more authoritative than the mace. When the house sits, there is a mace.

And it's not that important in American politics, but in British politics, the mace is absolutely essential. And you'll see it's a big jewel-encrusted thing. It's just worth millions.

And it represents the authority of the king or of the queen, and it sits right there in the front of the House of Parliament. And if the mace is removed, Parliament has no power, has no authority. It only has authority when that mace is removed.

Now Moses doesn't get a mace, and it doesn't represent the queen. It represents God, and it's just a stick. But when God uses it, it becomes the most powerful tool that Israel had ever seen.

And so if we go to the New Testament, Matthew chapter 14 and verse 17, and the context again is that the people are hungry, there's no food to eat, and Jesus said, what have you got? And they said to him, we have five loaves and two fishes. That's all we got. And we know what happened.

They gave it to the apostles, to Jesus, he broke it, and he fed the multitude. And so the question is, what have I got? We need to be givers. The problem is that instead of laying hands on people and giving, we have our hands out, wanting a handout from God, wanting a handout from the church or from somebody else.

And I'm not talking about money, I'm talking about spiritual stuff. No, we shouldn't be having a handout. We should be imparting.

We should be giving. You say, well, I don't have anything. You have, just give it to God, and he can use whatever it is that you have, just a stick, he can use that.

A little boy's lunch, five loaves and two fishes, he can use that. But we need, you know, if that little boy said, no, this is, you know, what did the little boy say? Mine. This is mine.

I'm not giving it. Can you imagine what would have happened? He would have lost out on the biggest blessing of his whole life. This event probably defined him for the rest of his life.

He was able to tell his grandchildren one day, you know what, Jesus took my lunch, and he fed the multitude. But as long as he held on to it, it was of no value whatsoever. All right, I'm not, let me close with this verse, I'm going to leave the rest out.

Heal the sick. This is Jesus' commission to his disciples when he sends them out before halfway through the ministry. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.

Freely you have received, freely give. Now, obviously, this speaks about not charging for the gifts of God. So those healers who charge people to be prayed for, they're out of line.

Jesus says, if you have a gift, you received it as a gift. You didn't buy it from God. Remember Simon, the magician, he tried to buy it from the apostles, and they said, you and your money perish.

You can't buy the gift of God. The gift of God is a free gift. A gift of salvation is a free gift, and any other gift we have is a free gift from God.

We received it freely, we must give it freely. But in that word freely, there also is the idea of abundantly, that God has given to us abundantly. Blessing, his word, his spirit, his church, his teachings, salvation, eternal life.

He has given these things to us. We must give freely. We must lay hands on people, not in the sense, as I said, of physically laying hands on people, but we need to give blessing.

There's Jacob in his last moments, and he's giving the blessing. There was Isaac, he's giving the blessing. Abraham gave the blessing.

We need to be those that God is using to give a blessing to those who are around us. Father, we pray that you'd help us understand, Lord. We sometimes get so caught up in the physical aspect of laying on of hands, and yes, Lord, that is important.

But Lord, I believe that the spiritual aspect of blessing others and imparting a blessing to others around us, Lord, that that principle may be more important in our hearts and minds, and Lord, that we may be those who are givers and not takers. Lord, that we are those that are meeting the needs of those around us, whether those be needs for comfort or for encouragement or for edification or for wisdom or for some kind of help. Lord, help us to be those who are able to give, because you've given so much to us.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Lord, help us to understand, but above all, Lord, help us to be doers of your Word. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Go with us, keep us, and protect us. Bring us together again safely on Sunday, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/NY8r9YLgpDQ.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/anton-bosch/laying-on-of-hands-video/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net