

# Journey Toward Brokenness; Gelassenheit

by Chester Weaver

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*Chester Weaver's sermon emphasizes the biblical concept of Gelassenheit, highlighting the power of humility and brokenness in the Christian journey toward obedience and God's work in the world.*

**Duration:** 58:01

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:37, 2 Corinthians 12:9

**Topics:** "Brokenness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of radical obedience to God. He imagines a scenario where he and God watch a video of his life on judgment day, highlighting the significance of his actions and words. The speaker also discusses the need to agree with adversaries quickly and avoid lawsuits. He then addresses three areas where believers may fail God: their devotion to Him, their relationship with society, and their involvement in church life. The sermon concludes with a call to repentance and a challenge to reevaluate personal priorities and attitudes.

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## Transcript

And now, Father, we look to you. You have blessed us this weekend, and you have walked among us, and you have touched our hearts, and you have, oh God, ministered to us, and we're so grateful, Lord. And now, just a special blessing on Brother Chester, Lord, tonight as he ministers and breaks your word to us.

And, oh God, deliver him from the fear of men. Lord, help him to say what he needs to say. Help us all to receive and to listen and to change and to move and to be what you want us to be.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen. I extend a warm Christian greeting to each one who has assembled in the fear of God tonight.

The title of the topic is Journey Toward Brokenness, Gelassenheit. I'll confess to you up front that I am not German. I speak no German.

I don't even speak Pennsylvania Dutch. But I've learned something about this word, that it is German, and it's untranslatable into English. And I've tried to learn some things from other people about this, and discovered that it's a very biblical concept, and we have missed much as Mennonite people, at least my branch of it, because it's not even in our vocabulary.

Those of you who have an Amish background have an advantage. You've heard about this. I never even heard this word that I remember ten years ago.

All my life. Never heard the word. Unless I heard it and it just didn't stick.

The handouts that are coming, I'll be following closely tonight. Now brothers and sisters, tonight we'd like to speak about matters that the natural man cannot understand, but rather they're foolishness to him. But I take courage by knowing that quite a few of those listening here this evening are living on a higher plane than the natural man.

It's a blessing to speak to people who know something about the power of God. This is not just an ideal, but that the power of God is real and working. And so to me it's quite exciting to be able to partner with the divine, with Christ, while God works in the world to accomplish his purposes.

It would be quite another matter to have the Almighty working against us, but to the proud and self-sufficient it is that way. Did you get that? To the proud and to the self-sufficient, the Almighty God is working against us, if that's our case. But on the opposite side, if we understand humility and what Jesus said in the first Beatitude, blessed are the poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.

God is working with us for his own glory. And we have the privilege of participating in it. I think that is wonderful.

And for those who have not yet discovered these wonderful truths, I invite you to step up, to participate in these wonderful experiences. For a scripture text this evening, I'll use this familiar passage in 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9, where it says, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength, my strength, Jesus said, is made perfect in weakness. Now that doesn't make any sense to a natural man, but it's true.

Most gladly, therefore most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Now there is a wealth of spiritual truth and spiritual power locked up in that. And I don't think that a person could even explain it.

You can talk about it, but you have to experience it to understand what that's all about. Now listen, that's on the one side. God said that.

The other side, the natural thinking would say, I will boast in my strengths so that I can advance myself in the world. Back over here, Jesus said, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea, in his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Wow.

Now we profess to be his disciples. And Jesus tells us, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself. Over here, the natural man would say, I will love myself first and then I'll love you if I want to.

Over here, Jesus said, If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever does not desire to save his life will lose it. All right, let's pause now to summarize what we've said so far with some overheads here.

You know, the natural man says that I'm first. If someone seesaw, it's me first. And then Christ is, well, he's wherever I can fit him in.

But with the passages we just read, Jesus makes it clear that it's either, it must be him first. Christ is first and then it's me. The Christian thinking is, as John the Baptist said, he must increase, I, I must decrease.

Now we know that all men worship something. It's very natural for the natural man to worship himself. But God says we must worship and love him more than anything else.

We must worship the risen Christ. This cuts contrary to the flesh, to deny all himself. This fits the flesh quite well.

Jesus says we're to bear his cross daily, to take up that cross every day. And he says that we must be willing to lose our life and we must do it often. If we take up his cross daily, we die often.

And we often have to stop and let them nail me fast. That's not very natural. God asked me to stop every so often and get on the cross and let them nail me there.

That's what cross bearing is. It's about him and his program and what he's doing. It's not about me.

You see, naturally, when we operate in human power, when we have to have all our ducks in a row and we have to have everything strategized out, we have to have everything in place, then God restrains himself. He lets people to their own devices. But whenever we step back and deny ourselves, it unleashes God to work.

Whenever human is powerless, human powerlessness allows God to go to work. That's what these verses are saying. Tonight we'd like to talk about, in Golosomite, the power of powerlessness.

And we'll develop that more as we go along. Jesus says, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. Brothers and sisters, that is a very powerful statement.

The kingdom of God goes forward in the world when the world can see the power of God working in us. When we are willing to do that which is unnatural, to die, to be put on the cross. And as Jesus was put on that cross, lifted up from the world in all shame, he says, I will draw all men to me.

And guess what? He's going on to glory, but he has you and you and me here to be put up on that cross. And whenever we are put up on that cross, we also draw all men, not to ourselves, but to him who went to that cross first. Brothers and sisters, the reason why the church has always had power, when it did have power, is because humans were out of the way.

They did not have their programs in place. When the Anabaptist movement first started, they did not set out to change the world. All they set out to do was be obedient to Jesus Christ.

They were doing this. They were willing to die. When they had that first baptism, they knew what that meant.

They knew that they would be called to death. But they went ahead with it anyway. And in human weakness, in human powerlessness, God went to work and he changed the world through those men.

And every time since that God has done wonderful things in human history, it's because people got out of the way so he could do his work. Compare that to this. You see, once this is at work, whenever we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we have something that turns loose in us.

We want to. Lord, tell me what I can do so I can obey you. And not any of this, do I have to? Because anytime I have to, look at all these little arrows here.

There's resistance. I don't want to, but I have to. I don't want to, but I have to.

And self is out of the way and we love our Lord Jesus Christ. We just want to and nobody makes us anymore. That's liberating, very liberating.

God has made us all always to struggle for life. We don't want to die physically. And with our fallen human nature, it's the same way.

We don't want to die to ourselves. We want to live unto ourselves. That's natural.

But just as for Christians, it's better to die and to go be with the Lord. So it is spiritually now. It's better to die to ourselves so that we can participate in the spiritual resurrection power in this life.

Brothers and sisters, there's glory in this life too. Do you know that? If we don't participate in the glory on this side of the river, we won't be participating in the glory on the other side of the river. We have to tap into and understand the power of God working privately in my life and tap into the power of God working corporately in our lives, as we've heard today already in the kingdom of God.

I think that's exciting. I don't know what God's going to do around the corner, but it's something in me. I just don't know.

I'm not a prophet. Please don't hold me to this. But something tells me that while there may be a turning away, we may be on the brink of something happening again where the power of God is unleashed.

But I know it will only happen as we are out of the way. May God grant us the grace to die when that is. There have been some powerful things that have happened in the past.

And the same God of the past is the God of the present. We tend to think in our two-kingdom concept, we have the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of this world. And we portray them like that.

I'm not sure if that's a very good way. In fact, we tend to think that the kingdom of this world is big and the kingdom of Christ is small. That's not true.

God owns the universe. God built the universe. He built all of us.

He made us. His kingdom is foreordained to win. It cannot help but be otherwise.

And evil is this little pocket of rebellion that's in the universe. And it's absolutely foolish to identify with that rebellion. When I think about apostasy, it's a losing mentality.

In our businesses, we know to save a dollar. But somehow, we feel like we ought to make compromises spiritually and lose. It makes no sense at all.

The kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ will triumph. I'd like to triumph with it. Wouldn't you? It's possible.

We have the opportunity. Well, this gospel principle of Golosanite runs counter to human thinking. It always has and it always will be while we're in the world.

And for this reason, we have largely lost it. Like I said, I didn't even know about this term, Golosanite, ten years ago. Robert Friedman said back in 1931, Golosanite has been almost entirely lost among the Mennonites.

And I'm from the Mennonites. I have no Amish or Beechy Amish background. And I can testify that Friedman is largely correct, except among the old order groups.

And there, sometimes the principle of Golosanite is somewhat of a form without necessarily being the best kind of Golosanite. But at least some of it's there. Same is true for the Amish background groups.

And yet Jesus teaches it. The above scriptures and more provide the biblical basis for Golosanite. And the privilege of practicing Golosanite remains today.

The power of powerlessness remains today. But many, many times we have disqualified ourselves from receiving the power of powerlessness because we have taken matters into our own human hands. And Christ's kingdom has suffered accordingly.

We're in the old Anabaptist groups believed and practiced this. They unleashed the mighty hand of God to move in their day. And we looked at that some earlier.

In fact, I thought about it. Maybe we should have this message before we had the one on leadership. Because this directly flows, is a foundation for that kind of leadership we were talking about.

Servant leadership. Okay, the Anabaptist groups unleashed the mighty hand of God to move in their day. Probably the most visible evidence that remains to us today is the separation of church and state.

The old Anabaptists did not set out to accomplish separation of church and state. But God being permitted to work because of their Golosanite did that mighty work in history. Another less visible evidence is the record of the difference between the Anabaptist groups who practiced Golosanite and those who did not.

The Anabaptist monstrosities of Germany soon came to an inglorious end and actually increased persecution for the Anabaptists practicing Golosanite. The Anabaptist church that gathered around Balthasar Hubmare soon died out. They were known as the Schwertler, the sword bearers, as opposed to the Stabler, the staff bearers.

And the Hutterites are the descendants of the Stablers. And they're here yet today. Now I've been using this term, Golosanite, as if you understand it.

How many of you, walking in these doors tonight, understood what Golosanite was? I want to see your hands. Okay, some of you, many of us. I guess we're like myself.

Well, it's an untranslatable term. It means yieldedness, brokenness, surrender, submission. And again, I tell you, I'm not German.

Maybe you can help me understand some of the nuances beyond that. It refers, first of all, to an attitude toward God. Yieldedness to what He's doing in one's life.

Secondly, it also refers to yieldedness to others in working human relationships in the church or in the kingdom of God. Now, in years past, martyrdom was a sign of Golosanite. But today we don't face martyrdom.

But we still have opportunities to practice it. Lots of them. And every time we practice Golosanite, when God presents the opportunity, when we fail to do that, we miss out on unleashing the power of powerlessness that God would want to display.

See, God wants to partner with us. He has a plan for the kingdom of God going on in the world. And He can only work whenever we practice Golosanite.

When we are weak and we allow Him to step in and be strong, then His kingdom is built. His kingdom is not built by the accumulation of my money and the accumulation of my wisdom and the accumulation of my strategy put together with your accumulated wisdom and your accumulated power and your accumulated strategy. It fails.

This is a divine thing. The kingdom of God is divine. God wants to show Himself strong in relation to His people.

But often they do not allow Him. We have problems today which have resulted from our failure to practice Golosanite. Oh, brothers and sisters, when I think about this and I meditate upon this, I just feel so bad.

I just feel so bad. I think about what all God has wanted to do. But we have limited Him from doing what He wants to do.

Praise God, in the past we have a heritage of people who allowed Him to do some work. Now, the question is before us. Could we allow God to do marvelous things in our generation? The answer is absolutely yes.

But we've got to get out of the way. We've got to learn something here from Christ. And I'm hoping that today many of us can recapture this lost biblical teaching and in doing so allow God to unleash His power that He wants to display in the world in our generation.

He wants us to rediscover this power of powerlessness. So how can we do that? And the rest of the message is going to be practical. And I guess we'll just be honest, it's a call to repentance in the various areas where we have failed God.

So we'd like to look at three areas. Golosanite in relation to God. Golosanite in relation to general society.

And Golosanite in relation to church life. That's what we'd like to cover next. Number one, in relation to God.

I'm not sure we are all Bible believers. I'm afraid some of us are practical atheists. Because we read those words that Jesus says that I've already referred to earlier about not hating father, mother, family, to interfere with our devotion to Him.

And yet we do. We let family come before God sometimes. And whenever we talk about cross and we sing all the old rugged cross and we have all these emotional feelings inside, always want to worship.

But when God calls us to crucify our flesh and to let somebody else have the say, how will we get upset? We refuse to crawl up on that cross. Now I wonder what God thinks about that. You know what I think He thinks? I think He says, shut up, quit your singing until you learn what the cross means.

Now maybe we ought to sing the old rugged cross and think about the cross and that be a message to us. But brothers and sisters, we've got to have this galasanite, this idea of yieldedness and brokenness before God. Absolutely.

When He tells us to do something, it's yes, Lord. I don't know how. Yes, Lord, I will.

It's taking your name and putting on a blank check. I sign it. God, you may fill it in, whatever.

God has asked me to do that. And I really think He's asked you to do that too. But I'll tell you, I did not know what I was doing when I said that.

And my journey is not your journey. Whatever God is asking you to do, sign that name and then go for it. Whatever He says, you say, yes, Lord.

And we may be amazed at what happens as a result. You know, we humans are really good at justifying our disobedience. We say things like, well, everybody does it.

I heard Brother Roger talking about these signs today. He was saying, maybe we ought to get to the point where everybody does the signs. And so the person who doesn't do the signs is an oddball.

Well, everybody does it does not count with God when the issue is with disobedience. I do not need to stand before you on a judgment day. Sometimes the Almighty and I, now this is just me in with my imagination.

Please don't say this is gospel truth. But I think the Almighty and I, when I get to the judgment, are going to sit down beside each other. And He's going to turn a video on in my life.

And He and I are going to look at this video. This, this is what I said, this happened, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this. And when it's all over, He and I are going to look at each other.

And we'll both know. My answer to God alone on judgment day. Number two, this call to radical obedience on my part is tough on my flesh.

And my flesh would say, well, if I have to obey God, you do too. I'm going to push it on you, Nathan. You better obey too.

Because I'm scared to do this myself. And I want you to help me. Well, there's a part of that that's okay.

There's a part of that that just says I'm a coward. I, when God calls me to obey, I must obey. And I may not coerce you into obedience.

Now, I'm not referring to parents here who are charged by God to bring up their children and nurture and admonition of the Lord. And by the way, that doesn't end at age 16. But somehow I feel better if you walk with me.

You need to obey so I feel better with my obedience. No, no, no, no, no, no. I need to bear the weight of my personal obedience alone.

I need to love the Lord with all of my heart. Now, I know, I know that when the brotherhood is around us, when we're part of the kingdom of God, that's a tremendous help to this thing. It takes enormous courage.

And my hat is off to every one of you here who is of non-Anabaptist background, who have taken up the cross and have suffered all kinds of tribulation for it, paid a high price. My, I salute you. You didn't have a brotherhood to stand behind you to do this.

And I know some of Brother George Klein's story. But how many of our young people who have all the support of the kingdom of God locally somehow can't do this? Number three, when God begins to work in my life, I may not yield to bitterness when life seems unfair to me. I look around and I see other people having nicer families, nicer houses, more money, less sickness, less accidents, more opportunities than me.

And I say to God, that's not fair. That's not Golosanite. When this happens to me, I say, yes, Lord, I don't understand, but I accept it.

I yield my life to you. Golosanite is being content with whatsoever state God has placed me in. Right along with us, number four, I accept death when it comes to my natural family.

Job said, the Lord gave and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. And you know, one of the messages that went around the world with the nickel mine shooting was this right here.

Those Amish people, when they lost those daughters and they demonstrated a yieldedness to this with no bitterness and forgiveness and the reaching out to the Slayer's family at that yieldedness was so unnatural that went all the way around the world. Somebody told me just here, since I'm here, that that was news in Great Britain on the headlines for a week. That's how impressive that was.

I had an atheist friend who told me one time, he says, things like that don't happen. How can this be? The power of God at work. It's impressing the whole world.

And I've noticed since then that some people, even non-Anabaptist people, have picked up on this. And now when there's some kind of misfortune like that, there is a distinct statement of forgiveness. I wonder where they learned that.

God is at work. Number five, I accept chastening and affliction that God directs to me. Actually, this becomes a comfort because the chastening and affliction that I experience indicates that God considers me his son.

And he's dealing with me. It might hurt in my flesh, but I receive comfort in that God is dealing with me as a son or as a daughter. Now, number six, I am not wise enough to understand, but I'm going to tell you, and maybe we can talk more about this later.

Our government would like to be God in our lives. And I don't know what God is going to allow our government to do in the United States of America. Government is trying to become bigger and bigger and eventually tell us everything.

And somehow we can't let that happen. And I don't know what all that is. But some of us have found rationales to buy insurance and to take government programs where it's possible.

And I think we justified in the basis of good economics. And I better just stop right here because I'm not wise enough to know all this. But I do know this, that the kingdom of God has within it a collective voice of counsel and consensus where the spirit of God is moving upon many hearts and they come together.

God will make a way for his people. There am I in the midst of them, Jesus says, when two or three are gathered together in my name. And may I add this, asking me how we should proceed.

Moving on, Golasenheit in relation to general society. Obviously it's non-resistance in times of warfare. I hope this is all a settled fact among us that we would rather be killed than to kill any other person.

I hope that's not even a question. But you know that would tempt us. If we had the opportunity to shoot somebody before they shot us, would we be tempted? Remember Jacob Hostetler? His sons were tempted.

But he put his hand on this boy's shoulder and said, no, put your guns down. And the story of Jacob Hostetler and the yieldedness that Golasenheit came out of that story has come down to us today and all of us marvel at the power of God. My guess is that almost everybody sitting here is a beneficiary of that movement right there.

Almost all Amish people I hear are related to the Hostetler family some way. I salute Jacob Hostetler. He understood Golasenheit as made a difference with his family.

Number four, page four. Non-participation in political office. So much of political office has the force of law with it.

Sorry, that's human effort. We can't participate. It's not the kingdom of God.

We can't participate in police work. It involves the force of law. Beyond that, we can't participate in juries.

Juries pass judgment upon people. Our brother already talked about that today. And judgment is something only God can do rightly.

Every so often you hear stories where a jury convicted somebody and then later on DNA gave evidence of innocence. No. Juries are not infallible.

I cannot sit in judgment of somebody else and pass a judgment. That's not my job. That's God's.

You know, all you have to do when you go in, if you're called for jury duty, if they don't give you a release on a letter or something like that, all you have to do is sit there and they ask you whether you can pass judgment. You say no. You can't pass judgment.

They don't want you in a jury. Number four, yieldedness and boundary disputes. One time I owned a property.

A man had come for me and was plowing. And he turned a corner at the end of the field and hit the fence and it broke the corner post off. And it was a corner.

And my neighbor came to me and informed me that the fence had been at the wrong place. It needs to be guess which side. It needs to be over on my side.

Well, of course. Okay, plan it. Great.

We'll put the fence post right there. Well, the poor man, I think I spoiled him out of a fight. He was kind of known in the neighborhood to like to fight.

What could he say? This is another personal story. I used to live in town, a little town of East Petersburg in Pennsylvania. And we had our freezers in the barn.

And one time I noticed that there was food going out of my freezer. Well, we're going to deal with this somehow. So one day I decided that I want to put chairs and a wagon and a whole bunch of stuff.

I just stacked the lid of the freezer full of things. Okay, well, he'll have more difficulty stealing out of that. But then I stood back and I thought, now this isn't right.

So I took all the stuff off the freezer. And I put a note down on the side. I said, whoever you are, we love you.

Just help yourself. And we never had anything stolen after that. You know, a lawsuit settled out of court is just the way to go.

Jesus says, agree with your adversary quickly. Don't make an issue. Agree with him.

Even if it's unfair, don't let it go to court if you can help it. Now, we Anabaptists, we have some sorry stories. May I take time to read to you a sorry story? This actually happened among my people, not your people.

The problem, again, was whether the church would use its discipline to help a church member abide by the social rights of surrender instead of resorting to coercion and manipulation. In this case, a daughter of a Mennonite family had married a non-Mennonite. She later decided she could no longer wish to live with her husband because of his cruelty.

The girl's father became very angry at his son-in-law and sent his two sons and his daughter to the justice of the peace to swear out a warrant for the husband's arrest in order to protect his daughter's life. Then the father, in the company of a constable, went with a wagon to pick up the daughter's furniture at her house. The house was locked and the son-in-law was gone.

Nevertheless, they entered the house and took the possessions. During the loading, the husband returned home. When he saw the constable, he tried to flee, but the constable threatened him with a gun and the husband stopped and was captured.

The father, afraid of legal retaliation for his part in the affair, finally settled the case out of court. The spouses agreed not to come onto each other's property again. Bishop Herr and the other church members approved a document to this effect in spite of its appeal to legal restraints in the case of disobedience to his provisions.

Conservative members of the church were unhappy with the whole affair and asked that it be investigated. Swearing out an arrest warrant, engaging the help of an armed constable, entering a locked house, having the son-in-law threatened with a gun, and resorting to a legal writ of separation were all actions in flagrant violation of the principles of powerlessness. But the congregation could come to no agreement on how it wished to treat the offending members.

Most wished to be lenient. However, Stauffer and the others wished to impose the ban. That was way back at the beginning of the 1900s.

I'm embarrassed. Why in the world did an issue like that ever happen? Where was Golossenheim? It was absent. Was the power of God manifest there? No.

It was a shame to us. How much better would it have been if there would have been some practice of yieldedness and refusal to push than God could have stepped in to do his work? Golossenheim in relation to church life. This, brothers and sisters, is where we're losing out on God's blessing in a big way.

I wish I wouldn't have to stay in here and tell you this stuff. I would pray God would help us to see our errors here and to genuinely repent. Following is how we naturally think.

I'm confessing that I'm naturally selfish and I think I'm speaking for you too. And so naturally we have a whole bunch of selfish people in a church, right? Naturally. And naturally I think my way of thinking is better than your way.

That's natural. And so I will insist on my way because my way is better than your way. Well, what happens when you think the same way? That's where church fights come from.

One man told my brother one time, who was a patron of one of our Anabaptist schools, he says, you Mennonites, he said, you might be non-resistant, but you sure know how to fight. Brothers and sisters, that's the opposite, the power of powerlessness. We ought to say things like, I think this way, but let's do it your way this time.

Nathan, I don't think that way. Let's do it your way. Dave, let's do it your way this time.

It takes a pretty big man to say that. Because I'm really right. I'm just submitting to you, but I'm really right.

Number two, I would like people to notice me, to be significant. And I learned something. Brothers and sisters, I am indebted to the January 1981 issue, the Quentin Mennonite Quarterly Review.

I learned some things about this that I just did not know. I believed in church standards and I had my reasons for it, but I have a new appreciation for church standards as a result of this. Listen, the easiest way for me to be significant and to be paid attention to is by my personal appearance.

And with my clothing. I need to be just a bit unique. Because if I blend in with everybody, how would you notice me? Now, none of us ever say anything like this, but we want to catch people's eye in some way.

Is that godly? Is that exalting Christ? And so I groom my hair in a distinctive way. I wear eye-catching clothes with colors or designs. I'm unique in my appearance.

And if I may go beyond this, if I have a wedding, my wedding is different from every other wedding ever. Because it's my wedding. It's the only wedding I'll ever have.

And I want to be doing my thing on my day, and this is my right. That's very carnal. Very carnal.

Number three, I want to work at a good paying job so I can make a lot of money for myself. So I can buy a nice car because we're known by the kind of car we drive. It's our status symbol.

Furthermore, I can buy nice things for my house. And when people come into my house, they judge me immediately. But my house, fine things, fine furniture in my house.

This man must be making money. Step up in the world. Respect it.

But it makes for a non-community spirit. I'm standing out. I'm not blending in.

Number four, this is natural human thinking. We should not have church standards because they restrict and interfere with what I want to do. Listen, brothers and sisters, this next statement.

Anybody who resents church standards is simply announcing his self-centeredness. That's all he's doing. Sorry, I've been around the block enough that I know this is a cool thing among some young people today.

They are finding all kinds of problems with church standards. You know what they're doing? They're just announcing their self-centeredness. That's all.

Church standards exist for several reasons. One of those reasons in particular is to give opportunity for me to deal with my carnal self-centeredness. A self-centered person has simply not yielded yet to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Number five, independence and individualism. We heard this before today. Everybody does their own thing.

I let you alone. You let me alone. Christ is not there.

It's not community. It's not the kingdom of God. Christ is where people surrender to each other in the form of community, of working together, and of yielding to each other.

The New Testament teaches interdependence for both individuals among themselves in a brotherhood and also between brotherhoods. One of the things I'll just bless God for is in this audience right here in front of me. There are several different church groups.

It's high time we start respecting each other better. And I just bless God that enough wall has been broken down that some of you feel comfortable being here. Bless God.

Bless God. Number six, seeking for power. Seeking to dominate.

Getting people on my side. You know, if there's an issue, I got to talk to people to show them the truth of the matter. If I'm a good enough talker, I'll get enough people that we're right.

Might makes right, right? Might makes right? Really? Does might make right? Truth makes right. Well, we know well how to use threats. And develop a party spirit.

And use gossip. I love what Brother Ed had to say about that. About those Russian Ukrainians.

We use insinuation. Innuendo to make certain people look bad. Never say bad things, actually.

I never said that. Yeah, but the words I used shaded the matter, you see. That's still error.

I'm not loving my brother if I do that kind of thing. Spinning the facts. In my favor.

Back room agreements. Using influence of money. Oh, money should not speak in the church, should it? Shouldn't.

Does it? Using influence of family names. Putting pressure on. That's not yieldedness.

Stonewalling. Stony silence. Anger.

Tears. You know, wives. We men can't stand crying women.

And many of you know that. Pity me stories. Blustery talk.

And on and on and on. All pressure tactics, brothers and sisters, are foreign to the spirit of Christ. And yet, let's be honest, they are used in the name of Christ.

But he's not there. Brothers and sisters. Church punishment.

You know, there is no such thing. The church is redemptive. I heard what Brother Ed said about those Ukrainians.

How they suffered for years before they did excommunication. I think there's something for us to learn there. Even discipline needs to be redemptive.

We hurt with the hurting. Church discipline is important. But we must exercise even church discipline in the spirit of Christ.

In the spirit of powerlessness. Number eight. Use of direct voting to choose church leaders.

Now that, I don't know where you all are on that. I know different groups do it various ways. But there is a little problem with the highest number of votes wins principle.

Whenever a church chooses to use the law. It basically says we've done what we can. And now we submit the matter to you Lord.

There's wisdom there. Number nine. Baptism without church membership.

And we heard more about this again today. Individual conversions emphasize without a corresponding working in a vertical relation. Working that vertical relationship out in the church.

The body of Christ. This relationship is worked out this way. Horizontally.

Number ten. Church splits. This is a terrible way to settle differences.

It's a sign that Golosanite has failed among a certain group of people. The right way to settle differences is with Golosanite. With yieldedness.

If it can't be settled that way. The group can agree to disagree and bless each other in party. But what happens if one group has to curse the other? Shame on us.

We can lead with mutual blessing if it comes to that. If that cannot happen, a deep problem exists. And as was already said today, churches have two doors.

A front door and a back door. And we might as well make it a little bit more difficult to get in and very easy to leave. Nobody has to stay.

If we're not one, we're fine. Go someplace else. Let's not fight it out.

Brothers and sisters, our churches are struggling today on this subject. And you know, I think it's in a large measure because God is letting us to our own devices. We have decided that we know better.

And he's letting us prove among ourselves that we don't know better. He says, if you want to do it your way, go ahead. But I cannot be there to bless what you're doing.

And so we're disintegrating and becoming more and more like the world we love. Any hope? Of course. The same hope that's always been offered.

I've got to repent of my selfishness. I've got to love the Lord with all my heart. And I've got to love my neighbor as myself.

I've got to die to myself. I've got to be weak in myself. We need to be weak in ourselves so that God can demonstrate his power among us.

Thank you, Brother Chester. I don't know if you all believe in altar calls and all that sort of thing. But I think we all need to repent.

I'm first in line. I was thinking about my relationship with my brother. This is Matthias speaking for those of you listening in.

I love my brother Nathan. Sometimes we get mad at each other. We don't speak for a while.

Then we say I'm sorry and we start walking again together. But, you know, it's a wonderful thing, working through things. But I wanted to be first born.

God made me second born. And we've been having a problem for a long time. So, praise God.

Oh, praise God. Who would like to ask our speaker a few questions? Steve Smucker from Abbeville, South Carolina. And I had a question, Chester.

You commented that, if I understood you correctly, the majority of church splits and divisions would be because we don't understand that very principle. Could you elaborate more on that? And I think the comment was made earlier today or yesterday. So many of our splits are over petty issues.

I'm not going to say all, but many. I'd just love to hear more of your take on that issue of how churches could learn to work together instead of fight. Earlier today, I talked to you about the story of God and Uncle Dale.

Now, there is an illustration of something that's not a petty matter. It was a doctrinal issue of where the church was going. There are times and places for some separations, but they must be done in the right way.

They must be. Now, every time we have a difference, it is a big issue, isn't it? Do you know of anybody who splits over small issues? Well, even manure spreaders are big issues, right? I heard that earlier today about splitting over manure spreaders, whether you knew manure spreaders or not. But to those people, it

was a big issue.

So I think what I'm saying to you, Stephen, is that somehow we have to learn to back up and say, Lord, is this your issue? You see, if we fail to step forward and it is God's issue, then we fail. We're cowards. But when we step forward, it's not God's issue, then it becomes human issues.

And it takes the wisdom of God and the humility of God and probably some other people helping us to know whether it's that one or not. And I'm sorry, brother, I'm just not wise enough. I've had enough of my own sorting out to do a, oh, Lord, I need wisdom.

Maybe you have a further comment yourself. If I can re-quote him correctly, but that his personal opinion is almost no church split is biblical. The only exception is if there's a clear difference in theology, then he would accept it.

And only if it can be done peacefully. I don't know if that's correct. It just struck me when he said that his take was very, very few are actually God-ordained.

That's the way I would feel. But sometimes the sheep get caught in this thing. And it's not their will, but they're caught.

The herd is doing this. And so the innocent sheep are caught with a herd that has to differ and separate. That's so unfortunate.

Question, Nathan Overholt, Sarasota. Do you think this could be, and I'm going to use this word trepidatiously, God's judgment on us that we're not focusing out and we're focusing in and on ourselves and not advancing the kingdom? And wouldn't we, if we would advance the kingdom more offensively, wouldn't some of these things take care of themselves? Could we get the focus on the right place? That's a very good question. And that question has risen often.

But, you know, the Amish Mennonite division happened while the church was blooming as a rose among thorns. Even good church life does. And I mean, even some persecution does not stop this from happening.

It would be a nice thought to say, Lord, send us some persecution so all this stops. That would not be the answer, because it does not deal with my carnal nature. Time is moving on.

Let's just take one more question right straight there in the back. Eugene Weaver from Sarasota. We have a comment here about the highest number of votes wins.

Now, in relation to church standards, is that enough? Sometimes it's really a matter of understanding God's will for us and following his direction in the word. That makes a problem, like in relation to the north spreader, et cetera. Or does the church actually have authority to exclude or discipline someone for a scriptural custom or application, simply because it's not what the church has dictated? I think these answers are found on our knees in humility, in a deep sense of being poor in spirit.

And when we're honest before God, we know that. Or whether we're still pushing our agenda, somehow making it the way we want it. The hardest thing in the world for us, it seems, is just to die to ourselves, to get up on that cross, and just let God work it out somehow.

Maybe that's not a very good answer, Eugene. We would like it. We would like the church to run like a business.

When a couple people agree, well then it must be right. But I've had enough experience in life. It doesn't matter if everybody agrees.

If God disagrees, it's not right. In fact, a minister told me about, oh, twenty years ago, after the church had gone into apostasy on my side, I had a chance to talk with this minister, and he said this, I'll never forget it. What I saw the church doing, going into apostasy, he commented and said, who was I to resist the Holy Ghost? If the church was deciding this, it must be right.

Brothers and sisters, that's not true. Now, here we're group conscious, and we ought to be group conscious, and we ought to think in terms of the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God needs to be super sensitive to what the word of God says. And if there's somebody who is voicing some opposition here, who is bearing that opposition out of the spirit of God, the rest ought to stop.

You ought not to say, if you read that book, God and Uncle Dale, you ought not to say, get out of the way, we're going. It doesn't matter what you have to say. That's ungodly.

And brothers and sisters, God can use single voices who are given in humility, in weakness and humility. If they cannot be heeded, then there's something wrong with the larger group. And again, I'm not wise enough to know how to sort through all that.

All I know is that I've got to be honest before God with my heart, and I've got to share it with you because I'm in brotherhood with you. And then I let it with God. Thank you so much, Brother Chester.

This is real living, getting along. And like I said earlier, experiencing this in family, with the church being the larger family. But first of all, working it out in my own personal family has been a challenge for me.

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