

Encouragement Builds The Church

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, focusing on the need to move beyond physical experiences to true spiritual connection. It highlights the significance of receiving 100% justification through faith in Jesus, rather than relying on personal achievements or percentages. The message stresses the essentiality of taking little sins seriously, encouraging one another, and growing in love through friction and sparks. Unity in the Spirit and unity of the faith are discussed as key aspects of building a healthy church.

Scripture: 1 John 1:1, Romans 3:21, Proverbs 27:17, Ephesians 4:3, Ephesians 4:13, Romans 8:9, Colossians 3:5, Mark 12:41, Isaiah 1:17, Proverbs 27:6

Topics: "Fellowship with God", "Unity in the Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, focusing on the need to move beyond physical experiences to true spiritual connection. It highlights the significance of receiving 100% justification through faith in Jesus, rather than relying on personal achievements or percentages. The message stresses the essentiality of taking little sins seriously, encouraging one another, and growing in love through friction and sparks. Unity in the Spirit and unity of the faith are discussed as key aspects of building a healthy church.

Transcript

I'd like to start by turning us to 1 John chapter 1. As we sang, I pray that the Lord will speak to us. And the light of Christ will shine. 1 John chapter 1, verses 1 through 4. What was there from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched our hands, of the Word of Life.

For the Word has been made public, and we have seen it. And we witness and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father, and has been made public to us. What we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you, because you also have fellowship with us.

And this fellowship of ours is also with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you, that your happiness may be fulfilled. This is the apostle John, who writes that he is already very old in his life.

John was one of Jesus' most intimate disciples. John was also very physically close to Jesus. He leaned on Jesus' breast.

So when he says, what my hands have handled, what my eyes are seeing, he saw the physical Jesus Christ. So it is very important when we hear the apostle John saying, but what I want to talk to you about is fellowship. You know how it is in Christendom today? You have one vision about something, and you get a national tour because of that.

Somebody went in a coma and saw a great white light, and movies are made about it. And we buy big books about it. We are all taken up by it.

Fifteen minutes in heaven. What did I see? John spent three years with Jesus. He says, I saw all of that, I touched all of that.

I know about all of those things. But what I want to talk to you about is fellowship. And it is not fellowship with a physical human Jesus.

But it is fellowship with the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. It is not a number of physical experiences that you have to look for. But it is fellowship.

It is all Christian words. But I want to try to make it simple for you, the way I try to make it simple for myself. This is not a Bible study.

This is not a theological exposition. This is just a simple way in which I try to understand these words. It is the simple way in which I try to understand these words.

What does it mean to have fellowship with the Father and the Son? This is not everything that I am going to say about it. You can say much more about it, but I want to share a simple picture with you. Fellowship means that you are completely connected.

That there is no brokenness of the connection. Dear brothers and sisters who are sitting here, children, teenagers. What does it take to not experience brokenness in the connection between each other? The beginning of it is something that I want all of us to understand.

And this is a big problem that I have struggled with for many years and I still struggle with it. And I want to explain what I mean by an example. Imagine I am sitting in a school.

In a classroom. And I just took a test. I took many of them.

I am sure you kids are taking a lot of tests. And you just took a test and the teacher is handing out the results. How did you do? How did it go? Let's say you got your exam papers back.

And you have a score of 95% out of 100%. And you look over to your classmate next to you. And he has only 25%.

He has a 2.5%. And you look over to another classmate. And he has a 4.5%. And I have a 9.5%. How do you think I am sitting in the classroom? My head is kind of up. I keep my paper right in front of my desk.

Everybody can take a good look at it. Next week another exam paper comes. I get my exam results back.

And I get a 2. How do you think I am sitting today? My head is not so much up. The paper slips into the bag. I don't want to talk about it.

That was my Christian life. Some weeks I got a 95%. And I sat in church like that.

My head a little up. I conquered most of my sins. I clicked X on the browser when those ads came up that I shouldn't click on.

I was fatal to read my Bible or to pray. And then there were other weeks. When I got a 2. 2 out of 100.

Failed miserably. And then I had to also come to church in those weeks. I didn't feel like coming to church.

Would you when you get a 2? Some of you may be sitting here with a 2. Wondering what you're doing here. And you hear the word fellowship and you say where do I even begin when I got a 2? This is where Romans chapter 3 comes in. As I said, I still struggle with this.

Romans chapter 3, verse 21. It says that the righteousness of God was revealed. The righteousness of God was revealed.

Here's what I want you to think when you see the word righteousness. 100%. Not 95%.

Not 99%. Not 2%. Here's how 100% was revealed.

And it's not by obeying the law. It's through faith in Jesus Christ. Verse 23.

We all know that verse. Romans 3, 23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But what I like about it in my Bible is that there's not a period after that verse. It's full stop. Does anybody here know Romans 3, verse 24? Anybody? I didn't.

I learned Romans 3, 23. It's not a whole sentence. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Well, there's more to it. But I never memorized Romans 3, 24. And so that's why the 95 and the 2 all hung over my head.

And so that's why I was busy with that 9 and a half or 2 in my week. Because I never went to verse 24 where it says to be justified. To be justified means that you get a 10.

It's given to you, that 100%. Freely. For free.

Because I was stuck in Romans 3, 23 the 95 or the 2 kept hanging over my head. And the entrance into God's kingdom. You cannot sit on God's lap if there's not a 100% over your life.

You're not allowed to enter God's presence. 99 won't cut it. 99.99 won't cut it.

One sin, just done once, kicks you out forever. That's what Romans 3, 23 says. We're all out.

The Gentile in Romans chapter 1, the Jew in Romans chapter 2. The Jew in Romans chapter 2. The people with a liberal conviction and the people with a conservative political conviction. The only way in is with a 100% score. Always.

And so we're all sitting here. And the question I have is you also have a certain number hanging over your head. Some of us with 85% score, 20% score, it doesn't matter.

A number. And it's based on how you do it at school or how you do it at work. You bought a new car, a new house.

89%. Hanging over your head. I can't see it.

The devil can see it. God can see it. The angels can see it.

Some of you, relationships not worked out. You should have been married by now. Got a 17% over your head.

And there's a 17% over your head. Some of you struggling with your quiet times. Struggling to read the Bible.

Trying to be a Christian but defeated. 8%. You got some percentage over your head.

Some of you just came back from a mission trip. Scoring goals against the devil. Victory after victory.

98%. Hanging over your head. Everybody's out.

You don't get in if you're not 100%. This is the starting point of the Christian journey. You don't get in if you don't get 100%.

So is there any benefit of getting a 98 over 2? Not to get in. No difference. We're all sitting here excluded.

And in front of us is the free offer of 100%. To fellowship with God. That is why John says, I don't want to tell you about what I touched when I touched Jesus.

How I leaned on his breast. How the 5 loaves and the 2 fish became 5,000, fed 5,000. As all meaningless compared to the fact that I get 100%.

And I can have a connection with God and sit on his lap. I don't want to waste your time with all the stories of how Jesus did this on the earth and Jesus did that on the earth. I don't want to tell you about fellowship.

That's what John was saying. Dear brothers and sisters, if we don't get this, we have not even begun the Christian life. And as I said, this is my weakest subject.

This is what I get so often wrong. Because I take the percentage that the world tells me, what my boss tells me and how I'm doing my work through my bonus, through my pay increase, how my family is doing, how my car is doing, how my spiritual life is going. And that percentage drives me more than the justification of Christ.

And that percentage can sometimes drive me more than the justification of Jesus Christ. And that's why I'm weak. And for that reason, I don't always have the fuel in my life.

Because I don't believe God's word. Oh, I'm certainly always motivated to stand up against the liberals. Or to argue against this apologetic idea or that apologetic idea.

Because I say it is written. But dear brothers and sisters, we got to start with, it is written, you are justified by faith. Everything else is meaningless if we don't start there.

That is what Jesus' blood bought us. So I invite all of you to receive 100% over your head. Like the dove descended on Jesus.

Through the blood of Jesus, God can look at you as He looks at Jesus. You have to choose to do this. You have to set aside the percentage that's hanging over your head.

There are some people who live their whole life and hold on to their percentages. And never receive the free gift of 100%. Many people sitting in the church.

You have to make that choice. You can make that choice right now. You don't have to kneel down.

You don't have to raise your hand and stand up. You can say it in your heart. This is fellowship.

This is where fellowship begins. And this is the fellowship that John says, I want to have with you too. This is what we should be calling church.

The 100% that we get from the Father and the Son. We share the result of that to one another. We share the joy of that.

We share the encouragement of that. The consolation. We share all of that with one another.

We're not here to bible study. We're not here to do all the breakdowns of the stories and the verses. We're seeking to have fellowship.

We can't have fellowship with one another if we don't have fellowship with the Father and the Son. If we have fellowship with the Father and the Son then God says I want you to have fellowship with one another. And there's one key word that I want to give you as you think about interacting with one another.

I've spoken to a few of you. And the challenge that a lot of you face is very similar to the challenge that I faced and a lot of people that I talk to face. The churches that you're going to, the people that you're listening to, the friends that you're connected with.

So many are caught up with all kinds of different perversions of the Christian gospel. The perverted view of the Christian gospel which is the prosperity gospel. And many other ones like that.

But so many humans are taken up with it. So many Christians are taken up with it. But we shouldn't be surprised.

As I said yesterday. The number one problem with the Israelites in the Old Testament was idolatry. Over and over again for thousands of years the Israelites struggled with one big problem was worshipping a block of wood.

Right the time they left Egypt they felt that they need to build a golden calf. They thought to themselves we need to build a golden calf. And thousands of years later they continued to do this.

Build a golden calf like the people of the heath next to them. And then we ask ourselves when we look at it, how could they be so stupid? Don't you understand that there can't be a God in this piece of wood? What are you doing worshipping it? Until I read Colossians 3, verse 5. Very important for us to understand

Colossians 3, verse 5. That I found out that I have the same problem as the Israelites. The last part of that verse where Paul gives me the new covenant equivalent of idolatry.

Just like idolatry was there in the Old Testament here is what we struggle with. The same thing, same idolatry in the New Testament. Here it is, greed.

That is what drives the prosperity gospel. They can use bible verses to back it up. But the spirit behind the prosperity gospel is nothing different than unadulterated greed.

Greed for a healthier life. Greed for a wealthier life. Greed for a more prosperous life.

No desire for a holier life. Idolatry. Greed.

So those are the many of the teachings that many people are being seduced by. What's the alternative to that? Fellowship. Community.

You don't have to go to a big church to get that. Many churches don't even know what that means or what it looks like. That was my journey too.

I was going to a very big church. I was actually even speaking in that church. But the leaders weren't gripped with fellowship.

They were gripped by the concept of community. They were interested in growth. Multiplication.

Great corporate ideas. Not discipleship. Not holiness.

And so I didn't know what to do. And I made the decision. I'd rather sit with one other person and have fellowship and sit with thousands and not have fellowship.

That's the decision my wife and I made. And we were also willing to move to a different country for fellowship. Because the Lord opened my eyes that what matters most is fellowship.

Fellowship with people who have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Fellowship with people who are disciples. Fellowship for people for whom Jesus is everything.

It doesn't matter if it's two. Because we're two or three. Are gathered.

And the only thing between the two of us is Jesus. That's the church. Where two or three are gathered and Jesus is in the middle.

Not doctrines. Not culture. Not preferences of food.

Nothing. Jesus. That's fellowship.

That's the church. And only need two or three. And I said, Lord, I don't need twenty.

I don't need twenty thousand. But I have to make sure that there's nothing between us except Jesus. And He needs to make sure there's nothing between us except Jesus.

And He can't bring His cultural ideas. I can't bring my cultural ideas. I can't bring my theological preferences.

I have to bring Christ. I start there. And what do I need to bring? What do I need to bring to this brother? I have to give him encouragement.

I want to give you that's another word I wanted to underline. This is what, when we have fellowship, here's what we do to one another. We encourage one another.

The word that has helped me the most with encouragement is this word courage. It's in that word. When you go to Bible studies, you read a lot about different scriptures.

You read about Peter walking on water. Jesus healing the paralytic. You can have great Bible studies out of it.

You can share great thoughts about it. But did you give that brother courage? That's what fellowship is. And I have to be intent about giving other people courage.

Some people say compassion makes the world go round. I think encouragement makes the world go round. You can give people compassion and weaken them.

We have to give them courage. I shared this yesterday. I want to share it again.

When I think of our meetings together, what people call the local church, I think about the local church in the 1st century. I think about the local church in the 1st century when they used to meet in the tombs. What they called the catacomb.

And these people were hiding for their lives. Because the governments of their day were trying to catch them and kill them. And feed them to the lions.

And so I'm sitting next to my brother here in the tombs. And I don't know if he's going to be around next week. And I don't know if he's going to be around next week.

Or if he's still alive. Because next week at this exact time he might be eaten by a lion. Literally.

So I'm here this week for Bible study. How much time am I going to waste? On theological intricacies. Is it the sovereignty of God or the will of God? How do they relate to each other? Pre-millennial, post-millennial.

Are you joking? This man is going to be eaten by a lion next week. What should I tell him? Have courage. Don't give up.

When you see these things coming, lift your head up. Because your redemption draws nigh. Fear not him who will kill your body.

But fear him who will send your soul to hell. I have to give this man courage. And that is what the local church meeting ought to be about.

So I can easily test in my own sharing whether I'm giving people courage or not. Or I'm just giving people a lot of good ideas. That's what Jesus came to this earth to do.

He healed the sick. He fed thousands. But he was not at all interested in that.

He didn't come all the way from heaven to earth to heal the sick. He came to save us from our sins. He came to give us the right to be called children of God.

He came so that he could have fellowship with us. And we squander our birthright like Esau squandered his birthright. When we make church just a place to go and listen to a message.

And we pay no attention to the fact that sitting among you are people who are suicidal. People who are about to give up all hope. People whose marriages are about to break down.

People whose children have just been diagnosed with serious diseases. People who don't know how they're going to get enough money to pay the bills for the end of the month. But we're all sitting here so focused on me, me, me.

And we wonder why our churches are so weak. The number one virtue of the people who go to hell are the cowards. They are the people who are the first named who will go to the lake of fire.

It's not a virtue, but it's a bad character trait. The cowardly are the first to be named in this line of people who will go to the lake of fire. The homosexuals.

Really? They're not the number one? Not the murderers? People who are killing the babies? John, did you get this right? Who's the number one people we're sending to hell? Who's the number one people we're sending to hell? John says it's the cowardly. And he says that inspired by the Holy Spirit. The opposite of courage is cowardice.

I'm more worried about my Christian brother who doesn't have courage. That's what I learn from this verse. And my desire is to build up courage in people.

I want to give you the best picture of courage that I have in the Bible. I want to give you the best picture of somebody who built up the church. I'm so excited by this picture.

And this is something that makes me so happy. Mark chapter 12. The person who built up the church the best in any story that I know.

It's a small story. This is Jesus watching people giving money to build up the church. And most of Christendom is saying, you give me your money I'll build a big church.

There's a pretty famous pastor in America who would come to people, businessmen in California. And there are a lot of successful Christian businessmen where I live. Multi millionaires.

And these Christian pastors would come to them and say, here's a business plan. Give me this much amount of money and I'll build a thriving church. And they listed all out.

This money for music department. This much amount of money for the location. Has to be close to the Starbucks.

Has to be close to the highways. So you have to pay more money for the real estate there. And you have to have good parking.

So you give me this much amount of money and I'll give you a good church. And I've seen the result of it. Their churches are growing.

Expanding. Buying up other churches locations, growing in size. And Jesus saw how the rich were putting in lots of money.

And verse 42 A poor widow came and put in two small cup of coins which amount to a cent. And if you see this passage Jesus is being bothered by one question after the other, by this theological question this theological question. And Jesus says stop, stop, stop.

He calls his disciples and he says I want to see this. You see all these people with the business plans with millions of dollars and all the money being built up that way. You see all these people with their business plans for the church and all their money to do God's work.

But I want to show you this poor widow. One cent. One cent.

She has put in more than all those have given to the church. There were all these rich men carrying wheelbarrows. Chariots full of gold coins.

Dumping it into the treasury. And here comes this little widow. Maybe carrying a baby in her arms because her husband died at a young age.

And dragging another three year old boy with him. And she drops two cup of coins. Do you see that picture? Jesus said that woman gave more.

Because she gave what she had to live on. And these other people gave out of their surplus. This is what builds the church.

Dear brothers and sisters give courage from that which has given you life. Has it changed your life? Share it with other people. Are these theories? Things you're reading in books? What point is that? That's your surplus.

It's just the creative workings of a smart mind. God looks at the widows. Not very intellectually minded necessarily.

Never stand up here and speak a sermon. Never stand in front of the podium to preach. All she gave was two mites.

Maybe two words. Maybe two minutes. But she gave something that she lived on.

She said, God is my father. But she lived on that. And Jesus looks at that and says she gave more.

Than the preacher who spoke for an hour. God has no respecter of persons or gifts. He looks at the heart.

And he saw this woman and she gave something that she had to live on. And dear brothers and sisters, fellowship is a simple word. Encouragement is a simple word.

Jesus said, take my yoke and learn from me because I'm humble and gentle of heart. God wants humble and gentle people who are willing to carry his burdens. They are often found in the not glamorous people.

They live with God in secret. They fear him. They don't have much to say.

Maybe two copper coins. But it's impactful. One other thing.

They take the little sins seriously. When I was in my early thirties I was asked to speak in a pulpit of a church which was thousands. And this church had a senior pastor who was an incredibly gifted person.

He used to have altar calls every week. Every session people would come forward to receive the Lord. And he was not just seeker friendly.

And the church was growing every week. He was on the radio. Then it came out that he fell into some sins.

It shocked the whole congregation. It shocked me. So one of the people they asked to speak after he left was me.

And I was in my early thirties. And I said, what chance do I have? The man, he had such a great gift. He fell.

The devil took him down. I'm going to go down too. The Lord taught me a lot in those early days.

This is one thing the Lord encouraged me through the story of David. Young boy. And God encouraged me to have the spirit of David and Caleb and people like them.

When I spoke about not being afraid of the devil, it started from experiences back then. And God asked me, are you going to have the spirit of David who said, who are these uncircumcised Philistines who are standing before the armies of the living God? Who are these people who are saying that you can't live a holy and pure life? Who is going to have the courage to stand on behalf of God? And I said, Lord, what makes me have the right to say that? I haven't even been tested properly. And the Lord taught me this, you take the little sins seriously.

I'll never let you fall into the big sins. You take the little sins seriously. What Solomon says, the little foxes, they are the ones that are ruining the vineyard.

I read this story about in communist Hungary, probably in the 60s or 70s, it was being driven by a very strong atheistic agenda. But there was a little town where the people took the little sins seriously. And so their faith grew.

I want to repeat that. They took the little sins seriously. And so their faith grew.

And the communist regime in Hungary heard about it and sent one of their expert teachers. And were teaching some of these small children. And there was one girl who was especially devout.

Eight years old. Eight year old. Are there eight year old children here? Eight year old.

Some of you are older than that. But there was an eight year old girl who took the little sins seriously. And that story was told by Richard Wurmbbrand.

And he said that this story has been verified to be true. This little girl Angela was in the classroom when this atheistic teacher came in. And the atheistic teacher says I'm going to talk to you today about God.

And she said Angela when you call your father does he come? She said yes. Good. When you call your mother does she come? Angela said yes.

Is your grandfather still alive? No, my grandfather died. When you call your grandfather does he come? No. Why? Because he's dead.

Okay, that's very simple. What if you call your friend sitting in the other classroom? You call her, does she come? Yes. But if you call somebody who's dead does he come? No, he doesn't come.

So she said now we're going to do a test. We're going to see if Jesus is alive or dead. Let's say, Jesus, come.

Everybody was scared. The children were too reverent. So she said, okay, Angela, leave the room.

And Angela left the room. Say, okay. Children, call Angela.

Angela came. See, even though Angela's not in the room, if he can hear you, he'll come. This is a proof that even though you claim you're Christian you know you're not even able to ask Jesus to come.

Angela said, let's call Jesus. And so they all started, she said, children, let's all start saying, Jesus, come. Jesus, come.

Lord Jesus, come. And it grew louder and louder. This is a true story from what I heard.

A light came through the door and a little girl stood there. And the teacher saw it and said, he has come. And the teacher saw it and said, he has come.

And she ran out of the room and she went mad. She had to be admitted to an asylum. And all the parents and the pastors verified that this story is true.

You heard me say that I don't believe in signs. I didn't exactly say that. I said, I don't rest my faith on signs.

God works miraculously through signs. Definitely in countries of communist countries and things like that, I'm sure that these stories are true. But here was Richard Warmbrand's point.

These were children who took the little sins seriously. I appreciated that point. That's why I tell you this story.

Not to tell you to believe in the big sign. But dear brothers and sisters, if we want to be a faith-driven church, we have to take the little sins seriously. Not the sins that everybody else can see.

The sins in your thought life. The sins that my wife can't even see. The sins that my husband cannot even see.

Sins that nobody can see except myself. If we take the little sins seriously, we will be a people of great faith. It's that simple.

I've seen that as the authority over my life. There's an authority in my tongue when I speak God's word. If I have an authority over my tongue when I speak to my wife and my children.

If my tongue is not becoming increasingly gentle and pure towards my wife and my children, my tongue is guaranteed to lose its authority while standing on the stage. I'm absolutely sure of that even more than I'm sure of the law of gravity. That is why I take what I say with my tongue more seriously.

I am careful on how I talk to my wife I am careful on how I talk to my wife and my children and my coworkers and my boss. A little body part can bring hell and yet it can produce hell. Life and death lie in the power of the tongue.

And what about my eyes? The eyes are the lamp of the body. If the eye is clear, the whole body is clear. If I'm not aggressive against lust.

How can I minister? I have to battle it. I'm not saying I have to have a 100% perfect record all the time. But I have to battle it.

And I have to take my faults seriously. And I have to keep getting up. But I have to know that my authority is connected to how seriously I take my eyes and my tongue.

Then having an affair is such a long distance from me. Because purity of Christ is what I'm trying to draw closer to. We have to take the little sins seriously if we want to have a healthy church.

We have to grow in love. How do we grow in love? I have an interesting verse of how we can grow in love. Proverbs 27, verse 17.

Proverbs 27, verse 17. This is how we become sharp in love. As iron sharpens iron.

You know how iron sharpens iron? Friction. Sparks. That's how I become sharp.

That's how I become sharp. You know my brother and I, how do we become both sharp? We have fellowship with one another. We seek for nothing but Christ between us.

But as we work with one another there is a friction. You know this if you've been married. Even with the people you love the most.

There are sparks. But that's how you become sharp. In love.

That's what the Bible says. And that's how it is in the church. So after all that friction and all the sparks I have to become sharp in my love.

Sharp in how much I love my brothers. Or have I gotten offended? We've grown apart. Oh I thought love was going to be all fun and vacations and all of that.

And I thought love would be a lot of great music sessions and all of us falling before the Lord and that's how we've grown fellowship. I thought love would be a lot of fun and that everyone would fall on their knees before the Lord. But that's not how you become sharp.

It's through friction. That's how iron sharpens iron. That's how we have to grow in love.

I speak from experience. In the last 12 years that I've been a member of a local church I've focused on the things I've spoken about. Taking the little sins seriously.

And encouraging each other. And when I'm talking about encouraging each other I'm talking about every man and every woman. I don't have a special place in that.

We're all a family. And it's the responsibility of every member of that family to build up. To encourage.

And I've seen friction. I've seen sparks. And I'll tell you what's the greatest area that I've seen in my own life.

Lack of love. I'm a pretty nice guy. I'm a friendly person.

But I've seen all kinds of lack of love in my heart. I have a good way. If you just go around me on the surface you won't notice it.

I hide it pretty well. But I know what's in my heart. I've never seen such a clear lack of love as in the last 12 years.

That's the crazy part. The heathen? The heathen coworkers? The heathen activists? Oh, easy to love them compared to my brother in the same church. Iron sharpens iron.

Don't be afraid of sparks. By disciples who love Jesus. Expect it.

He's trying to sharpen you. Not the brother. The Holy Spirit is trying to sharpen you.

Dear man of God. He's using your wife to sharpen you. It's not her weaknesses.

It's the Holy Spirit working to sharpen you. Woman of God. He's using your husband.

You've got to see that. That we can grow in love towards one another. One final word on unity.

Ephesians chapter 4. I want to talk about two kinds of unity. The word unity is used by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 two times. In Ephesians chapter 4 verse 3 He says preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Preserving means to maintain. You have it, don't lose it. The unity of the Holy Spirit.

If anyone has the Spirit of Christ he belongs to him. Romans chapter 8 verse 9. If he has the Spirit of Christ in him he is born again. If I have the Spirit of Christ in me I'm born again.

Unity of the Spirit. Unity in the Holy Spirit. Members of the universal body of Christ.

But then in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 13 he talks about a different unity. And here it is the unity of the faith. What's the difference? Here's how it's helped me.

Let me give you one definition of faith that has helped me. Here is faith. 100% Jesus.

0% Sandeep. That's what faith is. Do I have faith? I have to be going towards that.

100% Jesus. 0% Sandeep. I'm not there.

Don't think you're there either. But we are growing towards that. 100% Christ.

0% Christian. 100% Jesus. 0% Sandeep.

And we're all members of the body of Christ. We're growing towards that. 100% Jesus.

0% me. In every single situation. And we build one another up.

And iron sharpens iron. Chipping off our edges. And our edges are being cut off.

And all the edges that are still there of a Sandeep that I bring into the body of Christ. I'm not talking about my personality. I'm not talking about how God made me.

I'm talking about my selfish will. My ego. My name.

And God is saying I'm trying to build you so that you are 100% Jesus 0% Sandeep. But He's not just interested in me being like that. He's saying we want to be built up to the unity of the faith.

That's what I feel is the purpose of the local church. Where every man, woman and child are 100% Jesus 0% us. We got work to do.

So I have to go back and keep working in my local church. That's why I need to be in fellowship with other brothers and sisters. I want to encourage you dear brothers and sisters.

Start with the fellowship that you have in Christ. That Christ puts a number over your head 100%. You can only get that if you are in Christ.

But if you are in Christ 100%. Now God says bring that 100% to others. Always seeking to draw more people into this life.

100% Christ. Nothing of myself. Giving courage to others.

We may not see some of us ever again on this earth. This may be the last time we see each other. Let's give courage to one another.

Don't give up. Christ is on your side. God loves you.

Every single thing He is allowing in your life is for your very best. Because He loves you more than the mother who bore you. And He is left.

And He is coming back to get you. Any day now. Any day now.

Let us be faithful to the end. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ZQs4lWVX7QY.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/sandeep-poonen/encouragement-builds-the-church/>

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