

# 08 New Wine in New Wineskins the Congregation, the Club and the Church

by Santosh Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of obedience to God and love for others, as represented by the new wineskin, and challenges listeners to examine their own devotion to God and their relationship with others.*

**Duration:** 1:00:23

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 3:14, Acts 2:42, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:25, Hebrews 12:6

**Topics:** "Church Growth", "Discipleship"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of moving beyond congregations and clubs to truly build the church as a body of Christ. It highlights the need for personal sacrifices, devotion to God, and genuine fellowship among believers. The speaker shares insights on the new covenant, the significance of dying to self, and the transformation that occurs when individuals are willing to pay the price to build the church.

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## Transcript

As I mentioned at the beginning, we want to move towards giving more and more responsibility and ministry to younger brothers and so this session we'll hear Santosh Poonen. He is a one of two elders in a church in Colorado in the United States. He's been there an elder for some years.

Church that's growing and both these churches that there are in the US, both Santosh's and Sandeep's, they seek to not only follow the life, primarily the life and pattern that they have seen in CFC from childhood and also have asked me to oversee them and guide them. That's not a responsibility I take lightly because it's a serious responsibility I don't take it just because they happen to be my sons. But because I see that they've understood the truths we have stood for and they believed it and they preached it and I'm encouraged to see the quality of people whom they permit to be members of that church.

They don't allow anybody to be a member of that church. They wait six months to see whether a person really wants to be a disciple. And the other thing I noticed there is they encourage all the male members to definitely come for a weekly Bible study that they have together, that they share together and it's very good.

It builds a fellowship between the brothers and when there's a fellowship between the brothers in a church, it goes well. So, Santosh. I'm also going to use PowerPoint.

I hope that will be a help and not a distraction. It's something I use. I found that the Lord has blessed it and so that's why I use that.

I also want to speak out of something that the Lord has been doing in my own life and especially over the last three years. It's a teaching and a way of life that has become very dear and personal to me because it has involved some sacrifices that I've had to make and I see that as we've been hearing over the last two days, if we really want to understand the teaching and the life of Christ and doctrine, it's going to bring us to a cross, a cross where we have to give up something, where we have to make a sacrifice in areas of our life and then it becomes reality and then we won't go astray. I'm going to be speaking about the church today and that's an area that I mean that I'm talking about where God has made it very personal and made it a very, very narrow way.

See, one of the areas in which we're speaking about new wine in new wineskins and I've seen that the old wineskin is like a layer or many layers, you know, we think about layers of onions in the personal life, layers of onions that you peel off, layers of selfishness that God shows you in your life and I found in my personal experience in trying to be used by the Lord to build a church there in Colorado that the old wineskin is like layers of the old wineskin, that as the Lord shows us those layers we strip it off and unfortunately many, many Christians who are seeking to live the life in the church or to build churches that are living out this reality of new wine in new wineskins stop short at some point. At some point they feel they have come to the new wineskin when really there were many more layers of the old wineskin still there. Maybe they stripped off certain levels of human tradition but they stopped at a certain point and until the Lord can bring us to the point where we get rid of the old wineskin completely and start afresh with His new wineskin, then we have understood the new wine in the new wineskins and so this new wineskin is a narrow way to life and I'll be honest and perhaps this is your testimony as well.

It's a very, very narrow way. I have sought to for many years, I'll say this first, for many years even though I knew the teaching on the new wine in the new wineskins and what it meant to really build a church that was the body of Christ, I knew it up here because I've heard more Zach Pudden sermons than all of you. You can be sure of that.

Not only did I hear it on Sunday, I heard it Monday through Saturday so try to beat that, but it was here and when it still took many years and I say that to regret that for many years it took the truth from descending from my head to my heart where I realized this is the only way that I can live. Like we heard a few a couple days ago that Jesus is the only way, the only thing and I believe that building the church of the body of Christ for me is the only way I can build a church, the only way I can be used by God to build a church. Taken up with all these other things in the world and having gone to the US and seen Christendom at its best by the world's standards, I see now this narrow way and I have seen especially over the last three years.

That's what I'd like to share with you this morning. You know I wonder if you have ever considered why Jesus went to the cross. Jesus went to the cross, we know it and it says in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2 that there was a joy that was set before him for which he endured the cross.

He endured the cross because of that joy set before him. I wonder if you have considered what that joy was that was set before him. Was it you? Was it you know there's that song that was made popular some

years ago, he took the fall and thought of me like a rose trampled on the ground he took the fall and thought of me above all.

It's a great verse, it's a great course to think about if you're struggling with sin and you think about how much Jesus did for you but I think there was something greater than that. Yes, Jesus loved you and I. Yes, the father loved the world so much that he sent his only begotten son but there was something greater than that that drove and compelled Jesus to go to the cross. I'd like to show you in John chapter 14 what that was I believe.

These are from Jesus' own words in John chapter 14. We know that these passages of scripture are towards the end of Jesus' life and he was sharing these as his parting words to his disciples and we heard I think a few days ago also about how John wrote about this more than anything else. I love that John took the time over four chapters, five chapters to express to us the parting words of Jesus as it were to his disciples and in the midst of these parting words Jesus says in John chapter 14, John chapter 14 verse 31, look at the last sentence first John chapter 14 verse 31 he says arise let us go from here and I think what Jesus was talking about was let's move on towards my crucifixion.

I've got to go somewhere else maybe somewhere else in the garden of Gethsemane but Jesus had this attitude of moving towards the cross and in that he tells his disciples come let's go but before that he says verse 30 John chapter 14 verse 30 I will not speak much more with you it's like he was saying I've spoken for three and a half years to you I'm not going to speak much more for the ruler of the world is coming and he has nothing in me but that the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father gave me commandment even so I do I love the Father and the Father commanded me to go to the cross and that's joy to me do you see the joy that was set before Jesus that he said I love the Father and the Father gave me a commandment the Father said son you have to go to the cross and I

believe it was that joy because Jesus had experienced fellowship with the Father through all eternity that joy of always being in submission to the Father as the Trinity there in heaven he understood that joy and he said here while on earth the greatest joy I can have is to obey my father and so Jesus going to the cross was first of all a an obedience to his father's commandment out of love for his father first out of love for the father and then out of love for us because the father commanded so when Jesus went to the cross and I'm I'm stressing this point because I really believe that this is the only way we can build the church as well all building of the church all Christian work all Christian ministry must come first from a love for the father from which we receive his commandment

and then a love for people we've heard about compassion for others that we need as people in order to build a church but before that compassion must be a love for the father a passionate unadulterated love for the father which allows us to hear his commandment and then sends us forth in that compassion now this I believe can be represented by the two beams in a cross you know that a cross has two beams there's the vertical and the horizontal beam in a cross if you just take one of those planks you don't have a cross if you just have the vertical or just have the horizontal you don't have a cross and I think there's a beautiful picture in the cross of our of their two-way relationship that that defines how we should carry the cross ourselves the vertical relationship representing the love

for the father and that must come first I think when they were putting across I don't know if this is actually how they did it but when they built it I imagine certainly the cross that the father intended started with a vertical plank and a vertical plank if you notice that's twice the size of the horizontal plank in other words

the father was saying this is the most important thing this is the part of the cross on which your body must hang and then the horizontal so the the cross the vertical relationship with the father coming first and then that horizontal relationship with others and we know that that cross on Calvary was only the last of Jesus's crosses the cross that Jesus carried to Calvary was the last of about 12,000 crosses that Jesus carried and if you ask me where I came up

with that number that's a simple multiplication of 365 days in a year times 33 and a half years comes to about a little more than 12,000 and Jesus said if you want to be my disciple you must take up your cross every day and it was that principle of Jesus living out 12,000 times and actually probably more than that but 12,000 plus days Jesus said my life will be determined by my love for the father first of all and obedience to his commandment and then my relationship and my compassion for others that's why Jesus could spend 30 years in his home living in subjection to his parents his his unconverted parents they hadn't received the Holy Spirit yet living there at home because he said this is what must define my life for the first 30 years because the father said so and that relationship

continued to the end of his life as much as Jesus had to carry his cross as much as Christ himself the first body of Christ had to carry that cross for 33 and a half years today the body of Christ must carry the cross as well and the definition of a disciple we're building churches of disciples not converts but the definition of a disciple you know from Luke chapter 9 verse 23 is one who carries the cross Luke chapter 9 verse 23 Jesus says if anyone wishes to come after me that means be my disciple the other Gospels use that word disciple if anyone wants to be my disciple if anyone wants to build a new covenant church which lives out this principle of new wine and new wineskins he must deny himself and take up his cross daily her cross daily and follow me this is what it means to build

the body of Christ this is what it means to build a church this is what it means to have the new wine in new wineskins and be a church of believers of disciples that are living that out is that we are all taking up the cross in the same way that Jesus himself did with that vertical relationship with the Father established first of all that vertical relationship our devotion to God as the most the only thing in fact like we have already heard and a consequence of that once that vertical beam that vertical plank is established then the horizontal beam has a place in which to hang if you were to try a try to hang a horizontal beam in the air it would just fall but the moment you establish this vertical plank now the horizontal beam has a place to stand and a place to hang and it becomes a

cross without that vertical it's not possible and so the church must be the churches that we build the new covenant church that is living out this life of the new wine in the new wineskins must be built from those whose testimony is this whose motto in life is this I do not want to do what I want to do I only want to do what the Father wants me to do I never do what I want to do I only do what the Father wants to do and sadly the majority of churches don't have this the majority of people in the majority of churches this is not true about their life I'll tell you honestly that's I know that because that's what it was like for my own life sitting in CFC growing up in CFC coming back when I came back for holidays the reality in my own life was I still wanted to do what I wanted to do I

wanted to build the church or be a part of a church that fit my idea of a church I wanted to build fellowship with others the way I had a great idea about building fellowship I like to hang out with people and spend time with people whom I enjoyed spending time with and the people who rubbed me the wrong way have fellowship with others that's not a cross and you can never build the true body of Christ as long as we hold on to that mentality of this works for me I like this group of people that I'm around and fellowshiping with

this is a great church and it's possible for us to sit in under such good teaching as we receive in these churches in CFC for many years and our affiliation is to CFC because we like the people who also attend CFC and God forbid I say this in fear God forbid if we

should ever be willing to tolerate the teaching as good as it is because we're comfortable in a human way with the people whom we spend time with and so also for us building the church that vertical relationship is most important and you know we see this truth in the New Testament that that vertical relationship is a hundred percent in secret the devil fools many Christians into thinking that their devotion to God is somehow apparent to others around you when you think of a godly man who is devoted to God do you base that assessment on what you see about him when you see when you think of a godly woman is it based on what you see him or her do that's an outward manifestation of the devotion but you know that your devotion to God my devotion to God is 100% secret 100% hidden that's the New

Covenant that's why you see in Matthew chapter 6 in the in the Sermon on the Mount that the difference between the old wineskin and the new wineskin was in the old wineskin it was about how it looked did you give and how much you gave did you pray how much did you pray etc did you fast how much did you fast and then when Jesus was showing us the new wineskin the New Covenant he said when you fast go in secret and we haven't understood the the New Covenant or the new wineskin if we haven't understood this principle of our devotion of hiding our devotion to Christ and that's something that the Lord has been speaking to me more and more in the in these days that my devotion to him must be hidden what you will hear in the old wineskin and in the churches in the world is let the people see

your devotion to God let them see how much you fast post it on Facebook put it on your webpage that I'm going through this 40-day fast that's the world that's the old wineskin and the new wineskin says I'm gonna fast and I'm gonna put on wash my face like Jesus said nobody knows that I haven't eaten in 10 days that's the spirit of the New Covenant and that's the spirit in which Jesus is building his church today where that devotion to him that vertical plank is hidden away your life is hid with Christ in God that's the most beautiful place to be I'm experiencing it a little a little more day by day that's my honest testimony that the more I hide the true nature of Christ within me the more it's hidden the more I can hide my devotion to Christ and it become about him and me alone the more

I experience the secrets of the Lord because I fear him and we have those times of intimacy where the where the doors are closed and it's me and my bridegroom in secret and nobody knows the things we share that's the best marriage the best marriage is one where the husband and wife have learned the joy of each other's company without anybody else in the world around them without anybody else being aware that they are spending time together this is the beauty of the new wine in the new wineskin and this is the kind of church that Jesus is building you know for many years I thought that the proof that we were disciples was that we loved one another because there's that verse in John chapter 13 in John 13 verse 35 Jesus said by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have

love for one another by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another so I understood that to mean here's how I prove that I'm a disciple I love my brother I love my sister I love the church I'm going to I love CFC I must be a disciple but look at you look carefully like we've heard so so often reading the Bible slowly by this all men will know that you are my disciple if you have love for one another so that's the horizontal plank that's the horizontal part of the cross by this they will know that you're my disciple because they see that this is not just a vertical plank here's the horizontal aspect of it but before that like we've already seen Jesus said the test of a disciple is Luke 9 verse 23 Luke 9 verse 23

comes first Jesus said if you want to be

a disciple this is the condition you must take up your cross you must deny yourself after you become a disciple and God knows that you're a disciple he knows first of all that in your heart of hearts you are a disciple in those areas when nobody sees you he sees that you denied yourself and he saw that he attests you're a Luke 9 23 Christian the only kind of Christian that there really is after that Jesus said the evidence to the world around you will be that you love others who are also like-minded disciples but you see the vertical plank coming first that God being able to attest about our lives this is a disciple of mine and I hope that you won't be fooled anymore like I was for many years to into thinking that I'm a disciple simply because I love going to CFC I

love the people in CFC all the youth there's such a fiery youth or those brothers and we have godly older brothers there can be that human love that can deceive us into thinking we are disciples and that's why Sunday is the best day of the week because I'm with other disciples I think Monday Tuesday Wednesday it's boring Thursday Friday oh it's heavy I can't wait for Sunday because I'm with other people whom I love and I fool myself into thinking I'm a disciple the true disciple it doesn't matter if it's Sunday it doesn't matter if the whole church leaves and they're the only one left or maybe one or two others because God knows they are disciples and so a true disciple enjoys Tuesday when they are away from the church just as much as Sunday when they're with the church they enjoy it

because who are they about they are about their bridegroom they enjoy that personal relationship and so it doesn't matter who comes and goes really it doesn't really matter because I have God and I have Jesus my bridegroom and I hope and God will build when we have such a mentality God will build around us and allow us to be a part of a work that builds such a church of disciples who have put Jesus as the only thing in their life he is their bridegroom and their affiliation is to him and to him alone and then he will build a church around that a beam by itself is no cross take any one of those beams and isolate it and unfortunately most churches are falling into one of these two categories where they have this beam or that beam and I want to talk about that for the rest of the time

that that I'll be speaking on three categories of churches that I have observed and seen the first is a congregation the second is the club and the third is the true church the only church that is living out this life of new wine in new wineskins see first of all the congregation the congregation you think about it like this is a gathering of vertical beams and many of the majority of churches today that at least I have been to our congregations congregations where there's many people who are taking their personal walk with God at least somewhat seriously they're interested in a deeper personal walk with Jesus they love they have good Bible times and and they know the scriptures and their their doctrine is good but they're individual beams they can never build fellowship with others and

especially with others who rub them the wrong way and I was a congregation member for many years having heard these truths for many years I was satisfied that somehow my personal walk with God was okay but like John says how can you claim to love God when you don't love the brother whom you see and that's a verse that the congregations will never teach on in other words John is saying that you may think that you have a cross because you have this vertical beam and you seem to be hanging on this vertical beam and you're proud of it and everybody can see that you're taking up your cross and you're a holy brother or sister but there is no fellowship we're not spending time building one another up in love in the church and I'm an isolated brother and nobody can have fellowship with me and

nobody even my wife can't have fellowship with me because I'm so super spiritual and when she's sick when she's taking care of the six sick children here I am busy reading God's Word and spending time in meditation that's a congregation person I don't even know if I should call them a Christian but it's such a person who thinks that somehow my reading my Bible and my prayer and my giving to the church and and all this is somehow a representation of the fact that I'm on the cross it's it's heresy it's it's deception the devil has fooled most Christians it like he fooled me for many years into thinking that I was okay this is all covenant see the word congregation is an old covenant word you'll hear the even in the Old Testament when Moses gave the law to the Israelites he talked about the

congregation and you read Exodus chapter 40 you'll see how God gave detailed commands on how they should worship when they gather together but it was a bunch of individuals bunch of individuals who were whom God was saying come live a holy life that's why you had solo prophets like Elijah and solo leaders like Moses but you never see two working together in the Old Testament two prophets hand in hand building fellowship and together doing the work of God that is completely a new covenant a new wine in new wineskins principle the old covenant was you take care of your holy life and your family you take care of your holy life and your family you take care of your holy life and your family and the three and the different groups can never have fellowship together because they're holy

individuals lone rangers who love to do things for God and God puts them in situations where they should be submitting to authority around them or submitting to brothers and sisters around them and he can't do that because they're all covenant Christians trying to put the new wine into old wineskins and the sad result of that like Jesus said in that parable is that it bursts that that that implosion that it just bursts because you're trying to fit the life of Christ which was intended for a new wineskin into this old wineskin into thinking that somehow I can keep this life of Christ and just keep it to myself and I don't really have to build fellowship with another brother or sister and this is the warning I see Jesus saying that if you have the life of Christ and you're filled with the

Holy Spirit and he pours the wine into you or I and we refuse to build fellowship with others as a result of it there will be this bursting and this catastrophe this great fall like he says that the house you know in Matthew chapter 7 the fall was great that's what I think of trying to control the life of Christ into my personal life where I keep it to myself and I refuse to build fellowship catastrophe disaster a bursting and thank God there's hope for us then because he had hope there was hope for me God had mercy on me when I was a congregation type of Christian and things burst in my life and everything fell apart God said now will you let me build a new wineskin around your new wine so the good thing about bursting is it gets rid of the old wineskin pretty quickly you know I talked

about layers and we spent years taking these layers and sometimes it's good that God allows this wine to just burst where I realized I put my faith in that which was on the earth I put my faith in an old wineskin the traditions of men or some fantastic idea I had about building the church and God just burst it for and said let me give you the new wineskin and you build a church that way devotion to God is external people can see what a godly man you are how much you pray what a godly sister you are how well you cover your head and sit in the church it's all these external things and I think I must be spiritual I must be building the new wine living the new wine in the new wineskin the language is religious they love to talk religious language can't talk to them about football or cricket

because they're talking about scripture lots of verses their mouths just spew forth verses not that that's a bad thing but there's a false religion around that where I can't relate to the everyday people in life you

know I'm always intrigued by the fact that when Jesus spoke to his disciples and to the people around him he didn't just always spit forth Old Testament verses he did when the time needed it when he spoke to the devil and he quoted to his disciples but most of the time he spoke if he was in Tamil Nadu he would speak Tamil if he was here in Bangalore he would speak Kannada or whatever the language is he spoke the language of the everyday people and he wasn't so super spiritual this is the most spiritual man himself the man who showed us how to have new wine and new wineskins

and until I have learned that this religious language can give me a false impression that somehow I am building the church around these other people who also speak this religious language they know how to quote this verse and everybody knows that verse how come you don't know that verse brother haven't you read your Bible and there can be this false super spirituality it's a congregation of people who are pretending or imagining that God is pleased with their devotion result is also that worship is soulish that's why these mega churches which are congregations and that's another feature of congregations they're usually very large 4,000 10,000 20 25,000 can't build fellowship with even two but you can gather 25,000 people listening to a bunch of soulish music and listening to powerful

soulish preaching and gather the numbers and fool ourselves into thinking that that's the church Jesus said unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone because that vertical beam has refused to take up the cross that grain of wheat didn't refuse to fall into the ground and die it loved to be in a showcase you know the problem with with most churches is their grains of wheat lined up in the pews and the benches grains of wheat sitting right next to each other another grain of wheat grains of wheat grains of wheat 25,000 grains of wheat and I sit there and I'm hungry and look at those grains of wheat and think if only two of those grains of wheat had been or one had been willing to die God could have made bread out of it that feeds the hungry and no wonder

there's a hungry lost thirsty world out there because we've got churches that are 25 even bigger than that thousand large of grains of wheat sitting nicely in the in the chairs next to each other and may God save us from ever gathering numbers in that spirit where we have grains of wheat sitting next to each other all it takes is one willing to go on the ground and die and God will bring another one willing to go on the ground and die and bring forth fruit out of that and he'll blend and knit and need that that word need you know they say about dough when you take this grain of wheat and you flour out of it and you need it work it work it work it work it work it that's how the church is built that's the bread of life that can feed the world the hungry world instead these grains of wheat

will just tease Christendom it'll just tease the hungry desperate lonely people in the world you can be bread and we pretend that we're bread because we're grains of wheat but if the grain of wheat is willing to fall into the ground and die it will bear much fruit Jesus said how does much fruit come from one grain of wheat if you want to take this one small grain of wheat if I was to hold a grain of wheat right here you wouldn't even be able to see it it's that small and perhaps we feel like we're a small group of believers meeting someplace persecuted by others around us despised by others the other mega churches have the big preachers they have the big churches and they have their the elders and though the pastors and those those churches drive the fancy cars and they go to the US and

to to the UK and all that and we look at ourselves as grains of wheat and the one command God gives us is you go into the ground and die and see the Lord says if I will not bring forth fruit out of that that's his promise if a grain of wheat goes into the ground and die takes up the cross God will bring forth much food from that that's the secret to building the church want to talk about the club now so the club is the opposite

of that we saw that the congregation was these vertical beams stacked nicely next to each other and different sizes you know some have more devotion others have less devotion you saw that too but the club is made up of people and I'll tell you honestly my dear brothers and sisters I think as a I consider myself still a part of CFC even though I live away from CFC

in the US I consider myself a part of that and I think this is perhaps a greater danger for us because it's easy for us to hear this doctrine and to hear good teaching about personal life and then say okay we're all going to be exactly the same you talk to one CFC brother and another CFC brother and they look the same and they talk the same one CFC sister another CFC sister it's easy for us to think that we are spiritual because we all look the same we all cover our head we all wear modest clothes we all understand these teachings we all believe at least we think we believe that Jesus Christ came in the flesh and all these special doctrines we have and so we become cookie cutter you know what cookie cutter is you cut them all to the same size in woodshops you can measure they have these

measuring instruments that will cut a piece of wood into exactly the size that you want and the greatest danger for us having understood these truths is that we become a club where we all we try to get everybody to join our church by going through this cookie cutter process and we insist if you want to come to our church it must be like this and you must speak like this and you must talk like this and we become a club of people who are all exactly the same where our relationship with each other is based on the fact that we all speak the same language we heard about that yesterday that I get along with these people and I gather around me even if they're of different skin color and maybe different language they're all people that I like to spend time with and this other brother who's not so

educated and not so well versed in doctrine not so well versed in in the things of this world he's kind of like he comes along and we don't really get along with him so we keep him on the outside and eventually he falls out and leaves because he doesn't fit into this mold that I have.

See the new wineskin of such a club is that there's no covenant at all we saw that the congregation is based on the old covenant it's a devotion to God yes but it's not building fellowship and some people who say well that's old covenant we want to leave the old covenant come out of the old covenant into no covenant at all honestly I've met many Christians like that they think that God has set us free from the old covenant they love the book of Galatians because God has set us free from these ritualistic laws and things that God has commanded in his word so we have no covenant at all most people who complain about about the head covering for sisters say well that's just Galatians you're trying to bring us into more laws they love it they don't want any covenant at all but you know that

without a covenant there is no marriage when Megan and I married we signed a covenant that said there are some rules in this marriage we do have some rules there's no rule book but we do have some rules one rule I that is and the rules are based on a love I will never cheat on my wife I will never commit adultery against her by God's grace I say that not because it's some rule book that says thou shalt not even if Exodus 20 was not written I would still not want to commit adultery against my wife because I love her I would still never want to do anything that will harm her because I love her and it's that same relationship where I love Jesus and my relationship with him is not based on rules but in clubs you have lots of rules if you want to be a part of this club you have to fulfill

these these requirements rules that are beyond God's laws traditions of men we have no covenant and so we are our relationship when there's no covenant then the church has to make its own covenant with each

other what I mean by no covenant is this no covenant with God because God has set us free we're in the new covenant man we have freedom in the spirit but our covenant is with each other in other words we make a pact you scratch my back I'll scratch your back you treat me nicely I'll treat you nicely but the moment you don't treat me nicely I'm out of here or you're out of here and there are churches being built like this clubs the club gives me some privileges if I'm a member of the CFC club it's possible to have such a club if I'm a member of the CFC club I get to come to the

conferences or I get this or I get that and I thank God that CFC Bangalore has rules but it's the spirit of Christ and I've tasted that that's why I love coming here I taste the spirit of new wine in new wineskins where there is a covenant and we'll talk about the true church in a moment but I want to paint this picture of a club and how dangerous it is because I see that people who are leaving congregations the devil like I said this this this church the way of the church the way to life in the church is a narrow way and we come from this other extreme of congregationalism of being congregations and we swing to the other extreme of becoming clubs where we build fellowship with one another and we're a bunch of horizontal planks and with you can see with some of them there's a little bit

of devotion to Christ a little bit a little bit of devotion to Christ the the vertical plank is very small in most of the cases it's not even there and we can fool ourselves into thinking that I'm on my way to heaven I'm part of the bride of Christ because I attend CFC and the devil I think will will will have fooled so many for so long he did me for many years too I thank God that I didn't realize it I didn't wake up at the judgment seat of Christ and realize I was just a part of a club everybody else in CFC understood the spirit of Christ and they were a church but I was just tagging along I was just holding somebody's hand and dragged along maybe my husband dragged me along so I came maybe why my wife dragged me along so I came maybe my son or daughter or my father or mother dragged me

along and here I am as an adult still being dragged along because I like this club a club of religious teaching where we listen to good sermons that's still a club and that's a danger for us when we preach good teaching when we when we listen to good teaching we can fool ourselves into thinking that somehow we are spiritual because we're a part of CFC because we're a part of this church or that church and we look at all the other denominations and think ah look at those Baptists or those CSI Lutherans bunch of ungodly people Catholics I'm CFC and if that vertical plank that devotion to God is not there my dear brothers and sisters we're in for a surprise a tragic surprise at the judgment seat of Christ when I wake up and it'll be too late I have pictured the judgment seat of Christ like

this like a big furnace sitting there with Jesus the Father and the Holy Spirit sitting there and there's this furnace and you know like they have in airports a conveyor belt where the luggage goes through the conveyor belt and it comes through this and there's this furnace and God puts our entire lives one by one puts it through the furnace and then on the other side comes out nothing you can read about it Bible talks about how all of that will get burned up the wood hay and straw will get burned up all of those who sat in CFC churches or any church with this club mentality will find that nothing came out at the end of it by God's mercy perhaps your soul will be saved it says in that passage perhaps you might make it into heaven but think that if we if we attended CFC for so many years

attended good churches listen to all the messages on the internet and watched all the videos and the you stream and and all this stuff but at the end of it God says it was useless because you didn't care about a personal relationship with me you didn't take your walk seriously Monday through Saturday when it mattered whether you were taken up the cross you didn't may God build churches in these days of those

who are devoted to God but have compassion for others see this horizontal plank is important it's important that we have fellowship with one another it's important that we enjoy the church the church is the most enjoyable place I really say that from the bottom of my heart CFC Bangalore is my favorite place in the world I love coming back here I enjoy it so much the fellowship is so

sweet but I'll tell you it'll never beat the fellowship that I have with the father this is that the manifestation of it on the on the earth the fellowship that I experienced with with Jesus with the father that I hope will never be broken until the day I die and then will not be broken for all eternity it's the basis of that that I experienced fellowship with you all my dear brothers and sisters the result of this club is that our security is in the church we find security in man and I'm listening to Zach Foon in teaching I must be saved I must be on my way to heaven I listen to so many messages I've listened to a hundred sermons this year I fool myself into thinking I went to every conference I must be a true Christian the result also is that members expect to be pampered and we have

witnessed this in our church in Colorado too that those who had the club mentality get offended they want to be pampered they want to be treated like somebody special they want to be their names to be mentioned or they want to be given this gift or that other gift they want to be used they want to be publicly visible they want to be treated nicely or if you speak a word of correction or criticism or encouragement to them they get offended my dear brother sister this is what the Lord has spoken to me and I hope it's an encouragement to you if I ever get offended in the church over anything something that an older brother has said or some some other brother if I get offended over anything in the church I'm just a part of the club I am just a club member and others around me may be

experiencing the true life of Christ the new wine in the new wineskins but I'll sit here for years and years and years and then die or Christ will come and get the rudest wake-up call in eternity when I realized that I was just a club member may God save us from ever getting offended God has given us elders and older brothers godly older brothers who love us who speak God's word to us in love they have not spared the rod because they know the command that fathers should not spare the rod and spiritually they have loved us as the father himself has loved us it's such elders that God has given us in the churches and when when we rebel or when we get upset when we get offended with things that older godly brothers say to us it's a sure sign I'm just a part of the club and I say that again

from my own testimony that there were times when I got offended by things my father told me by things that other older men godly men told me I got offended I didn't show it I knew better my dad told me something I didn't show that I was offended but in my heart there was this really I have to listen to that that's really the only way and God taught me you're just part of the club Zac Poonam Club CFC Club whatever club it is the end result is there's no spiritual growth in fact like we heard in one of the first messages if there's no spiritual growth growth you're backsliding there's no stationary in the Christian life if you're not growing my dear brother and sister if you're not loving the correction and reproof of the elders you're backsliding that's how the Lord has spoken it to me if

my older brother cannot speak some word of reproof to me because he's afraid that I'll get offended I'm backsliding I'm on my way to hell backsliding but if I love the correction of the Lord read Hebrews chapter 12 where he says my son love the discipline of the father because he does it out of love for you and it's that same spirit of fathers in the church of elders who will correct and direct in love so that I don't backslide but if I reject it if I look at it and think oh they hate me or he's mean to me he's partial he likes this elder better than that other elder he likes this brother better than the other brother that feeling of that somehow

somebody is partial against me that's club mentality you cannot build a church like that let's talk about the church for a few minutes see in

the church in the new covenant there are a couple of new words that you won't see in the old covenant one is the word fellowship on the day of Pentecost Acts chapter 2 you can read about it after this outpouring of the Holy Spirit and this mighty revival 3,000 people were born again that day then what happened they didn't have tent revival meetings for 10 days that's what we would do today right one evening of mighty revival say yeah let's have another 10 days what God told them to do now that you've had this mighty revival with 3,000 people got born again shut down the revival meeting and go build the church you can read that in Acts chapter 2 verse 42 that they devoted themselves to fellowship first time it comes in the Bible that word it's a Greek word koinonia first time you'll read

about it fellowship for the first time came as an immediate consequence of the filling of the Holy Spirit most people today when you say what's the proof that you are baptized in the Holy Spirit I spoke in tongues brother I got filled with the Holy Spirit or I got filled with the Holy Spirit and I healed somebody or I thought I healed somebody I spoke in tongues and God allowed me to speak some powerful sermon the proof of the original baptism of the Holy Spirit was these men and women went back from the revival meeting where God used them and built fellowship with one another that's the church that's the result of the filling of the Holy Spirit is that we build fellowship Acts chapter 2 verse 42 and then in second first Corinthians 12 he also uses this description about the true church

not a congregation not a club but the church is this it's a body you are Christ's body and members of it he says first Corinthians 12 27 this body there's a beautiful picture that you see like that I have like to have it there where a cross it's it's a body that is built on the basis of the cross and in this this wineskin is the new covenant I saw you I showed you how the old the congregation is a part of the old covenant the clubs have no covenant at all it's just their agreement with each other the church is built around a new covenant yes there is a covenant yes there are there is an agreement that word covenant we don't use it often it's an agreement it's a commitment and these these men and women who are building the Church of Jesus Christ in these days have made a commitment to

the Lord first of all to their bridegroom and a commitment to each other based on that and so you have the two planks of the cross the love for each other you know it says in Romans chapter 5 verse 5 I think Vincent or one of the other brothers referred to it our love for for each other does not come on based based on some human lover I have for you because I like you and you like me I love for the lost is not based on all I have a passion to reach the lost and evangelize to them and go into North India or to go somewhere else and be a missionary the love that drives me for God's work on this earth is not my own idea but it's a love that it says in Romans 5 verse 5 is shed abroad from my heart I've heard brothers Zach use this teaching of the difference between the old covenant was that

the Holy Spirit was poured out like an inverted cup an upside-down cup and it flowed out but the difference in the new covenant is that this cup is filled first and the overflow of that is the results in the building of the church if I'm still trying to build a church based on the Holy Spirit flowing off of me into other people's lives that's old covenant that's a congregation or I'll gather a club of people around me but if God can fill me and shed abroad his love in my heart first of all then he can shed it abroad and build a church around those who have the same spirit of fellowship so the love for God and others overflows from within our hearts and the unity and spirit is built through the cross see I believe I've come to see this from my own heart I say I've come to see that the time

when the church is built the most is when we're away from each other I used to think that the church is built up on Sunday morning when we gather yes it is and you see the gifts are used in the church but the times when the church is built up the most is in secret when I'm away from you my dear brothers and sisters when I'm in my workplace and I'm tempted to lust with my eyes and I take up the cross and die to myself and I say Lord I'm devoted to you first of all and you do the same thing in your workplace where you deny yourself die to yourself and you say Lord I'm devoted to you first of all guess what happens when I see you on Sunday morning we have fellowship Colossians chapter 2 verse 2 talks about a knitting I can't knit physically and I can't knit spiritually either only the Holy

Spirit can do that work of knitting and if I try to knit my heart with yours I will only build a club if I try to knit my heart I try to build fellowship try to build fellowship God says no just die that knitting will happen the Holy Spirit will knit your heart with mine because I'll realize here is a spiritual brother here is a spiritual sister who is dying to himself or herself during the week and so when we get together on Sunday our fellowship is sweet not on the basis of the fact that we look and we like and we sing the same songs or anything like that but the basis of this fact alone that I have gone into the ground and died and taken up my cross and so have you and we experience fellowship through the Holy Spirit any other thing we experience where either one of us has refused to

die during the week will just be friendship just be friendship you know the difference between friendship and fellowship fellowship is a spiritual thing friendship is an earthly thing the people in the world have friendships the law the the clubs in the world the Rotary Club and the Masonic Club and all those clubs have much deeper friendship than you and I can ever have but what they can never do is the work of the Holy Spirit because it's a work of the spirit it's a spiritual work that God must do in our lives where he attests here is a man here is a woman who dies to himself during the week dies to herself during the week and then they come out and live out that dying to self in the body of Christ so when in secret I faithfully give up my will every day faithfully give up my will and

if I fail to do that I get back up and say Lord help me to give up my will I'm going back to work now after the conference on Monday help me to give up my will around such people God will build the church and so I realized when I started to see these truths that my complaint is no longer Lord where are the people where are the people who want to build a church where are they Lord that's no longer the complaint in my mouth I'll tell you honestly I know that God will find them if I go into the ground and die if I refuse to die then sure I can look for other grains of wheat where are the grains of wheat Lord I don't know you've heard this analogy as well of a trying to find a needle in a haystack and I could spend years and I tried trying to find where are the other needles by which I'm

gonna build a church and Lord says no you go into the ground and die and that cross will become such a powerful magnet that the needles will come others who are serious about living this godly life who are serious about dying to themselves and refusing to do their own will even once such people will be drawn to the message of the cross and they say you want me to die yes I've been waiting for somebody to show me the way to life it's by death may God build his church in this place and in others of such people make us such people dear brothers and sisters he can use the smallest of us from the world standpoint if we're small in our own eyes God can use us God will use us because he says if you're a grain of wheat and go into the ground and die you have your ears can't even your eyes can't

even your mind can't even imagine what God has prepared because you love me because you small grain of wheat alone in that town or feeling alone in your fellowship around a bunch of other carnal club people

you said Lord I really want this I want to experience the true Church of Jesus this grain of wheat goes into the ground and dies bears much fruit may be so in our days amen yeah I believe we've heard something which has explained the matter I think more clearly than I've ever heard it in my whole life what it means to build a congregation what it means to build a club or be a part of a club and what it means to build the church what the news white skin is all about and I like that what was said at the end that where the message of the cross is proclaimed and lived in a human being that

message and that person will be a magnet that draws out one here one there like that Old Testament where it says in Jeremiah 3 I'll take you one from a city and one from a home and I'll bring you to Zion and there I will give you shepherds after my own heart beautiful words you know you've come to the church when you found shepherds after God's own heart and you learn to respect them you don't get offended they correct you because they seek to lead you on to godliness it's all wonderful truth but like we heard at the end we must be willing to die and that is a painful process there's a price to be paid I love that verse which says that Christ loved the church Ephesians 5:25 and gave himself to build the church there was a sacrifice that Jesus made when he came from heaven to earth a

sacrifice of comfort and ease and a financial sacrifice he lived in poverty many of us would like to build the church without paying a price no we don't want to pay any financial sacrifice we don't want to pay any sacrifice of convenience such people will always be members of a club they will build a club there is no building of the church without sacrifice as a father I will tell you I have not only wanted my children to be born again and baptized I wanted them to be disciples and I wanted them to make sacrifices in their life because I know that they would never build the church if they didn't make sacrifices even financial sacrifices some years ago Santos told me that he wanted to move to Colorado to this church and I knew the price he'd have to pay in his job he would never again get

a promotion for the rest of his life all his juniors would be promoted over him he wouldn't get the hike in pay that he could get if he stayed in California he said I'm going now he told his boss if you don't let me go I'll resign I said boy if you're willing to pay that price to build the church I'm sure God will do something so behind the message you hear there was a sacrifice that you probably don't know about I know about it the same thing happened with Sunday I don't want to go into the details but I remember one time when he paid a very heavy financial price just because he wanted to you know be committed to a little group what I want to say is there are different brothers here I know who have been like that who paid a price and God has honored them some of you admire the work

they've done admire their ministry but you're not willing to pay that price you'd like to seek your own comfort your convenience and have everything your own way and build a church you don't want to die and I believe there are many many even CFC churches where people are lonely lonely means there's no fellowship there's no fellowship between the elders there's no fellowship between the brothers there are individual grains of wheat and they think they are the church they are not it's one of the greatest deceptions it's grains of wheat that have died that have been crushed in the grinder and put into the oven kneaded together and put into the oven and come out as one bread when you see a piece of bread look behind to what happened to all those grains of wheat they were crushed and powdered

and mixed with water so that there was no longer one grain of wheat standing up and saying I'm somebody no it's all disappears and put into the oven under tremendous heat unbearable heat comes out as bread wherever you see a church that emphasizes devotion to Christ and fervent love for one another and you see a fellowship many people have come to our conferences have been more impressed by the

fellowship than the messages you know that there's been a price paid behind the scenes that you may know nothing about but there's no partiality with God if you're willing to pay the price he'll do the same for you too he who has ears to hear let him hear that's bow our heads in prayer Heavenly Father help us to have that secret life with you the secret areas where we die like Jesus loved the

church and gave himself in secret in numerous ways that we still don't know in all those 33 years like that the church was built help us to see that hidden life of Jesus to walk in his footsteps pray in Jesus name Amen

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/lsiulsK0CdA.mp4>

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