

# 12 New Wine in New Wineskins - the Beginnings in Bangalore

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen shares the transformative journey of establishing a church in Bangalore through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and prophetic words.*

**Duration:** 55:35

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 3:6

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Church Unity"

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## Description

This sermon reflects on the journey of faith, highlighting the importance of seeking God in desperation, experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, facing challenges within the church, and ultimately finding unity and direction through the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes the need for personal encounters with God, the dangers of legalism, the significance of compassion and love, and the importance of being under authority. The speaker shares personal testimonies, insights on veiling for women, and encourages a focus on God's word and revelation.

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## Transcript

So, in these days we have had the opportunity to hear some younger elders and I hope you have been blessed by what you have heard from them. And now, in this session we want to hear two of the oldest. Brother Ian has been from the beginning.

In fact, the whole work here in Bangalore started when he and I together were seeking God in our own desperate, defeated state for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We used to come together and pray together. We were just two needy people and if you're a needy person, it's wonderful if you can find another needy person with whom you can pray.

That's what we did and we didn't know, I at least didn't know, I was pretty fed up with my own defeated life. But in January 1975, God amazingly met with both of us separately. And I'm glad he met with us separately, with me on one day in one place, with him on another day in another place the next day.

And that was because God did not want it to be a joint experience. I'm always afraid of these joint experiences. Our relationship with God is personal, individual.

And God met with him and met with me and that turned our life around. We were baptized afresh. We had experienced something earlier but we had backslidden.

We were baptized afresh in the Holy Spirit and then of course we began to share it in our local church and we were turned out in about six months, literally kicked out with no warning. I mean, I was told one Wednesday, we don't want to hear you anymore. Fine.

I said, God bless you. Can I speak one last Sunday, next Sunday? They said no. I said, all right, I'll go.

I said, I will not cause any problems. I'm a man of peace. But then they finally felt bad that I had ministered so long.

You know, I had ministered without taking any salary, without taking a title for one year. And they felt bad about that. So they said, okay, we'll let you speak next Sunday.

And then I spoke and I said, this is your opportunity. You've come to the borders of Canaan. You have to decide whether you want to go in or turn back into the wilderness.

And I left. And they did not want Ian to leave because he was still ministering there. But then he got up and said, Zach's leaving, I'm leaving too.

And we didn't know what to do that evening and we met together in our home, not knowing where to go. It was really like Abraham left, not knowing where he was going. We had absolutely no clue.

We had no intention of starting a church, definitely not. He said, okay, let's pray together. One or two others also left and joined us.

And we would just pray together and meet, go day by day, step by step. And that's how the church began. And it's been 36 wonderful years working with this dear man of God who has been in the background, not known by many, but has been the strength and support of this church that has enabled me to travel.

And you will see that at the judgment seat of Christ. I don't want to rob him of that reward by talking about it now. And then after that we will hear Brother Prabhakar.

He's one of the first brothers, probably the first from Tamil Nadu, whom God brought and he will tell you his story. But I wanted these older brothers to share so that those of you who are younger, who are starting now, can see what God has done in their lives and through their ministry, through the years, to encourage you. Brother Ian, deeply touched by God, what a privilege to be in this church.

I know it is the grace of God and His mercy. I could have been languishing in that Baptist church, lost my children, and probably lost my salvation also. But I thank God that God sent a man like Brother Zach across my path, not just once, but thrice, which means that God had something.

For me and for us. And I really thank God. I'm deeply, I'm really humbled to be part of such a glorious family, to be part of the body of Christ.

This is not a fairy tale. This is not pie in the sky. This is real.

It's real for me. This is my family. It's been my family for 36 and a half years and it's going to be my family for all eternity.

I praise God with all my heart. I said it, I'm not ashamed to say it, but it's not my flesh and blood relatives who are my family. If they come in the body of Christ, praise God for that.

But my dear brothers and sisters, and I thank God for every one of you and for those in our local church here who have blessed me through the years, Brother Zach and Sister Annie, their family, their boys that have been a blessing and encouragement to our children. I thank God with all my heart. I don't want to just relate facts.

Something that has been impressed on my heart, like road signs along the way. That's what I want to draw your attention to because I believe that's how God leads us. God leads us through His Holy Spirit.

Like Brother Zach just said, it was His Holy Spirit that changed the direction of our lives, began to change the direction that God wanted to lead the church, but unfortunately they chose not to be part of it. And it was the Holy Spirit who led us and the prophetic word that God gave us at different times through the years. I believe that this is so important that we have the Holy Spirit to lead us just like it was in the beginning and we have the prophetic word.

They are like road signs so that we don't get lost. And even if we take a deviation, which we did at one time, God brought us back again. So, I just want to call your attention first of all to 2 Peter 1, verses 19 and 20 as I go on.

2 Peter 1, it says here in verse 16, I like to read from verse 16. Verse 19 is a word down my heart, but verse 16, it says, As we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty for when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. And we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

So, we have the prophetic word made more sure to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

And this was so blessed as I thought of this word and it says there that the prophetic word is a lamp shining in a dark place. Some of you may have seen the souvenir that we brought up for Brother Zack's 70th birthday, a man holding a lamp in the olden days when there were no lighthouses. That's how it was that in the darkness, there was this lantern that this man held to guide the ships.

And, you know, the word there is the same thing. It's a portable lamp. In the old covenant, it was they needed somebody to go to God to go.

They needed someone to go to the lighthouse or somebody to go to God in the new covenant. I'd really bless my heart. We are portable lamps.

We can have the prophetic word on our lips. We can have the prophetic word in the church. And interestingly, it says until the morning star rises in your hearts and that word very blessedly is the word phosphorus.

Phosphorus, you know, that chemical that glows. You see these fireflies at night that have that little lamp in its body. And there are some creatures in the sea that have that that little glow that glows in the night.

It's it's comes from within. And that blessed my heart that that's what the prophetic word in the church should do. We have the prophetic word made sure it says and we are to focus.

I want to read that to you from the message Bible. It says we couldn't be more sure what we saw and heard God's glory God's voice. The prophetic word was confirmed to us.

You'll do well to keep focusing on it. It's the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the morning star in your hearts. The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of private opinion.

And why? Because it's not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God's word. And that's what I want to emphasize on my brothers and sisters.

As we think of how God has led us. It was the prophetic word. It was this lamp that shone in a dark place.

And that continued to shine and in different points there were the lamp shone and gave us direction. And like I said, there was a little time when we went astray. God brought us back.

But that's how it is until the morning star rises in our hearts until we partake of divine nature until we we have the life of Jesus within us. The light comes from within. The light emits.

And that's the word there. The morning star. It's a light emitting, you know.

It's from within. That's what the word should do. We come to conferences.

We come here and hear the word. We have to focus our attention on what God is saying. What is God saying to me? What is the spirit we heard many times? Let him who has years hear what the spirit is saying.

Let him who has years to hear and to give heed to this word. And why I say that because that's what it was not brother Zach's bright idea. I know in all the time we were in that Baptist church never once did he ever speak of wanting to you know, we start another church.

We we start another group. Never once. We really felt that God would take the church along with what he was trying to do.

And just like I said at the beginning of creation when everything was when there was chaos and darkness and emptiness. The spirit of God moved it says upon the waters and then God spoke that there be light and there was light. And I believe that's how it is.

That's how the that's how the church came into being. It happened as God spoke as God guided us and led us after he baptized us and afresh in the Holy Spirit and fire. And so the prophetic word was shining through the darkness and that has got brighter through the years.

In 36 and a half years we thank and praise God the light has not got dimmer. We praise God that there's a generation growing up at least in CFC Bangalore who are gripped some of them who are gripped who

have this who are now the morning stars beginning to rise in their hearts. They are now light emitting.

They are phosphorus. They glow in the darkness and that's what I want to be and that's what I want to encourage all of us our young people especially. You need to focus on the prophetic word let it work in you till you tell it there's phosphorus.

There's a light in you that will come forth that will give light to others. And that is how God led us. It was one Sunday morning in this Baptist church that Zach just spoke a little about and I remember that Sunday morning when the air was as it though electrically charged everything, you know things even though the whole church was not in that decision they would rather have had us continue but they knew that something was happening and the word that rang out loud and clear that Sunday morning, I never forget it.

We still have the message on on now on CD. It's from Luke chapter 19, if you would like you can look at it in verses 41. This was the word that after they agreed to let brother Zach speak, I believe that was of God.

They couldn't stop it. There was a word the church needed to hear at that time of prophetic word and before that before that there was a man of God. There were two men of God that God brought across our path.

One was an Anglican pastor who helped us, who helped us to understand, who led us into an assurance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Brother Zach one day and me the next day and then following that a few months later some other brothers and sisters in the church about six families and there was this Presbyterian pastor. There were others who came and you know we gave them freedom to speak and try to get people to speak in tongues and leave your tongue loose and all this kind of thing, but these two men stand out.

We thank God for them and I think both of them have gone into glory and just one brother had a baptism very recently and he had said this word and remember that he was sick that morning. He was lying down in the vestry and he was only able to get up to come and speak that word and he gave a word. It was a very powerful word that day and at the end of that word he said, he says God will fulfill his purpose through his servant either with you or without you.

That's the word he left for the church. This was months earlier before they literally asked Brother Zach to leave. He was not supported by the church.

I was and when they said that I should continue and I would work under the board, I said, I'm sorry. I have the same convictions. I believe what Brother Zach believes.

I believe what the Bible says. I believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If he leaves, I leave also.

And so we we left that after the message that Sunday morning and that word in Luke 19, 41 and 44, you know, Jesus said if you had known even you the things which make for peace. It's good my brothers and sisters. We don't just think back.

I don't want to think back 36 and a half years. I want to think of now. I want to take this word for now and Jesus said if you had known even you the things which make for peace, but now they have been hidden from your eyes.

That's a sad thing. That the things which make for peace get hidden from our eyes and he spoke further there in in Luke chapter 19. It says there before earlier that when he approached Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it.

And I know the times we had when we used to meet together with some of those who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We would seek God. We would really seek him and many times with fasting and times weeping praying that God would lead the church along.

And Jesus said there he spoke. He said the days will come upon you verse 43 when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you and so on. They level you to the ground and it says you will not leave in you one stone upon another and listen to this word.

This was the word because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. That was the word that came that morning to the church because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. And speaking in Luke chapter 13, you can turn to that word also because that was a word also that Rosack had shared and together with Luke 19 and Jesus speaking of Jerusalem there.

He says who killed the true prophets. He says a word you spoke to Jerusalem. They killed the true prophets.

He says how often Luke 13 verse 34 often I wanted to gather your children together just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you would not have it. That was a word that came that Sunday morning. There were many many in tears sad that we were leaving and the ones who were baptized in the Holy Spirit when they came and said now, what do we do? We said no, you go back.

You don't need to leave with us. They said no, but if we go back they're going to tear down all that we we have believed. So we didn't know what we were going to do like brother Zach just shared.

The title of that message which we have you can always ask for order it. It's a moment of crucial decision. And I just don't think of 36 and a half years as I sing.

I think today I want to recognize the time when God comes near me and we as churches my brothers and sisters is good that we recognize the day of our visitation. It's good that we recognize the things that make for peace in working together with one another lest they get hidden from our eyes. It's good we recognize that Jesus wants to gather us together.

And if we don't gather with him we are scattered. It's good we give heed to that. We focus on this prophetic word.

It's a lamp that shines in a dark place. And like we just read in the in the message bible in this time of darkness, we have the prophetic word. Thank God for that.

And thank God that the light gets brighter. And so we left the church that day and the denominational church we met that evening and we had a powerful prayer meeting. Before that many people came and tried to persuade me to leave and said don't join Zach.

He's a loner. And he's always been a loner. My own dad told me, I hope you have your eyes open.

I said to him, dad, my eyes were never more open than today. And ironically, oh, I would say thank God. It was brother Zach who led my dad to the Lord who brought him into the kingdom of God just two weeks

before he passed away.

So God has, God works in mysterious ways. And we left. I had two children.

My eldest was three and a half and our youngest was one about one year. And we felt free when we gathered together. We didn't come out with a heavy heart sad and we felt free.

We were sad, of course, that the church did not go along with what God was doing. So together with these six families, we met in the home of brothers Zach and Stanny, 16 Becosta Square. We had no plans to start a church as we just said.

I think of Acts chapter 4 verse 25. I was thinking of that word when I was thinking of these things. I read that from the message Bible.

It says there, Acts 4 25. Why the big noise? Why the mean plots? Peoples. Earth's leaders push to position.

That's how it was. There were people on the board there who wanted to become the next pastor. Earth's leaders push for position.

Potentates meet for summit talks. They had secret board meetings. They had a secret board meeting without the chairman, but brother Zach decided that they're going to push him out of the church.

But God had his plan and purpose and everything and it says there, the God deniers, the messiah defiers. That's how the message paraphrases Acts 4 25. So as we prayed that evening, there was another word that God gave us.

That was a prophetic word that gave us direction and that's in Revelation and chapter 3. I've gone back to this word many times. Revelation and chapter 3. We heard it's good to together with the epistles of Timothy and Titus to read the first three chapters of Revelation because they are through the churches that Jesus wrote to John. So Revelation in chapter 3, you know, and this was a word that came to us that day.

It says in verse 7, the middle of that verse, he who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut and who shuts and no one opens. While we were in that Baptist church, we had got light with some brothers that got brought across our path that Jesus came in our flesh and that was the key of David and we got light that we can that Jesus became like us in all points, tempted in all points, and that we could live a godly life. So that was the word that came and it says, I know your deeds, verse 8. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut because you have a little power and have kept my word and have not denied my name.

And goes on many other things there, you know, because those of the synagogue of Satan will say that they are Jews and not but lie and make them to come and bow down to your feet. We we're not looking for that. When Jesus said, because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing.

The hour which is about to come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. I'm coming quickly, hold fast what you have so that no one will take your crown. So that was a word that God gave, encouraged our hearts that evening.

We had a powerful prayer meeting, the Holy Spirit came upon us and we just gave thanks and praise to God. It was like on that day of Pentecost, it says there when they spoke in tongues, when they praised God, it says they spoke of the mighty deeds of God. And that's what it was.

That's that was such a powerful prayer meeting that we praise God. God gave, encouraged us. I put before you an open door that no man can shut.

He closed one door, he opened another and he said no man could shut. That encouraged us tremendously and gave us direction for the coming days and we didn't know how God would lead us. I think back and like I was saying, I thank God that God allowed our paths to cross it was 40 years ago, not just 36 and a half years ago, 40 years ago that a young powerful preacher and Bible teacher who was about 31 at that time visited the little home of a newly married couple.

You know, we were married for about six months and for the first time drank chocolate tea which the wife had made. And that young preacher was none other than Brother Zach and that couple was my wife and me. We had not yet had our first child.

Well, that's the first time that we met when he came to Secunderabad where I was living, where we were living and we had the Brethren Come Baptist Church that I was going to, had deeper life meetings and Brother Zach took some Bible studies there which really blessed us and challenged us. It was the first time. So I'm so thankful for that God 40 years ago that I never thought of it then.

I was a full-time worker and working with Youth for Christ and they never wanted to invite Brother Zach for any of it was said to us, don't ever invite Zach Ponen for your YFC rallies and all. He'll drive the people away and the offerings will go down. We'll not get a good offering.

That's how it was then. So he was never invited for any Youth for Christ program and I was working at that time with this organization. and then when I think back to that time, the second time when disillusioned after the first meeting we had and that we didn't have any contact with each other and disillusioned with full-time Christian work, my wife and I were newly married.

We had our first child. We said no, we need to take a break. We need to go to some place where we can study God's word and give our time to understand God's word and see what God's purpose was for us.

So that's how we came to Bangalore a couple of years later and that was the second time we met him when we joined. It was more a discipleship training center and Brother Zach again was taking some Bible studies there. We used to look forward to his to his sessions more than all the other boring sessions that we had.

And the third time of course, so I just I say all this to see that, you know, we don't think that God plans everything so perfectly and the third time when God brought us together in the Baptist church and let me see now God's purpose in bringing us together and it was there as we shared that we received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and we experienced the gifts of the Spirit. We apart from speaking in tongues, apart from the gift of tongues and apart from the gift of prophecy and apart from seeing demons cast out, we we saw many people delivered, some people who came to our meetings and miraculous healings and in a situation a word of wisdom that exposed a man's heart who pretended that he wanted to become a believer. So many things like this and discerning of spirits.

God gave us the gifts of the church, but God added we see to the church those who had a longing, those who were to be saved and I could say like it says in Mark chapter 2 verse 1. It was heard that Jesus was in the home. Those six years that we met together in Brother Zach and Sister Annie's home if we could say and many young people, you know this word it was heard that Jesus was in the home. That's how it was.

And in that time we decided to to work and support ourselves. We said that we would not take any support from the church, excuse me. And we never lacked.

We never took an offering right from day one. We had the offering box at the back. We would not even remind people that there was an offering box.

We never asked for money and even when we bought up that piece of land and today we have the meeting hall there when we built the ground floor. We never asked for money. We never sent out requests for money.

We never sent out letters or reports of our work. And because of the stand that we took Brother Zach ceased to get invitations to preach. Before that he spoke at Keswick conventions and different other meetings even in that big meeting in Kerala.

At one time and but after that, you know all the invitations ceased. We became unpopular. People called us heretics and all kinds of things.

They wrote about us in Christian magazines and there was an approach. People were warned don't go to 16th Acosta Square. Don't go to Zach Poonen's church.

And you heard Brother Vincent share and just how that helped him. So we we continued to meet there and God added to our number. We you know, the drawing room was full the bed and the adjoining rooms and the veranda and we were just bursting at the seams.

But like I said, we never asked for money and God enabled us to build the hall that we have. And I want to say one thing that having experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, being immersed with the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we came to a place as you know, when our Lord, you know, we we had the faith to exercise the gifts of the Spirit. But we seemed to reach a roadblock.

We were not satisfied. We believed that there was more and so we prayed and sought the Lord and just like it says in John chapter 16 verse 15, Jesus speaking of the Holy Spirit says, He will glorify me for he will take of mine and disclose it to you. That word many times I I have read that and I claimed that.

I asked, Lord, you promised that the Holy Spirit will take the things of you and reveal them to us. And that's what he has done. That's what he has done for us through the years.

At that time we were like a locomotive full of power but no tracks to run on. And the Spirit of God led us to see the new and living way that Jesus made for us through the flesh. He led us to see that it's it's the way of the cross like we heard this so powerfully from Santosh this morning that makes us one.

We have this this vertical connection, this vertical beam, a connection with the Lord and a horizontal beam in our connection with each other. And we thank God for that because then we began to experience the Holy Spirit began to make us one. We were not large in number and not everybody became part of this core, but we thank God for those brothers and some of them are with us.

Some of them have fallen away and along that path, there were some who thought they would be made elders. They were not given enough recognition. They left us.

And I think there's only one family today and that's brother Danny. Brother Sundar Singh, his father has passed away. But all the others just fell away.

But those who had a hunger after God, who did not want to be an elder, who did not want recognition, they did not want to you know, have some big part in the church. They just wanted to be disciples. God made us one.

And I want to say that that's what God has done in brother Zach and myself and then brother Newton. Even though there's a 15 years difference between, I mean his age and ours. We never felt that way.

We have worked together in such unity. Newton is not a yes man. He's never been one.

And whether it's brother Zach or whether it's me, we have worked together in a spirit of unity and fellowship and that's the thing. We may not have the opportunity to visit one another so often. Brother Zach travels.

Newton has a job. I had my business. But there was a fellowship that there was something that fused us together.

It was the Holy Spirit. And like I said, what happened on the 17th of August 1975, that was the church was born. I always say that, you know, it was not a bright idea of brother Zach.

It was planted by God. It was not planted by man. It was planted by God.

The church was born that day, my brothers and sisters, and we look back to that and we thank God. It was the Holy Spirit. The church was born of the Spirit.

And God had immersed us in the Holy Spirit and showed us the way that Jesus made for us, the new and living way through the flesh that we can have confidence to walk that way through the blood of Jesus. And that we can become one as we take up the cross like we heard and deny ourselves. It's not been easy.

We are both different personalities. And Newton and myself, we are different personalities. But we have worked together in fellowship.

We have had our, we have heard that often, we have had our disagreements, sharp disagreements. But never once a smell of strife, I can testify that before God. Never once did I get offended.

Things that brother Zach would have to tell me, where I needed some correction, where I needed something, where I needed to put something right. And whatever it was, whether it was something personal, whether concerning my family, concerning, I think we worked together and never got offended. There's never been a smell of strife between us.

And we thank God for that. And I believe it's only the Holy Spirit. It's only the way that we decided to walk the new and the living way.

That we deny ourselves, take up the cross daily and follow after Jesus. And that's that's how it's been. But like I said, we, God gave us these directions, words along the way, the prophetic word that we looked at in

the beginning, that was made more sure, we focused on it.

God gave direction and continued to lead us. And as we did that, we became one. As we continue to walk that way, like I said, we became phosphorus, the day star, the morning star, rose in our hearts.

And the fellowship between us became more glorious. And so, at one point we did stray. We, in our pursuit after holiness, and we don't blame anybody, but we went into a phase of legalism.

And, yeah, we, we, I always think that who suffered most were our children at that time, but I believe it was God's purpose in taking us through that phase of legalism. Because today we could help others. That today we could help others to become servants of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit.

The letter kills, like it says in 2 Corinthians and chapter 3. The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. And that's why God allowed us. But I want to say one thing, and there was another word that God gave us at that time, a prophetic word.

And I remember so very clearly, I got light on that. You know, we were focusing that on 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16. Depends, you know, we have been hearing about reading the scripture slowly, and to read it exactly and slowly as it is written.

And it says there in 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16, by common confession, great is the mystery of godliness. We have heard about that in this conference, that Christ will manifest in the flesh. And we were taken up with the doctrine.

And we thought the secret of godliness was a doctrine, Christ manifest in the flesh. That's what led us into legalism. That's what made us legalistic.

But I remember we got light, I got light, and Brother Zak shared. And you know, we never despise the paraphrases like the living Bible and message Bible. Sometimes we get light.

And in the living Bible, it said, it is quite true, listen to it. It is quite true that the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter, but the answer lies in Christ. That was a liberating word.

The answer lies in Christ, not Christ manifest in the flesh. That liberated me. I can testify to that before God.

That freed me from legalism. I had to repent of it. I know Brother Zak has even publicly in conferences apologized for taking the church through legalism.

But God allowed us to go through that path. So that we can warn one another, that we can be alert. And I believe that the danger we face, my brothers and sisters, as we continue to pursue holiness and all holiness movements.

As we continue to pursue a godly life, as we continue to live a godly life and live a victorious life, the danger is not worldliness. Because that can be recognized very quickly. The danger is legalism.

The legalism can come in among us. It's not that we don't keep the commandments of God. We have heard about teaching even the obeying the least of the commandments.

Like women covering, wailing their heads. I'll come to that in a moment. And it's not that we say, no, we don't need to obey all that.

But we can obey in the letter. And if you don't, we don't have time to look at it. But in 2nd Corinthians and maybe we can.

I think it's a good word. I shared this last week in CFC in 2nd Corinthians and chapter 2. I was sharing about being that we are called to be a fragrance and exquisite perfume of Christ. And you know Paul says there in 2nd Corinthians in chapter 2. He says there, Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.

I was saying that that word actually is that Jesus triumphing over us. And the picture that Paul had there was this Roman general with all his captives that he had taken into captivity and then marching through the streets of Rome in chains. These were all his trophies and the crowds would cheer him.

And the picture that Paul had there that Jesus has triumphed over us, you and me, my brothers and sisters. We are captives, not in chains. We are free.

Our chains fell off. We have been taken captive. We don't have the smell of the prison like I was saying.

We have a fragrance. That's what it says there. We are a fragrance of Christ.

Verse 13 To God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. For the one an aroma from death to death to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? That's the question Paul asked.

And chapter 3 verse 5 he answers that question. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy, that is our competency, our sufficiency, whatever you like to call it, is from God who also made us adequate or competent as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit. For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

And we praise God for that. Like I said, you know, we read the scripture slowly that we can get light. And that's how God liberated us.

And we thank God that Brazzac helped us. We were led into a life of legalism, but we thank God we were led out of it. And the answer lies in Christ, not Christ manifest in the flesh, not in a doctrine my brothers and sisters.

You can believe in a doctrine of Christ manifest in the flesh and go to hell and lose your salvation. But the answer lies in Christ, who came to earth as a man, was proved spotless and pure in his spirit. That's a living Bible paraphrase.

The answer lies in Christ. I praise God for that. Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.

So that's how it has been. And so we came out of that and like everything, everything, you know, people can think, oh now we are free, now we can do, now we can wear jewelry, you know, we can dress, we can go to movies, we can do this, we can do that. Yeah, some people take advantage and use their, like Paul says, they turn their freedom into licentiousness.

But thank God, the freedom that God gives us is that we can serve Christ, that we can be servants of the new covenant, that we can serve one another in love. That's the other thing I want to emphasize, that it was the love of God in us and through us. And I can thank God that God gave us a love for, not only for each other, but God gave us a love for people.

You know, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 9 and verse 13, a word that I have gone to many times. He says go and learn what this means. I desire compassion and not sacrifice.

And you can put, substitute that word sacrifice for many things. I desire compassion, not our offerings, not our service. And he says, I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

And again in Matthew chapter 12, in case, you know, in verse 7, he said, but if he had known, you know, in chapter 9 and verse 13, he says, go and learn what this means. When they were finding fault with the disciples, that they were plucking the grain on the Sabbath day. And here in another instance, when they were watching to see whether he's going to heal this man with the withered hand, and he says he was angry at the hardness of heart.

And he said, if you had known, I told you earlier, go and learn what this means. If you had known what this means, I desire compassion and not a sacrifice. You will not condemn the innocent.

And that's something that has challenged my heart, my brothers and sisters. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not just speaking in tongues and not receiving all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We thank God for that.

But the love of God poured into your heart and mine. And flowing through us, that we can have a love for people. Jesus was moved with compassion.

I believe I cannot be a shepherd in the church if I don't have a compassion for people, if I don't love people. It says in one of the Psalms, indeed, the Lord loves his people. And if I am a shepherd after his heart, it should be said of me, indeed, he loves God's people.

Then I'm qualified, then I'm fit to be a shepherd. If I don't have compassion, if I'm not merciful, I don't mean that we compromise. Sometimes we have to speak firmly.

Sometimes we have to correct and rebuke. That's part of the responsibility as shepherds, because we have to give an account for the flock. And I take that seriously also.

So we have to warn, we have to rebuke and correct. But to have compassion, that whatever we do, we do it with compassion. We do it with mercy.

And that's how it's been. That as the church has grown, we have always, even now recently, we have asked people to recommit. We are not interested in numbers growing from just about 15 people, and today we have nearly 400 people.

We take it seriously. We're not excited. If the disciples increase, we are excited.

If numbers increase, it makes us fear and tremble. Because we can be infiltrated. And that's what we we have to watch.

And that we continue to get light like we heard. That Jesus, that we get revelation. I like that word in Luke chapter 2, verse 32, when Simeon prophesied that Jesus was a light of revelation to the Gentiles, to us.

A light of revelation. We get light upon Jesus. We get light upon His word.

We get light on ourselves that will keep us humble, keep us united, keep us free from strife and competition and exalting ourselves. And like we heard, that we can, that it's no burden to consider my brother or my sister more important than myself. And that's how it is.

That's how it was with Jesus, to be under authority. These are the, I'm just saying, these are the things that have kept us together. I'm not preaching a sermon.

I'm just sharing with you realities. I've never felt it a burden to be under authority. I know that God has put me under the authority of Brother Zach.

I thank God for him. I could say, I too am a man under authority. Can we say that, we brothers who are shepherds? I too am a man under authority, or am I my own authority? I want to do my own thing.

I never want to. I'm scared of that. I want to be a man under authority.

I'm not a yes man. I've never been one. I've never tore the line.

If I have a different opinion, I voice it. But we have had glorious fellowship together. There's Brother Newton and myself now.

Brother Zach is no longer the elder. And we have other brothers, not just Brother Newton and me, but we have some glorious brothers in CFC. We've got eight brothers to support us and help us.

We've got some young brothers, wonderful brothers and ancestors. They're not all yes people. They don't just tore the line.

They're themselves. Always encourage young people, be yourself. Don't try to be somebody else.

I remember once, one young brother, when we had the Wednesday meetings, who was kind of hitting out, and I saw, you know, he was trying to imitate Brother Zach. And I talked with him after the meeting. I said, you'll destroy yourself.

God has not given you that grace. Be yourself. God has given you a measure of grace and a proportion of faith.

Live within that. And you will blossom. I'm so glad he took it.

He took that correction, and I saw a complete difference in his life and in his ministry. So, and there have been others also like that. And so I thank God for many such ones.

To be able to say, I too am a man, or I too am a woman under authority. I just want to say a word about that. You know, this controversy about sisters veiling their heads.

I want to give a testimony here. I want to tell you, I've never had a problem with 1 Corinthians 11, even before CFC came into being. Never had a problem.

My parents went to the CSI church. And though I know they're covering as a, you know, a cap on their head or something, but my mother got my sister to, when she went to church, the CSI church, to cover her head. The Roman Catholics and the Hindus and the Muslims must put us to shame if within our churches

we have a problem about the sisters veiling their heads.

I've never had a problem. In fact, even before CFC came into being, when I was in Secunderabad, and when there were some clever people who say that the hair is the covering for the sister, I said, no. Why would it say that a sister should shave her head if she doesn't want to cover it? How comes that the the hair becomes a covering? So many things.

So I just say this to say that I didn't get this from CFC, that a woman, and my wife has had no problem there, that a woman should veil her head. I want you to see one thing, sisters. And I pointed that out to my daughters.

And I said to the last daughter who got married, I said, you're going to Australia. You're probably going to go there and you'll find that women don't cover their heads there. I said, don't follow their example.

If you're the only one covering your head, I see in the meetings that Sister Annie, in the meetings we see them on YouTube and on the recordings, that she'd be the only sister with her head covering. So I told my daughter, I said, don't compromise there. I said, follow the scripture, not what CFC has taught, but what is in God's word.

That's what I want to say to our sisters. See it in God's word. Not that Brother Zach preaches it and that CFC teaches it, but Zach preaches what is God's word.

I've everything that he has preached through the 36 and a half years. I've gone back to God's word. If it's there, I obey it.

And I want to encourage all of us to do that. And I was just pointing this out. I'll stop with that.

But it says in 1 Corinthians 11.10 that the women ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. A woman should have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. I thought of that, you know, that many many young women, many girls who get married, many sisters who get married, like, oh and brothers want their their bride or their wife to wear a symbol of a of their marriage on their ring finger.

They want the wedding ring so that no other man would look at her and think that she's not married and try and fool around. They're so careful about that. Wouldn't we want the angels to see that, yeah, that woman, that sister is under authority.

So we need a symbol of authority as much like we want a symbol of marriage. It's good to have a symbol of authority, sisters. I hope that helps you and like I said, I thank God for the church.

I thank God that I've had a privilege to be part of this family and I know God has blessed us through the years. God has blessed my children and I want to do the three things that Zach reminded us last year, keep my face in the dust, be an ordinary brother, and know that I'm a disciple that Jesus loves. Not so much that how much I love him, but that he loves me.

Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/12-new-wine-in-new-wineskins-the-beginnings-in-bangalore/>

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