

# Being Servants of Christ's Body ■ A Word to Elders

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of total surrender to God, focusing on the need to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. It highlights the command to love our enemies, forgive others, and maintain a clear conscience. The speaker stresses the significance of personal devotion to Jesus, humility, and serving others with a heart of worship. The message warns against pride, legalism, and the spirit of the Antichrist, urging leaders to prioritize discipleship and knowing God deeply.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:48, Matthew 6:1, Hebrews 8:12, Mark 9:24, Psalm 139:23, 1 John 2:19, Daniel 11:32, Amos 9:9, Proverbs 4:12, Luke 17:10, Revelation 1:17

**Topics:** "Total Surrender", "Humility in Service"

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## Description

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## Transcript

The first thing that I want to emphasize is what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 6. Matthew 6, as I was meditating recently on the Sermon on the Mount again, you know you keep discovering new things when you read the scriptures even after 60 years. I saw this expression in Matthew 5 48 in a fresh way. It is not a promise that you will be made perfect.

That would be different. It's a command. We study common commands and promises in our memory verse and this is a command.

It's not a command that a lot of people like to look at, but yet it's one of the right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. You must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. Now we know that it's impossible for us to be perfect in wisdom, power, knowledge, and probably a hundred and one other things.

But since we learn to, since we have learned to see scripture in its context always, we can't go astray. So Jesus said that in the middle of a few statements. So when I see that verse, I look at the immediately preceding verses and immediately preceding verses talking about being good to those who are evil towards us.

That is the area we are to be perfect and that means it is possible. It's possible to love our enemy and it's possible to do good to those who hate us and pray for those who persecute us and to grieve those who don't need us. That is possible.

That's not an impossible command. In that area be perfect and that's a good area for all of us to examine ourselves in the beginning and see that our heart is free from any grudge against anyone in the whole world. Believer or unbeliever.

All of us. I say anybody who's more than six or seven years old has faced some harm that somebody did to them. And we are all much older.

There are people who have spoken evil of us, done harm to us and especially if you are servants of the Lord. I found that as a servant of the Lord. There are many people who target me.

They write about me in articles and whatnot. I say by God's grace I can say I have forgiven every single one of them. It's been my habit.

Whenever I hear a report of someone having said or done something against me or to hurt me, I immediately right there I say Lord I forgive that person. I don't know what he's did or said. I haven't read what he wrote about me or said about me.

I haven't heard it. But I forgive him right now in Jesus name. And I cannot remove that memory, that knowledge of that fact from my memory.

I have no control over my memory and God does not demand that I forget. Even God himself does not forget anything. Read Hebrews 8 12 carefully.

He doesn't say I'll forget about your sins. He says I will not remember. Which means I choose.

It's an exercise of God's will. I will. I will not remember.

So I also say I will not to remember what people have done. God knows every single thing we ever did. He hasn't forgotten it.

But he wills not to remember the past that is under the blood of Jesus. And that is our choice also in relation to all the people who have done or said anything. Very important to keep our heart absolutely clear in this area because the word of Jesus is clear.

If you don't forgive others you will not be forgiven. And if I'm an unforgiven man, I'm absolutely unfit to lead God's people. I will not be able to hear God's voice.

The Hebrews it says, the Apostle Paul said to the Hebrews in chapter 5, you have become dull of hearing. And because you're dull of hearing I cannot say to you, you read that passage in Hebrews 5 towards the end of it, because you're dull of hearing I cannot explain to you some of the wonderful things about the humanity of Jesus Christ. Yes you all believe in his deity but there are some amazing truths about his

humanity that can change your life.

But I can't explain them to you, he says, because you're dull of hearing. You've understood the truth of forgiveness of sins and maybe the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But in terms of living that overcoming life, walking in Jesus' footsteps, there are many things that I can't explain but they are dull of hearing.

And I think they became dull of hearing because they didn't keep their conscience clear. Whenever people ask me to pray for them for healing, it says the elders must pray when people come and ask for healing. But James 5 there says when the elders pray for healing, if that person has committed sins it will be forgiven him.

So I asked them, particularly about one sin, have you forgiven everybody? Because I find that is the one thing that blocks even healing from people. So it's very important. I'm not saying we should fellowship with everyone.

Jesus never had fellowship with the Pharisees. Jesus is my example in forgiving. I don't want to be try and be more spiritual than Jesus by the fellowship, going visiting Pharisees homes to show that I have forgiven them.

No. Jesus never did that. He forgave them and that was before his father.

That was it. And even on the cross when the worst crime that has ever committed on this earth, he immediately forgave, teaching us that whatever crime people do against you is far inferior to the crime of the crucifixion of the Son of God. And he forgave immediately.

There was no delay there. Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

Everybody knows if you kill a man it's wrong. But what they did not know was to whom they were doing it. That it was the Son of God.

And very often it's like that. I believe we are the apple of God's eye, according to the Zechariah chapter 2 verse 5 and 8. And God's a wall of fire on about us. And whenever anybody hurts us he's poking into God's eye.

I mean that's not boasting. And we keep a clear conscience and walk in humility before God. We are the apple of God's eye.

And the eye does not protect itself. It's the hand that reaches out and stops that person from poking my eye any further. And that's God who does that.

I'm not a do that. God will stop whoever tries to do that and whenever he wants to stop it and however much he wants to stop it. But my calling is to be perfect in this area.

To bless those who curse me. Love all my enemies. And to pray for those who treat me badly.

And that's just an exercise of my will. I choose. I say before the Lord, Lord I have forgiven them.

And I wish the best for them. I don't wish any evil for them. I must keep myself in that place always.

Whether I feel like it or not is not necessary. We all are mature enough to know that we do not live by our feelings. We have finished living by feelings.

We live by faith. And so it's not a question of whether I feel I've forgiven or not. I don't live by feelings.

I live by the fact that I have exercised my will before God Almighty and told Him clearly, I forgive them. I want to release them. I will not hold their throat and hold anything against them.

I have no demands. And I do not wish any evil. I wish them good.

Then I move on to, as your father in heaven is perfect, what immediately precedes that verse. And then what immediately follows that verse. That's the next thing.

And that is Matthew chapter 6, verse 1 to 18. And that's basically that unlike the old covenant where the act itself was enough, the prayer or the tithing or the fasting. And it was quite OK if everybody knew that you were fasting regularly and that you were paying your tithes and that you were praying as planned by God and came to Jerusalem as often you were supposed to.

But in the new covenant, you had to be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect. They did not know the father in the old covenant. And to be perfect as my father in heaven is perfect, according to the succeeding verses in chapter 6 of Matthew, is that I do nothing before the face of men.

I do not want people to know what I have done for the Lord. I don't want people to know how much I pray or fast or sacrifice or any righteousness that I've done or any money that I've given. I don't want people to know.

Now, I realize that in our day, when you give an offering, very often it's given by a check and the treasurer will know. That's OK. You can't avoid it.

The question is not whether people know. Many things that we do, people will know. For example, your ministry, you can't keep it completely hidden.

People know about it. But the point is not whether people know about it. The question is whether you want people to know about it.

Or you get a secret delight when people know that you did something. That's what I've got to repent. That can happen very, very easily.

I've had to judge myself up to many, many times in the past years of feeling a little satisfaction when I have ministered the Word of God in a very free and powerful way. I really had to go before God's face and say, Lord, forgive me for touching your glory. There's one thing God will never give us.

Isaiah 42,8 says, My glory I will not give to another. He gives us His love, His power, His wisdom, and so many things. But His glory in time and in eternity, no one can touch it.

The glory of God belongs to Him alone. And so we have to be very careful because there's a lot of this in Christendom. And we are the products of, we grew up in Babylon in Christendom, all of us.

And we have gradually come out of it. And just like we have a flesh we inherited from Adam and that still troubles us, in the same way some of the habits of Babylon in Christendom can still cling to us if we are not careful. And that's why we have to be very alert if we want to keep our hearing clear.

If I'm not hearing God correcting me, rebuking me, showing me the right path in love, something is wrong. If I'm not hearing God encouraging me when I'm depressed or discouraged, if I'm in that gloomy position for long, something is wrong. I'm not hearing because God never wants us to be like that but to be encouraged.

Otherwise I cannot fulfill the command which says rejoice always. So I for myself have taken this as a law for my life that any time I don't have fullness of joy in my heart, I say to myself, you're not in the Father's presence. Because Psalm 16:11 says, in the Father's presence there is fullness of joy.

And I must have it all the time because I want to live in the Father's presence all the time. That is more important than even reading the Bible every day. I've had a habit from childhood, not childhood, from the time I was born again to read the scriptures every day.

But as I've grown more and more mature, I've discovered that more than just easing my conscience that I read the Bible for a few minutes is to ask myself, have I heard God speaking to me today? You can read the Bible for half an hour and not hear God speaking to you. Just ease your conscience. I tell you honestly, it's more important for me to hear God speaking to me in the morning than reading the Bible in the morning.

Now I wouldn't say that to a new believer, but I can say that to all of you who are mature, who understand the value of Scripture, that I want to hear God. The thing I try to do to the best of my ability, as soon as I wake up in the morning while still in bed, I say, Lord I want to hear you today. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And Genesis 1 says He spoke every day. God said this on the first day, second day, third day, fourth day. That's the first page of the Bible, teaching me that throughout my life, every day God wants to speak to me.

And if I allow God to speak to me and submit to Him like the earth did way back in Genesis 1, something will happen every day in my life. Some little thing, maybe not conscious, something invisible, which I may not be aware of. But if I respond to what I hear of God, even a one word, something will happen in my inner life.

And that's the way God wants us to live. That's the way to progress in sanctification. That's the way to purify ourselves as He is pure.

That's very, very important. That's the first thing I would say, to live before God's face and not to be disturbed by things that happen around us. And this requires a constant baffle, because pride is never too far away from us.

Particularly when people esteem us, respect us, and particularly when after we have had great freedom to minister the Word, pride is very, very close. That's the time we need to be alert. We stand before people so much, more than other believers in our church, we are in greater danger.

So we need to be alert. The Bible says, exhort one another daily, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. In Hebrews 3 and 13.

24 hours. Exhort one another every 24 hours, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. So I learned from that, Hebrews 3:13, that it takes only 24 hours for me to be hardened.

Not through obvious sin, but through deceptive sin, which I'm not aware of. And a lot of it is through pride. That's the most deceptive of all.

Some of the other things I can be aware of immediately. Encourage and exhort one another. And we don't meet one another daily.

And we don't have people to exhort us every day. But thank God that in our day, even if we don't have one another, I have Peter and Paul and John and others in the churches who exhort me, who can exhort me every single day. Like, I can get exhortation from one of the apostles as I read God's Word.

So that's very, very important. That helps us to live before the face of God. This is fundamental.

We mustn't think of our ministry primarily. Turn with me to Matthew in chapter 4. The words of Jesus. These are, to me, the first three temptations of Jesus were very, very relevant for me when I started serving the Lord, when I quit my job 54 years ago.

And one of these are the three temptations of Jesus or some of the things that the Lord brought to my mind at that time. I was just 26 years old. And the first thing the Lord showed me was from the first temptation.

The devil said, you've got power. You've just been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The anointing, the devil told Jesus, the anointing of God is upon you.

God's pleased with you. Now use that power to satisfy your need. You're not stealing.

You're not asking for ice cream. You're not asking for luxury. You're asking for basic bread to survive.

And you've got the power. God gave you that power to produce bread here in the wilderness with your supernatural power. Use it.

And Jesus said no. He would use it later on to produce bread for 5,000 people who are hungry in John chapter 6, but he would not use it for himself. And that's the first thing the Lord told me.

The power that I've given you to serve me, never, never use it for your own profit. Never use it to make money for yourself. Never, never use it to get honor for yourself or glory for yourself.

Always use it under the leading of God for the good of others. Feed the 5,000 with it, fine, but don't use it to feed yourself. I will take care of your need without your using.

I will provide the money you need. I will provide everything you need. And we must be very strict in this, that I don't even use the respect I get from others because of my ministry to gain something for myself.

Gain for me from my ministry must be zero. I think we are faithful in this area of money, all of us, but we have also got to be equally faithful in the area of receiving honor or expecting any, even one of the things the Lord told me is not able to expect thanks from others, gratitude from others for what I do for them. Not at all.

Years ago I learned that when I was very disappointed with somebody who did not express his thanks for me, I mean, after many years, after having left Bangalore, gone somewhere else, he prospered, but he seemed to completely forget all the years we helped him as a young man in Bangalore and the Lord said,

you're wrong. You should not expect thanks from him in as much as you've done it to the least of these my brothers, you've done it unto me. So if you want thanks, expect it from me.

I'll give that to you in the final day. Don't expect it from anybody on earth. That was the day I discovered that expecting thanks from somebody is a sin for me at my level.

Some brother who's in the kindergarten, it may not be a sin for him because he hasn't studied that subject yet, but for me it was sin from that day onwards to expect gratitude from someone. I expect zero gratitude and I mean, I'm thankful for them that they've learned that habit of gratitude. That's good.

So I don't say, oh, I don't want it. That'd be super spiritual. If somebody comes to thank you very much for that message and bless me, I receive it.

I don't want to act humble before him and say no, no, no, I'll give the glory to God. That's all seeking honor for my humility. No, I just accept it and go on and I secretly I give the honor to God.

I don't want even honor for humility and saying, oh, well, it wasn't me. It was the Lord. All that type of super spiritual stuff.

And never to expect thanks inwardly. If people thank me, I accept it. It's a good habit for them.

When out of 10 lepers, when only one came to thank Jesus, he said, where are the nine? He, the Lord of the universe, he has the right to expect people to come and thank him, but not me. I have, I'm a servant and I like the servant who, you know, Jesus said about the man who worked and worked and worked in the field. And when he came back, the master didn't say, okay, sit down, I'll serve you.

He said, make food for me. And he's even so he said, even when once you have done every single thing that is commanded you, you know, that verse in Luke, it's the gospel. Then say, we are unprofitable servants.

We have only done what we were told to do. We have to retain that place, dear brothers, always. I believe it's because of this, that so many brothers don't have a mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit upon them.

It leaks out through some little pride, some little seeking honor, some little receiving honor. I'm sharing this to plug those holes so that we're going to live before God's face alone and give all the glory to him. And when we have done the best we ever could have, a day of fantastic service, we'll come before the Lord and say, Lord, we've only done what we were asked to do.

We probably haven't even finished all that we were asked to do. And if we did finish everything we were asked to, we are still unprofitable servants. Those are the words of Jesus.

And we have to obey that command. It is very, very important. So never use the power for myself.

That is the first temptation. The second one, temptation in Matthew 4, is don't take God for granted. Don't say, oh, because I've served the Lord, now if I jump off the roof, God will protect me.

No, he won't. You may have served the Lord for 50 years. If you jump off the roof, he'll break your head.

And don't foolishly claim some promise. We are not senior believers who can take something. No, we don't tempt God by such things.

We have to walk in humility. When there are stairs available in the temple, we use the stairs. Just like other ordinary human beings, we use the stairs.

We're not going to show off and say, well, we're servants of God. We can live by a higher standard than you guys in these areas. No, we humbly take the stairs.

Jesus humbly took the stairs. He didn't want to show off, saying what he could do. Now, you know, the application of this, there are many, many applications of this.

And you ask God to show you how this applies in your own life, as to where I'm supposed to take the stairs and where I'm trying to jump off the roof of the temple to show what a great man of God I am. See, that was the second part of that temptation. One was, you know, foolishly tempt God.

The other is when you, Jesus, when you land down there in the lower part of the temple, will people see you descending and claiming you as a son of God? This is an honor there, which Jesus denied. And the third one, which I'm thinking of particularly here, you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve. See, the alternative to worshipping God, here in this verse, is worshipping Satan.

And worshipping Satan means compromising in some area in my life, in order for some personal gain. That's how I look at it. Jesus had come to the world, come to earth to get the world for the Father.

And the devil said, you don't have to go the hard way of the cross. I'll give you a shortcut. There are no shortcuts in God's kingdom.

It's the way of the cross every single day. Even if I've taken up the cross for 50 years, I still have to take up the cross today, just like a new believer. I'm no different when it comes to that.

There are no shortcuts to bringing the world to Christ. And Jesus said, no, I don't want any shortcuts. I have to go the way of the cross.

You're trying to tell me to avoid that. That's why He said, get behind me, Satan. Get away, Satan.

You're trying to tell me to avoid the way of the cross. You remember the next time, when Peter told Jesus to avoid the way of the cross. Again, he said the same words, get behind me, Satan.

Twice. Once to Satan directly, and the other time to Peter. Both times the temptation was, avoid the cross.

Take a shortcut. And I need to recognize that voice wherever it comes from. From my heart, or from somebody else.

No, take the easy path. Avoid this. There's too much sacrifice here.

There's too much, there are too many problems along that way. It's difficult this way. Get behind me, Satan.

I have no time to listen to you. Blessed are you, we can recognize these very subtle ways. You know, Satan's a deceiver.

He doesn't come bringing a piece of ordinary paper and saying, this is a hundred dollar bill. No. He brings something that looks exactly like a hundred dollar bill, watermark and everything, and it's not.

I don't want to receive anything from the devil's hand. And you've got to be alert in this area, that I don't take shortcuts. And the other part of this, is what Jesus said.

You cannot serve God, before you have learned to worship. And worship, let me please, let me emphasize this. I, I sometimes feel I'm the only person emphasizing this so much.

I hardly ever hear anybody saying it. What the entire Christian world calls praise and worship, is not worship. It is praise and thanksgiving.

That's not worship at all. And people may say, Brother Zach, what does it matter if we call it worship, if it is not actually worship? It's along with praising the Lord. Yes, it does.

And I use the example of a person who has never seen a Cadillac car, and somebody tells him, hey listen, I've got a gift for you with a Cadillac car. Go to this store and pick it up. And the storekeeper knows this guy has never seen a Cadillac car, and gives him an honorary bicycle with the label Cadillac written on it, Cadillac car, and gives it to him.

And he takes away the cycle and rides it, thinking he's got a Cadillac car. He hasn't. That's the danger of calling a bicycle a Cadillac car, when it is not.

You miss something that you're supposed to have. The real Cadillac car. So if you call something worship, which is not worship, you satisfy yourself.

Yeah, I worshiped and praised God on Sunday morning. No, you didn't. You praised and thanked him.

Worship is mostly something we have to do in private. It's in the most holy place. You can praise and thank God in the holy place.

See, there are three parts to the tabernacle. The outer coat is where most believers are. Yeah, they've come through the gate, they're born again, and they've gone to the laver, they're baptized in water.

That's the altar and the laver, the cross of forgiveness and the laver of baptism that's over. And then there are some people who go beyond that, to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is the holy place where they study the Word of God, the twelve loaves of bread on the table, and they pray the altar of incense, and they keep the oil burning with the oil of the Holy Spirit.

Fine. And they praise and thank God there. It's wonderful.

It's a smaller crowd in the holy place. It's mostly the priests and those who serve God. But you go to the most holy place, there's only one person there.

It's God. Nobody there. There's no place to show off or preach or anything there.

All that is in the holy place in the outer court. And our calling is to go through the veil every day. And going through the veil is not an act of a moment.

Hebrews 10, 19, and 20 says, Jesus has made a new and living way, not a door. If it was a door, you enter in a moment. A new and living way through the veil, which is his flesh, which he crucified for thirty three and a half years.

And that's what the tearing of the veil meant, that Jesus had faithfully rent every stitch of that veil in thirty three and a half years, every temptation that man could ever face. He took up the cross and died to his own will and entered the veil. And that's the way for me.

He's opened a way. He's inaugurated, it says there, for me to walk so that I can live in the Father's presence all the time. But in a sense, I am alone there.

And if others have come through the veil, they are there. But I'm more aware of the Father's presence. I'm delighted to have these other brothers there also, who are also inside the veil in the most holy place.

But I'm more aware of the Father and Jesus than about all these people. That's worship, to be occupied in something we have to do mostly alone, by ourselves, where we, and it's not so much even in words, I believe the highest form of worship is in silence. The Lord is in his holy temple.

Let all the earth be silent before him. I think that's in Habakkuk. The Lord is in his holy temple.

Let all the earth be silent before him. Silence is the highest form of worship, where you don't have words to express, you know, that there are songs we can sing along to God, and I do that often. My God, how wonderful thou art, thy majesty how bright, how wonderful thy judgment seat and depths of burning light.

So we sing those songs before the Lord, and there are many other songs of worship, love with everlasting love. That relationship with Jesus is very, very important to be maintained every single day. We call it worship, or we can also call it personal devotion to Jesus.

Dear brothers, your ministry will go down gradually if you're not maintaining personal devotion to Jesus every day. And that's not something you have to spend hours in. It's a moment-by-moment thing, and this is the thing that Paul was afraid of, that the Corinthians would miss out on.

I believe that's the reason for their carnality. Second Corinthians in chapter 3, it says, I'm afraid, sorry like Eve was deceived and led astray by the devil away from the tree of life, which means, 2nd Corinthians 11 3, simple, pure devotion to Christ. That's the tree of life.

That's the thing that the devil deceived Eve away from. That's what I get from comparing 2nd Corinthians 11 3 with Genesis chapter 3. So I'd miss the tree of life too, if I'm not living in simple devotion to Christ. And if you're not maintaining simple, pure devotion to Christ, you'll miss the tree of life.

You can accumulate the knowledge of good and evil in tons and tons and numerous interpretations of Scripture and doctrine and understanding this and explanation of this verse and powerful, clever things from different parts of Scripture. It's all knowledge of good and evil. It's not the tree of life if I'm not living in simple, pure devotion to Jesus Christ in my personal life.

Dear brothers, ask yourself that. I check myself on that regularly. It's the main thing that matters.

I say my whole ministry must flow out from that. Otherwise I'm just a servant of men, not a servant of God. Some people, some brothers are wonderful servants of men.

They sacrifice so much, they do so much for God's people, and they build fellowship with them, they open their home to them, they give money for them, they spend their time, they play with them. There are so many things, but it is all for men. The Lord says, it was not done as unto me.

Yeah, it can lead to even, Lord, we cast out demons in your name. We did this in your name, and we preached in your name, and we served, and we sacrificed, and we gave up so much of our time for you. And the Lord says, well, how much did you know me? How much did you spend time with me? Is that important? The Lord says that's a primary thing.

God created man to be a worshiper of him. It's not so much service. You know, in the Old Testament, if you read the Old Testament and see God's heart, you know, we're not under the Old Covenant, but I read the Old Testament a lot to see God's heart.

And you can see God's heart in the way He speaks to Israel through the prophets. You guys worship idols. You're giving preference to idols more than to me.

That is one of the primary things the Lord criticized Israel for. What does that mean? It means, what is the idol today? My ministry can be an idol. Something more important than Jesus Himself.

It's very easy to begin our Christian life with fervent devotion to Christ, and after a few years of ministry, to be taken up with the ministry, particularly if God blesses it. And we compare our present ministry today to what it was, say, 20 years ago, when we were messing up our Christian life, and wasting time. And we say, wow, God's given me so much life.

Praise the Lord for that. But has your ministry now become your idol? Is this the thing you're worshiping now? Is your church building your idol? Is the way your service goes so smoothly your idol? Is your music your idol? Idolatry is a thing God detested in the Old Covenant. And it's so easy.

Is your job your idol? To glory in the fact that I support myself. Is supporting myself become my idol? That that's what I glory in now? Glory and mercy on us. Let me never worship idols.

Idolatry is a very, very subtle thing. It comes in so easily. Those Israelites didn't even think they were doing something so evil when they worshiped the Golden Calf, or they worshiped Beal.

It's unimaginable. How in the world could people have seen the mighty power of God splitting open the Red Sea, and bringing that pillar of cloud from above, see all that, and still go and bow down before a Golden Calf, and say this is the God that delivered you from Egypt. We think they're crazy.

But I think it's like that with a lot of servants of the Lord today, who think that it is by their power that they preached, or did something, or somebody was healed, or something or the other. What a need there is for brokenness. You know, I think often of the bread.

We are bread in God's hand. We have surrendered. I believe all of us have surrendered everything, like the boy gave all his five loaves to Jesus.

He didn't hold back one. Dear Lord, take all my five loaves. That's total surrender.

That's where we begin. Then we pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. That is the Lord blessing the loaves.

Great. But it's still five loaves. The multitude is not fed until the loaves are broken.

That's the third thing. First the total surrender, then the anointing, the Lord blessing us, and thirdly the brokenness. That's the point at which the five becomes 25,000 loaves that 5,000 people can eat.

And then we've got to remain there. So these are some of the things that I want to emphasize. Please make sure that worship has an important part in your life.

And that's personal devotion to Jesus Christ. It may not be in words, it may be in silence, but it's where, you know, I love Song of Solomon as a book where I can relate to Jesus intimately. You know, there's one passage in Song of Solomon which to me is a beautiful picture of worship.

I would encourage you to read it. I wish we had a whole day to talk about all this, but it'll have to be another time. It says in Song of Solomon chapter 4, and the bride is saying in the last verse, Awake, O North Wind.

Song of Solomon chapter 4, verse 16. Awake, O North Wind, and come wind of the South. The North Wind is the cold wind of trial and, maybe, persecution and difficulties.

And the South Wind is the warm wind of blessing and encouragement. And it says whichever wind comes, the North cold wind of trial and persecution difficulties, or the South wind of encouragement and blessing, whichever it is, when it breathes upon my garden, everything is for my beloved to receive. Let my beloved come into this garden and eat his choice foods.

It's reserved for my beloved. It doesn't matter which wind is blowing upon me. It's for my beloved alone and for nobody else.

I like that, that everything that comes into my life, and if I endure in some trial and come out of it triumphantly, and people have seen it, well, that's also for my beloved. It's not so much for people to see how I stood faithful to the Lord in the midst of some trial. If they saw it and they got blessed by it, well, praise the Lord.

That's a byproduct, but that's not the main product of the factory. The main product of the factory is that God is glorified, that my beloved gets something out of my life. It's very important, dear brothers, and I found this a great help for my own life, to preserve my personal devotion to Jesus.

I started out my Christian life like this. I don't know how it was. God, in his sovereignty, put me on a ship, which was a survey ship, so it never came to land to civilized ports.

We were always serving uncharted waters, and that was mostly in areas where there were no people living, and so the end result was for about one year of my life, immediately after my baptism in 1961, I was alone most of the time, and I didn't know much of the Bible. I'd just been baptized, and somehow I had with me a very thin commentary of Song of Solomon that I picked up from my father's library. That is the only book I had, and I said, okay, let me at least study this book, and boy, that was of God, and that's the one book in my first Bible, which is full of notes that I wrote on it, because I felt the Lord led me there to prepare me for a life of devotion to him primarily, not of service primarily.

No. If I plant a garden, it is for the breeze to come and take a fragrance to my beloved. That's also not for me.

Let him come and eat the choice fruits there, and I'm so thankful for that, and I learned so much from it, and I see its value even today after 60 years of being a believer. I would encourage you very much, whether you read the Song of Solomon that way or not, but devotion to Christ. The devil, 2 Corinthians 11 3, took Eve away from that, and that's what made the Corinthians carnal, in spite of their speaking in

tongues, in spite of what it says in 1 Corinthians 1, they lacked in no gift of the Spirit.

Fantastic. But they lacked devotion to Jesus, and they were in terrific danger. They were carnal, they were fleshly, they were babies, and anyone who lacks that devotion to Jesus is a baby.

He may not realize it, he may have fantastic knowledge. I'm not impressed by all the Babylonian preachers who preach wonderful things. They're maybe born again, and they're preaching a lot of good things, but I can see through it, and I hope you can see through it, and if you can't see through the hollowness of so many people who are not leading their flock along the new and living way, I would ask you to judge yourself.

There are many godly people out there in other churches, and I thank God for them, but I see a lot more than many of them are saying. Are they leading you to personal devotion to Jesus? Are they leading you to build the body of Christ in such a way that no honor goes to them? There are very few like that. And so I want to encourage you to read the book of Hebrews.

You know, in my 70-hour study through the Bible, I spent four hours on Hebrews alone. Out of 66 books, 70 hours, I spent four hours on Hebrews, because I felt here is a book which is not a popular book among Christians, but there's no book that explains the humanity of Christ like that book. That's what changed my life and brought me into a life of victory, to see that Jesus was a man tempted like us in all points, and did not sin.

It's not a doctrine. The secret of godliness is not in a doctrine. That's what some people have made the mistake of.

They hear the doctrine and say, ah, the secret of life, the secret of the mystery of godliness, 1 Timothy 3 16, is in the doctrine of Christ having come in the flesh. No, sir. The secret of godliness is in Christ, the person, not the doctrine.

I made that mistake myself in the beginning. I thought it was in the doctrine. Get everybody to understand this doctrine, that Christ came in your flesh and was tempted like you.

And I found even though people understood it, they didn't get victory. Because the mystery is not in a doctrine. The mystery is in the person.

Like the Living Bible says, it's true that the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter, but the answer lies in Christ, not in a doctrine. In Christ, who came as a man, was tempted like us, and did not sin. So that's, to me, a very important part of Hebrews.

And then it goes on in Hebrews 12 to say, looking unto this Jesus, who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, that's how we are to run the race. It's very clear. And in the NASB it says, fixing our eyes on Jesus like this.

That means there are so many temptations to turn our eyes away from that, to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to get occupied with knowledge of doctrine or knowledge of the Bible. But I say, if through the Bible doesn't lead you to Jesus himself, then it has failed. If it just leads you to a greater knowledge of the Bible, then my book has failed.

My purpose is to lead people to devotion to Christ. A lot of Bible study books lead people to knowledge of the Bible. That's good.

But it must go beyond that. I say then, we are all signposts that point to Jesus there. Even a book must only be a signpost that points to Jesus, not that people get taken up in the book itself.

But that's very important. But coming to the second part of that, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. So there must be a balance in worship and service.

It's not only worship. It's not that I spend all my time like the monks in the monasteries, just occupied with devotion to Jesus, and I wonder if they really have devotion to Jesus. Or it's just a satisfaction of their conscience by doing something all by themselves.

It must lead to service, and not service the way I think it should be done. I can't just pick and choose what I want to do. I have to do that particular thing, because we understand the body, the little finger can't do whatever it likes.

It has to do what God called it to do. The eye can't do what it likes. It has to do what God's called it to do.

And we're not in competition with each other. We are members of one body. And I have to do, I worship the Lord, which is the members connected to the head, and complete submission to the head, eye, hand, everything.

But then after that submission, there must be fulfilling that particular task which God has called me to do. And that I'll come to know more and more as I'm faithful in my personal life, in my walking with the Lord. The Lord will show me little by little.

I love that paraphrase of Proverbs 4.12. As you go, as you walk, step by step, I'll open up the way before you. And it says that your way will not be narrowed. The opposite is, I will open up the way before you.

So it's as I go forward that the Lord shows me the next step, and the next step. And if I don't go forward, I'm stuck. Thy word is like a torchlight to my feet, a light unto my way, and a lamp or a torchlight to my feet.

And a torchlight is something that shows me only a certain distance. That's all that God's guidance will show me. If I take that, then I move forward, the torchlight shows me a little more.

That's how God leads us step by step. And so in our service for the Lord, there are certain principles, particularly as an elder. I always say an elder is a washer of feet.

There's a picture I have there right behind me of Jesus washing Peter's feet. And the words, by love, serve one another. And that's our calling.

I must never graduate from that place. The feet of my people, to serve them, that is the dirtiest jobs, that's what I am. I'm supposed to be a washer of feet till the end of my life.

But I've said that, Lord, on the last day of your earthly life, the most wonderful man that ever walked on this earth, on the last day of your earthly life, you're not a director or a chairman of the board or any such thing. You're a washer of feet. And that's where we go up and up and up and up, become chairman, director, etc., etc.

I want to go down and down and down and down till I get to the feet of my flock and stay there till the end of my life. I would encourage you to do that. It's a very blessed way, because you'll have fellowship with the Lord.

The Lord's down at the feet of the disciples. If you want fellowship with Him, get there. If you're going up, you want fellowship with the Lord.

The Lord is at the feet of His disciples. The closer you get there, the more fellowship you'll have with Him. These are not just nice thoughts.

Sometimes we hear something, we say, that's a nice thought I'd like to meditate on, or that's something nice I'd like to share with others. Rubbish. I've got to live this life.

Say, Lord, if you give me something to help me to live, then I've got something out of this meeting today. I want to live this life where I'm a washer of feet. The other thing I tell elders are, as you go along as an elder, you'll find more and more, you're a toilet cleaner.

Because some of your flock are babies. They're in diapers. They're going to mess up.

Sometimes they don't wear their diapers and they mess up the floor. Then you're a cleaner. Or they go and sit on the toilet and they don't flush it.

They don't flush the bowl. Who's going to do that? The mother, father, that's what you are. And so you're a toilet cleaner.

And if the toilet's all filled up and mucked up, you've got to put your hands in it and clean it out. That's your job. Clean up the mess that somebody in your flock did cause confusion that's hindering other people from being able to use the toilet.

So that's not a great task. So whenever I appoint elders, I say, listen, you guys are toilet cleaners. Don't ever forget that.

And don't ever seek to graduate from that. I mean, if you want to graduate from that, resign your leadership and go and sit as a member of the congregation. If you want to continue to be an elder, you're a toilet cleaner.

You're a washer of the feet. That's what you are. And yet in the Christian world, many people don't understand that.

In CFC churches, I have seen people who started out so well, understood all this in theory. And in a few years, they are proud. They think no end of themselves and they've fallen away.

And we've had to remove them from eldership. This has happened. John the Apostle appointed diatrophies as an elder in one church.

And a little later, the guy thought so much of himself that he still respected John, but he couldn't care less for any of the other co-workers of John. And John sent some people to diatrophies and diatrophies wouldn't even listen to them. You read that in third John.

So that happened in the days of the apostles. And even the churches that the apostles planted, you see their condition in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3. Always the fault is with the elders. The Lord says to John, don't write to the whole church.

It is a message for the whole church, but write to the messenger of the church. Maybe there were two or three elders in each church, but one of them was the primary messenger. It's usually the case we have found in most churches we have planted, that even when there are two or three elders, one is the primary messenger.

Whether you call him senior elder or primary messenger, the Lord says write this letter to the messenger. He is primarily responsible, along with his fellow elders, for the state of that church. And he has lost his first love.

And if he doesn't repent of that, I'm going to remove the anointing from that church. It'll no longer be a church. It'll just sit there in the big 500 members saying First Church of Ephesus, but it will not be the Church of Jesus Christ.

That group of five people who pulled out from there and started meeting separately, that will be the church. That's Revelation chapter 2. And another church, he says, in your case, you're allowing your wife, Jezebel, to control what's happening. You're not a strong enough leader.

That's also a problem with some elders. They're not strong. They're not firm.

They've got wives who are stronger than them. You allow that Jezebel to run your life? Take those, I have often told elders, read Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3. You have a name that you're alive. Wow! What a church you have planted.

What a work God has done in you in the last five, ten years. But God says before me, I don't see that. You're not alive like you were once upon a time.

Other things have become more important in your life. Those words are words of warning, or once upon a time you were on fire, baptized in the Holy Spirit, but now you're neither hot nor cold. Is that a good state to be in, lukewarm? No.

The Lord says, I'll spit you out of my mouth. That means you will no longer be my mouthpiece. You will no longer speak my word.

Once upon a time you did speak my word, but I'll spit you out of my mouth. You will no longer be my mouth. So I believe that we have to take these words of rebuke.

May the Lord says to me, you're getting legalistic. You're sticking to small, small little things which are important. All the sisters must wave their heads good.

But that's not the number one thing. That's one part of the law. And the Lord said, yes, you have to, but don't be taken up with these things.

The Lord told the Pharisees, you tight minted anise, but you don't, you've neglected the weightier matters of the law. He didn't say you can ignore those things. The weightier matters.

The small things are also important. In fact, what made Daniel count before God was because he obeyed the small commandments. Don't eat pork.

Don't drink that little bit of wine. That's what made him the man of God in Babylon. So small commandments are important, but we're not to become legalists and major on minors.

Very, very important. We must distinguish also one last thing between what is lawful and what is profitable. 1 Corinthians chapter 6, we read about the difference between these two in 1 Corinthians and chapter 6 is all things are lawful, verse 12, but all things are not profitable.

And to be an effective servant of God, I must always, out of the 10 lawful things, I must choose one thing that's profitable and devote myself to that and give less time to the other lawful things. What is profitable? What's profitable? Time is short to redeem the time the Bible says. Make the most of the time because the days are evil.

The coming of the Lord is drawing near. I'm not saying we should not go on a vacation or should not play sports. All this is necessary because we're not supposed to be sitting reading the Bible and praying all the time.

We are balanced human beings and we can build fellowship, but sometimes we can build more fellowship with people playing games with them than any other way. So don't stay away from that and informal fellowship and humor. To me, humor is a very important part of my life.

We can build fellowship with our children with humor. We build fellowship with other believers. It's humor, but I don't want to be a circus clown all the time joking.

I don't want that to be my reputation. I want to be a man of God. That's what all of us are supposed to be.

So we need a lot of wisdom from God in all these things and God gives us one another to correct each other, to help each other. As we approach the end of time, there are a couple of verses I want to share with you. I want to encourage you to remember that the Old Testament prophets preached out of a burden.

They didn't just study the scriptures and preach. It says the burden of the word of the Lord, the burden of the word of the Lord. That's what sometimes the first words that some of the prophets said was the burden, the burden, the burden.

That's what all of us must have, a burden given by God for God's people, for building the body of Christ in our generation. When we think of the evil days in which we are living and all the turmoil and confusion, a pandemic that's paralyzed the world such as never happened in known history. It's really true.

We're living in a time such as never been known in the history, but in known history and the whole world has been hit by a pandemic. So this is a sovereign control of God. God's in charge of these teeny weeny Corona viruses that can't even be seen under a microscope.

And God shows how he can use a small thing like that to paralyze the world to show his almighty power. And I bow before him and I say, Lord, you're my father, our father who art in heaven. We don't say, oh almighty God, like the Old Testament people.

We say our father who controls the Corona viruses, who controls the atom bombs. Many years ago, he taught the world how a small atom is enough to destroy the whole city or to give electric power to the whole city. And today he's shown how a small teeny weeny Corona virus can paralyze the whole world.

It doesn't need much power. God is almighty. He's a God of small things and teaches us that he can use small people like you and me.

Let the Corona virus teach you how much God can use you. If God can teach a lesson to the world through the Corona virus, he can use you and me, brother. Just remain small.

Always remain small in your own eyes. Remember what Samuel told King Saul. There was a day, King Saul, when you were small in your own eyes.

You didn't want to be the king. You hid yourself. But now you're so big, you think you can even become a priest and offer a sacrifice.

So the kingdom is taken away from you. We have unfortunately seen that in some CFC elders who became proud, some in a very short time, because they thought, oh, I'm an elder in a CFC church, not in a Babylonian church, and God's using me. And maybe their messages are on the internet and it goes to their head.

May God have mercy on us. I always tell people, all my fellow elders, remember John on the Isle of Patmos. Revelation 1. At the age of 95, he doesn't even call himself the Apostle John.

It's not even mentioned in Revelation. He says, your brother, John. That's what we all are.

Like Jesus said in Luke 17, when you have done all your work, obeyed everything I've told you, say, we are unprofitable servants. You want a title? Unprofitable servants. That is, you don't get it until you obeyed everything Jesus said.

When you get there, then you become unprofitable servants. Till then, we haven't even reached there. That's what Jesus said.

Very clear. When you have done everything He commanded you, then remember you're an unprofitable servant. Continue to serve.

Here Jesus said about that man who went to the field, worked hard and came back, and when he came back, the master did not say, go and have your meal now. No. The master said, serve me first.

I know you worked the whole day in the field. Serve me first, then go and have your meal. And that's what I want to do.

I'm not to pat myself on the back because I've served out in the field for so long. At the end of it, I have to come to the Lord and say, Lord, I want to serve you. I want to worship you, give you all the glory.

Then I can sit down and have my own meal and call myself an unprofitable servant when I've obeyed everything. Let all my dear brothers, don't let any high thoughts ever get into your head just because you preached a good sermon one day or somebody got blessed. Please, please don't destroy yourself.

It'll destroy you. It'll destroy your family. It'll destroy your church.

See the apostle John. He called himself your brother John, and he was flat on his face in the dust in Revelation 1 before the Lord. I say, keep your face in the dust all the time, especially when God has blessed you, especially when God gives you visions of heaven like John God in Revelation.

Amazing visions that other people haven't got. Even if you're the last among the living apostles, put your face in the dust. That's what God's spoken to me.

That's what God's speaking to you as well. And I want to say this is a word we can give to those who are worried and concerned in our time from the book of Amos chapter 9 and verse 9. Amos chapter 9 and verse 9. In a time of turmoil, when we don't know what is going to happen in the future, men's hearts feeling them for fear of what's happening in the world. The Lord says, let me paraphrase Amos chapter 9 verse 9, I am commanding the coronavirus and I'll shake all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not the smallest kernel, not even the smallest bit of real grain will fall to the ground, solely the chaff that will be removed.

So the weakest child of God can find comfort. He will not drop out of God's sifting sieve. No, he'll be saved.

The weakest, smallest bit of grain. So we must encourage our people and for ourselves as servants of the Lord. I have one verse and we close with that.

Daniel chapter 11 and verse 32. If you read that chapter, it's talking about the last days, the days of the Antichrist, when he will desecrate the sanctuary and all. Verse 31, just similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 24, the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 11 31. And with smooth words, he will turn to godlessness. People who act wickedly towards the covenant.

I paraphrase that as people who play the fool with the new covenant message will be deceived by the Antichrist. And remember John said in 1 John 2, the spirit of the Antichrist was rampant in his church, but they fell away. And I want to preach in such a way that anyone who's got the spirit of the Antichrist will fall away from our churches and I won't be disappointed.

John says that in 1 John 2, they went out from among us that it might be manifest that they were not of us. They didn't want to be part of the body of Christ. They didn't want to be washers of the feet.

They didn't want to become like a small little grain. They didn't want to fall on the face before the Lord. God removed them.

Let us be examples. And so the Antichrist is going to, with smooth words, turn away people who don't accept the new covenant. But here's where we stand as leaders among God's people, servants among God's people.

The people who know their God will be strong and will act powerfully. Our desire is to know God more and more as a father and as almighty God who runs this universe and will never hand over that authority to anybody else. We serve a Lord who's got all authority in heaven and earth.

And it's on the basis of that authority, Matthew 28, 18, that he's told us to go into all the world and make disciples in every nation and not only make disciples, but teach them every single thing I have taught you.

I don't know how many churches in the world emphasize discipleship, taking up the cross every day and emphasize it, the baptism and the fullness of the Holy Spirit and teaching them everything in the Sermon on the Mount. Anger is equal to murder.

Lusting in your mind after a woman is as bad as committing adultery with her. It's not enough if you love your friends. You must love your enemies and never do anything to get honor from men, praying, fasting, giving money, nothing.

Everything must be before God's face. Where are the churches that emphasize go to the YouTube and see the messages? You never hear messages on these things. It's always about evangelism and outreach.

What's the use of all that if those people don't become disciples? Today, if you go to the great evangelist and say, where are these 100,000 people you brought to Christ? They'll say, we don't know. We heard that you brought thousands of people to Christ in many nations. Where are they? They'll say, we don't know.

But you go to the apostle Paul and ask him, where are the believers? I heard, Paul, you went to Philippi and brought some believers. Where are they? He said, come, come to Philippi. I'll show you.

He'll take you to the church and show you every single person he brought to Christ. And Paul, I heard you brought some people to Christ in Thessalonica. Where are they? Come to Thessalonica.

I'll show you. He'll take you to the church in Thessalonica and show you every one of them. I said, not only are they here, but they've grown in the Lord since I brought them.

That is our testimony. We're not looking for tens and thousands to boast that we went to this country and that country and brought thousands to Christ. No, you don't have children and throw them on the street.

All of you, you have children, you bring them up to adulthood. That is our example in the church. We're not interested in numbers.

We don't glory in the number of children we have. We want our children to grow up to maturity. We want to present them one day as a pure virgin to Jesus Christ.

And for that, we must have a godly jealousy that the devil doesn't get a hold of them, that false teachers don't get a hold of them. And for that, the solution is we must know our God. We must be able to hear His voice.

Our hearing must never become dull. God bless you all, my brothers. Thank you for listening.

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